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Cultural Integration in Newly Formed Public-Private Partnership Organizations

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

Cultural Integration in Newly Formed Public–Private Partnership Organizations

by

Scotty O. Izevbigie

MA, Florida International University, 2006

BS, University of Benin, Benin City, 1995

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

February 2019

Abstract

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) formed public-private partnerships (PPPs) with local and international private companies during the construction of the Port of Miami Tunnel (POMT) project. These PPPs had employees from different cultural backgrounds who brought new cultures, ideas, innovation, and experiences to their PPPs. The limited PPP literature did indicate that different cultures should be properly integrated to avoid challenges and conflicts in the new organization. If not properly managed and integrated, cultural conflict can create communication problems, increased employee dissatisfaction, higher turnover, and poor employee performance. Using Risberg's communication theoretical foundation, the purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of PPP employees to see how their intercultural communication facilitated cultural integration. Data were generated through semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 11 employees of the PPPs formed with FDOT during the POMT project. Data were coded and analyzed using a thematic analaysis procedure. Findings were that cultural aspects like social interaction, comfort in interacting with people from different cultures, empathy, respect for others, knowledge about other cultures, open-mindedness, and managerial support helped in facilitating cultural integration in the respective PPPs. Positive social change implications may include the improvement of PPP efficiency and efficacy with: greater leadership awareness of the challenges and opportunities of diversity; new policies and management strategies that take advantage of different cultural contributions; and, policies that encourage cultural competency and sensitivity.

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Dedication

It was with profuse gratitude and sense of deep indebtedness owed to the one without a beginning and an end that I dedicate this dissertation first to God for the breath of life and all the gifts with which he has endowed me. To this, I will forever be grateful. With your grace and power, I further dedicate this proposal to my immediate family (Joy, Amadin, Osayi, Esosa, Osahenoma, Nehizemen, and Osazee Izevbigie) for their endless love; support; understanding; encouragement; and unreserved patience during the journey. This dedication is also extended to my parents, Dr. Omokaro Izevbigie and Mrs. Victorian Izevbigie for their love and sowing the seed of my life. Finally, I dedicate this book to my brother, Bishop Osadolor Izevbigie for encouraging and prodding me to be studious at an early age despite the challenges stacked up against us.

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numerous to mention, thank you for prodding me on when the chips were down and for

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Martin (2015) defined culture as a set of values, norms, languages, beliefs, and behaviors that individuals in an organization or community share together and are passed on from one generation to another. Culture influences our everyday life. It forms our identity and impacts how we behave everyday (Martin, 2015). Culture acts as the bond that holds organizations together (Bolman & Deal, 2004).

Culture takes two forms: organizational and individual culture. Ireland and Hitt (1999) stated that organizational culture was "the complex set of ideologies, symbols, and core values shared throughout the firm" (p. 71). It was concerned with all the resolutions, activities, and communications in an organization. Boan (2006) described organizational culture as "the shared beliefs, perceptions, and expectations of individuals in organizations" (p. 51). Individual cultures, on the other hand, are the set of core values, ideals, symbols, beliefs, history, norms that are passed on from one generation to the other (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009). Individual cultures are those values, beliefs, and shared assumptions that a group of people have learned, recognized as valid, and are passed on from one generation to the other as the correct way to do things (Schein, 1992). From these definitions, it is clear that organizational culture remains very important in organizations, since it prescribes and sets the expectations of what individuals are to do in the organization.

Multiple organizational and individual cultures are usually found in public-private partnerships (PPPs), formed by the government with private sector actors—including for-

profit, nonprofit, and/or nongovernmental organizations. When PPPs are formed, the employees from the various partners of the PPP usually bring their multiple cultures to the new organization. PPPs have also been referred to as *cross-sector collaboration* (CSC; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). The cultural diversity found in PPPs could be challenging to properly manage for the mangers of the new organization if the different cultures were not integrated. Managers might face challenges such as the need for diversity management and acute cultural differences that can cause dysfunction in the PPP. These challenges are exacerbated if the PPP employees value and uphold the dominant cultural memes from their previous organization more than the values and memes of the new PPP. Therefore, it is very important that cultural differences between employees, which can cause "conflict, misunderstanding, and poor project performance" (Ochieng & Price, 2009, p. 533), be managed and integrated for the organization to reap the benefit of cultural diversity. Brannen and Peterson (2009) pointed out that post-partnership challenges found in organizations can sometimes be attributed to national and organizational cultural differences, cultural differences among PPP employees, and the different managerial control systems that hamper effective management in the partnership. These challenges are further exacerbated when employees of the newly merged organization bring their individual cultures (and sometimes identity politics) that define their attitudes and behaviors to the new organizations (Brannen & Peterson, 2009).

     Although PPPs have existed in the United States for years, the growth in calls to reduce the size of government, to cut operational costs, and to accelerate the effective delivery of goods and services to citizens (Acar, Cuo, & Saxton, 2007; Bryson, Crosby,

& Stone, 2006; Eggers & Goldsmith, 2003; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Goldsmith & Egger, 2004; Hawkins, 2014) have spiked the need for PPP formation by government. Grossman (2012) stated that some groups of citizens advocated for a changed and improved public trust in government to lower the risks and liabilities of government, while others believe that the government handled ethical and accountability issues more effectively than the private sector and, as such, should be the primary delivery modality for providing infrastructural goods and services to the people.

To achieve a win-win solution for the calls for a smaller and a more efficient government, there has been a shift from a government do-it-alone attitude to the formation of more partnerships with the private sector. These partnerships are formed to help properly manage social and environmental issues such as service delivery, infrastructural development, resource dependencies, and waste management (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Eggers & Goldsmith, 2003; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Goldsmith & Egger, 2004; Hawkins, 2014; Rethemeyer, 2005). The PPP organizational form is found in almost every area of governance because the flexibility of the form allows government to compete effectively in multiple arenas, both public and private (Grossman, 2012). PPPs have become an essential and effective mechanism to resolve the many social challenges facing public institutions (Acar, Cuo, & Saxton, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Hawkins, 2014; Rethemeyer, 2005).

PPPs are usually fashioned to respond to high demand in social service needs and other societal issues that directly or indirectly have an impact on all sectors but would have been insurmountable for one sector to handle alone. Goldsmith and Egger (2004)

stated that in our complicated world, where citizens are faced with highly complex and unusual problems, the government is required to consider innovative approaches to provide solutions and deliver public goods and services to the people. They added that governments should partner with the private sectors to respond to disasters, minimize costs, maximize flexibility, and distribute public services to the people rather than having to carry the burden alone.

Other scholars have advanced additional reasons for partnerships. Esen and Erdem (2013) stated that governments transfer public services to the private sector by forming a PPP as a way to address governance ineffectiveness or the inability to secure adequate financial resources to manage public services. Hawkins (2014) stated that as social issues and government protocols grow in number and complexity, government incentives, funding, and programs might become inadequate to address these rising social issues, hence the need to partner with the private sector that might have more freedom and financial flexibility to address social services challenges. Agranoff and McGuire (2003) found that at the institutional level, many factors such as legislative mandates, agency needs, the policy environment, community needs, and communal expectations all played important roles in partnering with nongovernmental organizations. Siemiatycki (2012) stated that governments engage in PPP formation because PPPs save money, provide capital that assures big investment in facilities that are critical to both public and private sectors, create innovation, and transfer investment risks from the public to the private sector.

Similarly, a nonprofit manager might want to partner with public agencies if she or he faces unusual operational issues, environmental problems, security concerns, organizational incentives, or training issues. Communal needs like education, incentives, and prescribed standards at both the individual and institutional levels are other reasons why government might decide to partner with the private sector. This was supported by Gazley (2010) who stated that partnerships between the public and private sectors could be the result of government forcing the private sector into partnership to maintain certain standards such as environmental cleanliness—the BP oil spill for example.

In today's globalized world, partnerships have become a way for government to resolve common problems that affect both the public and private sectors. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) supported this claim in their study of the design and implementation of CSCs when they stated that partnerships occur in a shared-power world because most organizations and other nonprofit groups have a moral responsibility to come together to address public challenges that affect them all. The researchers also noted that public agencies form partnerships as a result of environmental factors and failures in either sector to solve an unusual public problem (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Acar, Cuo, and Saxton (2007) stated that PPPs have developed to become an important tool for addressing vital societal problems and delivery of goods and services to the public.

PPPs occur in almost all areas of government, including but not limited to, infrastructure development, construction, service delivery, child and family services, science and engineering, education, health science and medicine, space exploration, environment, construction, and security services. PPPs have been around in the

developed world for centuries. Alexander and Nank (2009) stated that public and nonprofits have been engrossed in a permanently cooperative and mutually beneficial joint venture for centuries. Citizens call for smaller government seems to have added growth in PPP formation by the government as it struggles to balance the downsizing of government without jeopardizing the quality of goods and services provided to the public. To this point, Bryson et al. (2006) stated that, to deal with social problems and achieve valuable outcomes for the community, the different sectors of the society—public, private, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organizations—must collaborate to deal effectively with the problem. Government continually form PPPs today to effect the delivery of good and services, cut costs and save money, reduce liabilities and overheads, and reduce the risk borne by government.

Unlike transmission of culture between groups, the transmission of culture from one generation of people (within a group) to another was easy due to cultural fluidity. One mode of transmission was through meme creation, which was a process of generating a cultural belief or concept that was replicated and passed from one person or generation to another. Similarly, Clawson (2006) defined a meme as "ideas and beliefs, the VABEs [values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations] that people develop and pass on to others over time" (p. 87). Just like memes, the social construction of reality can also impact communication and cultural integration if the actions or activities of some of the employees in the PPP not started by the management were perceived to be real by the majority of employees, become adopted by employees, and are then passed on from one generation of employees to the next (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). A good example would

be the openly negative attitude towards Arab-looking people and Muslims following the attack on America on September 11, 2001. The attack caused a lot of trauma for many Americans. As a result of the attack on America, the social construction of reality that forms the basis of what many today have come to believe was that some Arab-looking people and Muslims do not mean well for Americans. As a result, Arab-looking people and Muslims were more closely scrutinized and monitored in organizational and many group settings (Peek, 2011). This seemingly wary attitude towards these groups affected social interactions, collaboration, and communication patterns in any group settings in which they were involved. As a result, the possibility of integrating the culture of Arab Americans with that of the other employees in any PPP or public institution might become challenging.

Although PPPs have brought innovative solutions and delivered public goods and services to the people effectively (Goldman & Edgar, 2004), they have also brought diversity (multiple cultures and individuals from multiple cultural backgrounds) to organizations. Pitts and Wise (2010) stated that diversity is a strength that organizations can use to improve their performance. The need therefore to integrate these multiple cultures to achieve optimum performance in the PPP is paramount. Lack of cultural integration in organizations resulting in cultural differences have been attributed to prejudice and discrimination in the workplace due to failure of organizational leaders to measure and monitor diversity effectively in the workplace (Guajardo, 1999). More work is needed to help managers of PPPs integrate their multiple cultures in organizations.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore what aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universality) of intercultural communication were present in newly formed PPPs in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and to what extent did intercultural communication hinder and/or facilitate cultural integration in that PPP formation. The social significance of the study is that it could provide insights for leaders regarding the collaboration and performance within PPPs, foster the promulgation of positive intercultural communication skills needed for effective teamwork, and provide bridges over the cultural gaps that Ochieng and Price (2009) found to cause misunderstanding and conflicts common to a multicultural work environment.

Background

PPPs have a scholarly definition. Grimsey and Lewis (2004) defined a PPP as an enterprise whereby private parties participate in, or help to provide support for, the provision of infrastructures and services to the public. Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) defined CSCs or PPPs "as the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately" (p. 44). Therefore, a PPP is a contractual arrangement where private individuals or businesses partner with the government to deliver public services to resolve a common problem.

The PPP formed by public organizations and nonprofits which have been engrossed in a permanently cooperative and mutually beneficial joint venture for centuries (Alexander & Nank, 2009) are new to developing countries (Salamon, 1994).

The growth of PPPs has mushroomed in many parts of the world because of their many successes in the areas of improved security services in many volatile and dangerous areas of the world, waste reduction, improved oversight, and reduced public liability. Goldsmith and Egger (2004) noted that in our complicated world, where citizens are faced with highly complex and unusual problems, the government is required to consider innovative approaches to provide solutions and deliver public goods and services to the people.

PPPs have thrived in the United States and other developed countries of the world because of these countries' citizens' calls for changes in government and governance due to government failures and/or inefficiency in the delivering of goods and services. Other reasons for the growth of PPPs are cost and waste reduction, and reduction in the high transaction costs of government programs.Other reasons identified as driving forces that lead to the formation of PPPs are the need to reduce costs in purchasing and procurement necessary for infrastructure development, workforce reduction, social service dependability, concern for public workers' security, increases in the advocacy for a frugal and controlled government (smaller overhead), and most importantly, achieving effectiveness in the delivery of public goods to the people (Acar, Cuo, & Saxton, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Goldsmith & Egger, 2004; Hawkins, 2014; Siemiatycki, 2012).

The literature abounds with reasons why both the government and private sector form partnerships. Similarly, there is a robust literature on cultural diversity in organizations. Nevertheless, culture clashes due to multiculturalism, and conflicts

between the partners and their employees continue to be a challenge in organizations (Brannen & Peterson, 2009; Clark, 2015; Ochieng & Price, 2009). This challenge appears to be the result of the limited work specifically addressing cultural integration in PPPs. Matos-Castano, Mahalingam, and Dewulf (2014) found that the challenges of multiculturalism were the result of the limited work addressing cultural integration or poor integration practices in organizations. As a result, more work was needed to understand the employee interaction, collaboration, and cultural integration efforts in PPPs. This research explored the aspects of intercultural communication that were present in a newly formed PPP. Aspects of culture were of three types: cultural variations, cultural peculiarity and specificity, and cultural universality (Carteret, 2011). The results of the study may help organizations better manage culture clashes and conflicts between the partners and their employees.

In all organizations, shared culture brings people together (Bolman & Deal, 2003, 2004). Diversity brings different cultures to organizations. Clark (2015) stated that the culture of an organization reflected the diversity of people working together in that organization. Organizations needed to take advantage of diversity to maximize the competitive advantage it brings to organizations (Clark, 2015). Pitts and Wise (2010) stated that diversity is a strength that organizations can use to improve their performance. Conversely, cultural differences have been attributed to prejudice and discrimination in the workplace due to failure of organizational leaders to measure and monitor diversity in the workplace effectively (Guajardo, 1999). Cox and Blake (1991), Jackson et al. (1991), and Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (1984) argued that poorly managed diversity in the

workplace could be problematic to organizations in terms of interfering with communication, performance, creating additional costs, generating employee dissatisfaction, and encouraging employee higher turnover.

Improperly managed diversity can also cause recurrent conflicts among the employees of the PPP as their cultures, attitudes, behaviors, memes, and social constructions of realities brought with them to the new organization clash and might not align well with those of other employees in the new PPP. Earley and Mosakowski (2000) noted that improperly managed cultural diversity can lead to low morale, relationship conflict, and communication problems in organization. Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that cultural differences among employees can cause "conflict, misunderstanding, and poor project performance" (p. 533). To avoid cultural conflict, according to Weber (1996), as new partnerships are embraced, and the various propositions of the partnerships are discussed at the early stages, the various cultures of the merging organizations also need to be addressed and properly integrated into the merger. Handy (2002) argued that employees should be valued and treated well in organizations, but that most companies, due to law and accounting rules, treat their employees as costs and not as assets. He suggested that the language and the measures of business need to be reversed as assets were properly managed, appreciated, and secured while costs were not cherished and nurtured but were to be minimized. Based on this premise, Genest (2005) called for organizational and institutional leaders to possess intercultural communication competencies to successfully manage diverse employees.

While many studies have been carried out to understand partnerships formed between the public and nongovernmental organizations, research on cultural integration in the PPP appear scanty due to more focus on regulatory frameworks and less focus on the institutional context and other informal constraints (Matos-Castano, Mahalingam, & Dewulf, 2014). This study was intended to add to the literature by shedding light on intercultural communication as one of the ways to integrate culture within organizations. The results obtained might help to advance the effective integration of cultures and reduce culture clashes in the newly formed PPPs.

