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Effective Management Communication Strategies

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Cad Shannon

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2018

Abstract

Effective Management Communication Strategies

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BBM, Cornerstone University, 2001

Doctoral Study Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Managing employee engagement is critical to the success of an organization, but 85% of managers struggle with engaging employees. The purpose of this single-case study was to explore effective communication strategies within an organization and determine how managers used these strategies to increase employee engagement, productivity, and organizational effectiveness. Data were collected from organizational documents, observations, and semistructured interviews with 6 managers of a corporation located in the midwestern United States. All participants were working full-time for at least 3 years, had a managerial title, and were responsible for departmental communication.

Moustakas's modified van Kaam method was used for data analysis. Communication theory provided the conceptual framework for the study. Three themes that emerged from the participants' interviews, observations, and data analysis were coaching employees, motivation, and consistency in communication. The findings of this study may impact positive social change by improving the organizational competitive environment through engagement in the community and society. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers with direct reports to improve their understanding of the causes of engagement and disengagement, internal communication strategies that cause disengagement, and the benefits of implementing engagement strategies. The results of this study may provide managers with knowledge about employee engagement strategies used to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness within the industry. Community relationships could also improve as a result of effective communication.

Effective Management Communication Strategies Within An Organization

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Dedication

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for blessing me with the opportunity to accomplish this goal, you are my rock that gives me strength, and my true inspiration, allow me to use this doctoral study to fulfill your purpose in my life. To my beautiful daughters, Brooke E. Shannon and Camille R. Shannon, thank you for encouraging me and giving me a reason to continue this journey, you both have been a major influence in my life. To my amazing mother Eva M. Shannon, thank you for your support and believing in me when I did not think it was possible. To my late great grandmother Eva M. Evans who has always encouraged me with these words, “you are stronger than you think,” I now know what this means.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Leaders expect more organizational communication change within organizations (Barratt-Pugh, Bahn, & Gakere, 2013). Developing strategies for effective communication should be every leader's goal (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2013). Communication often entails organizational restructuring, as well as developing job-related functions and new organizational cultures, which fosters organizational change (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2013; Parfitt, 2014). Organizational leaders experience increased pressure to improve communication within their organization to improve employee engagement (Altman, Valenzi, & Hodgetts, 2013). Some research has taken place in the area of effective communication strategies and their influence on organizational cultures (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2013).

Background of the Problem

Managerial communication plays a vital role with an organization in the areas of organizational behavior and communication (Michael, 2014). Organizational leaders transitioning from traditional modes of communication influence organizational goals to improve productivity (Yang, Huang, & Hsu, 2014). Leaders play a significant role in motivating performance through employee communications and are compelled to consistently implement new communication strategies to keep employees productive (Yang, 2012). Managerial communication had a positive effect on subordinate job performance (Michael, 2014). Organizational communication affected employee participation (Yang, 2012). Yang (2012) stated that as a result of communication strategies, employee effort and engagement determined organizational productivity.

Additionally, the specific communication style affects employee engagement (Hunter et al., 2013). Serving as the research focus, leadership communication is one factor that affects an employee's performance and productivity. Management communication must be effective to motivate others (Hunter et al., 2013). Internal communication is a central process where employees share information and promote organizational culture and values (Men & Stacks, 2014). Communication style stimulates employee collaboration, increased job engagement, and strengthened organizational culture (Hunter et al., 2013).

Problem Statement

A need exists regarding how organizational managers with direct reports effectively communicate to help connect with employees, build better relationships, and improve attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Dasgupta, Suar, & Singh, 2014). In a survey of over 1,100 employees in U.S. organizations, 86% of managers believed they were good communicators, but only 14% of employees thought their managers were good communicators (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). The general business problem was that the lack of communication between managers with direct reports and employees negatively affected engagement and productivity. The specific business problem was that some organization managers in the communications industry lacked effective communication strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposed qualitative single case study was to explore what effective communication strategies managers with direct reports in the communications industry used to increase employee engagement and productivity. The target population was six managers from

different divisions of a single corporation in the state of Midwestern United States. Participants were managers working full-time for at least 3 years who had a managerial title and delivered communication to a department. The social impact of this study might ameliorate employees' lives. Community relationships could improve as a result of effective communication.

Nature of Study

The research method for this study was qualitative. Researchers who use qualitative methods focus on communication components within research (Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2007; Josselson, 2014). Participants in the study arrived at a full story portrayed through personal documentation through a qualitative heuristic framework (Moustakas, 1994). From individual depictions and images relayed from research participants, a complete picture develops (Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative inquiry highlights problems where the researcher reveals articulations of personal experiences (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative approaches permit researchers to select and interview participants who have actual experiences pertaining to what, where, and how the study phenomenon influenced managers (Davis, 2013). This study was not to test a theory or hypothesis, which are reasons why the quantitative method was not appropriate. Researchers who use quantitative methods discover social phenomena or human problems through theoretical testing consisting of statistical measures (Yilmaz, 2013). Mixed methods include a quantitative component and researchers focus on the exploration of problems and potential solutions instead of the understanding the cause of a problem (Sparkes, 2014). The study did not include measured variables.

The research design selected was single-case study. Yin (2014) indicated a single-case study design compares the target population's differences and similarities through multiple sources of evidence of the phenomenon. A single-case study design supported comparing data collected from various sources. A phenomenology design is a study of human experience from the view of those living the phenomenon (Robertson & Thomson, 2014). I conducted an exploratory single-case study focusing on a single organization. Ethnographic inquirers study groups of individuals and their cultures (Yu, Abdullah, & Saat, 2014), which was not what I anticipated with my study. Narrative inquiries collect stories, group conversations, and documents as the primary data source (Yin, 2012). A single-case study was the best choice to collect the data necessary to answer the central research question.

Research Question

The central research question was: What effective communication strategies do managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement and productivity?

Interview Questions

I focused my interview questions on management awareness of effective communication.

The proposed interview questions followed (see Appendix D).

1. What strategies have you used for effective communication?
2. What are the characteristics of effective verbal and written communication that you apply?
3. How have effective communication strategies motivated and engaged your direct reports?

4. How do you distinguish motivation and engagement as a result of effective communication from other types of communication?
5. How have your communication strategies affected productivity?

Conceptual Framework

Communication theory follows the idea that human behavior is connected to the environment, which included past experiences, present circumstances, and future expectations of all the parties involved in information transfer (Duncan, 1973). Communication theory is a concept where a message that is sent and received can influence the reliability of communication (Duncan, 1973). Shannon (1948) asserted communication is not a singular language function, but a combination of coded speech and physical features. The essential elements of Shannon's communication theory are information source, transmitter, receiver, and destination. Duncan (1973) observed that when employees and managers understand each other, they respond to one another in a more productive, collaborative manner.

I used communication theory for the conceptual framework for this study, as I researched how communication strategies increase employee engagement and productivity. Employees communicate and express themselves in physical, cognitive, and emotional manners (Young, Sturts, Ross, & Kim, 2013). Communication theory was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study. Qubasi, Elanain, Badri, and Ajmal (2015) added effective managerial communication creates a productive and engaged organizational culture.

Operational Definitions

The following are terms and definitions pertaining to this research study.

Affective commitment: The emotional attachments that employees have with an organization's culture, job characteristics, and personal interactions between coworkers (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013).

Communication: A process through which information generated elicits a response in people concerning the message and the sender (Rebore, 2003).

Communication strategies: Those strategies which infuse communication efforts with an agenda or plan (Christensen, 2014).

Employee disengagement: The removing of oneself psychologically from or devoting less attention to one's own agenda (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014).

Employee engagement: The discretionary efforts of employees that further the interests of an organization (Gerst, 2013).

Goal congruence: Employee commitment and performance determine organizational success (Shahid & Azhar, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are the underlying perspectives assumed likely true by the researcher, or otherwise the study may not continue (Merriam, 2014). One assumption was participants answered all questions truthfully. Another assumption was that managers provided complete answers to the interview questions as well as other documents to complete the single-case study.

Limitations

Limitations to a study are the potential weaknesses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). One limitation identified in the proposed study was the threat of self-selection. A second limitation was communication originating from individuals of different generations. These limitations may reflect differences in communication styles. Limitations of language, associations, and subject knowledge by the participant could result in misleading data.

Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study (Yin, 2014). The data encompassed the answers to five interview questions offered by a minimum of three eligible participants. Eligible participants must be an organizational leader from a communications company and located in the state of Midwestern United States.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings for this study may be of value to business and contribute to improvement of the business practice through better understanding of effective communication practices employed by managers with direct reports. Leaders often consider practices of managers to be barriers to implementing new organizational responsibilities (Eberle, Berens, & Li, 2013). There is potential to generate communication recommendations through addressing concerns about managers' roles and managerial communication. Describing new knowledge related to organizational communication may enhance management practices. Improving managerial communication practices may bolster employee engagement and productivity.

A positive relationship exists between downward communication, employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Four dimensions of meaning take place involving communication use of personnel, management conduct and methods of communication, face-to-face communication, and the efficiency of the communication process (Christensen, 2014). Managers use multiple communication channels and send clear and precise messages to employees (Raina & Roebuck, 2016). Positive employee-organization relationships improve and generate excellence from implementing best practices (Men & Stacks, 2014).

Implications for Social Change

The quality of life for consumers and commitment to corporate social responsibility are principles of social change. Doctoral study findings have the potential to influence social change and a productive organization may contribute further to society in a positive manner. The findings from my study fostered better understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of effective communication strategies improving community relationships.

Leadership communication influences internal and external organizational success (Zulch, 2014). Understanding the strategies of effective communication helps motivate employee productivity and provide better comprehension of communication factors that influence social change (Gursoy, Geng-Qing Chi, & Kardag, 2013). Leaders must communicate in order to build lasting employee relationships (Ayub, Manaf, & Hamzah, 2014). Consumers enjoy quality products and services because of increased employee engagement (Berens, 2013).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of the section is to review current literature related to issues affecting communication between leaders, employees, and engagement. In this literature review, I addressed the topics of leadership communication practices, workplace communication, internal communication, job satisfaction, and employee engagement behaviors, attitudes, and trust. This qualitative study explored effective communication strategies that managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement and productivity. Communication theory provided the conceptual framework and a guide to examine related theories and concepts in the literature review. I searched a variety of online research databases and local libraries for the literature. The literature review included peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, and books. Keywords for retrieving the electronic sources included *communication theory*, *effective management communication*, *leadership communication*, *the influence of effective leadership communication*, *effective communication*, and *effects of effective management communication*.

To search the keywords, I used Walden University's electronic library databases including ABI/INFORM, Emerald, Sage Premier, Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar, other online libraries, and websites. The search produced more than 300 journal articles, books, and dissertations. Of the 238 sources used in this study, 208 are from peer-reviewed journal articles (87%), nine are non-peer-reviewed journal articles, 18 are books or dissertations, and three are government or white paper sources. The number of sources used in the study published within the last 5 years was 134 (56%).

Conceptual Framework

Communication theory was the conceptual framework for this research exploring effective communication between managers and employees. Communication theory was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study because effective managerial communication created a productive and engaged organizational culture. The effectiveness of an organization's culture drew from a conceptual framework with communication theory as a central theme.

Communication theory. Communication theory provided insights into organizational success. Effective communication involves individuals possessing positive views of themselves and others, and engaging in trusting and intimate relationships (Mishra et al., 2014). The communication theory was relevant when addressing a practical life world in which communication is a term. Duncan (1973) asserted that communication theory embraces the notion that the environmental context within which a message delivers and receives significant influences on communication (Vroom, 1964). Organizations should place a high priority on communication at the management level. Managers with ineffective communication strategies have neither a negative attitude with regard to themselves nor a positive attitude toward others (Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, & Osuji, 2014). The opposite applied to managers possessing a positive attitude toward themselves and a negative view toward others (Hussein et al., 2014). Manager mindsets have adverse effects on the work environment. Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, & Osuji (2014) concluded that managers that have effective communication strategies reported fewer employee concerns.