Problem Statement

PPPs are formed as a result of a contractual arrangement wherein private organizations partner with the government to deliver public services to resolve a common problem (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Grimsey & Lewis, 2004). These PPPs have thrived and brought many benefits to organizations (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Just as PPPs have brought benefits to organizations, they also have brought greater cultural diversity to the workplace (Levine, 2003).

The proper management of diversity should be a priority for organizations. Wood and Wilberger (2015) stated that diversity can enhance group performance, amplify organizational competence, produce superior resolutions, yield quality ideas and creativity, and increase effectiveness by bringing people of many talents together to interact, work together, and share their competencies to promote the goals of the agency. McLellan Tung and Kirchmeyer (1991) stated that diversity can enhance group performance, amplify organizational competence, and increase organizational

effectiveness. Improperly managed diversity can be costly for organizations and it causes

recurrent conflicts amongst the employees of the PPP as their cultures, attitudes,

behaviors, memes, and social constructions of reality, brought with them to the new

organization, clash. Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that culture clashes between the

partners of PPPs and their employees continue to be a challenge because of poor diversity

management and poor integration practices in partnerships. Cox and Blake (1991),

Jackson et al. (1991), and Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (1984) all argued that poorly

managed diversity in the workplace can create communication problems, additional costs,

and an increase in employee dissatisfaction, which further lead to higher turnover and

poor employee performance. Similarly, Earley and Mosakowski (2000) noted that

improperly managed cultural diversity can lead to low morale, relationship conflicts, and

communication problems in organization. Similarly, Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that

cultural differences among employees can cause problems such as confusion,

misinterpretation, and low performance in organizations. This could be further

exacerbated if the employees valued and upheld their own culture or their previous

organizational culture much more than they do that of the new PPP.

Although cultural diversity based on race and ethnicity has been studied and has

been the early focus of the study of culture (Cleary, 2013), there has been a recent shift in

focus from the study of cultural or racial diversity to the identities of employees (and

identity politics) in a multicultural workplace. This shift, which was due to the

stereotypes associated with diversity, was what Cleary (2013) called the "shifting nature

of cultural borders" (p. 5). Cultural identity allowed people to assume different

organizational and personal identities at any given time as they crossed from one culture to another (Cleary, 2013; Lugones, 1987).

In order to reap the usefulness of diversity in organizations, management and employees must integrate the different cultures that are at play in the organization. While work on cultural diversity abounds, more work specifically addressing cultural integration in PPPs is needed to assist managers to manage and aid cultural integration effectively in a multicultural work environment. As employees come to organizations with different or multiple cultural identities, it is important that these concepts of identities brought to the workplace be studied. Thus, this study was intended to add to the extant literature by shedding light on intercultural communication as one of the ways to integrate culture within organizations. The results are expected to help advance the integration of culture in the newly partnered organizations, reduce cultural conflicts, and encourage the PPP leaders to consider factors that hinder and enhance cultural integration.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine which aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universality) of cultural integration were present in PPPs and to what extent does intercultural communication hinder and/or facilitate cultural integration in these organizations. To address these points, I interviewed employees working in a PPP to find out how they experienced the phenomenon under study—intercultural communication in the workplace. The study explored cultural integration in PPPs by studying which aspects of cultural integration were perceived to

have been present in emergent PPPs and how intercultural communication might have been fostered by management. It is expected that the research results will help fill the gap in literature and provide insights into the cultural integration process in new PPPs.

<div align="center">

Research Questions

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The following research question guided the researcher through the research process, including data collection (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & Demarco Jr., 2003). This study asked and was guided by the following research question: What aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universally) of cultural integration were present in PPPs and to what extent does intercultural communication hinder and/or facilitate cultural integration in these organizations?

With this research question, I sought a common pattern in the lived experiences of the employees and then made inferences from the results. Critical theory revealed and described the deeper underlying truths about organizational behavior as they related to overcoming racial and cultural discrimination and domination (Held, 1980).

<div align="center">

Theoretical Framework

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Held's (1980) concept of critical theory and Risberg's (1997) communication theory provide the theoretical frameworks for this study. I used both theories because critical theory does not explain everything about intercultural communication in organizations. Specifically, the research used the two theories to explore the central phenomenon of intercultural communication in PPPs.

Critical theory was first introduced in the Institute of Social Research in Germany in 1923 by the Frankfurt School (Held, 1980). It became popular amongst professionals

and academicians during and following the New Left movement during the 1960s and early 1970s. Fay (1987) stated that critical theory is about empowering people to overcome the obstacles that emanate from racial, cultural, class, gender, and power differences.

Since critical theory was about empowering people to overcome the obstacles that emanated from racial, cultural, class, and gender differences (Fay, 1987), it helped me to explain the central phenomenon of intercultural communication in PPPs by seeing if there were any social imbalance amongst the employees (such as political power) and what had been done to help foster cultural integration in the new organization.

Critical theory aided understanding of the transformation in organizations by helping to unearth patterns of domination and oppression during interpersonal and intercultural communication, and during team collaboration (or the lack thereof) in organizations. Thomas (1993) and Madison (2006) stated that critical theory can help to explore how people think, interact, and act during communication discourse.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, I used Thomas' (1993) approach to critical theory to help explain how institutions such as PPPs can be transformed by critically evaluating the intercultural (and political and policy) communication practices in the PPP. It also was used to critique and challenge how intercultural communication was fostered to overcome the obstacles that emanated from racial and cultural differences, and to advance changes that focus on social interaction and discourse, and suppression of all forms of dominance and inequalities in PPPs.

This study also employed Risberg's (1997) communication theory because it emphasized the need for managers to address ambiguities, uncertainty, and early communication in mergers and acquisitions, and to avoid cultural clashes, anxieties, and improve integration (Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994; Risberg, 1997; Smith, 2009). Risberg (1997) stated that clear and unambiguous communication should help managers to manage diverse employees effectively. Similarly, Genest (2005) stated that communication can occur between members of organizations and community members, but only when there is open discourse between the parties involved.

Nature of the Study

I chose a qualitative research paradigm for this study over quantitative because of the exploratory, observational, and interviewing strategies that can be applied to successfully capture the lived experiences of the participants. Qualitative research is realistic in nature because it takes place in the real context of the phenomenon or where the participant lives, and it does not require the manipulation of any data to get results (Patton, 2002). I used the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to study what aspects of cultural integration might be present in a PPP and how they were facilitated by the management. I choose this approach for my study because it allowed me to study a number of individuals in depth to understand the lived experiences and meanings (Creswell, 2006) they ascribe to the phenomenon: intercultural communication under study. I focused on both the individual cultures and institutional actors (leadership) in the PPP to see how intercultural communication was facilitated.

I collected the data through interviews and observations. I used an audio recording device to record each session. The advantage of this approach was that it allowed the participants to collaborate with me in capturing their lived experiences— thus, it was a progressive method and allowed effective communication between researcher and participants. Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Laws & McLeod, 2006) stated that qualitative research allowed for "a detailed study of a micro issue of a larger reality within a particular setting" (p. 8), which aligned with my research questions.

I interviewed and collected data from employees of new PPPs who had experienced the intercultural communication phenomenon. I then identified themes from the interviews and analyzed the result to draw conclusions about the phenomenon under study. It is expected that the findings will benefit the employees and PPP leadership with relevant results that can help to raise awareness and consciousness about the dynamics of intercultural communication and integration in PPPs, and perhaps other organizations facing multicultural transformation. Since some qualitative designs, such as phenomenology, contain no obvious theoretical orientation (Creswell, 2009), I used critical theory to better understand the phenomenon (intercultural communication) under study. Bolton (2014) stated that critical theory allows for communication free of domination and discrimination between groups. Critical theory was right for this study because it helped to study and understand how people think, interact, and act in the context of this study (Madison, 2006; Thomas, 1993).

Definitions

The concepts used in this research are defined as follows:

Acculturation. This was a dynamic process of adaptation for an individual from a different culture interacting and adopting the geographical, cultural, and behavioral patterns of a new culture (Organista, Marin, & Chun, 2010).

Adaptation. Cleary (2013) stated that adaptation was the ability for one to make choices and change reality thus leading to adjustment to the context.

Cultural empathy. Cultural empathy was the ability to empathize with others from different culture (Cundiff, Nadler, & Swan, 2009).

Culture. Culture was simply defined as a set of values, norms, and beliefs that individuals in an organization or community share together (Schein, 2004). It was the bond that holds an organization together (Bolman & Deal, 2004).

Diversity. Defined as the difference that existed between people. Diversity creates the identity that makes people different from one culture to another (Maznevski, 1994).

Integration. Integration was a human activity that comes from one's choices and ability to adapt to the reality in one's context (Cleary, 2013). Berry and Sam (2013) defined integration as a joint involvement in and/or connection to their traditional culture and community.

Intercultural communication. Gonzalez (2011) defined intercultural communication as what happens when two or more people from different cultures or groups come together to interact and communicate.

Public–private partnership (PPP). An arrangement whereby private parties participate in or join hands with the government to help provide support for the provision of infrastructure and services to the public (Grimsey & Lewis, 2004).

Assumptions

Assumptions in research as defined by Simon (2011), are those basic things that are beyond the researcher's control but which would make the research irrelevant if omitted. My first assumption was that cultural barriers might lead to possible conflict resulting from clashes of culture, which might hinder relationship building and intercultural communication in the organization. I assumed that the leaders of PPPs do not regard cultural integration as an integral part of post-partnership investment. I assumed that the less dominant employees of PPP go through the process of acculturation and adjustment to the context —adapting to the culture in their new environment, which might be different from their original culture, so as to alleviate the way they were treated by employees from a different dominant culture.

I assumed that my cultural identity of coming from a less dominant culture would have an effect on the study. To overcome this, I declared my identity (dual citizenship) at the beginning of the study and remained as neutral as possible during the interview, even though my cultural identity showed that I am an immigrant. Cleary (2013) stated that the honest way for a researcher to enter into another culture and successfully study the culture is to declare his standpoint and understand the standpoints of those who are the subject of the research.

I also assumed that the result of this study might not be comparable to other areas that were less culturally diverse than the large metropolitan area where the study was conducted and also because of the small sample size of 11 participants used for the study. As an immigrant, I assumed that others might see me as being biased. To build credibility

and become neutral, I needed to first identify my biases as an immigrant who has experienced some form of cultural domination prior to the start of the study. I was forthright with my past experiences and prior exposure to the phenomenon so that my position on the phenomenon (intercultural communication) was known. This helped to reduce my biases and brought credibility to the study.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations were those parameters that set the limits and boundaries of the study (Simon, 2011). This study was limited in scope by the sample size chosen for the study. Patton (2002) stated that sample size in a qualitative study was variable depending on the purpose of the study, the result expected from the study, the importance of the study, and the number of people that can be studied with the limited time and resources available. Therefore, this study was delimited to a small sample size of 11 participants. This sample was sufficient to reach saturation in participant feedback on the phenomenon in terms of their lived experiences. If saturation had not been reached, additional interviewees would have been sampled, in increments of three.

This study was also delimited to the employees of the PPP formed with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The phenomenological research method chosen for this research also delimited this study because with this approach, I was able to study in details the meaning and experiences that the participants with their distinct identity brought to the research.

The focus of this study was delimited to a single phenomenon: intercultural communication. My focus on intercultural communication was based on the assumption

that communication must occur before effective cultural mixing took place. The question of cultural integration in both public and private institutions was also likely to be informed by a better understanding of intercultural communication, but this study was delimited to what could be learned from individual experiences; the results would not be generalizable as an evaluation of the PPPs themselves.

This study was delimited by geographical location of the study, the South Florida Metropolitan area, which is rich in diversity and PPPs. This made the topic more suited for study because of the unique challenges employees and organizations face as a result of the cultural diversity of South Florida. This study might not be generalizable to other areas that were less culturally diverse.

Limitations

The limitations are the weaknesses of a study, and they are out of the researcher's control (Simon, 2011). The study was limited by my biases. To build credibility and make sure my biases did not influence the study, before the start of the study I recognized them as an immigrant and as one who had experienced cultural discrimination. I was forthright with the interviewees with my past experiences and prior exposure to the phenomenon (intercultural communication) so that my position on the phenomenon was known by the participants. This helped reduced my biases, prevented imposing meaning and the assumptions that I brought to the project, which could have affected the interpretation of the results. Other limitations were time and the study of other variables—the attributes of culture that might directly impact cultural integration.

Significance

My study was intended to add to the knowledge base of public policy and administration by contributing to the literature on intercultural communication in PPPs. To this end, the results of this study might affect positive social change by giving the administrators of PPPs and other organizational mergers insights into the intercultural challenges that impair improved organizational performance, and other work-related issues, such as misunderstanding and conflicts common to a multicultural work environment.

The research might also provide insight into ways to foster effective cultural mixing and intercultural communication skills needed for teamwork collaboration. It also might provide ways to bridge the cultural gaps between employees from diverse cultures in organizations. The results might help PPP managers to not only effectively manage employees from different cultures in the, it might also help them to learn new ways of leadership that are needed to foster effective employee collaboration and manage successfully in an unstable, fast-paced, and multicultural work environment.

Summary

Although there have been many studies done on PPPs, much of the earlier research focused on trust amongst the partners of the PPP, collaboration among the partners, partners' communication, and mutual benefits that both organizations gained from the partnerships. Research on the role of intercultural communication in effective cultural integration in PPPs is not common. More research was needed in the area of how to integrate cultures in an organization.

This study addressed intercultural communication as a gateway to the integration of cultures in PPPs. The study attempted to answer the central research question: What kinds of intercultural communication practices were present in a PPP and to what extent did they hinder or facilitate cultural integration? Critical theory framework and Risberg communication theory set the stage for this research as they both helped to study how people think, communicate, act, deal with ambiguities, and uncertainty.

The next four chapters are previewed as follows: Chapter 2 addresses the different strategies used in gathering literature for this study, and it summarizes and assesses the critical theory framework that acted as the backdrop for this study. It also focused on the literature on culture, diversity, communication, communicative action, culture and collaboration, rationality, dialogue, respect, and how they impacted cultures in the PPPs and the current study. Chapter 3 addresses the methodology chosen for this study. Specifically, it addresses the research design and rational for choosing the design, the research questions, the central phenomenon of the study, my role as the researcher of the study, sampling and sampling strategy, participant selection, participant consent, the data collection and analyses techniques, and data storage techniques. Chapter 4 addresses the results obtained from the study while Chapter 5 provides the interpretation of the findings. It also discusses the study's limitations, recommendations, social change possible implications, and advise for further research to advance and document future studies on intercultural integrations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Background

PPPs are generally formed between government agencies (public) and nongovernmental organizations (private, both for profit and nonprofit). PPPs have become a very important and effective way to respond to high demand for social services, such as service delivery; communal issues, such as the environment, which has impacted both the private and public sectors, and many other public challenges and complexities— such as costs of providing services and infrastructure facing public institutions (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Rethemeyer, 2005). Governments and institutions also formed partnerships with the private sector to manage increasing social issues, such as infrastructural development, resource dependencies, and waste management. Several other authors agreed that partnerships are now formed to reduce governmental size, cut operational costs, and accelerate the effective delivery of goods and services to citizens (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Eggers & Goldsmith, 2003; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Goldsmith & Egger, 2004; Hawkins, 2014; & Siemiatycki, 2012).

Although PPPs can be formed in almost all areas of government, many successes have been recorded more in the areas of infrastructure development, construction, service delivery, child and family services, science and engineering, education, health science and medicine, space exploration, environment, construction, and security services (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Despite these successes, the gains of PPPs have not been universal because of the challenges of poorly managed intercultural communication and or the lack of cultural integration among the employees in the newly partnered PPP

(Cox & Blake, 1991; Jackson et al., 1991; Wagner, Pfeffer, & O'Reilly, 1984). Central to this cultural integration problem were the multiple identities (organizational and personal) that the employees brought to the workplace. Researchers of organizational and personal identity have shown that individuals can assume different/multiple identities at any given time (Cleary, 2013; Lugones, 1987) and that the primary identity assumed by the individual depended on the context (Chaudhry, 1997). Thus, the employee identity standpoints and how they were managed impacted cultural integration in the new organization. To determine how cultural integration can be facilitated in the PPP, this study used Qualitative study, specifically the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to study what aspects of cultural integration might be present in a PPP and how they were facilitated by the management.

This chapter addressed (a) culture and the different variables that impacted cultural integration in the workplace, (b) the different strategies used to understand PPPs and how to integrate or recreate culture in the new organization when a PPP has been formed; (c) the knowledge base, for example, critical theory framework (Habermas, 1984; 1987; 2000), that helped explain the research phenomenon. Specifically, the literature review related to culture and communication, intercultural communication, PPPs. The purpose of this chapter was to summarize all relevant literature and research on the topic to assess the knowledge base and identify gaps.

Literature Research Strategy

The following databases were used in this review: Google Scholar Proquest Central, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Sage Premier, Emerald

Management Journals, and Thoreau Multi-Database searches. The keywords were as follows: *cultures*, *cultural integration*, *cultural mixing*, *mergers*, *acquisitions*, *public–private partnerships*, *multiculturalism*, *acculturation*, *diversity in the workplace*, *cross-cultural and intercultural communication*, *communication*, *dialog*, *rationality*, *communicative action*, *respect*, *empathy*, *values*, *assumptions*, *and expectations* (VABES), and *collaboration in organizations*. Due to recent shift from the study of diversity and because diversity has been over-shadowed by *identity politics* [Cleary, 2013]), effort was put into a broader search of dissertations (70% of scholarly work reviewed) and nonscholarly—trade (30% of nonscholarly work reviewed) sources written in the last eight years that aligned with the research subtopics in this study.

Diversity and Multiple Identities in the Workplace

Diversity, which has become a fact in our everyday life (Berry & Sam, 2013) was important for organizations because our country, institutions, and organizations increasingly consist of people from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds (Abreu, 2014; Alpert, 2018; Belfield, 2016; Martin, 2014; Wood & Wilberger, 2015). So, it was important for organization workforce to reflect the culture of the population that it served (Martin, 2014). Similarly, Nwaebube (2009) in his study of the minority representation in the North Carolina government stated that diversity demanded that every job classification be a representative of the population in which the organization operated. Researchers (Jackson, Might, & Whitney, 1995; Maznevski, 1994; Milliken & Martins, 1996) have classified diversity into two types: observable and non-observable (underlying attributes). The observable diversities were gender, racial, age, cultural,

ethnic, and national while the less observable underlying attributes were functional

background, technical abilities, organizational tenure, and education (Milliken & Martins,

1996). For the purpose of this study, focus was placed on cultural diversity to see how

intercultural communication assisted cultural integration in organizations.

Dolan (2004) stated that a diverse workforce was important to organizations for

three reasons: symbolic, equal representation, and effective response to public needs. As

organizations become more complex or began to operate globally in multicultural and

multinational environments, there was a growing need to hire diverse employees from

different cultural, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds in the organization to allow the

organization fit in the context within which they operate (Martin, 2014). Diversity

increases our level of understanding of other cultures through our interaction with people

from other cultures (Belfield, 2016; Martin, 2014). It reduces turnover and made

employee recruitment easier, helped organizations recruit top talents with different

experiences and from different backgrounds (Abreu, 2014). These diverse employees

with their varied ideas and experiences helped organizations to become innovative and

creative (Abreu, 2014). Despite the advantages of cultural diversity, Faist (2015) found

that diversity was still plagued by stereotypes and social inequalities. He stated that

immigrant children were predisposed to poor educational qualifications and high

unemployment rate due to their cultural background and social segregation. As a result of

the stereotypes associated with diversity, there has been a recent shift in focus from the

study of cultural or racial diversity to the identities of employees in a multicultural

workplace (Cleary, 2013). Specifically, the organizational and personal identity that the

employees brought to the workplace was the identity concept that this study engaged. Lugones (1987) and Cleary (2013) agreed that the theories of identity posited that people had the capability to assume different organizational and personal identities at any given time as they crossed from one culture into another.

Chaudhry (1997) stated that the primary identity assumed by an individual depended on their cultural context. Similarly, Cleary (2013) stated that identity was fluid and that one can assume multiple identities depending on which one was relevant to the organizational context. Those who were able to identify with multiple positions were often referred to as hybrids (Cleary, 2013). She added that *hybridity*—the ability to identify with multiple positions of race, gender, economic, and political positions was now the new way of studying race and species. Cleary (2013) stated that those who crossed from one culture to another developed double consciousness and existence as a result of their insight and experiences in both cultures.

With the globalization of labor, it was common for organizations to invest in the hiring and retention of employees from different nationalities, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds (Abreu, 2014; Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009) to maximize workforce diversity, identities, and talents. Milliken and Martins (1996) stated that as organizations became more complex and began to operate globally, it became increasingly important to learn how diversity affected outcomes. Similarly, Martin (2014) stated that the increase in globalization in the world has caused an increase in cultural diversity as organizations ventured into new territories and crossed cultures. This increase in diversity was vital because it was arguably difficult to recruit labor when one filtered out a section of

available talents in the workforce (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Also, recruiting a diverse workforce made the organization inclusive and a true reflection of the population around it (Abreu, 2014). With the spread of high technology and the growth of the Internet, it was not uncommon to find people from different walks of life working in a global organization across different geographical boundaries and time zones. Denver (as cited in Levine, 2003) stated that to maximize effort and increase productivity, it was important to have a diverse workforce.

Bolman and Deal (2003) stated that having a diversified workforce made good business sense, prevented bad publicity, and reduced alienation within the organization. They added that organizations needed to stay focused, be determined, and include the promotion of diversity in their daily management strategies to become a workforce that treated everyone well. Diversity promotion initiatives within organizations have included: tailoring recruitment practices to diversified groups (people from different cultures, race, and genders), developed mentoring programs and other diversity initiatives like tying managers promotion and performance bonuses to effective diversity management, diversifying the different levels of management positions to include people with different identities and cultural groups, breaking the glass ceiling, hiring more women and minorities, and patronizing minority businesses (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Diversity promotion initiatives can be monitored by the human resources department in the PPP to ensure that affirmative action laws were not violated. This diversity promotion initiative was easier than changing organizational hiring practices that have been practiced for years (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

A diversified workforce, however, could be both a blessing and a challenge to organization (Martin, 2014; Milliken & Martins, 1996). A body of research pointed to the different ways that diversity could be a blessing to organizations and improve productivity in the workplace if properly managed. Diversity researchers such as Abreu (2016), Cox (1993), Kirchmeyer (1991), Levine (2003), Martin (2014), McLeod and Lobel (1992), Milliken and Martins (1996), Tung (1993), Watson, Kumar, and Michaelsen (1993), and Wood and Wilberger (2015) found in their studies that diversity could enhance group performance, amplified organizational competence, produced superior resolutions, yielded quality ideas and creativity, and increased effectiveness by bringing people of many talents together to interact, groupthink and work together, and shared their competencies to promote the goals of the agency. Similarly, Levine (2003) stated that diversity encouraged efficacy and ingenuity. Abreu (2014) stated that diversity drove innovation, increased creativity, made recruitment easier, increased the organization's market share, and reduced turnover in the workplace. Cox and Blake (1991) argued that diversity enhanced social responsibility, brought added ideas, and created competitive advantage. Belfied (2016) stated that diversity helped us to understand, build bridges and trust, and respected the "ways of being" of other people as we engaged in intercultural communication. Al-Jenaibi (2012) stated that despite the advantages of diversity, it might cause serious communication problem, cultural conflict, and even disrupted the smooth flow of business.

On the other hand, Martin (2014), Jackson et al. (1991), and Wagner, Pfeffer, and O'Reilly (1984) stated that poorly managed diversity in the workplace could be

problematic to the organization in terms of miscommunication, interpersonal conflicts,

costs, employee dissatisfaction, higher turnover, and performance. Diversity has also led

to stereotyping, group-based dominance, and racial conflict between groups (Bhabha,

2012; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Levin, n. d.). To successfully manage diversity and

organizational change, leaders of organizations needed to ensure that employees of

heterogeneous group were made aware of their behavioral and attitudinal group

differences, and to organize cultural awareness training for the employees (Cox & Blake,

1991). Diversity in the workplace would also be problematic if one of the cultures

became dominant over the other cultures. Bhabha (2012) stated that when two cultures

come together, one cultural group often become dominant and imposed itself on the other

group. Bolman and Deal (2003) stated that at the group level, there was an organizational

and societal challenge in terms of how to respond to diversity because the dominant

group that made the system found it difficult to grasp issues associated with the system.

This was one reason why the focus today shifted from diversity to the different identities

that employees brought to the workplace. Today, some immigrants who were bi-racial

and or multi-racial, having crossed from at least one culture to another, carried multiple

identities with them. This enabled them to fit better into the context in which they

operated (Cleary, 2013).

Culture and Diversity

Cultural diversity was critical to the survival of organizations in that it increased

productivity and enhanced better performance as the workforce of the organization was

mixed with employees from different cultural backgrounds (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, &

Otten, 2013). Diversity was a human attribute that differentiated one individual or group

from another. Amadeo (2013) defined cultural diversity as the religious, racial, language,

ethnicity, nationality, and sexual orientation differences between people in a community.

Cultural diversity exists when marked significant differences existed between two or

more people. Being a part of a particular culture gave one the distinctiveness that made

one different from others in a different culture. As our country, schools, organizations,

and institutions became more culturally diverse, it was also important for organizations to

represent the communities in which they operated (Belfield, 2016). Although recent

studies have shown that culture was fluid and that people, whom Cleary termed *hybrids*,

were not so distinct from one another, because they were able to assume multiple

positions and identities, rather than just one (Cleary, 2013).

The cultural diversity of a team brought many benefits of diverse views and new

ways of thinking, new knowledge and skills, experiences, and attributes of the different

employees to the organization (Belfield, 2016; Maznevski, 1994). Since diversity brought

different experiences to the workplace, it could then be restated that culture equally

brought experience and creativity to the workplace (Abreu, 2014; Levine, 2003). Levine

(2003) noted that if an employee or leaders of an organization valued cultural diversity,

then that should also mean that the employee or leaders of that organization valued

experience in the workplace, since culture and diversity were both similar and

intertwined. Constantine (2000) concluded that globalization required greater employee

empathy towards diverse groups when one considered the necessity of a multiculturally-

competent workforce. Wood and Wilberger (2015) stated that globalization brought

about renewed interest in cultural diversity, cultural knowledge, and organizational

commitment. Dixon and Dougherty (2010) stated that diversity affected the daily

interactions in an organization as the employees shared and interpreted their common

phenomenon in a different way. While it was evident that diversity most likely brought

specific improvement to the workplace, it was equally notable that employee diversity

could integrate their cultures through empathetic interactions. To therefore gain the

usefulness of diversity in organizations, the many cultures that were at play in the

organization must be functionally integrated. Belfield, (2016) stated that as organizations

became culturally diverse, it became important for us to have a level of understanding of

each other's culture so as to facilitate collaboration and cooperation in the organization.

Cox, McLellan Tung, and Kirchmeyer (as cited in Matveev & Nelson, 2004) stated that

diversity could enhance group performance, amplify organizational competence, and

increase effectiveness. Leaders can do a lot to help the organization reap the dividends of

diversity by creating an environment conducive for the employees to interact and co-exist

amicably. This co-existence can further be developed if the employees of the

organizations were open-minded and easily embrace each other's cultures. Multicultural

team (diversity in organization) was beneficial to organizations because it gave the

opportunity for organizations to gain in productivity through the harvesting of ideas,

values, and work ethics from employees of other cultures (McLeod & Lobel, 1992;

Townsend, DeMarie, & Hendrickson, 1998).

Managing diversity in the workforce was often difficult because of the negative

team outcome that it brought to organizations (Knipperberg & Schippers, 2007; Hofhuis,

Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2013). Bolman and Deal (2003) found that organizations that fail to recognize diversity in their workforce might suffer employee alienation, governmental pressure to diversify, and possible boycotts from the public. Improperly managed diversity could lead to low morale, relationship conflict, and communication problems in organization (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). A workplace with successfully-managed diversity might enrich organizations by creating competitive advantage through quality decisions, enhanced organizational change and flexibility, and the ability of the organization to reap the benefits of a culturally-diverse pool of employees rich in problem solving skills and creativity (Cox & Blake, 1991; Rodger, 2014). Richard, Barnett, Dwyer, and Chadwick (2004) found that a moderately diversified (heterogeneous) management group showed better performance than a more homogeneous group in organizations.

Culture

Culture defined as those values, beliefs, and assumptions strongly held and generally accepted by a group of people in a particular environment from an early age that were passed down from one generation to another through ancestral and communal associations. Culture has been studied and described by many authors (Abreu, 2014; Amadeo, 2013; Armenakis & Burnes, 2015; Belfield, 2016; Bolman & Deal, 2004; Cleary, 2013; Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Martin, 2014; McLaurin, 2006; Schein, 1996, 2004, 2009, 2010; Tart, 1986; Wood & Wilberger, 2015; Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009). Belfield (2016) defined culture as the lens used in evaluating everything that surrounds us. Tart (1986) likened culture to a *consensus trance*—the half-conscious state in which

everyone within a given society obediently and unsuspectingly accepted the values, belief system, and views of that society. Similarly, Yukl, George, and Jones (2009) described culture as "the set of shared values, beliefs, and norms that influenced the way employees think, feel, and behaved toward each other and toward people outside of the organization" (p. 502). Schein (2009) defined culture as the basic norms and beliefs that have worked well for a group or organization and were learned, shared, and taught to every new member of the group or organization as it attempted to solve problems confronting the organization. Conversely, Ireland and Hitt (1999) stated that culture held everyone together in an organization and culture provided the context where organizational strategies were formulated and implemented while Bolman and Deal (2004) defined culture as the way we did things around here in the organization. The definitions of culture have had an impact on my proposal because of the different values, beliefs systems, and assumptions that the employees brought to the PPP. These different values, beliefs, and assumptions, if not integrated, might cause conflict, cultural misunderstanding, and poor productivity in the organization (Ochieng & Price, 2009).

A recent study of culture showed that culture was not as rigid as earlier thought. Cleary (2013) found that people can assume multiple cultures and that culture was more fluid and dynamic—people assumed multiple identities and crossed borders more easily today than ever before. She stated that "identities don't stay still. Neither does language or culture" (p. 91). If this was so, then it was clear that organizations needed to be more flexible and open to multiculturalism in a PPP.

Classification of Culture

Schein's 2009 classified culture into three categories: visible artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic organizational assumptions.

Visible Artifacts

The visible artifacts of a culture included such things as ceremonies, rituals, dress codes, behaviors, and time and space configurations (McLaurin, 2006; Schein, 2009). It was not uncommon to see members of an organization dressing and behaving in a particular way due to the dress codes or other rules and regulations put in place to assure conformity in the organization. These rules and regulations became the culture of that organization.

Espoused Beliefs and Values

These categories of culture were the guiding principles or beliefs that guide the organization through day-to-day operations and to have a competitive advantage over its competitors. An example of espoused beliefs and values were the leader's ideas, ideology, and agency goals that became the driving force in the organization. Espoused beliefs and values serve as the normative way or moral obligation that guided employees in the organization on how to respond to challenging situations (Schein, 2009). An example was the belief that increased advertising and being courteous to customers' increases sales. If these ideas worked and turn sales around, they would become espoused beliefs in the organization that more adverts and courteousness increase sales.

Organizational Assumptions

Organizational assumptions were ways employees feel was the proper way to do things in an organization to assure productivity and safety (Schein, 2010). These assumptions were ultimately passed on from one member of the organization to the other and became what members of the organization thought, felt, and perceived to be inherent in the organization. An example would be the espoused beliefs and values that have seen repeated success overtime during implementation (Schein, 2009). This repeated success led the idea or belief to become strongly held in the group and eventually became a basic assumption for the organization. Organizational assumptions will affect cultural integration if the organizational espoused values and behavioral norms high in individuality conflicted with that of the employees whose values and beliefs were high in collectivity (Schein, 2010). For example, an organization whose beliefs and espoused values were high in self-reliant and individual achievements will find it more difficult to integrate employees from another organization whose espoused values and beliefs were high on teamwork. One other framework to consider was the organizational and individual cultures in organizations in general, and in PPPs, in particular.