In a professional setting, effective managerial communication influences employees' personal commitment to stay with an organization (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Managers should be cognizant of the importance of this. Strengthening communication stems from a desire and need to encourage a healthier interpersonal relationship with a constructed reality (Dutton, Workman, & Hardin, 2014). Organizations strengthen their internal structure through using these concepts. Ineffective communication is a direct cause of the lack of subordinate motivation, well-being, and employee job satisfaction, and can be a factor in ineffective communication (Mishra et al., 2014).

Organizational leaders have a natural tendency to manage paradoxes in communication with activities such as organizational downsizing, new team development, or new roles (Phipps, Prieto, & Ndinguri, 2013). Managers who reconcile conflict through effective communication demonstrate the power of discourse to achieve substantive organizational change (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Phipps et al., 2013). Communication theory plays a vital part in determining successful organizational change.

Management and Employee Communications

Management communication influences or directs a group to achieve a common goal (Vickery, Keaton, & Bodie, 2015). Leadership development studies shifted away from leadership communication research and toward understanding and enhancing developmental processes (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). Managers with direct reports should understand the value of communication research and promoting organizational success. Effective management communication increases the flexibility required to choose the appropriate

management style and maximize communication (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Management styles are a mix of behaviors and emotions, which develop into a pattern that can describe a leader (Vickery et al., 2015). Leaders identify personal patterns and make necessary changes affecting behavior. Dahlstrom (2013) noticed that as it related to communication, leaders struggled finding a balance between task and relational leadership style. Al-Asfour and Lettau (2014) indicated managers recommend developing an effective communication style to enhance relationships, improve team cohesiveness, and sustain organizations.

If managers' behaviors exhibit their communication style, alignment better takes place with the leader's character (Vickery et al., 2015). The process assisted with an organization's migrating to increased effectiveness. Identifying the communication styles and strategies that fit an organization is a fundamental step toward positively affecting employee motivation, attitude, and performance (Al-Asfour & Lettau, 2014). Al-Asfour and Lettau (2014) further added leadership communication promotes employee loyalty and required reciprocity. Organizational leaders expect to have superior competitive advantages when employees think the organization is loyal to them.

Effective managerial communication styles influence performance, engagement, and organizational effectiveness (Braun et al., 2013). Transformational leaders motivate, inspire, and build trust relationships based on shared understanding with employees (Braun et al., 2013). O'Neill, Hodgson, and Mazrouei (2015) pointed out that good communication motivates and engages employees by allowing them to understand current organizational changes and how they should respond. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2015) examined the psychological process that evolves

while an employee engages at workplace and suggested that transformational leadership would have a higher impact on employee engagement by satisfying employees' psychological needs regarding sense of purpose. Management's capability to leverage employee engagement strategies is essential in an organization. Taylor and Kent (2014) suggested that to make employees feel engaged, the organization must develop a process to operationalize its employee engagement. Taylor and Kent added programs to include employee involvement in problem resolutions, respect, positive feedback mechanisms, and considering ideas from employees to implement in daily processes. Organizational expectations and needs impact engagement (Armstrong, Shakespeare-Finch, & Shochet, 2016). Socially responsible leaders found effective communication supported the fulfillment of the economic responsibilities to stockholders, legal responsibilities to suppliers, ethical responsibilities to employees or local communities, and discretionary responsibilities (McCann & Sweet, 2014; Othman & Rahman, 2014). Shareholders, whose desires and concerns focused on contracts with an organization, rely on effective communication (McCann & Sweet, 2014; Othman & Rahman, 2014). Focusing on improving shareholder return, while improving the stakeholder's work life, was the ultimate goal. A return on investment while increasing profitability had a direct relation with employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Developing positive communication exchanges. Positive communication is verbal, or body language demonstrated through friendly, smart, and helpful demeanor directed toward educational strategies, increases the academic success of learners (Sarros, Luca, Densten, & Santora, 2014). Sarros, Luca, Densten, and Santora (2014) found communication exchanges

determine behaviors, objectives, and cultures. Frenkel, Sanders, and Bednall (2013) indicated employees who had constant contact and communication with leadership and human resources specialists demonstrate a higher level of job satisfaction and less inclination to quit their jobs. The benefits are far reaching toward organizational improvement.

In quality working relationships, the manager offers the employee desirable responsibilities, information and communication sharing, development opportunities, verbal rewards, and benefits in exchange for strong communication, loyalty, and trust (Ballinger, Schoorman, & Lehman, 2009). Ballinger, Schoorman, and Lehman (2009) discovered conversely, where there are no communication conditions, a lack of respect and trust existed. Therefore, employees who recognize a manager's interest in establishing a relationship felt grateful for the perceived intention by their manager to provide support (Mignonac & Richebe, 2013).

Employees who receive continuous support from their manager and coworkers experience a high level of attachment to, and satisfaction with, their jobs (Karatepe, 2013). Employees' satisfaction with their jobs was vital to business success (Karatepe, 2013). Managers add to organizational value by becoming more sensitive to research information. Job satisfaction helps reduce turnover (Tews, Michel, & Stafford, 2013). The higher an employee's gratification through effective and positive communication, the lower the chance of that employee's departure (Vickery et al., 2015). Vickery et al. (2015) added effective communication is a predictor of employee productivity. Thus, positive communication exchanges yield proven benefits.

Learning effective communication skills. Organizations promote internal learning to

help improve communication skills. Individual learning is the process by which individuals increase role performance within a particular domain of action (Johnstal, 2013). Organizations' leaders learn through their members and, according to Reyes (2012), increase the organizational capacity for effective communication. Learning effective communication skills corresponds with how an individual relates to the respective roles of managers and employees (Alderfer, 1969; Steidle, Gockel, & Werth, 2013). Steidle, Gockel, and Werth (2013) concluded the learning loop should happen independently of the particular individual performing the role. Communication growth needs to reflect a person's desire for self-fulfillment through finding opportunities to be productive and creative by working on meaningful tasks (Steidle et al., 2013). In other words, the development of effective communication should be part of the job activities associated with every learning opportunity (Cummings et al., 2013). Effective management communication includes the process of observation, analysis, strategy, development, organization, and the implementation and evaluation of communication processes (Reyes, 2012).

A manager's communication style is part of an organizational learning process that can influence change (Heorhiadi, La Venture, & Conbere, 2014). Eighty-eight percent of participants assumed that they worked for an organization committed to communication learning from leaders and offered opportunities to learn about communication (Heorhiadi et al., 2014). Heorhiadi, La Venture, and Conbere (2014) posited that 12% of employees believed that they worked for an organization that provided skills to learn communication techniques. The findings indicated that not all managers with direct reports understand communication. Informative communication involves individuals learning how leaders who employed transformative

communication described the change process focused on expanding what is possible (Heorhiadi et al., 2014). Leaders who foster these types of environments encourage employees to communicate innovative ideas in a productive environment (Heorhiadi et al., 2014; Reyes, 2012).

Social forces outside of organizations such as poor reputation degrade the effectiveness of leadership communication regarding improved results (Kottke & Pelletier, 2013). Outside pressure allows a viewpoint to dominate decisions concerning the organizational communication (Reyes, 2012). Pressure from outside the organization such as marketing and competition controls and sways organizational relationships, and influences the stance of organizational leaders toward effective communication (Reyes, 2012; Winkler, Busch, Clasen, & Vowinkel, 2014). Research abounded in the area of building effective communication skills.

Leadership and employee communication strategy needs. Organizations emphasized a strategic approach to communication needs. Losing effective workers to nonemployee communication negatively affects businesses on a strategic level (Mitchell, Burch, & Lee, 2014). Mitchell et al. (2014) found the focus on the past, present, and the future across levels of leadership and employee communication practices is a need with studying communication strategies.

Employee engagement and effective communication with employees contributes to remaining in the organization or leaving the job based upon engagement with their leaders (Mitchell et al., 2014). Managers' communication techniques influence employees' desire to stay with the organization for a longer period (Mitchell et al., 2014). Employee engagement focuses

on the need for managers to create employee access to growing opportunities (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013; Mishra et al., 2014). Organizational stakeholders have a high regard for human capital (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013). For this reason, manager communication retains employees to provide a competitive advantage (Gounaris & Boukis, 2013).

Effective leadership communication and employee engagement strategies motivate employees to contribute effectively and remain with the organization for a longer amount of time (Mishra et al., 2014). Leadership communication and employee engagement are fundamental organizational success factors (Mishra et al., 2014). Deploying leadership communication strategies increases the chances of retaining long-term high performing employees. Bradler, Dur, Neckermann, and Non (2013) noted that employee recognition does not have to be extravagant; a simple communication of thank you made employees feel rewarded for their contribution to the organization.

Communicating to lead change. Change has often been the key for organizational effectiveness. Observing, praising, challenging, and escalating are efforts that assist professionals in incorporating changes to improve communication and services (Sykes & Durham, 2014). Healthcare organizational leaders did not encourage employees to challenge their communication system so that it may improve, which decreases employee engagement (Sykes & Durham, 2014). Sykes and Durham (2014) also discovered successful leaders learn how to incorporate methods of effective communication into an organization. Implementations of change initiatives fail because of a performance focus, instead of a focus on effective communication.

Organizational challenges exist daily and involve developing leadership strategies allowing companies to cope with the challenges (Christensen, 2014). Christensen (2014) added that communication is instrumental to organizational survival and growth. Leading change in effective communication require written questionnaires and surveys that are useful tools as communication instruments (Tucker, Yeow, & Viki, 2013).

The five cyclical dimensions of change communication are to direct, describe, define, deliver, and develop (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002). In the cyclical model, the direct phase focuses on communicating the direction of the organization. Communication is descriptive in the second dimension, as leaders incorporate organizational statements into one of the four operational strategies that include resourcing, performance management, reward, and communications (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002). Victor and Franckeiss (2002) continued with the defining phase as the third dimension, where organizational leaders document the process of communication. Goals of the third dimension are to ensure that all departments and employees understand management expectations, the communication process, and support any planned changes. The fourth dimension is the delivery of the strategies upholding effective communication (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002). Victor and Franckeiss concluded the fifth dimension is the developmental phase in which the processes are monitored. Leaders who leverage the five dimensions of communication change interlink the organization's elements together with change, incorporating the vision, mission, and focus of the organization, to ensure the success of the change initiative. Christensen (2014) argued that change is not necessarily beneficial to organizations. Resistance occurred revealing new considerations that managers ignored before. Employees evaluate the

desirability of change in light of how it affected them and their own existence within the organization (Penava & Sehic, 2014). Change generates deep resistance within organizations, making it difficult to implement change processes (Christensen, 2014).

Addressing employee communication deficiencies. Vroom (1964) stated that managers could suggest communication strategies that an organization implemented to address employee communication deficiencies. Organizational leaders have the capability to increase employee engagement through work and satisfied employees became increasingly aware of their work environment through leadership effective communication (McConnell, 2011; Vroom, 1964). Employee engagement and communication deficiencies have a greater impact on initiating and directing behavior than focusing on lower-level needs were closer to fulfillment (McConnell, 2011; Vroom, 1964). Engagement proves to be a method of increasing overall organizational continuity. Employee's lack of communication decreases the feeling of security within their work environment (Alderfer, 1969; Vroom, 1964). After a fulfillment of the need for security, employees seek esteem that is the last stage of self-actualization (Alderfer, 1969). Vroom (1964) added with self-actualization, employees are motivated to be engaged and to do their best work, thereby meeting their psychological and physical needs. Addressing communication deficiencies with employees catapulted organizations into new areas of improvement.

Leadership Communication

From the creation of the first organized business, leadership communication has become a part of the success or failure of an organization (Graybill, 2014). Graybill (2014) found that, despite the importance of the concept of leadership communication, there was not a clear and

consistent definition. Fan, Chen, Wang, and Chen (2014) investigated the effects of leaders' motivating language and method of feedback from virtual team members concerning creative performance, managers who demonstrated effective leadership communication. Effective leadership communication was a solution for leaders, when subordinates follow designed strategies and operated the organization.

Leadership communication behavior. Leadership could be pivotal to organizational growth. Men and Stacks (2014) reported leadership communication behaviors and competence influenced employee outcomes and follower perceptions. Leadership communication behaviors included accomplishing tasks and expending effort to maintain others who are completing assigned tasks (Grant, 2012). One of the fundamental signs of quality leaders is the ability and skill to motivate followers to accomplish great things with effective communication (Grant, 2012). Grant (2012) continued that leaders foster motivation by engaging in inspirational behaviors such as conveying a compelling vision, communicating and expressing confidence and optimism, and referencing core values and ideals. Deal et al. (2013) argued the failure of leadership communication with employees could lead to lower levels of employee engagement and loyalty.

Manager communication effectiveness is measurable by productivity, job satisfaction, turnover, cost, and employee engagement (Likert, 1961). Other measurements include the ability to retain a satisfied workforce (Likert, 1961). Certain qualities of leadership communication behavior developed through training programs are aimed at improving manager leadership skills (Wu, Tse, Fu, Kwan, & Liu, 2013). Ugwu, Onyishi, and Rodriguez-Sanchez (2014) suggested

empowerment involved identifying the rights of employees and provided them with the proper resources for being successful. Employee engagement focuses efforts on leadership communication behaviors and employees being satisfied with leadership communication (Nunkoo, Gursoy, & Rammkisson, 2013). Employees sought employment where they receive performance praises from leaders with positive leadership communication style and behavior (Nunkoo et al., 2013). Trust between an employee and a manager, a leadership style that encourages the development of skills among employees and encouraged employee job satisfaction, results from positive leadership communication behaviors (McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, & McAvory, 2012). McCole, Jacobs, Lindley, and McAvory (2012) added motivating leadership styles has the potential to increase employee engagement and retention. A significant influence on employee engagement and retention was from direction employees received from their managers. Conversely, there is little information regarding specific satisfaction levels of employees and preventive measures managers used to decrease the lack of employee engagement and turnover rate (McCole et al., 2012).

Management and Leadership Style

Allio (2013) attempted to differentiate leadership from effective management communication, asserting that managers coerce, while leaders persuade. Allio further posited managers take the short view while leaders take the long view. Men (2014a) added leadership style influenced internal communication by linking transformation and employee outcomes. Leadership style was particularly crucial when involved with projects (Zulch, 2014). Zulch (2014) further discovered leadership styles show the personality of a leader and even the

maturity of followers. Leadership dynamics depend on the correlation between effective management communication and management style alone was never strong (Allio, 2013).

Management communication is contingent on different considerations and circumstances, which means that management choices does not necessarily reveal subjective preferences (Schrager, 2013). Effective communication indirectly rests on emotions rather than evidence provided by factual communication, which is more prescriptive than descriptive (Schrager, 2013). Management communication decisions involve procedural rationality that matches means to ends (Kellerman, 2014). Leaders who approach communication in different ways employ procedural rationality and may not yield a unique solution (Kellerman, 2014). Job insecurity, combined with job demands, create difficulties with management trust and job satisfaction (Karkoulian, Mukaddam, McCarthy, & Messarra, 2013).

Henker, Sonnentag, and Unger (2014) described the transformational leader as fostering creativity by highlighting new areas of opportunity. Accountability encourages employees to become re-engaged and allows a renewed thought process of learning and problem solving (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013). When both parties, manager and employee, embraced effective communication skills, engagement follows (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013).

The leadership demand for successful communication skills has seen an increase in the workforce (Barratt-Pugh et al., 2013). To maintain productivity and competitiveness in the workplace, organizational leaders embrace effective leadership communication styles to motivate diverse departmental groups to apply successful communication (Daniela, 2013). Effective communication about the leader's ability to influence others to agree to a common set of goals

increased their level of performance (Daniela, 2013). Thus, management and leadership style affect outcomes of organizations in dramatic ways.

Leadership communication styles. A leader's communication style was critical to overall organizational change. Leaders who demonstrated a motivating leadership communication style held a belief system within a corporate culture that influences organization performance (Choudhary et al., 2013). Leaders espouse different leadership communication styles due to a combination of group values, competencies, skills, and personal styles (Choudhary et al., 2013).

Managers continuously work toward developing communication programs and encouraging behaviors that contributed to the professional abilities and advancement of employees (Sawa & Swift, 2013). Sawa and Swift (2013) continued managers develop leadership communication capability daily to reinforce the mission and goals of the organization with employees. Sawa and Swift determined that the leader's communication in a company plays a substantial role in setting the tone and culture within an organization. The dominant organizational leadership communication style and preferences determines the type of work, business practices, and opportunities accessible to employees (Sawa & Swift, 2013). A manager's implementation of a leadership communication style affects the overall tone and attitude of the work environment and the method of executing the vision for the business (Sawa & Swift, 2013).

Dinh et al. (2014) identified that authenticity has the greatest impact on all leadership communication styles. Yin and Kuo (2013) found leadership communication strategies enhances

the use of resources when facilitated meetings and department interactions center on communication issues. When managers implemented effective leadership communication strategies within the management group, employees exhibit more satisfaction, improved efficiency, and deeper organizational commitment (Dinh et al., 2014). When a manager uses one or more of the leadership communication styles, it affected their organization (Dinh et al., 2014). Communication styles plays an important role in successful organizational culture development.

Authentic style. A leader with an authentic leadership communication style has strong similarities with transformational, charismatic, and servant style leaders (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). An authentic leadership style plays a critical role in supporting a transparent communication system (Men & Stacks, 2014). Wong and Laschinger (2013) noted that manager's emphasizing being transparent, honest, open, self-aware, and demonstrating high ethical standards increased employee job satisfaction and performance. Men and Stacks (2014) further commented that transparent communication contributes to employee trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Seeking the same qualities in others, authentic managers helped employee's access opportunities to learn and grow by providing necessary support and resources (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Specifically, authentic manager's communications were more likely to create positive and empowering work environments (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Authentic leadership influences the development of an organization's internal communication system (Men & Stacks, 2014). Authentic leaders set their personal values and beliefs over another individual, which causes potential biases, and followers have a difficult time following their leadership (Ford &

Harding, 2011). An authentic communication style promotes change and followership in employees (Ford & Harding, 2011).

Employee Engagement

Many human resource managers consider employee engagement a required practice to help handle the present uncertain organizational conditions (Lee & Ok, 2015). Johnson and Beehr (2014) found employees engaged in activities closely related to their interests led to companies developing associated systems to help support. O'Neill et al. (2015) posited that engagement is the most important concern for organizations today. Employee engagement motivates an employee in one way, while that same need motivates another employee differently.

Panaccio, Henderson, Liden, Wayne, and Cao (2014) argued that effective leadership norms derive from their personal motives. An employee social-exchange relationship with their managers, employees responded well when behaviors may need addressed. Leaders must use effective communication techniques, in addition to coaching and mentoring, which transforms the thinking of employees and changes behaviors (Robson & Robinson, 2013).

The areas that demonstrate employee engagement are work environment, leadership, team and coworker training, and career developments (Anitha, 2014). Managers who provide effective feedback create a supportive work environment help employees develop new skills and increases engagement (Anitha, 2014). Organizations become stronger through demonstrated actions. Anitha (2014) expressed that managers are an important factor to increased employee engagement, particularly if leaders inspire, communicate well, and value employees' work.

Team and coworker relationships fosters a supportive team environment, which increases levels of employee engagement (Anitha, 2014; Tombaugh & Mayfield, 2014). Effectively communicating during training and development improves performance accuracy and clarity, which increases employee engagement (Roy, 2013). Managers who invested time to create an environment that included training, development, team relationships, and sound leadership produced enhanced employee engagement (Roy, 2013).

Employee engagement and effective leadership communication improves the organizational bottom line (Roy, 2013). The start of effective leader communication and employee engagement begins in the recruitment process, well before employment (Roy, 2013). An employer's leadership communication is an important driver of employee engagement, and is a focus of the human resource behavioral interview process. Silman (2014) added manager's need to understand that work engagement has a close relationship between job performance and organizational commitment. Effective communication influences other practices for employee engagement, such as recruitment, training, compensation, and performance management (Roy, 2013). Leadership communication shapes follower perceptions (Men, 2014a). Managers match communication-hiring process to the organizational strategy and culture. Roy (2013) found that every organization is different, and there is no one generic way of effectively communicating enhanced employee engagement.

Frequent, positive, and effective leadership communication reinforces employee engagement, which results in positive employee behaviors (Sahin, Cubuk, & Uslu, 2014). Sahin, Cubuk, and Uslu (2014) reported employee engagement depends on providing adequate

resources to complete a job. Managers, with the desire to provide the resources, exhibit an interest in employees to promote engagement. Techniques of management communication, such as goal setting, performance feedback, posted policies, explicit rules, and checklists, encourages employee engagement (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013). Employees reacted positively, and demonstrate higher levels of engagement, compared to managers who focus on improved behaviors (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). If mutual trust exists between managers and employees throughout an organization, employees will be motivated to perform their jobs and to produce better results for the organization (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2013; Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013).

Disengagement means detaching emotionally from work performance (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Negative influences create an increase in the level of engagement or disengagement (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Uncertainty, anxiety, insecurity, stress, and apprehension are factors that increase the likelihood of employees to disengage (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008; Young et al., 2013). Unethical leadership behaviors such as loss of internal controls, checks, and balances, or ignoring company rules and regulations, causes employees to disengage from their tasks and have lower organizational commitment (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Van Vugt et al., 2008). Disengaged employees unhappy in current jobs have a negative effect on the organization's bottom line (Johnson & Beehr, 2014). Disengaged employees burn out quickly and leave jobs, which leads to high turnover (Johnson & Beehr, 2014). Job fit is important to keep disengagement low or nonexistent, and increases productivity and engagement (Johnson & Beehr, 2014). Managers

match employees to positions aligned to skillset, experience, and personalities utilizing personality tools such as Myers-Briggs (Johnson & Beehr, 2014).

Increased employee engagement brings long-term positive results that increases the productivity and the bottom-line (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Engaged employees help organizations maintain a competitive advantage and improve profitability (Sparrow, 2013). Employees reach higher levels of engagement with managers commit to effective communication and enhanced engagement. Clifton (2014) and Sparrow (2013) added managers engage employees through the roles of prophet, storyteller, strategist, coach, and pilot. Managers strategize in ways that align employees with the organizational plans (Sparrow, 2013). Effective communication, through coaching, allows managers to link goals employee capabilities and pilot engagement, which promotes an environment conducive to increased engagement between employees and managers (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013; Sparrow, 2013).

Steinbauer, Renn, Taylor, and Njorge (2014) found evolved development and promotion of moral or ethical leadership in organizational communication, inspires profiles of leaders contributing to improved engagement. Systematic attempts make operationalized effective communication a leadership function (Steinbauer, Renn, Taylor, & Njorge, 2014). Effective communication, therefore, provides a foundation for organizational effectiveness. Organizational researchers interested in moral and ethical leaders portrays the characteristics as a basic tension between altruism and egoism (Steinbauer et al., 2014). Leaders capable of balancing the communication development of themselves and their subordinates increases employee aspirations (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Managers have found dysfunctional leadership in

organizations comes from dysfunctional communication, destroying lines of effective communication within many organizations (Steinbauer et al., 2014). Corporate governance research and communication theorists explored interrelationships between the corporate managers and corporate social responsibility (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014). Effective communication sustainability in management practices raises questions about the relationship between external and internal communication of corporate culture (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014). Filatotchev and Nakajima (2014) discovered workplaces have employees from multiple generations. Different management communication styles in the workplace benefited organizations significantly by providing creative skills to deliver effective communication (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014). Unique communication styles increase the productivity of employees (Filatotchev & Nakajima, 2014). Limited research exists that assesses the effect of direct leadership styles on effective communication (Belias & Koustelios, 2014). Employee engagement practices and implementation provide long-term company value.

Valuing employee engagement. Employee engagements are critical to business success (Park & Levy, 2014). Businesses evaluate the real value surrounding employee engagement. Employee turnover rates negatively influence productivity and decreases consumer satisfaction (Park & Levy, 2014). The cost of losing an employee includes the loss of productivity and the time involved to learn the necessary skills to replace that employee (Freedman & Kosová, 2014). Managers who use effective communication identify a valued employee through the individual level of productivity (Karatepe, 2013). Organizational leaders who hire and retain the best workforce are proactive in reducing the employee engagement concerns (Cohen, 2013).