Organizational and Individual Culture

Culture can be both individual and institutional. That was to say, both individuals and organizations have cultures that they adhered to strongly. While organizational culture has received more extensive attention than individual culture in the PPP setting, the concept was still elusive in organizational research (Driscoll & Morris, 2001). Bolman and Deal (2003) described organizational culture as a glue—rituals, histories,

ceremonies, beliefs, and patterns that existed in the organization and bonded both the

organization and the employees together, and unite them around shared values and

beliefs. Similarly, Hemmelgarn, Glisson, and James (2006) stated that organizational

culture "provides a social context that invites or rejects innovation, compliments or

inhibits the activities required for success, and sustains or alters adherence to the

protocols that compose the organization's core technology" (p. 77). Ireland and Hitt

(1999) stated that organizational culture was "the complex set of ideologies, symbols, and

core values shared throughout the firm" (p. 71). They added that it was concerned with

all the resolutions, activities, and communications in an organization. Boan (2006)

described organizational culture as "the shared beliefs, perceptions, and expectations of

individuals in organizations" (p. 51). Organization culture was created and influenced by

cultural leaders (organizational leadership) and cultural carriers (the opinions leaders) in

an organization (Armenakis & Burnes, 2015). As the external environment continued to

influence the culture in an organization, the organization culture would be subjected to

change in reaction to the external environment (Armenakis & Burnes, 2015). To maintain

the continuity of culture in an organization, the organizational artifacts, underlying

assumptions, and espoused beliefs and values must be secured through daily practice by

the cultural leaders and cultural carriers of the organizations (Armenakis & Burnes,

2015).

Individual culture was the set of core values, ideals, symbols, beliefs, history,

norms that were passed on between members of a group or from one generation to

another (Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009). Individual cultures were

those values, beliefs, and shared assumptions that people have learned, recognized to be valid, and were passed on from one-generation to the other as the correct way to do things (Schein, 1992). The definitions above aligned with the operational definition of organizational culture for this study, as identified in Chapter 1.

Researchers of organizational culture (Abrue, 2014; Al-Jenaibi, 2011; Boan, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Connell, 2006; Driscoll & Morris, 2001; Hemmelgarn, Glisson, & James, 2006; Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Kyarimpa & Garcia-Zamor, 2006; Schein, 1985; Soni, 2000; Sopow, 2006; Tamam, 2010; Wood & Wilberger, 2015; and Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009) noted in their studies that culture impacted social interaction and cohesion, loyalty and commitment to organizational goals, influenced people's thought processes and how they think, perceived, and interpreted issues, and related with one another.

In PPPs, finding that organizational or individual culture to bind the partners and employees of the organization together could be challenging for a new leader. New leaders appointed to lead an organization would need to be flexible as they oftentimes find out that the organizational, individual, and other subcultures already existing in the organization might define the kind of leadership style needed to successfully run the organization (Schein, 2009). This was so because the subcultures (small cultures existing in an organization based on the organization's unique products and services, occupations and functions, leadership, and geographical context that differentiated them from their counterparts) built around the existing leadership has rooted past history, memes, assumptions, beliefs, values, and social constructs of realities that the employees of the

organization has accepted and might have come to expect. So, changing this culture overnight might be difficult and so the new leader must develop new skill sets to be able to change the existing culture in the organization.

Cultural differences among employees can cause "conflict, misunderstanding, and poor project performance" (Ochieng & Price, 2009, p. 533), if the employees' valued and upheld the dominant cultural memes from their previous organization much more than the values and memes of the new PPP. Culture in organizations was expressed through employee attitudes and behaviors, beliefs and value systems, and attachments and assumptions (Crintea, Burcalu, & Micu, 2012) that affected how employees carried out their daily work and interacted within the organization. Similarly, Yukl, George, and Jones (2009) argued that organizational culture comprised of the norms, values and beliefs that influenced the way employees think, feel, and behaved toward each other and people outside of the organization. If these theories were valid, then organizational culture must have certain attributes that were necessary for one to possess in order for an individual to become a part of the new culture. Van Oudenhoven, Mol, and Van Der Zee (2003) in their study of culture identified five components of integrating cultures to be cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, social initiative, and flexibility. It was therefore very important for the employees of organization to cultivate these attributes to be able to understand, be empathetic, identify with others—all kinds of people, and have the ability—the flexibility—to change their attitude towards others.

Cultural Integration and Leadership in Organizations

Many authors and researchers (Ag Budin & Wafa, 2015; Armenakis & Mehta, 2011; Bolman & Deal, 2004; Brice, 2012; Ireland & Hitt, 1999; Picken & Dess, 1997; Schyns & Schilling, 2011; Shockley-Zalabak & Morley, 1989; Smith, 2009; Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009) who have studied culture and leadership in organizations all emphasized the importance of culture to organizations. In fact, Picken and Dess (1997) concluded that organizational leadership should be the organizational element responsible for promoting culture and policy in organizations. Avolio (1999) argued that organizational leadership can widen employees' *intellectual stimulation* that in turn might motivate employees to recognize their moral thoughts, values, and beliefs, and to change their mindsets to be open-minded towards other groups, and become more accepting of the cultures and behaviors of others. Similarly, Armenakis and Mehta (2011) stated that the creation, institutionalization, and transformation of organizational culture was dependent on the organization's leadership. Burns (1978), Bass (1985), and Yukl, George, and Jones (2009) argued that charismatic or transformational leadership, strategic, and transactional leadership styles have all been known to influence employee's behavior, attitude, and promote desired change, such as cultural integration, in organizations because these leadership styles relied on personal power, which made influencing and working with others more effective. Ag Budin and Wafa (2015) found a significant relationship between culture and leadership style preferences in Malaysia. This study suggested that leaders of organization should tailor their styles of leadership to their organizational culture so as to promote higher cultural commitment and productivity

from the employees. Drucker (2005) argued that leaders need to manage themselves effectively to influence their employees to take responsibility, to trust, and to better understand people from other cultures, and communicate clearly to avert personality conflicts in the organization. Oertig and Buergi (2006) stated that if cultural integration was not properly managed, it could weaken employees' performance.

Bolman and Deal (2003) argued that change happening in an organization was likely dependent on the leadership. Therefore, the role of leaders in organizations was very important since they can either make or break the organization by using their influence and charisma, behavior, and leadership style to either positively or negatively manage the different behaviors, personalities, and cultures brought by their followers and employees to the organization. For example, with the right influence and coordination of the leader, PPP members can more easily develop mutual trust, communicate and interact, and bond as employees. Schein (2009) agreed that leaders play an important role in organization when he stated that the key to organizational learning started with the managers of the organization. Leaders in a culturally diverse organization need to consider their behavior and actions to successfully lead the employees from different cultures (Ag Budin & Wafa, 2015). It was therefore advisable that the leader has a better understanding of the different cultures at play in the organization and tailored their leadership styles to successfully manage the different employee's cultural belief and values that they brought to the organization (Jogulu, 2010). Similarly, Marques (2015) suggested that organizational leaders needed to consider using the cultural competency skills necessary to manage themselves and their diverse employees to achieve utmost

performance in a culturally diverse world. Zabihi and Hashemzehi (2012) found that leaders of organization using the path-goal theory can successfully identify, analyze, and manage any emerging situations in an organization. It was, therefore, the responsibility of organizational leaders to assist and create the enabling environments for employees to achieve their goals and better performance in an organization (Ag Budin & Wafa, 2015). Leaders of organizations, therefore, are important for cultural integration in organizations to take place since they facilitated employee interaction, cooperation, and collaboration.

Cox and Blake (1991) stated that organizational leaders who advocated for changes from traditional monolithic organizations (organizations dominated by a specific cultural group) to one that reaped the benefits of a heterogeneous workforce must invest in multicultural workgroups. According to Cox and Blake, a heterogeneous workforce enhanced employee cohesion, reduced interpersonal sensitivities, increased creativity and innovation, reduced turnovers, and reduced the drawbacks of a monolithic workforce.

The leadership of organizations can facilitate intercultural communication in the workplace by making sure that the power distance, the degree of equal power distribution, between the diverse employees in an organization stayed low. Matveev and Nelson (2004) stated that a multicultural team whose power distance differed significantly would have difficulty in developing communication and leadership arrangements that was acceptable to everyone in the team. According to Matveev and Nelson, it was imperative that leaders of an organization invested in employee training, research, and analyses to identify areas like cross-cultural communication where changes

or focus were much needed for employee integration, cohesion, and the improvement of overall organizational effectiveness.

Matveev and Nelson (2004) and Marquis (2015) further argued that managers working on multicultural teams must be knowledgeable in terms of cross-cultural communication to be able to manage and work effectively with employees from diverse cultural backgrounds. When applied to a PPP organization, the leadership of the PPP needed to learn the different histories and cultures of their employees to be effective in fostering cultural integration. This historical learning prepared managers and employees alike to become empathetic, open-minded, and maintained the flexibility to accept other people's cultures and values. Cundiff, Nadler, and Sawn (2009) in their study of the influence of cultural empathy and gender on perception of diversity programs found that successful diversity programs were very important and necessary due to globalization and demographic shifts in today's workforce. As a result, they advised managers to handle the diversity of their workforce as a priority. Similarly, Martin (2015) stated that the effects of cultural diversity in the workplace were dependent on how well the organizational leaders managed diverse cultures in an organization.

Triandis and Singelis (1998) noted that for employees to work effectively with diverse people in a multicultural environment, each employee needed to know and understood the culture and history of the people they work and interact with so as to encourage inter-cultural communication in the organization. The knowledge and friendship gained from such social interaction could avert conflict and encourage a better understanding of every employee's personality, story, and life experiences.

Schein (2009) asked us to understand organizational culture through the lens of three subcultures that largely defined and compared an organizations' culture. First was an *operator culture*, whose adherents believed that the progress of the organization was dependent on the people in the organization. The second culture he called *engineer culture,* whose adherents believed that progress and problems in the organization can only be solved by science and technology. The third culture he called the *executive culture,* whose supporters assumed that only the executive of the organization has the knowledge and ability to solve the problems in the organization. Schein's extended definition of the subcultures in organizations both facilitated and limited cultural integrations in a PPP. For example, the engineer culture on the one hand limited cultural integration and while the operator and executive cultures on the other hand both facilitated cultural integration in organizations.

These subcultures were related to my study because the employees of the partnership who were the operators of the culture determined the progress of the partnerships in the PPP. The executives can create an enabling environment or teamwork for cultural integration to take place. Studying how the employees of the PPP worked together to integrate their various cultures to achieve optimal performance in the partnership was relevant. It was from this backdrop that this dissertation became relevant as a paramount way to add to the extant literature and widen the conversation on cultural integration in newly-created organizations.

Culture and Collaboration

In a multicultural environment, differences of opinions and lack of cohesion among employees resulted in lost productivity and hindered collaboration in the organization (Martin, 2015). Proper management of diversity helped to reduce employee turnover, truancy, and boosted employee staffing (Roberge, Lewicki, Hietapelto, & Abdyldaeva, 2011). As a result, it was important for people of diverse cultures to come together to solve problems and achieve valuable outcomes for their communities (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). Berger and Calabrese (1975) stated that to achieve effective functioning of a multicultural team, it was important to promote cross cultural communication amongst the employees and partners in a PPP to reduce uncertainty in the group. Collaboration has been studied by many authors and thought to be beneficial to integrating culture and solving uncommon societal problems (Abreu, 2014; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Eggers & Goldsmith, 2003; Goldsmith & Egger, 2004; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Martin, 2015; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Matveev and Nelson (2004) found that multicultural team members who differed in their cultural orientation were more than likely to face challenges in a group. One example was cultural rules about looking people directly in the eye. While it was expected in mainstream American culture to look people in the eye as a proof of innocence, this act would be considered disrespectful in my culture—the Edo culture. Cultural understanding allowed employees to be empathetic, became open minded, and effectively managed their cultural differences and cross-cultural misunderstanding that arose in the workplace (Ochieng & Price, 2009). Constantine (2000) stated that in today's

globalization of organizations, keeping empathy towards diverse groups and cultures was very important for a competent multicultural workforce. Similarly, Dovidio, Gaertner, and Validzic (as cited in Cundiff, Nadler & Sawn, 2009) argued that having empathy toward other's diversity in a group setting was a very important way to encourage collaboration and cooperation in work teams.

Cultural Differences and Discrimination in the Workplace

The diversity of the labor force in the United States has increased significantly in the new millennium. Cultural diversity was critical and beneficial to the survival of organizations in that it increases productivity and enhances better performance as the workforce was mixed with employees from different cultural backgrounds (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2013). To be able to overcome cultural differences and discrimination in the workplace, employees had to develop cultural competence that would effectively enable them to understand and interacted well with people from a different culture as their own (Alpert, 2018). The growing diversity within organizations now suggested the need for greater understanding and leadership intervention to reduce prejudice, discrimination, social inequality, and to maximize the organizational benefit from the diverse groups (Ferdman & Sagiv, 2012). According to Pitts and Wise (2010), the changes in workforce diversity have brought changes to organization in terms of how leaders of organizations thought and managed human resources. They cited the example of the percentage of white males who were in the Senior Executive Services (SES) in the US workforce in 1980—86%. By 2008 the proportion of white males had dropped to 65%. This demographic shift was also evident in other areas such gender, cultural, and

linguistic diversity due to globalization (Pitts & Wise, 2010). They noted that individuals

in about 18% of U.S. households spoke languages other than English. This finding was

supported by the last U.S. 2010 Census. According to the Census Bureau, 45.15% of the

307,007,000 people in U.S. in 2010 spoke different languages: 12.21% spoke Spanish,

8.71% spoke Chinese, 4.338% spoke Vietnamese, 5.26% spoke Tagalog, 6.99% spoke

French, 3.72% spoke Korean, and 3.93% spoke German language. Similarly, the EEOC

(2011) reported that in 2002, 17.5% of the total U.S. population (American citizens)

spoke languages other than English in their homes and that 4.1% spoke little or no

English. According to Pitts and Wise (2010) the demographic shift in languages spoken

and the diversity of the U.S. workforce was due to the globalization of business. This

increasing diversity of the United States workforce who do not speak English fluently

could further strengthen the workforce and increase the probability of these languages

spoken at home to subsequently make their way to the workplace as citizens

communicated and interacted with others at work. Pitts and Wise (2010) stated that

diversity was a strength that organizations can use to improve their performance.

Roberge, et al. (2011) stated that managing diversity in the workplace was very intricate

and elusive. As a result, they suggested to organizational leadership to assume the

appropriate tactical leadership skills and human resource competences to increase

awareness about diversity, and resolve or prevent the conflicts that diversity brought to

the organizations. Guajardo (1999) stated that cultural conflicts in the workplace came

from prejudice and discrimination, which were perpetrated when organizational leaders

failed to effectively measure and monitor diversity in the workplace. As a result, he

suggested that institutions should not only embrace diversity but also assure social integration in organizations.

As people from different cultural background and group interact, the diverse cultures, languages, biases and perceptions of the employees in the organizations were always at interplay. Research has shown that employees in multicultural organizations were constantly challenged with new organizational and cultural forms that directly clashed with their past value systems and cultures (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Janssens, 1995). The challenge here for both the manager and staff was how to successfully navigate the new cultural landscape to be able to better understand each other and successfully work together for the benefit of all.

Past research argued that cultural differences lead to language and communication barriers in the workplace, especially for non-primary English speakers. Cavico, Muffler, & Mujtaba (2013) stated that non-primary English speakers in the workplace might have language misunderstandings and face possible discrimination in the workplace due to their inability to effectively express themselves in the workplace (Kim, 2011). Ethnic identity affected the level of discrimination in the workplace. Operari and Fiske (2001) supported the argument when they stated that minorities (Blacks, Asians, and Hispanic) were more exposed to ethnic identity discrimination than the majority (Whites).

Crosby (1984) suggested that discrimination and prejudice occurred at two separate levels—the *personal* level (based on individual belonging to a specific social category) and *group* level (based on a particular group's social experiences). He contended that discrimination and prejudice were usually more likely to be reported at the

group level than at the personal level. This was likely because of the laws such as Title

VII Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) put in place to punish those

who committed workplace discrimination. Operari and Fiske (2001) found in their study

that certain cultural environments surrounding minorities and non-primary English

speakers actually influenced discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. This was

possible in a workplace environment where cultural awareness and integration was not

encouraged. To avoid this from happening and to reduce discrimination and prejudice,

and increase organizational performance through diversity competencies, Cox and Beale

(1997) argued that cultural awareness and knowledge acquisition must be encouraged so

that members of a diverse group can better understand and accept others from a different

cultural background.