Employee engagement strategies take into account a company's effort, cost, and time (Cohen, 2013; Schmitt et al., 2011). Temporary costs for an experienced employee are double the annual salary of a permanent employee (Capelli & Keller, 2014).

Employee engagement and productivity challenges. Effective management communication strategies become an integral part of a business strategy for employee engagement (Karanges, Beatson, Johnston, & Lings, 2014). Routine assessments by managers regarding effective communication, through performance evaluations, and employee rewards help to establish effective communication with employees, and demonstrate their involvement and empowerment (Karanges et al., 2014). In most cases, employees have a stake in the effective communication performance of the organization, which allows them to engage with the organization (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2014). When employees experience problems or observe opportunities for improvement, they engage in an improvement-oriented voice, resulting in speaking up or exiting the group (McClellan, Burris, & Detert, 2013). Organizational performance depends on managers demonstrating more than a passive voice when communicating information about employee performance (MacKie, 2014). With job market competition and the need for employee engagement and satisfaction increases, leadership communication is a critical factor in an employee's decision to quit their current job (MacKie, 2014). Employee engagement affects organizational productivity.

Employee motivations. Managers have the responsibility to implement effective communication strategies to attract, motivate, and retain the right people for their organization (Chauhan, Goel, & Arora, 2014). The high costs of training new employees, combined with a

decline in service quality, adds to leaders concerns about employee engagement (Chauhan et al., 2014). Employee engagement and retention adversely affects many aspects of managers' work including costs, ensuring service quality, and maintaining the productive morale of remaining employees (Chauhan et al., 2014). Examination of what motivated individuals within organizations enhances understanding of how to engage employees (Chauhan et al., 2014). Johnson and Beehr (2014) added employee motivational drivers include personal interests with activities and professional development. Leader concerns involving employee motivations challenges business decision making. Employee motivation is important for organizational research because it helps provide answers to the challenges of employee performance and turnover (DiPietro, Kline, & Nierop, 2014).

Employee growth needs. Alderfer's (1969) existence, relatedness, and growth (ERG) theory of motivation concerned existence, relatedness, and growth elements are similar to employees' needs found in other research. de Haan et al. (2014) and Vroom (1964) concurred with Alderfer's findings through further research. Maslow (1943) proposed that unfulfilled communication and engagement needs are critical, and people will not abandon a need until the need is adequately satisfied. In addition to the satisfaction of Maslow's need hierarchy through the progression, ERG theory is a frustration-regression process that plays an adverse role in engaging workers (Alderfer, 1969). If employees continuously experience lack of communication from their leaders, the frustration results in individuals redirecting efforts toward exploring new ways to satisfy lower order needs (Alderfer, 1969). If leadership policies, or the lack of sufficient communication resources restrict employee communication needs,

organizational changes occurred (de Haan et al., 2014). Employee growth needs are a factor in the business decisions.

Organizational Challenges

Relationships at work affect both emotional and behavioral outcomes and create feelings such as stress, anxiety, and other emotionally related characteristics and behaviors (Vidyarthi, Anand, & Linden, 2014). Manager's effective communication addresses the concern of how leaders relate to employee communication with job satisfaction and commitment to their employees, their jobs, and the company (Vidyarthi et al., 2014). Effective communication, employee engagement, and productivity are factors in the use relationship development (Albdour & Altarawneh, 2014). Deveugele (2015) indicated communication skills training is scarce, or even nonexistent, within organizations.

Relationships and communication are two primary factors that motivate change and comprises a single dimension to organizational transformation (Guay, 2013). Internal communication is a central process in creating good relationships (Men & Stacks, 2014). Organizational commitment is the organizational relationship that determines how an employee's willingness to remain loyal to a company relates to certain psychological conditions and circumstances of the employee (Hausknecht & Holwerda, 2013).

Organizational performance factors. Performance factors are considerations of a specific area of challenges. Internal and external communication forces within organizations are a part of a changing environment affecting organizational performance (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Forces such as internal and external communication affect productivity for human capital

strategies (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). If organizational leaders continue to become less effective and efficient communicators, that situation influences profitability (Phillips & Phillips, 2014).

A leadership team's communication strategies address and identify effective elements (Phillips & Phillips, 2014). Global communication shifts and trends are included in strategic plans for organizational communication (Phillips & Phillips, 2014). Employees who experience compassion are more committed to the organization and possess more optimistic emotions (Cook, Mascia, Schwartz, Possingham, & Fuller, 2013). Leaders who show compassion tend to be visionary, creative, and inspirational, and empower employees to a higher satisfaction (Men, 2014a).

Communication is a tool that leaders use as a platform and stance within their teams (Choi, 2013). Effective emergent leaders communicate in ways that motivates and inspires their teams (Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014). The competency to ask questions, as well as the ability to communicate the vision for a project, helps leaders bring identity to teams (Ziek & Smulowitz, 2014). Effective leadership depends on flexible or even adaptable leadership behaviors (Choi, 2013). Leadership behavior tends to be exhibited in various levels of skillfulness (Choi, 2013). Effective leadership communication, through an electronic, virtual, and online environment, involves collaborative and collective participation (Choi, 2013). Managers need to be alert to the prominence of employees who display loyal behaviors through effective communication. Leaders tend to have limited opportunity to focus on how they communicate to their teams, while striving to be proficient and balancing their teams' communication skills (Karp, 2013; Ziek &

Smulowitz, 2014). Leaders found the top priority to succeed is effective communication in a global business environment to foster change management (Wong & Laschinger, 2013). Theories of change management are widely accepted in organizations yet lack a useful framework to successfully plan (Wong & Laschinger, 2013).

Budd and Velasquez (2014) concluded evidence exists that discussions within an organization do experience communication challenges. The challenge managers face is the lack of using effective communication to promote employee engagement. Some leaders claim that they are not natural communicators, so improving their communication is difficult (Christensen, 2014).

A purpose of management using effective communication as a tool to promote employee engagement produces patron satisfaction (Christensen, 2014). Managers who implement communication changes are cognizant of each individual staff member (Christensen, 2014). Effective communication is problematic if managers are not consciously aware of their communication patterns (Men, 2014a; Sparrow, 2013). The consciousness of the employees and responsible execution relies on the leader's effective execution of the communication process (Men, 2014a). There is a tendency to be deficient in managerial communication, and organizational leaders are beginning to focus more on the realm of communication (Men, 2014b; Sparrow, 2013). Communication challenges take place when decentralizing information and creates a lack of resources to foster effective communication between various departments within organizations (Dade & Hassenzahl, 2013). The need for effective communication is to create systemic transformation toward sustainability (Dade & Hassenzahl, 2013). The fundamental role

for leadership demonstrated effective communication and creates employee sustainability (Dade & Hassenzahl, 2013). Organizational leaders have the responsibility to investigate, understand, and integrate the level of message-communication sustainability (Dade & Hassenzahl, 2013).

Leveraging management enhances the communication skills process and provides evaluation resources for direct reports (Carter, Drury, Rubin, Williams, & Amolt, 2013). A connection exists between perceptions of effective communications and increases confidence (Carter et al., 2013). Carter, Drury, Rubin, Williams, and Amolt (2013) shared that the confidence in responders is a mediating variable between perceptions of effective communication and improves productivity.

Creating an employee-centered work environment. Work environments require specific managerial attention. Managers have the greatest impact, control, and influence on the functionality of a workplace, regardless of leadership communication style (Sahin et al., 2014). Business managers use an effective organizational culture to maintain a positive work environment (Pinho, Rodrigues, & Dibb, 2014). Childress (2013) posited effective organization culture is a collection of sub-organizational cultures. Positive cultural examples include: (a) healthy customer service, (b) employee-oriented management, (c) strong interpersonal relationship, (d) exemplary leadership, and (e) ethical decision-making process. Managers are responsible for creating the environment and incentives that motivate and engage employees to achieve satisfactory results and realize the overall company goals and objectives (Vidarthi et al., 2014). Managers seek to create a consistent workplace through communication knowledge and skills (Sahin et al., 2014). In the absence of healthy and effective leadership communication

environments, employees are prone to dysfunction and low productivity, which hinders overall organizational effectiveness (Sahin et al., 2014).

Coaching opportunities. Organizations recognize coaching opportunities when presented. Managers use communication strategies to help look for opportunities that allow workers to challenge themselves in situations where their skills and competencies grow (Beattie et al., 2014). Leader's effective communication with employee coaching has an empowerment benefit for the involved workers (Kandampully, Keating, Kim, Mattila, & Solnet, 2014). Developmental opportunities presented to employees can be a combination of an individual employee engagement development plan and leadership effective communication coaching style (Kandampully et al., 2014). Depending on the effectiveness of leadership communication provided to employees, the outcome is helpful to both parties when employees develop the necessary skills to engage (Kandampully et al., 2014). Managers who took a proactive interest in being effective communicators experience the positive effects of coaching employees, boosted engagement metrics in their organizations (Kim et al., 2013).

Transition

Section 1 included an introduction and background for the proposed qualitative single-case study, business problem, and purpose statement concerning effective communication. The conceptual framework for the study was organizational communication theory, used to explain and contextualize the research. A definition of terms provided clarification of study-specific terms. Next, the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations highlight certain specifications and possible shortcomings inherent in the research design. The significance of the study section was

included to indicate how the findings from the research could reduce gaps in knowledge to improve business practices as well as promote social change. Concluding Section 1 was a review of academic literature concerning organizational change communication, offering the reader a background regarding the research conducted about organizational effective communication.

Section 2 is a focus on the specifics of the research project such as the role of the researcher, participants in the study, and data collecting techniques. Section 1 included inquiry of the researcher's organization and how it may relate to issues of reliability and validity. The objective of Section 2 is to highlight specific strategies to ensure the reliability and validity of the proposed study. In Section 3, I will present the findings of this study. The findings will include a detailed description of the analysis of the semi structured interview responses of the managers and the themes that emerged to answer the research question for this study. Section 3 will include a discussion and presentation of the application of the results and findings of professional practice and implications for social change. The research goal was to explain how the study of effective communication strategies increases employee engagement and productivity. There will be a summary of findings and recommendations for further study actions and Section 3 will end with a summary and conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this proposed qualitative single-case study was to explore organization managers with direct reports in the communications industry who lack effective communication strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity. The target population was six managers with direct reports from different divisions of a single corporation in the state of Midwestern United States. Participants were managers working full-time for at least 3 years who had a managerial title and delivered communication to a department. Based on the study, the results might contribute to social change by identifying strategies to increase employee engagement. The social impact of the study could affect communication strategies influencing the success of small businesses.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was to collect information accurately, analyze all the data collected, and consider experiences regarding the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) indicated a researcher seeks to understand the experiences of participants. The interview is a method of collecting data in qualitative social research (Anyan, 2013). I was clear and accurate when documenting my interview responses to reduce any potential bias that could affect data collection and analysis. I had no personal relationship with any of the managers of the organization that participated in my study. As I identified and bracketed my personal viewpoints, I sought to understand the viewpoints of others.

Based on the Belmont Report, research participants received respect and were provided adequate time and the opportunity to decide whether to participate in the study. Each person's decision regarding participation in the study was respected and protected from harm of disclosing identifiable information. The actions further supported the Belmont Report protocol.

Researchers using qualitative methods should incorporate epoché by documenting and describing their experiences regarding the phenomenon to obtain a fresh perspective (Moustakas, 1994). Epoché, or bracketing, is a technique used by researchers to describe their experiences with or about the phenomenon before conducting data collection to mitigate bias (Moustakas, 1994). The method of bracketing used in qualitative research mitigates potential biases and influences the research process (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013). Venkatesh, Brown, and Bala (2013) indicated the goal of bracketing is to ensure researchers discover contradictions prior to distributing study findings. The process of bracketing begins with making a list of assumptions and expectations before conducting research (Finlay, 2014).

Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) identified that qualitative research employs interviews as the primary data source. I conducted open-ended interview questions designed to prompt the participants to answer the central research question. I established an interview protocol to ensure that I treated each participant the same, helping to mitigate bias as recommended (see Appendix A). The interviewing protocol consisted of the following six steps: An opening statement, open-ended interview questions, probing questions, participants verifying themes noted during the interview, corrections to themes noted by the participants, and a recording of reflexive notes. I was the primary collection instrument in the semistructured

qualitative interviews, using face-to-face open-ended questions. No personal association existed between the participants and me, avoiding a potential conflict of interest. My actions remained professional and ethical while probing into the real-life experiences of the participants.

Participants

The proposed sample size for this study was three managers with direct reports from different divisions of a single corporation in Midwestern United States. Participants selected in this study participated in a voluntary interview. De Massi and Kotlar (2014) indicated the need for potential participants to be knowledgeable about and understand the dynamics present in the organizational setting. Business leaders met the eligibility requirements. All participants were working full-time for at least 3 years, had a managerial title, and delivered communication to a department. All participants worked at an organization that has agreed to take part in the study.

I contacted potential participants by email and followed up with a recruitment letter. Initial recruitment took place to gain access and established relationships with the managers of the organizations and participants. I worked with each facility's leaders to arrange access to the participants. The organizations provided a list of participants who met the eligibility criteria. I contacted each potential participant after receiving the list. I arranged with each participant to select a private place of their choice to hold the interview. Positive environments such as private offices, conference rooms, and libraries were possible locations of choice to conduct interviews.

I gained access through the permission of the organization's leaders contacted by email and obtained a letter of cooperation for access. After receiving Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, one-on-one semistructured interviews occurred with participants.

Morse, Lowery, and Steury (2014) posited that data collected from participants must include shared thoughts and experiences. I followed this recommendation to obtain quality responses.

Research Method and Design

The three types of research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Earley, 2014). All three methods were appropriate designs to consider for this study. The research method and design I selected for this study was qualitative inquiry and single-case study. The method and design explored different aspects of people to determine their interactions with each other in a business environment. Bailey (2014) expressed that qualitative methodology explores and explains human behavior. Organizational managers with direct reports lacked effective communication strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity, and a qualitative single-case study design will assist with my understanding.

Research Method

The research method I chose for this proposed study was qualitative. The qualitative method was most effective to gain an understanding of manager communications with their individual employees (Rice et al., 2014). Qualitative research contributes to the literature in many disciplines by interpreting, describing, and generating theories about social synergy (O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014). I explored individual perspectives to determine how leaders communicated effectively with employees. Qualitative methods allow in-depth exploration of managers who implement effective communication (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2014; Vasquez, 2014). The qualitative research method permits researchers to ask questions of selected participants who had actual experiences pertaining to where and how

the study phenomenon affected managers (Barratt et al., 2013; Tracy, 2013). Qualitative research was the best method for my study.

A study using quantitative methods lends itself to a statistical procedure examining the relationships and differences among variables to form a conclusion (Groeneveld, Tummers, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, & Van Thiel, 2015; Venkatesh et al., 2013). Quantitative research involves the use of various tests and variables and the verification of a hypothesis. Quantitative researchers use numerical data and statistical analysis to examine correlations between two variables (Barratt et al, 2013), which was not the purpose of the proposed research. Quantitative methodology uses specific theories as a point of reference to observe specific phenomena (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). The use of empirical observation falsifies the constructed hypotheses (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). The quantitative approach is not ideal for exploring strategies (Kamil et al., 2014; Vasquez, 2014). Data collected for quantitative research cannot provide an understanding of descriptive articulations of personal experiences (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). Gaining more understanding of effective communication led to the election of qualitative method as the best option for the study.

The mixed methods approach is not appropriate due to using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the same study (Venkatesh et al., 2013). Mixed methods researchers focus on the exploration of problems and solutions instead of understanding the cause of a problem (Sparkes, 2014). Mixed methods include both quantitative and qualitative components and the approach consists of the researcher using a combination of deductive and inductive

methods (Beck, 2014). The objective of this research study was not to test a theory or hypothesis, but to determine findings using a qualitative design.

Research Design

The research design for this study was an exploratory single-case study. Case study, narrative, ethnographic, and phenomenological study were all possible design strategies for this study. Case study design allows a researcher to explore and conduct a comprehensive analysis of an experience to gain full understanding of the real-world context (Yin, 2014). Researchers using a case study design describe participants' experiences from the position of the participant (Bevan, 2014). The use of case study design helps produce findings that deepen understanding of the phenomenon, which is present in the real life events of the participants (Robertson & Thomson, 2014).

I did not choose alternative research designs. Researchers use a narrative design to collect and analyze individual's narrative accounts of a particular phenomenon (Dubé, Schinke, Strasser, & Lightfoot, 2014; Robinson, 2014; Yu, Abdullah, & Saat, 2014). A narrative design focuses on studying an individual and data collection through stories, creating the individual's experience and the meaning he or she attributes to them (Robinson, 2014). I decided to not use a narrative design in the study because I did not want to focus on a sole individual's experience.

Ethnographic research requires an inquiry engaged in capturing more social meanings than external results (Snelgrove, 2014). To determine group cultural characteristics, such as class, race, and gender, ethnographic researchers will absorb themselves into the daily group activities for an extended time (Yin, 2012). The ethnographic design did not allow me to answer the

research question. I used multiple sources of evidence to explain real-life experiences. A phenomenological design requires a great deal of time involved with potentially a lengthy interview process and can become complex (Yin, 2014). Phenomenology research designs use interpreted human experiences from the subjective perspective of the individual experiencing the phenomenon (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). I decided that a single-case study design was the most appropriate for my study.

A qualitative case study design provides tools for researchers to study a complex phenomenon (Cronin, 2014). A strong point of case study research was the use of multiple data sources providing improved credibility. Additional sources of data could include documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts, direct observations, and participant observations (Baxter & Jack, 2008). I used multiple sources of data including interviews and company documentation. Dworkin (2012) wrote data saturation is the most important factor when considering qualitative sample size decisions. Data saturation is the point when the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data (Morse et al., 2014). Data saturation is a common theme in qualitative research (Morse et al., 2014) and key to quality work (Marshall et al., 2013). Gergen, Josselson, and Freeman (2015) indicated the importance of data saturation in qualitative research means giving full expression to the values expressed through the research. The interview process and review of company documents continued until the achievement of data saturation occurs.

Population and Sampling

The target population for the study consisted of 6 managers with direct reports from different divisions of a single corporation in the Midwestern United States and the target sample size included 3 managers with direct reports. An exploratory single-case study design uses participants as representatives of the same group or organization (Yin, 2014). Purposive sampling methods are advantageous when using single-case study research design because the researchers used a descriptive analysis of the phenomenon and selected participants who have direct experience with the research phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Purposive sampling strategies ensure participant selection is from particular predetermined criteria of cases within a sampling represented (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2015; Robinson, 2014). Purposeful sampling methods in qualitative research target a population to gain a sample of participants in the phenomena (Morse et al., 2014). If needed, a chain method process known as snowballing could have added participants (Emerson, 2015; Stivala, Koskinen, Rolls, Wang, & Robins, 2016). Stivala, Koskinen, Rolls, Wang, and Robins (2016) demonstrated snowballing is useful for qualitative research where participants are potentially hard to reach. I used purposive sampling and included additional participants, if needed, through the snowballing technique.

Participants in the study had the following qualifications: working full-time for at least 3 years that included a managerial title and delivering communication to a department. After recruiting participants using purposeful sampling, I contacted selected participants via email, or text to schedule face-to-face interviews. I scheduled appointments for the participants at their convenience. The interviews took place at a quiet setting that was comfortable for participants

and ensured no interruptions. Positive environments such as private offices, conference rooms, or libraries were possible locations of choice to conduct interviews. After the interview, participants received a note of appreciation and a copy of the findings via email or some other preferred method. The participant needs to be comfortable responding to questions openly (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

Rowley (2012) stated that case study research requires a sample size between one and 10 participants. A sample population of larger than 10 participants did not guarantee richness in data (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Rowley, 2012). I conducted semistructured, face-to-face interviews, with a minimum of 3 of the managers with direct reports in a communications organization in the Midwestern United States. The organization's management helped to identify potential participants satisfying the candidate requirements and assisted in arriving at the proposed sample size. The use of face-to-face interview methods permitted me to gather data about the lived experiences of managers facing the phenomenon.

Data saturation occurs when no new information or themes emerge and there is sufficient information to replicate the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Additional interviewing was to take place, if data saturation had not occurred. The general concept of data saturation focused on newly collected data not showing any added enlightenment of the study's research problem (Marshall et al., 2013). According to Marshall et al. (2013), statistical demonstration of data saturation can occur at any point during the data collection process. Interviews continued until achievement of data saturation. After contacting enlisted participants using purposive sampling, I

reached out to additional candidates, as needed, identified during the selection process through email using snowball sampling.

Ethical Research

Qualitative research leads to new discoveries difficult to present in other methodological approaches (Coons & Watson, 2013). However, researchers often face ethical challenges through the process the completion of findings. Ethics consider the element of understanding the significance of conflicts that arose from moral mandates and the actions taken by those participating in dealing with them (Avasthi, Ghosh, Sarkar, & Grover, 2013). The existence of possible ethical issues could challenge the integrity of a study (Lunnay, Borlagdan, McNaughton, & Ward, 2015). Constructing a study that include a research ethics review are central to credible research (Mezinska, Kakuk, Mijaljica, Waligora, & O'Mathuna, 2016). Mezinska, Kakuk, Mijaljica, Waligora, and O'Mathuna (2016) added the system of institutional review boards (IRB) is crucial to ensuring compliance with present compliance national and international standards.

The purpose of this proposed qualitative single-case study was to explore effective communication strategies managers used to increase employee engagement and productivity. Haahr, Norlyk, and Hall (2014) indicated researchers guide the interview process based on principles of justice, respect for participant rights, and autonomy. All participants received, via email, an introductory letter (see Appendix C), which described the nature and importance of the research study. Included with the introductory letter was a recruitment letter for study participants, which disclosed the potential benefits and risks associated with the participation in

the study. Should a participant desired to withdraw at any point during the study, they were to contact me by e-mail and would not have had to indicate any further explanation, other than stating their desire to withdraw. A participant could withdraw at any time from the study, and deleted all information and data pertaining to their participation in the study. There were no incentives provided to participants involved in my study.

Research consisted of ethical treatment of human subjects based on the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I applied all guidelines for ethical standards, including governing the rights and confidentiality of research to the findings. To protect participants' identities and job descriptions, only the researcher should have sole access to this confidential information (Yu et al., 2014). Identification numbers for participants included M1-M6 to distinguish the interview responses, to assist with transcribing, and coding to protect participant privacy. The numbering procedures and guidelines helped enhance the reliability of results and ensured the interviews performed during the research were consistent with ethical standards (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I included a detailed description of the research design and procedures to participants, delineating the research process, to allow future researchers to review my techniques for reliability and validity. Participation in the study was voluntary. I provided information needed for the study to the participants by face-to-face contact or email.

The data storage and disposal process entailed storing hard copies of data in a locked home office safe and shredding them after 5 years. I secured all secondary data documents, which included my reflective results and company documentation, in a home office safe that

only I can access. After the 5 years, I will destroy the data by shredding copies of printed information and erasing all electronic study files on the computer. I have received permission to conduct research through IRB #10-21-15-0453816.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection in qualitative research involves direct interactions with an individual or in a group setting (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The primary sources for collecting qualitative data are focus groups, observations, individual interviews, and documentation (Houghton et al., 2013). Interviews are a good approach for collecting data from participants and useful for ensuring validity of the measurements (Rowley, 2012). I was the primary data collection instrument performing semistructured interviews with open-ended questions. I gathered managers' personal perceptions and experiences on strategies of effective communication. To identify participants' potential biases and beliefs, I recorded, observed, and documented participant responses to open-ended questions (see Appendix D).

Conducting an interview for qualitative investigation entailed accuracy and confidentiality, and can yield better results depending on the investigator's knowledge about the topic (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015). Validity and reliability concepts ensure qualitative case study interview method consisted of three main domains: contextualization, apprehending the phenomenon, and clarifying the phenomenon (Bevan, 2014). I asked each participant a series of open-ended interview questions regarding their personal perceptions and experiences of effective communication. I did not conduct a pilot test of the interview questions.

The uses of interviewing or conversational interviews are data collection techniques (Pfaff et. al., 2014).