Culture and Communication

Culture and communication were intertwined and interwoven (Hall, 1959; Padilla,

1999). Communication remained very important and central in administrative processes

(Garnett, 1992, 1997a, 2005), furthermore communication linked cultures and

organizational subcultures through human interaction. Padilla (1999) noted that language

and culture were strongly connected and interwoven, therefore to learn more about a

particular culture, one must first understand the language of communication in that

particular culture. Similarly, Hall (1959) stated that culture and communication were

intertwined since they both affect each other—language and culture enabled social

interaction and knowledge acquisition. He added that language acted as a gateway to

cross-cultural interaction and understanding. To understand a language, one needs to

identify with and be able to communicate in that language. This meant that as the employees of a PPP interacted and understood the language of their colleagues, the different cultures in the organization would be integrated. Asante, Mike, and Yin (2014) stated that in a global village, intercultural communication was the only way to alleviate social problems, identity issues, religious problems, and ecological crisis. They added that human existence was dependent on our ability to engage in intercultural communication.

Nahavandi and Malekzadeh (1993) and Olie (1994) argued that in a merger or acquisition, problems can occur between members from different organizational cultures due to difficulties in understanding each other. Clear and unambiguous communication, therefore, was very important for cultural integration to be facilitated in the workplace. Without that integration, it might become challenging to have social interaction, and preserve, share, and pass on cultural attributes or memes from one employee to another and or from one-time period to another. Wheelan, Buzalo, and Tsumura (1998) suggested that the increasing reliance on multicultural teams to increase organizational performance called for a greater focus on understanding of the communication processes needed to develop and cultivate a multicultural performance team. This appeared so because communication in any organizations involved the sharing of history, culture, rituals, and priorities of the organization (Garnett, Marlowe, & Pandey, 2008; Schein, 1992).

Research has shown that workplace conflict was evident particularly in organizations whose employees were from predominantly non-English-speaking ethnic groups (Cavico, Muffler, & Mujtaba, 2013). Rosenzweig (1994) and Acar, Cuo, and

Saxton (2007) stated that active and/or effective communication remained very useful in bringing people together in organizations especially in situations where environmental distance, language difference, cultural assumptions were obscured, and misunderstandings were prevalent. Matveev and Nelson (2004) stated that to be able to work with diverse groups of people, one must understand the culture of the group with which the individuals interacted and the group's conflict behavior, characters, and experiences. Similarly, Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) stated that to be effective in another culture, one must show interest in the other people's culture, be sensitive to their cultural differences, and be willing to respect and modify their behavior towards outgroups.

Past researchers (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Kotter & Heskett, 1992) have shown that there remained a link between organizational culture and organizational performance. The relationship between organizational culture and communication stood very important (Garnett 1997a) because in any organization, effective communication assured effective organizational performance. Kotter and Heskett (1992) found that organizational culture was related to long-term economic performance while Gordon and DiTomaso (1992) found that it was related to short-term economic performance. This appeared to show that whether short-term or long-term, the impact of organizational culture on performance was significant and critical. Communication has also been attributed to play a major role in terms of how organizational leadership influenced cultural integration and performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). This appeared to suggest that if the culture in an organization allowed staff to openly interact and joined in the

organizational processes, open staff interaction and participation should yield positive employee performance, which should increase performance of the organization-at-large as employees shared information, new memes, and collective values.

Koene (1996) found that employee openness, orientation to new ideas, and communication have an effect on how culture affected individual performance. Similarly, Genest (2005) stated that active communication can occur between members of organizations and community members only when there was an open discourse between the parties involved. Open dialogue helped to increase cultural integration with employees interacting and sharing information that brought the organization together. However, care should be taken such that those employees who openly shared their views in team settings were not rebuked for their opinions, as this might discourage their participation and might negatively affect organizational culture and performance in the team (Alvesson, 2002).

Past studies of organizational culture showed a correlation between communication and performance. Falcione, Sussman, and Herden (1987) found that organization culture attributes such as openness and trust caused a variance in both performance and communication outcomes while Eisenberg and Riley (2000), Tompkins (1977), and Greenbaum, Hellweg, and Facione (1988) found in their studies that there was a significant relationship between communication and culture. The more the communication in a PPP was open, the more the diverse employees interacted, and the more performance was enhanced. Schein (2004) stated that knowledge of other

employee's culture in an organization prevents communication breakdown and fosters collaboration amongst employees.

The leader's behavior and employee's perceptions of leadership determined how various cultures were accepted and integrated in organizations (Schein, 1992). This stood so because the leader of the organization created the setting and conditions for socialization and interactive communication to occur (Schein, 2004). Risberg (1997) argued that managers needed to address ambiguities, uncertainty, and foster early communication processes in cross-cultural acquisitions to foster effective communication in mergers. For communication to be effective, there needed to be interaction or dialogue, respect and empathy, and appropriate communication style between the parties involved.

Culture, Respect, and Values, Assumptions, Beliefs, and Expectations (VABES)

Communication of respect in cross-cultural communication was the focus of many studies and reviews (Chua, 2004; DeLellis, 2000; Dillon, 2003, 2007; Garcia 2010; Mackenzie & Wallace, 2011; Manusov 2008; Simon, 2007; Stewart, 2006; Tamam, 2010; Tompkins, 1977; Van Quaquebeke, 2009; Van Quaquebeke, Henrich, & Eckloff, 2009) and has been found to play a significant role in cross-cultural communication (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005). Communication of respect has been defined in the literature (Beach, Roter, Wang, Duggan, & Cooper, 2006; Giles, Dailey, Sarkar, & Makoni, 2007; Gremigni, Sommaruga, & Peltenburg, 2008; Salacuse, 2005). The definition of respect given by Thorne, Harris, Mahoney, Con, and McGuinness (2004) was arguably the most all-encompassing. Respect was defined as a way to show regard for an individual by listening to the individual, recognizing the contributions of the

individual, expressing empathy with the individual, being aware of the individual's circumstances and environment, and offering solutions and information to the individual when necessary.

Scholars have cited different importance of respect in communication (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Van Quaquebeke (2009) stated that respect was important in communication because the more one showed respect to others, the less likely it was that any negative interactions will ensue from the dialogue. Respect for fellow employees, therefore, can build effective interactions, eliminate stereotypes, reduce unfriendliness in communication, and foster interpersonal tolerance. Rogers and Lee-Wong (2003) argued that respect played a large role in managing employees' relationships in a culturally diverse organization while Simon (2007) stated that respect could psychologically restore any strained relationships between employees as it opened up opportunities for dialogue.

Culture and Essentialism

In a multicultural environment such as the PPP, employees are regularly exposed to people from different cultural and racial backgrounds. When one of these cultural groups possessed an underlying principle that gave rise to an unchallengeable attribute, it is called essentialism (Chao & Kung, 2015). The essentialist theory would affect cultural integration in the PPP if the majority culture dominated and influenced the other cultures in the PPP. The essentialist theorists' belief about race was that the dominant social group influenced the perceptions of the out-group members, which in this case were the minorities (Haslam & Levy, 2006; Jayaratne, 2006; Keller, 2005).

The essentialist position was that the dominant group perceives that they are a better race than the out-group, which leads to the validation of stereotypes, prejudice, social inequalities, and racial discrimination against the out-group members (Jayaratne et al., 2006; Keller, 2006). Chao, Chen, Roisman, and Hong (2007) in their study of the implications of bicultural individual's cognition and physiological reactivity to essentializing found that bicultural individuals find rigidity and challenges in being accepted into the mainstream or dominant culture. This rigidity and challenge can affect cultural integration as the immigrant employee working in a multicultural environment negotiate their cultural identities between their host culture and their native culture.

Communication, Communicative Action, Rationality, and Dialogue

The theory of communicative action was a good fit for this study due because it places importance on promoting intercultural communication and common understanding of communication and language, communication rationality, and cooperation in a group setting. Habermas (1984) defined communicative action as the interaction of two individuals (actors) that are skilled in speech and have an established interpersonal relationship. Habermas (1984) placed these processes in the context of a broader *lifeworld* and systems—that are materialistic.

For the purpose of this study, focus was on the lifeworld. The lifeworld was made up of culture, social institutions, and personal identities while the system was materialistic (Kernstock & Brexendorf, 2009). Habermas' work on the theory of communicative action (TCA), has been studied and corroborated by various authors (Bolton, 2014; Cecez-Kecmanovic & Janson, 1999; Kernstock & Brexendorf, 2009),

particularly the ability to engage in discourse, fostering of intercultural communication, and advocacy of free public participation in public discourse. By applying this theory to my study, it helped to explore if the employees of the PPP have experienced the freedom of free discourse at work, if they freely asked questions, and if they participated in team work activities without being discriminated against.

Habermas (1984) stated that the TCA facilitates interaction of employees (social actors) and consensus building capacity in group settings through dialogue rather than the use of positional powers. If that was the case, then the study attempted to validate that the DOT practices the communicative action model, which encourages employees of the PPP to partake in communicative action that are free of discrimination, prejudice, and mockery. My study tested if the DOT actually practiced this model through my interviews. Kernstock and Brexendorf (2009) argued that people involved in the communication process have to accept each other and then set conditions to achieve mutual understanding. If employees accept each other and are free to participate in any discourse in a PPP, they would be able to communicate freely and achieve mutual gains from the discourse. Habermas (1984, 1987, & 2000) supported this when he stated that communicative action and rationality fosters cooperative work and improves cultural integration in organization. This meant that once employees of the PPP are interacting freely and sharing their opinions on issues, cultural integration might be supported. Cook (1997) argued that communicative action explained that everyone who was skillful in speech and action was entitled to partake in a discourse, freely ask questions, brought in new ideas or topics for discussion, and freely expressed themselves without any

alienation. Ngwenyama and Lee (1997) argued that for common understanding and consensus to be achieved in a group, communicative action has to be exhausted in the group. In this study, therefore, I measured in qualitative terms, the extent to which communicative action was embodied in the intercultural communication in DOT PPPs.

The TCA also helped us to understand the role of leadership in fostering cultural integration in organizations. My research assessed if TCA encouraged interactions and reduced the power distance amongst the employees of the PPP organization that existed at DOT. Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson (1999) supported this when they stated that communicative action focused on rational discourse, reduction of power differences among the employees of an organization, encouragement of interaction between people, and relationships building. Similarly, Bolton (2014) and Burkhart (2007) stated that communicative action advocated for actors in a discourse to pursue common understanding (communication universality—universal understanding of human communications), which was free from domination and discrimination through reasoned argument, reaching understanding, consensus building, and collaboration. Communicative action denotes a situation of ideal speech (Jacobson & Storey, 2004) in which all actors engaged in a discourse that was free from all forms of distortion, coercion, and the imposition of ideology on any member participating in the dialogue (Habermas, 1984).

Dialogue allowed employees to have a reflective conversation when they truly learn to have a deep reflection on their own assumptions and let their disagreement, feelings, behaviors, and the way they perceive others go. Schein (2004) argued that

dialogue was a low-key way of having an honest conversation that fosters reflective conversation and hinders confrontational discussions. This reflective conversation allows the employees to see where their assumptions and thoughts about others are different from reality.

On reflective conversation, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson (1999) argued that when actors in a communicative action are empathetic and open to discussion on any topic without being acrimonious, the result was a strong cultural and social integration that eliminates unwarranted domination and alienation by a dominant group in organizations. From the foregoing, it was clear that reflective conversation can foster cultural integration in the work place by opening the employees mind to have empathetic feelings, give them the opportunity to hear their own thoughts and feelings, explore the possible shared assumptions, and make them better listeners to people from other cultures and organizational groups.

Theoretical Framework

It was essential to address aspects of Habermas' theory of communicative action (TCA) and the relevant literature on cultural integration in organizations, given my use of critical theory of communication as a component of my theoretical framework. Critical theory which was first introduced in the Institute of Social Research in Germany in 1923 by the Frankfurt School (Held, 1980), provided the theoretical framework for this study. Critical theory was about empowering people to overcome the obstacles that emanated from racial, cultural, class, and gender differences (Fay, 1987). Critical theory was an appropriate lens to explore the central phenomenon of cross-cultural communication in

PPPs because critical theory addressed organizational social imbalance and fostered

social integration (Madison, 2006). Critical theory helped to understand better,

interpersonal and intercultural communication, team collaboration, and/or

communication culture (norms and values developed by the employees) in a PPP. Critical

theory helped to understand and study how people think, interacted, and acted in the

context of this study (Madison, 2006; Thomas, 1993).

Risberg (1997) stated that communication theory was important because it

proposed clear and unambiguous communication skills to manage diverse employees.

This theory was helpful in determining the role of leadership in managing diversity and

facilitating cultural integration in a PPP. Offermann, Kennedy, and Wirtz (1994), Risberg

(1997), and Smith (2009) all greed that communication theories addressed the need for

managers to address ambiguities, uncertainty, and early communications in mergers and

acquisitions to avoid cultural clashes, anxieties, and improved integration. Hall (1959)

noted that culture and communication were intertwined since they both affected each

other. This was why it was important to find out from the participants how

communication has facilitated their cultural integration in the PPP. Genest (2005) stated

that communication can occur between members of organizations and community

members only when there was an open discourse between the parties involved. This

communication discourse can lead to cultural integration in the PPP—the phenomenon

under study. I am hopeful that the results obtained from this research would help foster

effective dialogue, result in increased rapport between employees, and enhance cultural

integration in PPPs.

Habermas' critique was used in this study to act as my research theoretical backbone because it prescribed communication universality that is free from domination and discrimination (Bolton, 2014). Similarly, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson (1999) and White (1988) stated that during communicative action process, each actor in a communication must be free to participate in the discourse; free to introduce/question any new ideas put forward during the communication process, and that each actor will not be subjected to coercion and ridicule in the process. Habermas' critique guided me in finding out if the employees of the PPP participated freely in public discourse and communication, interacted well with other social actors in the organization, and built consensus in a group through dialogue without coercion, discrimination, and use of positional power (Habermas, 1984). Habermas' work on communicative action and public spheres informed my theoretical construct because it addressed social integration, free public discourse, cooperation, communication free from domination and discrimination, and communication rationality (Bolton, 2014). In other words, the TCA helped me to find out in the PPP if the employees from the different cultures were free to interact with each other, raised any idea/questions without discrimination and ridicule.

Kernstock and Brexendorf, (2009) argued that people involved in communication process had to accept each other and the set conditions to achieve mutual understanding. Habermas critique fitted well with my research in that cultural integration in organization promoted common understanding and acceptance of the varied cultures in organization so that the employees would be free to interact, become tolerant of each other, and become open minded and empathetic. It also would allow the employees to partake freely in a

communication process, take positions on issues without any coercion, be free from discrimination and ridicule, and effectively collaborate for organizational effectiveness.

Managing Diversity

There appeared to be rich literature on the benefits of and reasons why both the government and private sectors form partnerships. Despite the benefits, culture clashes between the partners and their employees continued to be a challenge because of limited research and or poor integration practices in the PPP. Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that cultural differences among employees could cause "conflict, misunderstanding, and poor project performance" (p. 533). A way to properly manage diverse cultures and achieve effective functioning of a multicultural team was to invest in intercultural communication amongst the employees and partners in the PPPs so as to reduce uncertainty in the group (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Kessler, Coyle-Shapiro, and Purcell (2004) stated that our familiarity of the effect of job outsourcing on the attitude and behavior of employees was little. Valentino and Brunelle (2004) in their study of the role of middle managers in the transmission and integration of organizational culture found that poor cultural integration can be a problem for organizations especially where multiple cultures and poor communication were involved. Banks (as cited in Genest, 2005) stated that in a multicultural context, effective communication reinforces self-concepts, affirms cultural identities, enhances relationships, and accomplishes strategic goals. Similarly, Rosenzweig (1994) stated "active communication was especially important in situations where geographic distance, language difference, and cultural misperceptions might exist" (p. 120). Employees from multicultural backgrounds can be

a blessing to partnerships when effective communication and socialization was effectively practiced. Otherwise, the cultural differences can lead to prejudice, ridicule, cultural degradation, and interpersonal insensitivities.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

In the last few decades, PPPs have become an essential and effective mechanism to manage increasing social challenges, environmental and developmental issues facing public institutions. Many successes have been recorded in the area of service delivery, infrastructural development, education, and waste management. Despite the recorded successes of PPPs, culture clashes between the partners and employees of the partnerships continued to be a challenge due to poor integration practices in the PPP.

Research literature indicated that cultural integration remained vital in PPPs with diverse employees to achieve effective communication, collaboration, and organizational performance. It was only through hiring and promotion of people from diverse cultures, employee dialogues, and employee performance evaluations that cultural integration can be strengthened in organizations.

While many factors might enhance cultural integration in PPPs, research (Falcione, Sussman, & Herden, 1987) suggested that cultural empathy; openness; flexibility; and social initiative, and provision of enabling environment for diverse employees' collaboration can facilitate cultural integration in organizations. My research explored ways to reduce the diversity challenges posed by lack of proper cultural integration in newly formed PPPs.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology chosen for this study. Specifically, it addresses the research design and rational for choosing the design, the research questions, the central phenomenon of the study, my role as the researcher of the study, sampling and sampling strategy, participant selection, participant consent, the data collection and analyses techniques, and data storage techniques.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

PPPs that were formed between the public, private, and/or nonprofit organizations have been important and effective ways to resolve socioeconomic and infrastructural challenges facing public institutions in the 21st century (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Rethemeyer, 2005). Previous research highlighted the successes and benefits of PPPs and also revealed the importance of diversity management in organizations (Acar, Cuo, & Saxton, 2007; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Cox & Blake, 1991; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Esen & Erdem, 2013; Hawkins, 2014; Jackson, Might, & Whitney, 1995; McLaurin, 2006; Wagner, Pfeffer, & O'Reilly, 1984; Zammuto & Krakower, 1991).

Diversity is important for organizations by bringing employees of different cultural backgrounds and geographical locations together and combining their unique individual talents and ideas, memes, and cultures. Although diversity has many advantages for organizations, it also can pose a problem when poorly managed. This is so because managing diversity involves the integration of the different cultures that the employees bring to the new organization. Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that cultural differences and or lack of cultural integration among employees can lead to conflict, misunderstanding, and poor performance among the employees in a group. To resolve issues emanating from diversity mismanagement and poor cultural integration, researchers have argued that leaders of organizations must promote a sound organizational culture and integration of employee cultures and subcultures in the organizations.

Studies addressing culture in organizations are common (Matveev & Nelson, 2004; Schein; 2009; Van Oudenhoven, Mol, & Van Der Zee, 2003). The research of Coyle-Shapiro and Morrow (2006), Biggs and Swailes (2005), Coyle-Shapiro, Morrow, and Kessler (2006), and Rubery, Earnshaw, Marchington, Cooke, and Vincent (2002) expressed concerns about the impact of PPPs on employee attitudes and behaviors in outsourcing. Specific work addressing how to integrate culture in organizations was not as common. Kessler, Coyle-Shapiro, and Purcell (2004) stated that our familiarity of the effect of job outsourcing on the attitudes and behavior of employees is limited. This was why cultural integration continues to be a challenge to some PPPs.

The challenge posed by the lack of cultural integration was worsened if the employees with a dominant culture in the new PPP are not sympathetic towards the minority cultures of the other employees and they perceive their cultures, attitudes, behaviors, memes, and social construction of realities to be superior to that of the minority employees (Jayaratne et al., 2006; Keller, 2006). More scholarly work was needed to address how cultural integration was facilitated between the employees from different cultural backgrounds and work environments in the new PPP. Thus, the purpose of this study was to determine which aspects of intercultural communication were present in the PPPs and if they were perceived to be sufficient to facilitate cultural integration among PPP employees.

My research explored employees from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to see how their experiences of the phenomenon (intercultural communication) hindered or facilitated cultural integration in new PPPs. The results were generated from

individual perspectives to explore how their experience might shed light on the ways to reduce cultural integration difficulties in newly formed PPPs and to help close a gap in literature about the role of intercultural communication in the cultural integration process in PPP. The research might not only contribute to the extant literature, but also lead eventually to practices that assures cultural mixing and improved performance in PPPs.

Research Design and Rational

My research method was qualitative to maximize the exploratory and in-depth aspects of the research method. I employed phenomenology for my study because it allowed me to explore and interview in depth the participants' comments to gather their lived experiences about the PPP phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). I chose a qualitative research paradigm over quantitative because qualitative research was closer to the phenomenon and to where the participants lived (Patton, 2002). In addition, the qualitative method allowed me to discover in-depth details about cultural integration in PPP from the participant's perspective to explain the phenomenon under study (Laws & McLeod, 2006), and compare my research results with the work of other researchers.

To be able to get a good sample of employees from the different cultural backgrounds that are employed in the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or its partners for study, I used snowball sampling to select those employees who has experienced the phenomenon in the past. Snowball sampling allowed me to recruit participants by referral from those who had previously experienced the phenomenon. Care was taken to ensure that members of both the dominant and sub-dominant cultures who experienced the phenomenon in the past were recruited for the study. Also, I needed

to explain my cultural identity to the participants so that they were aware of how my identity might inform the research—in terms of participants' selection, interview, and analysis. My approach was to be respectful to the participants and honest about my research questions and intentions to achieve effective communication between myself and the participants. This approach allowed me to capture the lived experiences of the participants primarily through face-to-face interviews.

Research Questions

The following questions served as basis for the study:

Research Question 1. What aspects (cultural universality, peculiarity, and variation) of intercultural communication were present in PPPs?

Research Question 2. To what extent did these aspects of intercultural communication hinder or facilitate cultural integration in PPP organizations?

With interview questions designed to answer this research question, I found a common pattern in the lived experiences of the employees and then made inferences from the results obtained (see the Appendix). I used critical theory and communications theory to help explain the results because they served to explain and described organizational behavior as it related to interpersonal and intercultural communication, team collaboration, and communication culture. These theories might help shed light on these themes in the area of intercultural communication, to help decode the norms and values held by the employees.

Central Phenomenon

The central phenomenon in this study was intercultural communication in newly-formed PPP organizations. Research indicated that as globalization of labor and markets continued, increasing pressures are placed on the less powerful cultures in organizations to give in to the domineering powers of the dominant cultures (Cleary, 2013). The submission to more powerful cultures can cause conflict, stereotypes, and distrust in organizations. This qualitative research sought to find out how functional integration (establishing rules for social interaction and putting people on cross-cultural teams to enable interaction and collaboration) was facilitated by the leadership of the PPP. Cultural integration remained useful to organizations because whenever one culture dominated another (as it was always the case with multiple cultures existing in PPP), the only way to maintain respect and cross-cultural understanding was to have mutual consideration of each other's cultural standpoint across a two-way channel (Cleary, 2013). This study employed the use of critical theory (Habermas' critique) to guide the interpretation of the results.

Critical theory guided me to filter and interpret the lived experiences of employees of the FDOT as it related to their intercultural communication. Since my qualitative research was focused on determining which aspects of intercultural communication were present in the PPPs and to find out what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in PPP organizations, critical theory fitted well with this study because it guided me to find out if the employees of the PPP participated freely in public communication/discourse, interacted well with other social actors in the

organization, and built consensus in a group through dialogue rather than the use of

positional powers (Habermas, 1984). Cleary (2013) stated that when conducting research

today, the community and those researched in the past now want to ask their own

questions, have self-determination, and also benefit from the research. She added that as a

result, researchers of many cultures and other disciplines now listen to and study those

that have been marginalized in the past.

My Role as Researcher

Qualitative studies, unlike quantitative methods with developed survey

instruments, have no known or standardized instrument other than the researcher for

gathering data (Creswell, 2009). As was generally the case for qualitative research, I was

the research instrument used to gather data directly through interviews with PPP

participants, and through the analysis of images to capture the context of the study. I used

both journaling and observational notes to help support the trustworthiness of the

research. I adopted Janesick's (2011) advice to record thoughts, feelings, and biases. A

reflective journal helped provide supplementary data. Janesick (2011) stated that because

the researcher was the instrument in a qualitative inquiry, it was important for the

researcher to keep a good journal to act as a backup to observations and interview

recordings. These practices supported a rigorous and ethical approach to data collection,

analysis, and security.

I used a digital audio recording device to document my interviews with

participants. The collected data was transcribed and the interview transcripts as well as

the field notes and journals were reviewed for accuracy and coded. I used NVivo

qualitative data analysis software to confidentially analyze the data for content and patterns (themes) that informed my research. The interview audio, notes, journal, and media were secured and will be stored safely in a locked personal cabinet for 5 years. Although I did not have any prior acquaintances or any existing personal or professional working relationship with the participants, I ensured that any conflict of interest was disclosed both prior to and during the research.

Methodology

The methodology section of this proposal addresses population, sampling and sampling procedures, participant selection, and data collection. It also discussed my data analysis plan for the study.

Population

The population from which I drew my sample was the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and its partners. I sought participants from the various divisions within the department to get the required sample of 11 and increment of 3 more samples until saturation was achieved for the study. Since Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2007) stated that the unit of analysis of a research was the most important and basic part of what was to be studied, my research unit of analysis was at the level of the individual, to focus on cultural integration in the FDOT. I chose the FDOT (accessible population from which participants were drawn) because it met the set criteria of having employees from diverse cultural backgrounds, the employees must have encountered some form of cross-cultural interaction and/or integration barrier on the job in the past, and might be willing to share their lived experiences about the phenomenon of intercultural

communication. It was hoped that their responses and willingness to share their lived

experiences on the job would help the proposed research in determining how intercultural

communication helped to facilitate cultural integration among the different or

multicultural employees of PPPs.

Sampling and Sampling Procedure

I sampled 11 people for my study. This size was sufficient as it was in the upper

range for qualitative, in-depth interviews. Also, this size was enough to study and explore

the lived experiences of the participants and answered the research questions (reached the

saturation point—data adequacy). If saturation was not reached, I made plans to sample

and interview additional interviewees, in increments of three. Following Patton (2002),

my study sample was sized adequately to provide data on what I wanted to know, given:

the purpose, the intended outcome, the usefulness of the study, the credibility, and the

number of people that can be studied with the available time and resources.

The sampling design I selected for this research was snowball sampling design. I

chose this approach because of its advantage of allowing me to select the individuals that

are good fit for the study from the accessible sample. I intended to interview 10-15

participants (n) from the accessible population—total number of employees (N). To

operationalize this, I used the help of previously selected participants to identify and

select their acquaintances and/or colleagues who have also experienced the phenomenon

that were visible and widely employed in the FDOT. To achieve reliability, I ensured that

the process taken during the sample selection and research interviews were properly

documented to ensure that a similar result would be obtained by another researcher who

follows the same procedure. The other advantage here was that it allowed me to observe as a member of a population out-group (I addressed my biases by stating my identity at the onset) and used critical theory more effectively to find out how freely the employees of the FDOT interacted at work, communicated with other people from different cultures, and collaborated in a team.

I intentionally tried to recruit different employees of different ethnicities/races and genders who met the set criteria in my sample if they were available. This assured adequate representation of the population under study. Also, it was good to know from the participants how the essentialist theory affected their perception about cultural integration in the PPP.

Participant Selection

My selected participants were drawn from the FDOT, which has experienced cultural integration in the past. The findings helped to answer my research questions and provided deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2007). To select participants in the PPP selected for the study, I used the following criteria to identify those who qualified for the study:

1. The participant must have been employed with the agency (PPP) for a minimum of 1 year.

2. The participant must have interacted with people from other cultures—that was engaged in cross-cultural communication, encounter, and or collaboration with other non-immigrants in the organization.

3. The participants and the researcher would not have worked together in the same agency or place of employment.

4. The participant must be able to read English to understand the need for the study and be able to interact with the researcher.

From the group of individuals who meet the general criteria stated above, I selected (using informed consent) the number required using snowball sampling. To avoid bias, I avoided the injection of personal opinion during the selection and interview process and maintained neutrality.

Participant Consent

My interview protocol included the use of a consent form for the participants to complete before the interviews began. The consent form asked for permissions from the participants to take part in the study, it informed them that their participation in the research was voluntarily, and that participants can withdraw from the interview or research at any time. The form described my data gathering process, addressed the confidentiality of the participants, it also explained the reason for the study, and any risks associated with it. The consent form had the date, place, time, and length of the interview. It also provided a brief description of the research/study, numbers of people participating in the interview, and how the participants might potentially benefit from the study. Participants were assured that the information they provided would remain confidential and be kept securely. The participants were told they could leave the study at any time without suffering any adverse effect. I let participants who became disinterested or simply wished to leave the study know that they could do so at any time.

Data Collection

I was the data collection instrument and I collected data through direct face-to-face interviews with participants of the study. Warren and Karner (2010) observed that face-to-face interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to define and control the research situation. I was convinced that the data collection instrument was sufficient for the study since I was the instrument and collected the data myself. Data collection lasted for two months. During the data collection, I journaled and used digital audio recorder to record the interview with participants. The audio recording gave me the added advantage of paying more attention and engaging with the participants than I would if I had only written down the interview conversations manually. Data was collected from 11 FDOT employees chosen as participants in the study. This sample was sufficient to reach saturation for the study.

After the data collection, the recorded audio interview transcripts, observation field notes, and field journals were managed, organized, and stored with qualitative data analysis software. The digitally recorded audio data collected was transcribed to Microsoft Word document manually with Dragon software as a backup. After transcribing, I then compared the transcribed document to the digitally recorded audio to assure accuracy. I also employed member checking by sharing the findings with the participants of the study to assure completeness and accuracy. While there was no plan then to include examination of historical or legal documents for this study, but it was not completely ruled out as the need might have arose later in the study.

Creswell (2009) stated that the role of the researcher in a qualitative research was that of the instrument used for gathering data through observation, interview, exploration, examination of documents, photography, or videos. Because I was gathering data for my study, I came up with the research questions and interview protocols. The interview protocols had an informed consent forms that the participants completed. To assure the accuracy and sufficiency of the interview questions and that they answered the research questions, the interview questions was tested on some peers and friends. This way, I was assured that my questions were not only clear and that it answered the research question(s), it also assured content validity. Janesick (2010) advised to pilot interview questions to learn which questions best suited the study and to find out under what conditions or when to use particular types of questions.

Assurance of trustworthiness and ethical credibility cannot be overemphasized in a research. Creswell (2007) stated that validation was a judgment of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research. To overcome ethical concerns related to informed consent, I used an interview protocol. Member checking which was considered one of the most critical techniques for establishing credibility (Creswell, 2007) was also employed here to further assure credibility.

Data Management and Analysis

After data collection, I managed the data for quality and reliability by creating, fracturing the data, and organizing the data files (Maxwell, 2005), linking the data to the research questions, and analyzing the data by using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to identify themes and patterns in the document and interview data. Coding was

simply the process of organizing raw field data into categories (similar words, phrases, and sentences), labeling the categories, and breaking the categories into smaller parts and then reassembled the parts that related to each other to form themes. Gibbs and Taylor (2005) defined the act of coding data as the process of combing through research data for themes, ideas and categories, and then marking similar passages of text with a code label so that they can easily be retrieved at a later stage for further comparison and analysis.

Data Condensation

Condensation of data takes place throughout the research process. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013) stated that data condensation starts from when the researcher decides which framework, cases, research questions, data collection approach, and coding technique to use. I condensed the data collected in the field by selecting, simplifying, summarizing of the field notes, coding and generation of categories informed by the themes that emerged from the literature review. I further developed themes and patterns from the field notes and interview transcripts to get a better understanding of the data collected which aided me in sharpening, sorting, discarding, and organizing the data to draw better inferences.

Preliminary Coding Framework

My preliminary coding framework was as follows:

1. Read the entire transcript first, read the text again and noted the parts that corresponded to my research questions. By familiarizing myself with the transcripts of the data collected in the field—listening to the audio tapes and

my interview notes, I became aware of key ideas and be able to recognize

recurrent themes from the data.

2. The next stage was to mark the text/transcripts by circling, highlighting, and/or
   underlining keywords and phrases.

3. The next was to index the data—the identification of portions of the data that
   form a particular theme. This step was followed by charting of the themes.
   Here, the themes indexed, were now arranged in charts with headings and
   subheadings for easy visual analysis.

4. The next stage was the grouping of the themes—combining similar codes and
   interconnection of codes.

5. The final stage was the analysis of the mapping, charts, and interpretation of
   the key variables or characteristics. This process allowed the mapping of the
   phenomenon under study and retained link to the original data, theory, and
   research questions. This also relates the codes to the research literature to
   compare the results to that of past research.