The use of a voice recorder played a part in recording the participants' interview responses. I transcribed the interviews into a Microsoft Word document, and uploaded the document into NVivo10® software. The NVivo10® software enabled me to organize the raw data into themes and analysis. I commenced the processing of data analysis after coding all of the data. NVivo10® software is a common software used in qualitative studies to aid the researcher in the analysis of the data (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

I deciphered information as participants share their examples of effective communication, disseminated the information as the collector, and organized individual experiences. The interpretation of results from interviews provided an understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions concerning effective communication (Robinson, 2014). Gaining access to the participants' experiences depends on their willingness to participate in the interview process (Robinson, 2014). Participants have different reasons for allowing researchers to perform interviews and participate fully in the research process (Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014). Reasons include subjective interest, curiosity, enjoyment, individual empowerment, introspective interest, social comparison, therapeutic interest, material interest, economic interest, and political empowerment (Robinson, 2014). To ensure information in qualitative research is accurate and truthful, researchers asked the interviewee to clarify their recounted experience (Robinson, 2014). I conducted a transcript review with each participant to clarify statements made (see Appendix E). A chain of evidence unfolds using data confirmation

verifying results (Yin, 2011). I asked each participant for documents and records pertaining to effective management communication strategies that increased employee engagement and helped bridge communication gaps. This secondary data was useful in understanding what strategies were used to improve effective management communication. To achieve data saturation, I followed the process described by Fusch and Ness (2015) that included: (a) member checking to interpret what the participant shared by confirming the interpretation of information is correct, (b) asking the participant if there is any additional information available, and (c) continuing the member checking process with all participants until no new information emerges. Member checking is a process used by researchers to improve accuracy, reliability, and validity of the findings reported by allowing the participant to validate the content (Harvey, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

Interviewing techniques helped gain an in-depth knowledge of the participants' lived experiences regarding strategies for effective communication. Doody and Noonan (2013) indicated researchers choose the correct technique and carefully plan for the data collection process. I made initial contacts to participants who met the selection criteria through email. An email to potential participants responding with interest and a willingness to participate took place to help form a working relationship. The discussion includes the expectations for participants, the confidentiality and ethical responsibilities of the researcher, and a convenient time and location to meet (Barker, 2013). I informed potential participants that the interview would take approximately 60-minutes unless participants choose to extend the time for more discussion.

Doody and Noonan suggested making the participants aware that, at any time during the interview, the interview may cease at the participant's choosing.

I asked for any secondary data sources that was available such as company coaching documents used to manage communication strategies used to increase employee engagement and productivity. Baxter and Jack (2008) indicated secondary data sources provide the researcher with other elements adding to the strength of findings. Once each participant completed the interview, I compiled the data. Once the interview concluded, the participant reviewed and provided feedback from the audio-recorded interview responses. If the participant desired to change their response, then corrections occurred. All research papers, documents, and interview transcriptions are in a locked file safe and no one except I will have access to for 5 years.

Member checking is a technique used by researchers to aid in interpreting what the participant shared (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Harvey, 2015). Member checking presents the interpretation with the participant for validation (Birt et al., 2016; Harvey, 2015). When conducting member checking, participants' results undertake checking for resonance with their experiences (Birt et al., 2016; Blythe, Wikles, Jackson, & Halcomb, 2013).

Collecting multiple sources of data such as interview note taking, digital recorder field notes, and secondary data collection supports triangulating evidence of the study (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) proposed that methodical triangulation occurs to increase the trustworthiness of a case study. I used methodological triangulation analyzing and comparing the data from the interviews, observations, and company documents. I requested access to, and used any secondary data sources offered, regarding standard risk management operating procedures.

Following each in-depth interview, I collected interview notes to elaborate on initial observations using rich descriptions of observations. Secondary data from the participants were documentation and physical artifacts that aided in identifying effective communication strategies promoting employee engagement and productivity. I asked participants if there were any examples of written communications, such as supporting documents regarding effective communication strategies that resulted in effective employee engagement and productivity, as well as physical artifacts they use to improve effective communication strategies. I proceeded to interview additional candidates who met the participant requirements, if the essential written communications and supporting documents were unavailable. Adding a rich description of the real-life context of the manager's effective communication strategies, as well as offering a means of triangulating the data gathered in the interviews and multiple sources of secondary data, can assist with collection (Anyan, 2013; Stake, 1995).

Data Organization Technique

Each participant had an identification number assigned that enabled me with examination and categorization of data. A code letter was *M* for the manager participant and the numbers were one through six. NVivo10® software assisted me with tracking codes to organizing the text data, coding the text, manipulating the text data, and displaying the codes. Appropriate strategies promote and maintain the integrity of transcribed recorded interviews and audio-recorded copies of interviews, and backup copies of the recorded interviews (Anyan, 2013). Anyan (2013) believed researchers suggest an assembled process of organization for collected data. A subsequent step was the implementation to identify concepts and themes in the data. Coding is

part of an analysis that the researcher will label and group data according to the content (Robinson, 2014). The coding process is advantageous because the researcher can identify each subject as described by the participant and group common perspectives among all participants (Robinson, 2014).

I used a technique involving a reflexive electronic journal focused on the reasons for undertaking the research for data collection. Lincoln and Guba (1985) taught researchers mitigate bias, beliefs, and meanings using a reflexive journal when conducting qualitative research, however, a complete detachment of a researcher's personal perceptions is unattainable (Yin, 2014). Ponterotto (2014) indicated reflexive journaling increases the researcher's ability to remain neutral with the phenomenon under study. I will use a reflexive journal from the start of the research process.

Following uploading the interview transcripts into NVivo10®, I stored the originals in folders in a safe to ensure they were not lost, misplaced, or altered. Master folders are stored journal notes, company documents, and data that includes labeling files of the recorded and written transcripts (Anyan, 2013; Gajewski, 2013). The master folder contained the transcripts named *Effective Management Communication Strategies Within An Organization* and the subfolders named M1 through M6. I categorized the manager's interview responses, organized through coding to arrive at a common set of perspectives, and determined what actions could improve employees' productivity. I was the only person with access to the data files and recorded data. Location of the master folder with transcripts is in my locked home safe, and a

password protects the personal computer for 5 years after the completion of the study. I will shred all paper files and erase electronic files at the end of the 5-year period.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurs as an explicit step in conceptually interpreting the data set as a whole, using specific analytic strategies to transform raw data into an original and coherent depiction of the research subject (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013). A researcher uses analyses to extract a clear meaning of the phenomenon under research (Moustakas, 1994). This case study data analysis method on the effects of organization managers was the most appropriate. Data analysis involves the inductive exploration of recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then transferred into clear and concise interpretation (Nassaji, 2015). I collected data to include the participants' perceptions and experiences. Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method included seven process steps of data analysis. The steps included: listing textual data in groupings, reducing and eliminating invariant themes of the phenomenon, clustering core themes, checking for patterns running contrary to the interview transcript, developing a structured description of experiences by each person, creating a structured description based from the textual data, and implementing an individual textural-structural description of the data from the combined interviews (Moustakas, 1994). I used this data analysis process for my study.

NVivo10® is qualitative analysis software for use with coding thematic categories and extracting themes from a research interview (Guangming, Wenjuan, & Jinjin, 2014). Audio-recorded interviews experienced review at the conclusion of the conversation and transcription

will follow (see Appendix E). After the participant had checked the transcription for validity of the experiences from the transcript, I organized the transcript notes in a Microsoft Word document, uploaded to NVivo10®, and established the data (see Appendix E). Using NVivo10® in this research facilitated the data analysis process, including coding the text and displaying the codes. NVivo10® software helps to verify the coding for data analysis and occurs for topic identifying during the literature review and conceptual framework explorations (Guangming et al., 2014).

Triangulation aided the researcher in the reduction of bias and it cross-examines participant response to affirm integrity (Anney, 2014). The triangulation method proves reliability, confirmability, and credibility of the research (Houghton et al., 2013). Methodological triangulation involves the use of multiple sources of data in studying a phenomenon (Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015). Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014) explained the four forms of triangulation are: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. I used methodological triangulation for my study.

Reliability and Validity

Cope (2014) related researchers must consider potential issues regarding reliability and validity associated with qualitative research. Reliability and validity concepts associated with qualitative research are more reliable through a well-constructed framework (Sousa, 2014). The key to strengthening both reliability and validity of data analysis began with appropriate techniques incorporated from the beginning (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the results are repeatable and confirm or reject findings from the data (Vaz, Falkmer, Passmore, Parsons, & Andreou, 2013). Reliability links reproducibility and stability to the data collected (Franco, Mannell, Calhoun, & Mayer, 2013). Dependability occurs with a study if the processes of selecting, justifying, and applying research strategies and methods included clear explanations (Josselson, 2014). Data collected from interview answers, and physical artifacts that the participants use such to specify their experience, helped explain the phenomenon of effective communication. Reliability refers to the extent to which the results are repeatable and confirmed or rejected findings from the data (Grossoehme, 2014; Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). A researcher's focus on dependability is to ensure the strength of the data (Vroom, 1964). Dependability and reliability are attainable through the detailed description of the conceptual framework, the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, data collection, and data analysis outlined in the study (Franco et al., 2013).

The same semistructured interview process took place during each interview and I asked each participant to provide effective communication strategy documents, if available. The consistency of asking each participant the same set of interview questions could increase the dependability of receiving a similar response techniques (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). Data collecting strengthened the reliability of exploring effective communication through implementation of communication strategies. Member checking is to verify the summarized data information gathered during data collection (Frels & Onwuegbuzie,

2013; Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). Each participant verified the transcripts and my summarized interpretations of their responses to determine accuracy (see Appendix E).

The use of member checking throughout the study further enhanced dependability, ensuring the accuracy of reported findings. Member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). Data or results from member checking returns to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences (Birt et al., 2016). I followed up with each participant to confirm ideas interpreted correctly and communicated appropriately.

Validity

A researcher establishes validity through the formation of data verification during data analysis (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In qualitative studies, the definition of validity encompasses a wide range of terms (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Three forms of the validating procedure include credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Vroom, 1964).

Credibility is believable results from the point of view of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and refers to the trustworthiness of the research (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). A study that establishes credibility provides descriptions and immediate recognition of an individual's experiences (Houghton et al., 2013). I used a digital voice recorder to document the interview and to assure credibility. The use of a recording device is a valuable tool in the research process, improving credibility enabling the researcher to check recording continuously for efficiency as the interview is transcribed (Al-Yateem, 2012). Member checking is a strategy that helped to establish credibility. I used member checking to assure confirmability. The use of

member checking allows the participant to validate the content of the transcribed interview (Harvey, 2015). The credibility of research is to ensure the researcher's findings consider the complexities that present themselves in the study and explore patterns not easily explained (Manning & Kunkel, 2014).

Transferability is the trustworthiness measure used to develop descriptive and context relevant statements that could transfer to other populations or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The decision to use open-ended questions can possibly lead to research findings that certify transferability across other industries (Yin, 2014). Manager communication was critical because many of the employee's jobs rely on effective communication, which is transferable within the organizations (Yin, 2014). I assured the transferability of my study methods by carefully documenting and describing the entire research process. I prepared and presented a detailed description of the research process to allow another reader to transfer this process to a different research setting, however, transferability is up to the reader of the research to decide.

Confirmability is results that others can confirm or corroborate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Developing studies with confirmability leads the data collection process to logical and clear findings (Josselson, 2014). An example of confirmability was the discussion of the evidence, data and processes, data collection, organization, and analysis that lead to the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I assured confirmability through member checking and the documentation of procedures during the data collection process. Fusch and Ness (2015) determined that data saturation could occur within the first six interviews conducted in a study. To ensure sufficient data to analyze, I interviewed additional participants until the data has reached saturation.

Transition and Summary

The objective of Section 2 was to explain how the research method selection of a qualitative single-case study applied to conducting the proposed study and to analyze results. Participants took part in a recorded and transcribed interview session. Data coding and review produced themes common among participant responses.