Data Display

Data display process involved analyzing the data holistically to understand the

data collected and to generally see where the analysis was going, take the necessary

action (further analysis if required), and drew conclusions from the displayed data. Miles,

Huberman, and Saldana (2013) stated that data display was a process of organizing,

consolidating, and compressing information to aid in the taking of action or drawing of

conclusions about the data collected. Data display generally helped to give a visual image

of the data for a better understanding of the data analysis. The use of tables, graphs, charts, and matrices were all examples of data display during analysis and interpretation.

The next step was the drawing and verifying conclusions from the data analyzed. During this process, I needed to interpret what my patterns, codes, and themes meant. This process involved the examinations and cross-examination of data, field notes, and interview transcripts to gain a better understanding of the direction of the study and reassure research validity and confirmability. Typically, one stage of analysis should lead to another. For example, data condensation might bring in new ideas or insights that can be displayed and verified at the end of the analysis. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013) stated that qualitative analysis was a continuous process that was both engaging and interactive as one moved from one stage of analysis to another.

Coding Protocol

Coding came from analysis of the words, phrases, and responses from the participant interviews. Coding of data began with the listing of pre-codes. My primary research question addressed those aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universalities) of intercultural communication, which were viewed to be present in PPPs by FDOT employees. To assess the extent to which the aspects of intercultural communication hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in PPP organizations, I derived pre-codes from the aspects of culture. The pre-codes selected were: empathy, teamwork, collaboration, trust, consequences, concerns for others, communication, fairness, friendliness, follow-through, interpersonal, integration, supportive, conflict, knowledge, learning, respect, and relationship derived from the literature review and

interview questions. With these pre-codes, I was able to easily analyze the data collected and successfully answered the research questions.

As a part of my coding protocol, I manually assigned codes using above pre-codes and themes to the participant's interview responses. Specifically, during coding the words/phrases from participants were circled, grouped together, assembled, clustered, subclustered, broken into sections or groups, labelled, and categorized together. I sorted through the coded documents/transcripts to identify related patterns, categories, phrases, themes, and the differences or commonalities in the data. The coded categories were then used to describe, classify, and interpret the data collected. Coding helped to summarize, synthesize, sort, and label interview data collected in a qualitative study (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). The emerging patterns from my coded data were then isolated, displayed for a better understanding, and used to compare my findings to that of already known theories and literature for research conclusion.

Coding Process

Coding was important because it made it possible for the data to be easily managed—analysed, searched, compared with other data—and helped identify any patterns that emerged from the data that required further review. The coding process that I used to code my data was the values and *in vivo* coding processes. I used these processes because they were suitable for coding phenomenological studies—studying the nature and meanings of everyday experiences (Saldana, 2009). Similarly, Saldana (2009) stated that values coding can be used for all qualitative studies, but they are best suited for studies exploring cultural value and interpersonal experiences of the participants. The

values coding helped me in coding the values, beliefs, and attitudes that employees of the FDOT brought to work. It helped me to identify power domination and possible conflict at FDOT. I also used *in vivo* coding along with the values coding system. *In vivo* coding required the use of the participant's generated actual words during the coding. Words were selected by underlining, highlighting, and bolding of participants' words as the participant went through the transcript for member-checking. *In vivo* coding was a good way to see if the researcher had consistency in identifying themes that were important to the participants. This was because in *in vivo* coding the researcher was able to see what was important to the participants from the words they used (Saldana, 2009). *In vivo* coding captured participant's behaviour and processes, and allowed the researcher to know how the behaviour or process was addressed (Saldana, 2009).

To assure/verify if my manual coding was successful and to easily manage my data, I also used the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software to help me manage my data. Specifically, I used NVivo computer software to manage my data during data analysis. I assigned a code label using the words from the code list above, or common words/phrases from the interviewee that related to the phenomenon under study. The NVivo program assisted in identifying code labels and searched the text or images of the storage file for new and pre-coded themes. By assigning codes and label to the text, analytic software such as NVivo can search the whole text and label those other portions that have the same labels, themes, patterns, ideas, and codes. It further encouraged careful line-by-line analysis of the text and visualization of the relationship among codes and themes by drawing a visual model (Creswell, 2007). The findings from the identified

themes and patterns that emerged from the coded interview data was used to draw conclusions and compared to the result of past researchers.

Issues of Trustworthiness

I was mindful to maximize transparency and document procedures to ensure trustworthiness. I made sure that I was clear, detailed, and comprehensive in describing the protocol so that other researchers can replicate the experiment. There were many threats to both internal and external validity. Here was how I will have handled them:

Threats to Establishing Validity

The threats to establishing validity that I foresaw in this study were as follows:

1. Prolonged contact with participants. This would have been a threat during the experiment if I was not able to have a sustained contact with the study participants. To provide evidence that the results of the research were authentic, care was taken to ensure that I had adequate time to build trust, captured the participant's lived experience, and brought each interview to a successful closure. I also used triangulation by comparing the responses of the respondents to help validate the trustworthiness of the study.

2. Disclosing and clarifying my biases about the phenomenon helped to give credibility to the study. It was important to disclose my past experiences and prior exposure to the phenomenon. As the researcher and only data collection instrument for the research study, my motivations and biases were relevant. As an immigrant, I was keenly aware of cultural miscommunication and discrimination. Those were some of the motivations behind my research,

therefore I crafted interview questions and prompts that were neutral to avoid

introducing bias to the study. Doing this brought credibility to the study.

Member checking was another great way to avoid threat to establish validity. I

asked the participants to review the research findings and my interpretations

of their responses for credibility. This process involved sharing the data

analysis and interpretation of the data with the participants to review for

accuracy and credibility (Creswell, 2007).

Threats to External Validity

Threats to external validity for my study could have come from the following:

1. A lack of variation in the participants. Using more than one location to select

   participants for the study (to allow variation of participants' selection)

   resolved this dispersion issue. However, since I was drawing participants from

   one agency, I had to ensure that the participants selected were as diverse as

   practically possible. The snowball sampling helped here.

2. I foresaw another external validity threat if the description of my research

   process was not well detailed and documented. Therefore, to minimize the

   effects of this threat and repressed this transferability problem, I had to be

   very clear, described in rich detail, and documented the procedures that I

   followed in the research. That way, other researchers might be able to

   replicate the research in another setting or context.

Dependability and conformability of the Research

To establish the dependability of the research result, I triangulated the research result by using different sources to corroborate the data collected during the study. In addition, careful and proper documentation of the exact process taken during the data collection and analysis helped to establish the confirmability of the research.

Intra and Intercodal Reliability

To achieve intra and intercodal reliability of the research result, I was very meticulous during coding so that when the same passage was given to multiple coders to code, they would see the theme or result that I saw in my coding. Also, I had the interviewees reviewed the results of my transcript for correctness and accuracy. With all these different credibility, dependability, confirmability, and reliability methods put in place during my study, the research results should stand scrutiny by external auditors and peer reviewers.

Ethical Procedures and Concerns

To overcome ethical concerns related to data collection, I used an informed consent form with the participants to complete prior to the interviews. The form sought permission from the participants, it informed them that their participation in the research was voluntarily, and that they can withdraw from the research at any time. The form also had an explanation of the reason for the study and any risks associated with it, and the procedures I used to gather the data. It also had a brief description of the research goals and the number of people participating in the study. It had an assurance that the

participant's personal information would be kept confidential, a disclosure of whom I shared the interview data, and the audience that benefited from the research.

Agreement to Gain Access to Participants

A letter of cooperation asking for approval to gain access to the participants needed for this study was submitted to the agency director. The letter detailed the reasons for the study, why the agency was selected, the number of people needed for the study, and the kind of information needed from the participants. It also asked for access to their facility and research population. With this letter, the agency director was able to approve access to participants.

Treatment of Participants

Participants of the study were treated with utmost respect. As human subjects, proper care was taken to ensure that they were handled in agreement with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines and the Walden University ethical standards for research. IRB permission (Approval Number: 11-17-16-0247313) to carry out the research was obtained before the commencement of the data collection. To comply with the guidelines set by the federal government on using human subjects for research, participants were given informed consent forms to complete. The form indicated that their approvals to participate in the research were obtained without any coercion. It also showed the minimal and reasonable risks compared to the benefits of the study. The research was carefully planned and monitored to assure the safety and privacy of the participants and ensure the equitable selection of the participants to make sure that both the risks and gains of the projects were fairly shared.

Data Treatment

The data collected for the research was handled with care both before and after data analysis. The data was downloaded to an external hard drive, which will remain stored in a locked cabinet for five years. The participants' personal identification and confidential information was protected and kept securely to assure that no other individuals were allowed access to the raw data, unless under my supervision.

Other Ethical Issues

I do not expect any conflict of interest or other ethical issues affecting this study because I did not study my place of work and I also did not have any prior contact with the participants. In addition, I did not give any incentives such as money, tips, or gifts to participants to partake in the study. Participation was strictly voluntary. Any participant who wished to leave the study could have done so at any time with no questions asked.

Summary

This project was proposed to study how intercultural communication was facilitated in the PPP. This research central phenomenon was cultural integration in organizations. Participants for the study were selected using a type of non-probability sampling called snowball sampling. I chose snowball sampling because it allowed me to focus on my area of interest—intercultural communication, and allowed me to collect data directly through firsthand interview and observation of the phenomena or events as they were taking place. It also enabled interaction with participants, interviewing and recording of participants' opinions, and their lived experiences during data collection. To successfully carry out this research, I used the critical theory in this study as a framework

of analysis since it addressed organizational social imbalance and discrimination. Additionally, communications theory was applied to explore how intercultural communication in the PPP was fostered.

To successfully answer the research questions, I served as the research instrument. I gathered data through direct interviews of participants using digital/audio recorder to capture the participants' answers and use of an interview protocol to explore the participants' lived experiences, particularly in terms of intercultural communication in the PPP. To ensure quality and reliability, the data was logically organized, managed, and backed up for security. The data was analyzed using qualitative data analysis software to code for themes, patterns, and connections. Proper care was taken to ensure that ethical procedures were put in place to safeguard the rights of the participants during and after the study. Participants were provided with information on the purpose of the research and informed consent. To ensure the research credibility and reliability, measures such as triangulation, peer review, member checking was put in place to assure the research result credibility and transferability.

Chapter 4 addressed the results obtained from the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

A qualitative method and phenomenological approach were employed for this study to answer the main research question: What aspects of intercultural communication were present in PPPs and to what extent did they hinder and/or facilitate cultural integration in PPP organizations? This central research question was divided further into four sub-questions with each subquestion having three additional interview questions (Q1-Q3). The participant responses to these questions were then analyzed to answer the overarching research question of intercultural communication in a PPP and compared to the findings of Drucker (2005), Oertig and Buergi (2006), Matveev and Nelson (2004), and Marquis (2005) on cultural integration.

The participant responses were also used to compare the theoretical framework for this study, and to the findings of Madison (2006). Past researchers have stated that critical theory was an appropriate lens to explore the central phenomenon of cross-cultural communication in PPPs because critical theory addresses organizational social imbalance and fosters social integration. In addition, the result from the participants were compared to Bolton (2014) views on Habermas' critique of communication universality. This helped to explore whether the communication amongst the employees of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) were free from domination and discrimination. The answers to the main research questions and the sub-question were helpful in determining the extent to which intercultural communication hindered or facilitated cultural integration in PPPs.

In this chapter I address the detailed description of the data collection process, how the data were organized/analyzed, and the result obtained from the study. I also present the different methods used to address threats to the study's trustworthiness to assure research confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability.

Field Test

After the construction of my instrument, I posed the interview questions to two volunteers in the field to assure the accuracy and sufficiency of the instrument to address the research topic. The field test of the instrument with two volunteers assured me that the interview questions were sufficient and appropriate to gather rich information about the phenomenon under study. The field tests also provided me the opportunity to test the time set for the interview to see if it was adequate or not, and also to test the interview probes. The result from the field test showed that the instrument, the time allotted for the interview, and the interview probes were adequate and needed no adjustment. Data from the field test were not used in the analysis.

Settings

The study was conducted with the employees of FDOT located in a large metropolitan area of Florida. The interview of participants however, took place in various locations within the South Florida area. The setting used for the interviews was selected to make the participants feel safe and comfortable as much as possible. The interview of the FDOT manager took place in the FDOT conference room while that of the remaining field staff took place at various locations: Starbucks, Burger King, private offices, City of Coral Gables City Hall, and local public library conference rooms. One participant,

however, was interviewed in his house at his request. There appeared to be no undue

organizational influences on the participants' responses. The participants were

interviewed during their leisure time, afterhours, or during their breaks during working

hours. These different settings provided adequate protection, privacy, and confidentiality

for the participants to freely express their experiences during the interview. I used an

informal location to make sure that the participants felt free to talk and unhindered by

peer or managerial intrusions.

Demographics

The selection criteria for participants were: that the participants were employed

with FDOT for at least 1 year, had interacted with people from other cultures (been a part

of the FDOT recent PPP projects) by engaging in cross-cultural communication,

encountered, and/or collaborated with other non-immigrants in the organization, and that

the participants had not worked with me before. The participants were required to be able

to read English to understand the need for the study and be able to interact with the

researcher. The participants were engineers, field office workers, compliance officers,

contractors, and Port of Miami Tunnel Project (POMT) managers. Thirty-one employees

from the group met the aforementioned criteria and from these thirty-one, eleven

members were selected for interview using purposive sampling. Of the 11 participants

selected, two were women and nine were men. The fewer number of women selected

reflected the gender composition of the POMT project workforce. This gender gap was as

a result of the construction job requirements with heavy duty lifting that typically favors

more men than women. The participants interviewed for this interview were from the

Hispanics, Black, and White races. The ages of the participants ranged from 30 to about

65 years of age.

Data Collection

Eleven participants were interviewed for this project during data collection. The

interviews with nine of the participants were face-to-face interviews in various locations

within the South Florida area while two were conducted through the telephone. I took

field notes during the interview discussion and also used digital audio recorder to record

the interview with participants. The audio recording created was filed separately with the

date and number given to each participant for anonymity. The interviews were completed

within four months because of vacations of some of the participants and relocation of

others to another state. This was different from my original plan. Each interview

conducted took about 60 minutes. The audio recording files were downloaded from the

digital recorder and saved to a secure computer. The files were then transferred to a

portable hard drive that was protected with an access password. When not in use, the

portable hard drive was secured in a locked safe cabinet in my home; I have sole access.

Three weeks after the interviews were conducted, the recorded audio interview

transcripts, written field notes/journals were managed, organized, and transcribed to

Microsoft Word document for easier cleaning to assure that the transcribed document was

accurate and correctly captured the interview questions/responses. After transcribing, I

read the entire transcript twice to note the parts that corresponded to my research

questions. I then did a comparison of the digitally recorded interview audio and field

notes for accuracy and correctness of data. This process helped me to familiarize myself

with the transcripts of the data collected in the field—to become aware of key ideas and recurrent themes from the data.

Data Analysis

After data collection and management of the data, I exported the transcribed document to NVivo for data analysis. Once the cleaned data was exported to NVivo, I marked the text and transcripts by circling, highlighting, and/or underlining the text. I then indexed the data—the identification of portions of the data that form a particular theme and grouping of the themes together—combining similar codes and interconnection of codes from the pre-codes selected from the aspects of culture. The exported data were then coded for analysis.

As a part of my coding protocol, I manually assigned codes using the pre-codes and themes to the participant's interview responses. The pre-codes I selected from the aspects of culture—cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universalities, were: empathy, teamwork, collaboration, trust, consequences, concerns for others, communication, fairness, friendliness, follow-through, interpersonal, integration, supportive, conflict, knowledge, learning, respect, and relationship derived from the literature review and interview questions. With these pre-codes, I was able to easily analyze the data collected, created categories and themes, and sought answers to the research questions. Specifically, during coding the words/phrases from participants that matched the themes selected were highlighted and copied and dropped into the themes bucket in NVivo. I then sorted through the coded documents/transcripts to identify

related quotes, patterns, categories, phrases, themes, and the differences or commonalities in the data. These were later reviewed to see how they answered the research questions.