Section 3 includes the practical implications related to research results. Along with my reflections regarding the process, I present the study findings. The findings include a detailed description of the analysis of the semistructured interview responses. Themes that emerged from participant's answers explicated the central research question. Section 3 includes a discussion, presentation of the application of the findings to professional practice, and the implications for social change. Finally, I summarize the findings and make recommendations for further study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore effective management communication strategies within an organization that managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement. To answer the research question, I conducted a qualitative single-case study. I collected data via face-to-face semistructured interviews with a sample size of six managers with direct reports in one organization in the Midwestern United States. Based on the findings, participants suggested several strategies to implement or reinforce employee engagement in their organization. There was a consensus among participants that implementing employee engagement strategies is needed to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness. Three primary themes emerged from the research: (a) coaching employees, (b) motivation, and (c) consistency. Through the participant interviews, identified themes revealed communication strategies to increase employee engagement and organizational effectiveness.

In Section 3, I provide the findings of the study to explore effective management communication strategies within an organization that managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement. Section 3 also includes the application to professional practice and implications for social change. Additionally, Section 3 includes recommendations for actions as well as further study, reflections, summary, and my conclusions.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What effective communication strategies do managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement and

productivity? Data collection consisted of semistructured interviews with each participant and a collection of company documents that pertained to communication strategies. I used the single-case study interview protocol (see Appendix A). I analyzed the recorded interviews and transcriptions using Moustakas's modified van Kaam method of analysis to identify emerging topics. Added themes that emerged from interviews were coaching employees, motivation, and consistency. In the following sections, I identify the findings relative to each theme, how each of the themes align with the literature, and the extent to which each theme supports the conceptual framework of communication theory.

Theme 1: Coaching Employees

Coaching was the first theme to emerge from the data. The analysis of interview and company data confirmed that effective communication is a crucial coaching strategy to increase employee engagement. Feedback and coaching employees are factors that participants found that keep employees engaged. As represented by Table 1, managers indicated that coaching with effective communication is relevant to employee engagement strategies.

Table 1

Frequency of Theme 1: Coaching

Participants	Times Mentioned
M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6	24

Note. N = frequency mentioned

Coaching, clearly stating attainable goals, and expectations were important factors participants found to keep employees engaged. Managers indicated that coaching was relevant to

employee engagement. The analysis of interview questions 1 and 3 revealed that regular coaching is an important strategy to increase and maintain engagement. Six out of six participants interviewed indicated that employees seek coaching and feedback about performance and goal setting. For example, M1 indicated that continuous coaching and feedback lets employees know that they are of value.

M5 explained that there is a need for managers to allow employees to be free to share and talk openly. M4 mentioned that engagement during coaching was crucial to promote employee engagement and during this process it allowed the employees to come up with ideas on how they can better engage with managers. M2 also noted that an open door policy during employee coaching sessions allows managers and employees to sort out problems and determine the best course of action and agree on solutions. Additionally, M2 mentioned employees feel a sense of belonging when managers allow open communication during coaching.

Five participants indicated that effective communication is needed to increase productivity and engagement. For instance, M3 stated, in response to question 2 that managers should effectively communicate goals during coaching, but also reinforce and communicate the benefits of meeting goals. M1 shared that buy-in is important when effectively coaching goals, when employees are committed to reaching their goals, which increases engagement. The participants shared that interaction during coaching encourages employee participation and the desire to perform at higher levels.

A review of internal coaching documents allowed me to understand managers' engagement strategies as they pertain to coaching. Throughout document analysis of goal

spreadsheets, I found that managers used internal documents to plan their coaching on a daily to weekly basis and consistently and thoroughly notated where the employees were making progress. M5 emphasized that “managers should ensure expectations that are communicated and align with the expectations of outcomes expected during coaching sessions.” M5 stated managers should make sure that coaching can occur to review and discuss outcomes of goals. M5 explained that employees who do not understand the desired results are not motivated to produce quality work.

M5 also noted that resistance causes disengagement, where employees are unwilling to perform at a high level. M6 indicated “direction comes from one-on-one coaching and expectations are then set. This is where involvement and engagement can come into the conversation. The framework of expectations is then set and gives the employee ownership.”

Coaching within this study was built on the literature. The participants’ viewpoints were that coaching with effective communication is a significant engagement strategy to increase productivity. Findings in current research are consistent that ongoing coaching increasing effective communication and encouraging employees to be engaged improved performance (Walden, Jung, & Westerman, 2017).

Theme 2: Motivation

Motivation was the second theme to emerge from the data. Participants expressed the need to motivate their employees, as an employee using this strategy increases productivity and employee engagement. The purpose of the interview questions was to collect information from participants concerning effective leadership communication strategies that helped motivate

participants. The interview questions further determined how advice given by leadership helped motivate employee job satisfaction from clear instructions. Table 2 identified the frequency with which motivation was mentioned throughout the interviews.

Table 2

Frequency of Theme 2: Motivation

Participants	Times Mentioned
M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6	60

Note. N = frequency mentioned

M4 explained that through motivating, “you can see those who have buy-in and this is where you can pull more out of them; that is how I understand where it is the motivating communication makes impact.” M4 indicated that if managers expect staff to be productive and keep up with the competition, proactive motivation takes place. M1 stated that motivation plays a part in engaging employees, which includes the goal of coaching to help employees become more productive. M1 explained that “the bottom line increases vastly when employees are in and then you know motivation and engagement happened.” M1 indicated concerns minimize when employees feel motivated and become engaged. M2 emphasized that the communication process to reduce disengagement motivates. M5 stated that employees motivate when getting feedback from their managers.

All participants referenced skip level meetings. Participants shared that every other month, managers conduct a skip meeting with their direct reports and meet their colleague’s direct reports for feedback, as a tool to determine effective communication strategies and

employee engagement. Participants used the results for coaching opportunities to develop motivation and increase manager communication skills. Writing out action plans may hold managers accountable for the steps they believe would help improve their communication behaviors. M2 related that once an action plan to improve communication is in place, employees see a difference and are receptive and feel motivated. Managers should continue improvements on motivation and consistency, which will reinforce the importance of engagement with employees.

The findings of this study showed the importance of motivation on increased productivity. Participants identified motivation as a successful engagement strategy to effective communication and increased productivity. Presbitero (2017) contended that motivational coaching positively correlates with increased levels of engagement. Participants shared that managers who were motivated while coaching might experience increased engagement and productivity in the workplace.

Theme 3: Consistency

Consistency was the third theme to emerge from the data. The consensus among participants was that consistency is a key strategy for effective communication that increases employee engagement. Table 3 identified the frequency with which consistency was mentioned throughout the interviews.

Table 3

Frequency of Theme 3: Consistency

Participants	Times Mentioned
M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6	33

Note. N = frequency mentioned

M3 claimed that rewards played a part in meeting goals. M1 stated that to help with consistency, recognizing employees who go the extra mile helped other employees or members and shared their success stories, increases engagement. Consistency in allowing employees to share, according to M1 “help employees feel valued and encouraged employees to continue to strive for excellence”. M5 mentioned that if managers do not consistently recognize the performance and dedication of employees, focus on goals would be lost.

Participants equated consistency to value. Some participants (M1, M2, and M4) indicated that when employees feel valued, productivity increases. M2 emphasized that “being consistent in their communication and their actions encourages employees to share their perspectives and they feel special, noticed, and needed”. Similarly, M4 expounded on ways to make employees feel valued by finding an employee’s niche. M4 indicated that managers should find ways to become consistent with employees to increase engagement. M4 explained that managers should determine how they can consistently communicate to employees on the employee level such as recognition and motivation. Therefore, when you find an employee’s niche for consistent effective communication, employees felt as though they are not forgotten.

Participants expressed the importance of consistently communicating value of the skills and contributions of employees. M2 claimed that when managers consistently seek and used employee's suggestions for projects, employees felt accomplished, which boosted engagement. M1 suggested that as managers are consistent in their communication, step outside of their comfort zone, and shared how employees have been successful added value to the team creating engagement. M1 stated "consistently communicating and involving my employees brings out loyal, creative, and healthier employees who then become engaged". M1 mentioned that "our goal as managers is to be consistent in our communication to get employees to the point of wanting to perform, which helped them to understand their job". Participants agreed that engagement increased when managers consistently communicated the expectations of the employees.

Participants emphasized that there are several types of consistent communication to increase engagement with employees. M5 mentioned that consistently communicating with spur of the moment thank you notes or recognizing an employee who accomplished a goal during a department meeting, were examples of consistent communication styles that increase employee engagement. M1 suggested that consistent communication of appreciation to employees motivates employees to get the job done. M5 added that morale increases when each employee is excited when there is consistent communication recognized. M4 added that some employees are intrinsically motivated to complete the task because of consistent communication. M4 emphasized that consistent communication does increase engagement and verbal recognition plays a big part in engaging employees.

A review of internal documents allowed me to understand manager's engagement strategies, as it pertains to written and verbal recognition. Throughout document analysis of discussion planner and feedback forms, I identified recognition which translated into the formation of the verbal rewards and recognition theme. I found that managers with direct reports met monthly to discuss consistent communication strategic plans and verbal recognition. Managers with direct reports notated consistent communication methods in their meetings, consist of rewards recognition of goals set for the month and recognition of individual staff highlights for the month.

The theme of consistency confirmed existing literature on employee engagement. Participant views confirmed that consistent effective communication to employees is important for an engagement strategy to increase organizational productivity. Findings in current research were consistent in that employee's value consistent communication with verbal recognition and rewards. Managers should work to develop and implement programs that's consistent communication valuing their employees (Presbitero, 2017).

Summary of Findings Alignment with the Communication Theory Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was the communication theory developed by Duncan (1973). The communication theory suggested ways to explore employee engagement, performance, and motivation of people in the workplace. According to communication theory, individuals determine effective communication by three factors that included: (a) past experiences (b) present circumstances, and (c) future expectations (Duncan, 1973).

The themes that emerged in this study were: (a) coaching employees, (b) motivation, and (c) consistency, which aligned with various aspects of the conceptual framework.

Communication, the first factor within the communication theory, is the belief that increased efforts lead to desired performance levels. Having the necessary resources and information impacts productive communication (Singh, 2016). The findings in themes 1, 2 and 3 indicated a direct alignment with communication. In theme 1, results indicated that managers with direct reports, who do not coach employees and effectively communicate goals, contribute to disengagement; therefore, communication levels decreased. Additionally, participants noted that employees exert effort and are persistent to complete tasks when goals are effectively communicated during coaching. Participants also revealed that employees take ownership of behaviors during coaching when goals and objectives are effectively communicated, which results in increased productivity. In theme 2, findings indicated that managers with direct reports who became motivated during coaching provided employees with the tools to reach goals. Participants explained that employees become better engaged and efforts increased when motivated. Participants indicated that employees take the initiative to perform their jobs becoming engaged willingly at the expected levels when managers with direct reports provided ongoing effective communication. The second factor within the communication theory was the perception that performance will lead to desired outcomes. Communication is a factor that affects instrumentality (Vroom, 1964).

Participants also revealed that employees feel motivated when instructions are communicated on how to meet manager's expectations. Feedback is given to reiterate progress

and performance increases. Managers with direct reports who are motivating and transparent in their communication established trust, created engagement, and increased levels of productivity. The findings in theme 3 involving consistency indicated a direct alignment with effective communication. Participants indicated that discovering consistent types of communication is what employee's value, which increases productivity. In theme 3, the findings indicated participant's consistent effective communication as the link to achieving goals, which caused employees to repeat positive behaviors and led to increased performance and productivity. Therefore, consistency was an important factor that increased engagement.

Findings Related to Existing Literature on Effective Business Practice

The results of research from this study contributed to existing literature, as it pertained to employee engagement strategies managers with direct reports used to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. The findings on effective communication and training linked to literature regarding strategies used to engage employees and increase productivity.

Communication is a key strategy that managers with direct reports should use to stimulate productivity (Kang & Sung, 2017). An effective strategy for communication is for managers to allow upward and downward line of communication to remain open (Sang, 2016).

Participants explained that managers with direct reports who provided feedback and allowed employees to suggest new ideas improved performance engagement. Communication from managers downward to direct employees are disseminating ideas, goals, strategies, and explained why decisions were made (Sang, 2016). Managers communicating upward allows managers to communicate and understand how employees felt about the workplace (Sang, 2016).

Participants shared that actively listening and genuinely seeking ideas of employees will increase engagement. For instance, Kang and Sung (2017) described effective internal communication enhances employee relationships, which in turn increases engagement, innovation, and productivity. When managers provide constant communication and guidance, employees take the initiative to perform their jobs willingly and at the expected level of performance (Tomer, 2016).

Participants expressed leadership styles played a powerful role in how managers with direct reports communicate. Managers contribute to disengagement when feedback and communication are minimal (Mehrzi & Singh, 2016). Managers who communicated strategies of the organization do so in a motivating way that employees understand how to reach performance goals (Zerfass & Vietmann, 2016). Active listening and engaging in innovative ways are characteristics of a transformational leader (Wang, 2014). Direct communication is the preferred communications behavior for transformational leaders (Wang, 2014). The desire of leaders is to reinforce effective communication in any message to bring about engagement (Diebig, Bormann, & Rowold, 2017). Individuals who understand organizational expectations exert efforts to meet and exceed performance expectations (Bembenutty, 2012). Participants explained that managers should consistently communicate and reinforce goals to be effective. Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, and Schaufeli (2016) suggested when goals are attainable, employee's self-efficacy or confidence to achieve goals increased. To improve engagement and productivity, communication must align with the organizations culture individual level (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015).

The findings on training and coaching linked to literature regarding strategies used to engage employees. Vroom (1964) suggested managers who provide employees with sufficient

tools to complete work tasks, experience efforts increasing, which leads to an increase in performance. Employees should have the appropriate resources, skills, and support to be motivated to perform jobs successfully. Managers who communicated goals effectively give employees the opportunity to take ownership of the behaviors and tools that bring about desired outcomes (Elst, Broeck, Cuyper, & Witte, 2014).

Training is necessary to increase the skills, knowledge, and abilities of employees to increase performance (Mwangi & Omondi, 2016). Participants noted that without the proper communication, employee performance decreased. When employees have expectations communicated that will enhance productivity and managers provide the necessary support and resources, employees become motivated to produce (Harris, Murphy, DiPietro, & Line, 2017). Researchers suggested that managers follow behaviors of the transformational leaders by coaching and encouraging employees to increase expectations of performance (Diebig et al., 2017).

Employees are motivated differently; therefore, managers must understand how to motivate employees to improve engagement (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013). Researchers suggested that people may be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2013). Employees who are intrinsically motivated committed to perform without any other actions (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Extrinsic motivation could be as effective as intrinsic motivation because managers use motivational coaching to drive productivity and performance (Delaney & Royal, 2017). Managers should communicate and develop rewards programs to motivate employees, gain commitment, and reward employees for contributions and the value that is created for the

organization (Presbitero, 2017). It is clear that productivity increases when employees feel valued (Barr, 2015). Participants noted when managers allowed employees to make suggestions concerning organizational changes, there was a morale increase and employees felt valued.

Applications to Professional Practice

The objective of this study was to explore effective communication strategies managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement and productivity. Improving employee engagement may increase productivity, which may improve the sustainability of financial institutions. The findings from this study are relative to the communication theory because motivated and stimulated employees become engaged and promoted efforts to meet company goals. Managers with direct reports who implement this study's findings may have greater chance of increasing employee engagement and effective communication strategies. This study has applicability to professional practice as managers with direct reports may use the findings to develop organizational improvement.

Leaders may consider the findings useful to improve business operations, if there is a commitment to investing in motivating and engaging employees to increase productivity and organizational effectiveness. Productivity levels increase when managers focus on engaging employees (Hanaysha, 2016). Focusing on communication and engagement strategies is key to improve business practice as disengaged employees affect organizational effectiveness (Khan, 2016). Therefore, managers with direct reports who apply the main themes of this study that included effective communication, training and coaching, rewards, and recognition within daily operations may gain increased productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Training and coaching is applicable to business practices. Using the findings from the study results, managers could proactively develop training methods that would transform the attitudes of employees to encourage behaviors that align with the culture of the organization. Training is a strategy that influences behaviors of employees and is needed to be competitive in the industry (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2015). Participants shared training and coaching was a strategy to reduce burnout and disengagement. Managers with direct reports should determine how to invest in training and coaching to improve the workplace experience. Through effective and ongoing training and coaching, managers could achieve success and enhance the skills of employees to perform on current and future jobs.

Managers with direct reports could use the findings from this study to develop recognition programs that will improve performance levels. To develop an effective rewards program, managers should determine whether employees are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Recognition increases engagement because employees feel valued and feel obligated to respond with increased levels to performance (Ghosh, Chauhan, Baranwal, & Srivastava, 2016). Managers with direct reports could use the conclusions from this study to evaluate what employee's value and how communication is beneficial in improving productivity and organizational effectiveness. Managers with direct reports may also use the findings of this study to discuss other engagement strategies that may improve productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Implications for Social Change

The demand to maintain relevancy requires managers with direct reports to invest in employee engagement in order to maintain the competitive advantage. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers with direct reports to improve understanding of the causes of engagement and disengagement, what internal communication causes disengagement, and what benefits could be established if engagement strategies were put in place. The results of this study may provide managers with knowledge on employee engagement strategies used to improve productivity and organizational effectiveness within the industry. As engagement within the organization increases, counter-productive behaviors of employees decrease, resulting in higher levels of productivity (Berens, 2013).

Recommendations for Action

The creation of the first organized business, leadership communication has become a part of the success or failure of an organization (Graybill, 2014). Manager communication effectiveness is measurable by productivity, job satisfaction, turnover, cost, and employee engagement (Likert, 1961). Grant (2012) continued that leaders fostered motivation by engaging in inspirational behaviors such as conveying a compelling vision, communicating and expressing confidence and optimism, and referencing core values and ideals. Deal et al. (2013) argued the failure of leadership communication with employees could lead to lower levels of employee engagement and loyalty.

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore effective management communication strategies within an organization used to increase employee engagement.

Managers with direct reports should consider the findings of this study. Managers who understand and implement successful communication strategies, could increase employee engagement, productivity, and performance. Managers with direct reports should evaluate the strategies presented in this study to align with existing communication strategies to increase productivity and performance. Recommendations for managers with direct reports are to increase employee engagement and focus on employee's emotional mindset when coaching employees, motivating, and using consistent communication.

The first recommendation is that managers with direct reports should focus on communication styles that cause engagement within the organization. Coaching direct reports requires managers to identify effective communication methods. Consistency in the messaging and acknowledging positive behaviors can cause employee performance levels to increase. Managers may use the findings of this study to develop strategies that focus on building relationships with employees to understand what communication strategies that motivates employees to become engaged.

The second recommendation is that managers with direct reports should take steps to motivate when setting goals. Participants noted that employees valued feedback. Motivating strategies are a consideration when developing communication strategies. Managers with direct reports should consider motivation in several personalized communication methods such as face-to-face and team meetings when communicating with employees. Managers with direct reports should consider both forms of communication that are both upward and downward, which allow employees to communicate suggestions and concerns that may help increase productivity.

I recommend that managers with direct reports determine the needs of employees and base what motivates them. Effective communication methods that to be considered include one-on-one training, webinars, interactive training, and instructor-led training. While motivation is important, managers should also consider motivating during coaching. Coaching is an ongoing communication effort to ensure employees are successful. Managers who communicate through motivation coaching increase employee engagement and performance because support and feedback can take place.

Several participants noted that consistency motivates employees. I recommend using various communication tools to connect with employee's communication needs such as providing feedback to employees during coaching. Managers with direct reports who are consistent in their communication with employees may see an increase in confidence, which may result in employees repeating positive behaviors. Publication of this study could be useful in future studies on effective communication and employee engagement.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this qualitative single-case study was on effective communication strategies within an organization used by managers with direct reports to increase employee engagement. The study was specific to managers with direct reports within one, communications organization in the Midwest region of the United States. I selected managers to represent the sample to provide perspectives on effective communication strategies to increase employee engagement. I noted several limitations and areas for further research.

One limitation was communication originating from individuals of different generations. A recommendation for further research is to focus in a broader mix of managers with direct reports to mitigate data being potentially skewed by one age group. Another limitation was differences in communication styles. A recommendation for further research is to pre-screen managers, identify their specific communication style, and determine if study results are different than those determined from this study.

Additional study limitations could be sample size, geographical location, and research method. One limitation of this study is the sample size of participants. Six managers do not represent the overall population of managers with direct reports within the Midwestern United States. A recommendation for further research is to use a larger sample size within the population, which include other managers with direct reports within the Midwestern United States, to understand the similarities and differences between strategies used to engage employees.

Reflections

My experience within the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program has been challenging and rewarding. During this journey, there were obstacles I faced that would cause many to give up, but because of the encouragement of my chair and classmates, I was able to complete the goals. The motivation for this study originated from work related experiences involving employee engagement. During my career as a Director of Development, I recognized the challenges of effective management communication strategies that contributed to productivity and employee engagement. My interest prompted me to want to explore effective

management communication and employee engagement strategies that could increase productivity and organizational effectiveness.

Reflecting on my experiences throughout this DBA program, I began with the expectation to be led to a distinct new level from an academic standard. I was not only challenged overall academically, but I was also encouraged to raise the bar in my writing skills. The Walden Writing Center assisted me with thinking and writing on a scholarly level.

Using open-ended questions with the research allowed me to probe deeper to a more in-depth discussion with classmates and improving my own communication and interpersonal skills. Through the insights gained, I was able to apply my overall professional and personal development. Overall, the doctoral study process enlightened me in a number of ways that included (a) how to perform research, (b) how to broaden my knowledge through the use of a literature review, (c) how I can impact organizational culture and behavior by the example we set as leaders, and d) understanding the effects of social change has on organizational culture and business success.

Conclusion

The study included research that explored effective management communication strategies within organizations. The central research question was: What effective communication strategies do managers with direct reports use to increase employee engagement and productivity? The organization that participated in this study had an employee communication program in place, required managers with direct reports to adhere to the effective communication program, and considered engagement a priority to maintain a competitive

advantage and productivity. Three themes emerged from the research included coaching employees, motivation, and consistency. I linked the findings of this study to existing literature related to motivation and employee engagement. The findings of this study align with Duncan's (1973) communication theory because employees who are motivated are also engaged and exert efforts to increase productivity and meet organizational goals.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Exploring Effective Management Communication Strategies Within An Organization

1. The interview session will begin with greetings, a brief personal introduction, and review of the research topic.
2. I will verbally express my appreciation to the participant for volunteering and taking the time to permit the interview.
3. I will inform the participant that a digital recorder will be used. Further I will note the date, time, and location of the interview.
4. The coding identification of the interview will be indicated verbally.
5. The interview will begin.
6. The interview will take approximately 60-minutes for responses to the 6 questions.
7. I will ask the questions in the order in which they are written.
8. I will pause after each question is asked to ensure the participant understands the question. If he or she does not want to answer any particular question, they may do so for any reason or no reason at all.
9. At the end of the interview, I will thank the interviewee again for taking the time to participate in the study.

10. I will be the primary data collection instrument performing semistructured interviews with open-ended questions and gathering manager's personal perceptions and experiences on strategies of effective communication.
11. I will let the participants know that I will be in contact with them and explain the review process and using member checking to ensure all cases are captured correctly with no bias. The use of a voice recorder will play a part in recording the participants' interview responses. I will transcribe the interviews into a Microsoft Word document, and upload the document into NVivo10® software.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions:

1. What strategies have you used for effective communication?
2. What are the characteristics of the effective verbal and written communication that you apply?
3. How have effective communication strategies motivated and engaged your direct reports?
4. How do you distinguish motivation and engagement as a result of effective communication from other types of communication?
5. How have your communication strategies affected productivity?

Appendix C: Email to Confirm Interview Transcript

Thank you for your participation in my research study entitled *Effective Management Communication Strategies Within An Organization*. I am emailing you to request your assistance to review the transcript from our interview on (insert date).

If your schedule permits, I would like to speak with you within the next 72-hours to inquire if you have changes to the transcript. Should this timeframe not work for you, please reply to this email and include a more convenient time I may contact you.

Thank you again for your valuable time and participation,

Respectfully,

Cad W. Shannon

DBA Candidate

Walden University