The coding process that I used to code my data was the *values* and *in vivo* coding processes. I used these processes because they remained always helpful in coding phenomenological studies—studying the nature and meanings of everyday experiences (Saldana, 2009). Saldana (2016) stated that values coding can be used for all qualitative studies but they are best suited for studies exploring cultural value and interpersonal experiences of the participants. Values coding helped in coding the values, beliefs, and attitudes that the employees of the FDOT brought to their work (Patel, 2014). In addition, I also used *in vivo* coding because it requires the use of the participant's generated actual words during the coding process to attune the researcher to the participants language, viewpoint, and worldviews (Saldana, 2016). *In vivo* coding helped to see the consistency in finding the themes that were important from the participants actual words used during the interview (Saldana, 2009). *In vivo* coding also helped in capturing the similarities and differences in the participant's responses to the interview questions. Saldana (2009) stated that *In vivo* helps to capture the participant's behavior and processes, and how the behavior or process were addressed during analysis.

As a part of the coding process, it was always good to display a visual image of the data for a better understanding of the data analysis/ interpretation. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) stated that data display was a process of organizing, consolidating, and compressing information to aid in the taking of action or drawing of conclusions about the data collected. Based on the premise, a word frequency was carried out to see

which words were more commonly used by the respondents to answer the research

questions. Below is an example of an output from my analysis—a frequency tree that

illustrated the frequency of perceptions about interactions with people.

Figure 1. Frequency word tree showing interact as the most commonly used word.

Figure 1 illustrates that the word *interact* were the most frequently used word by

the participants during the coding of the interview transcripts. The data showed that all

the participants responded that they interacted well with people from other cultures either

while at work or outside of work. For example, when asked if the participants normally

interacted with other employees from the minority or immigrant cultures in their

workplace while on the job, Participant 5 answered in the affirmative saying "Yes, I do

on a daily basis. From Tech to account, HR, etc. Luz took care of outreach, day-to-day

info on the personnel. I interacted well with personnel mostly in the office, during social events like happy hours. I am not new to cultural integration." Similarly, Participant 4 stated "Absolutely, I interact with people in every project very often. And there is a lot of people from many countries involved. Yes, I speak to people both in and outside of work." Participant 11, answering the same question, stated that "Yes, I do interact. The environment also encourages that. FDOT use private contractors and people for their projects. I interact with them mostly on the job in group meetings related to the job and discussion of projects." These responses were not surprising because the participants came from different parts of the world—two from Africa, two from Europe, two from North America, and the remaining five from South America. Participants perceived that it was important that they interacted well with others on the job to get the job done, and that to integrate culture, there must be interaction between groups.

When the interaction was compared with other data or code like cultural awareness, interaction with people of other culture was still the more commonly used code by the participants. But when I asked the participants how aware and knowledgeable were, they of other cultures, all participants with the exception of three (Participants 2, 7, and 8) responded that they were aware or knew something about the cultures that their coworkers brought to the workplace. For example, Participant 3 stated" I am aware a lot. We teach and learn about each other's culture on the job" while Participant 8 stated "Not fully aware except to those I have been exposed to."

Issues of Trustworthiness

Strategies that addressed threats to credibility, dependability, transferability, personal biases, and confirmability were employed to assure the transparency and trustworthiness of this study. Triangulation of the data collected was employed by comparing the responses of the respondents to help validate the trustworthiness of the study. To give credibility to the study, I disclosed and clarified my biases about the phenomenon to the respondents, I informed them that I am an immigrant who has experienced intercultural communications and prejudice both at the job and in my everyday life because of my accent and cultural background. I shared some of my experiences since I immigrated to the United States. To further assure credibility, proper data collection method using interview protocols and informed consents were employed. I crafted my interview questions and prompts to be neutral so as to avoid introducing bias into the study based on my past experiences and background as an immigrant from a non-dominant culture (dominant refers to White majority). I ensured that each interview question was aligned with the research questions. I also ensured that details about the study were disclosed to the participants and they were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I tried to build rapport with the respondents, and used active listening techniques to gather rich, sufficient information from the participants as I tried to develop trust and have the participants feel comfortable to answer each question completely.

To assure dependability and transparency of the study, I took the time to explain the details of the study, the study objective, and the interview protocol to all the

participants. I also ensured that the data collection process, data management process, and analyses were carefully documented to avoid researcher error.

Findings

I sought to answer one main research question in this study: What aspects of intercultural communication were present in PPPs and to what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in PPP organizations. To successfully answer this question, I developed interview questions to conduct the study and address my research question. My findings indicated that the aspects (cultural universalities, cultural variations, and cultural peculiarities) of intercultural communication existed at the PPP studied for this project. The results of the analysis confirmed that the FDOT employees interviewed for the project have several cultural attributes, like social interactions, values for diversity, diversity being an asset, etc., culturally in common with others despite their different cultural background. Participants also experienced variation between their different cultures as well as things that are uncharacteristic to their own individual cultures.

The first interview question asked whether the FDOT employees engaged in social interactions with other employees from the minority or immigrant cultures on the job, and if so, how often? Participants indicated that social interaction on the job between people from both the immigrant or minority cultures was a cultural universality for the respondents—this meant that all participants in the study interacted with coworkers who were immigrants or were from minority cultures. All participants interviewed for the study responded, with 8 noting that social interactions took place while on the job, at

home, and during social events and gatherings such as happy hour. For example, Participant 3 stated that "yes, I interact with other employees daily during working hours, when on vacations, weekends, and anytime. When working as a team or individual basis." Participant 2 stated "Yes, I do. How often? It depends—it can be the whole day. We interacted as a team and also on personal level outside of work—we had social connections like Happy Hours to celebrate milestones." Because FDOT does business with private contractors in a culturally diverse metropolitan area, participants felt that it gave them an added advantage for these interactions to spur intercultural integration in the organization.

The second interview question asked participants about the types of intercultural communication that took place in the PPP. I found that there were free interactions at both the personal and group levels. The interviewees stated that free interactions, at the group level, took place during meetings, events. Additionally, free interaction took place on a personal level throughout the organization. This was another aspect of intercultural communication found to be common among all the interviewees. The respondents stated that the free interactions at the group levels encouraged employees from different cultural backgrounds, including the dominant, minority, and immigrant cultures, to interact as a team. For example, Participant 11 stated that "there were both group and individual interactions during working and nonworking hours, and that there were free group interactions during meetings and normal business hours" while participant 3 stated that "everyone spoke to others in English. There were group and individual interactions with people from different levels. We interacted during job meetings and outside of the job

like during happy hours and at home." The free interactions at both the personal and group levels were found to facilitate intercultural integration and cultural mixing in the workplace. The nature of the jobs encouraged collaboration between the engineers, field officers, managers, and compliance officers from the different organizations that made up the PPP to brainstorm together and engaged in free interactions before a decision was reached regarding what to do and how to do the job successfully.

Another commonality between the interviewees was the issue of diversity. When the respondents were asked if diversity was an asset or a hindrance to intercultural communication, all the respondents stated that the FDOT PPP was very diverse and that diversity was an asset to intercultural communication in the organization. Respondents noted that diversity within the organization gave them opportunities to learn and understand more about other cultures and to work with people from other cultures. For example, Participant 4 stated that "it is a very good asset. This is because diversity shows no discrimination. FDOT always ensured that they have diversified employees to guard against discrimination and affirmative action" while Participant 7 stated "yes, diversity was an asset when I was at FDOT. But now, I am a consultant to FDOT." In addition to stating that diversity was important, participants elaborated that they benefitted from the different experiences that diversity brought to the organization. This was demonstrated by participant responses when asked what they valued most about working with people from other cultures. Examples here were given by participant 3 who stated that "we have a lot of people from different places that work for us. The experience that they bring to the job is a plus." Similarly, Participant 3 stated that "yes, it benefits to hire people from different

countries because of the different points of view, experiences, and resources they bring to the workplace" while Participant 8 stated that it does benefit to work with people from diverse culture "because of the different experiences to handle challenges that they bring with them."

The majority of the participants stressed or placed high expectations on the value of diversity, and others did not when they stated that the different experiences, ideas, hard work, creativity, and expertise brought to the table by the diverse employees were valuable. This finding supported the research of Pitts and Wise (2010) who stated that diversity was a strength that organizations can use to improve their performance. The values and benefits of diversity reported by the participants was another aspect of culture (cultural universality) that was common to all the participants in the project.

I asked respondents if they had experienced workplace discrimination, prejudice, or felt that they have been victims of stereotype while working with people from another culture? Seven out of the 11 respondents stated they had never experienced workplace discrimination, prejudice, or stereotype, while one third of the respondents had experienced some form of discrimination, prejudice, or stereotype on the job. For example, Participant 8 stated "I have never experienced discrimination" while Participant 1 stated he has experienced discrimination when he stated "the contractor from Boston— a rich English man but has problem with my communication. He told my boss about my communication problem. He didn't like me because I always reject many things. We had language barrier problem." This was not a surprising finding because five out of the eight respondents, who stated they had never experienced workplace discrimination, were

from the dominant culture. Conversely, the respondents who had experienced

discrimination, prejudice, or stereotype on the job were from the immigrant and/or

minority cultures.

Further analysis of the data confirmed that the languages spoken by the different

employees, including their accents, acted as barriers to effective communication and

cultural integration. Almost half of the interviewees that were immigrants reported

prejudice on the job because of their accents and or different languages spoken by people

from other cultures. Participant 5 stated "yes, not intentional prejudice. It was due to the

accent. I am Italian—once people get to know you and or interact with you, all that

stereotypes goes away." Other participants added that these prejudices and lived

experiences improved once they developed trust and became accustomed to other

cultures in their workplaces, particularly with people from the dominant culture. This

result was not surprising because the location of the study was highly diverse and

included people from different cultures and different accents that could vary from people

from the dominant culture in the study.

Another aspect of culture that was evident in this study was the support that the

employees of FDOT receive from their managers. When asked about the extent to which

the leadership of FDOT are perceived to be supportive and nurturing of employees'

intercultural communication, all the participants were overwhelmingly in agreement that

the FDOT managers were very supportive and actually fostered intercultural

communication in the organization. Participant 9 stated "the leadership have an

advantage. They have programs that ensure that we respect each other to get the job done.

They are very supportive" while Participant 10 stated "we encourage teamwork all the time. They are very supportive. We had firms from Spain and so we had to encourage and nurture intercultural communication very much." This support and nurturing that the employees enjoyed from their managers were the reason why all the respondents interviewed for the study viewed their managers as good managers who valued diversity and supported the integration of their varying cultures in the FDOT organization.

This study also looked at the extent to which the FDOT employees were supportive of each other and if they were open-minded to people from other cultures during intercultural communication. The result of the study showed that the participants interviewed were all in agreement that the staff of FDOT were very supportive of each other and that they were also open-minded to people from other cultures during intercultural communication. Participant 2 stated "we were very supportive. We never really had an issue. Their presentation skills, use of language, and body language was very supportive" while participant stated "we have to be supportive and open-minded. We had people from Russia, Iran, etc. without them the agency will not run." This open-mindedness and support for each other fostered intercultural integrations in the PPP.

Another important area this study looked at was how comfortable and respectful were the participants with the people of other cultures (between the dominant, immigrant, and minority)? The result from the analysis showed that all the respondents stated that they had a great deal of comfort dealing with people from other cultures and that they actually respected other minority people and the cultures that they brought to the organization. Participant 10 stated "I am very comfortable and respectful even when I

sometimes don't understand their accents." This comfort with people from other cultures was good for intercultural communication and fostered intercultural integration in PPP. However, when the question was reworded to see if the participants were comfortable working with people from other cultures in a group or individual setting, and if they feel dominated by their colleagues from other culture at work, eight of the 11 respondents stated yes, they feel comfortable but do not feel dominated while three of the 11 participants stated they do feel comfortable but feel dominated by their colleagues. Participant 11 said that "yes, it doesn't matter to me. I am comfortable. No—never experienced domineering on the job by my colleagues" while Participant 9 stated his comfort "will be in both settings. Our teams usually lunch together and we also have individual interactions. You don't feel dominated in a social setting. But on the job, there is domination." Similarly, Participant 8 stated "in a group, there is the general idea to not let our difference get in the way of the organizational goal. Yes, FDOT contractors were French. They have a strong personality and they dominated meetings."

Relating to the above, the participants were asked a follow up question of if the comfort and open-mindedness was the same when working in a team or individual setting with other employees, more than half of the interviewees responded in the affirmative. Similarly, the respondents answered in the affirmative when asked how empathetic the participants were to people from other minority or immigrant cultures. When the respondents were asked how readily they were to change their positions on issues when dealing with people from the minority or immigrant cultures, all the participants' answered in the affirmative. Participant 11 (from a minority culture) stated "I am flexible

to change if it is the right way to do the job. I am open to ideas" while Participant 6 from a dominant culture stated "I am open to change and not necessarily who came up with the idea." This showed that cultural universality (an aspect of culture) existed in the PPP under study.

The study also reviewed the different barriers and challenges that could impede cultural integration and communication in the PPP under study. When asked what barriers do FDOT employees needed to overcome to be able to achieve intercultural communication and effective cultural integration in a PPP, seven out of the 11 the participants stated language was the main barrier while 4 of the 11 respondents believed otherwise. Participants 3 and 10 stated respectively that "Language barrier is number one" and "Language is a major barrier." Conversely, Participant 7 stated "I understand that people are different. Therefore, I think people need to be open-minded and treat others as they want treated" while Participant 1 stated "People just need to accommodate other people to achieve smooth intercultural communication."

Similarly, the responses received varied when the participants were asked about the challenges they encountered when communicating with people from other culture, and if the challenges were the same if communicating with people from their own culture. Majority of the participants stated language was a major challenge to overcome for effective cultural integration to take place. Correspondingly, the participant's responses also varied when they were asked what were the things that got in their way of achieving a successful intercultural communication in their organization. Different participant responses appeared to indicate cultural variations amongst the respondents.

Albeit the differences, however, the majority of the respondents still named language and accent as a big factor because understanding the language spoken by a particular group of people was a big step in facilitating intercultural communication and integration.

Additionally, when the participants were asked how aware and knowledgeable were, they about other cultures? The result obtained had varied answers. Majority of the participants knew about other cultures while some were willing to learn more. Participant 7 stated "I only know a few things. I still have a lot to learn. I will love to travel to Asia to learn more about them" and Participant 4 stated "I know a lot—but there is always something to learn. We mapped a map to show the countries where all the employees came from. That helped in integration and tolerance."

Finally, the participants were asked if they knew whether the managers of the PPP formed with the FDOT received diversity training on the job? The responses received were as diverse as the employees interviewed themselves. Participant 1 stated "no, I wasn't aware of any manager training on the job" and Participant 2 stated "no, I was not aware of any diversity training." Conversely, Participant 5 stated "yes, they did. We have huge training department and we send our manager to training routinely. In this POMT project, we had onsite training" while Participant 4 stated "yes, as a manager and officer, I trained everybody and let them know that they can come to me if they feel discriminated against." The above question was very important to gauge the manager's readiness to lead in a multicultural workplace, to see if they were prepared to handle intercultural conflicts, and if they received training on how to foster intercultural integrations in the PPP. The responses received, as shown above, were not surprising as

the field officers and line engineers often do not know what the managers did on a daily basis. Only those participants who were either managers or worked closely with managers responded in the affirmative.

Summary

The results obtained from this study showed that the main research question of "what aspects of intercultural communication are present in PPPs and to what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in PPP organizations" was successfully answered in this study. The interview questions that were developed and used during the study were appropriate for the study. The coding and analysis process of the data collected showed that the aspects of intercultural communication (which included cultural universality, cultural variations, and cultural peculiarities) existed at the PPP (FDOT) studied for this project. The result obtained from the study established that the FDOT employees interviewed for the project have many things culturally in common, in variations, and peculiar to the cultures of each interviewee.

The following cultural aspects like social interactions, comfort in interacting with people from other cultures, empathy showed to people from other cultures, respect for others, knowledge and willingness to learn other cultures, open-mindedness to other cultures, the support that the employees enjoy from the PPP/FDOT managers and from themselves all helped in facilitating cultural integration in the PPP.

Language and accent appeared to be the only aspects of culture that had cultural variation amongst the participants. While majority of the participants agreed that language and accents were barriers to effective intercultural communication, exercising

patience and listening to people from other dominant, immigrant, and/or minority cultures can help bridge this gap and facilitated intercultural integration in the PPP.

Chapter 5 provided the interpretation of the findings. It also discussed the study's limitations, recommendations, social change possible implications, and advise for further research to advance and document future studies on intercultural integrations.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Culture, which influences and shapes our everyday behavior, has been defined as those sets of values, norms, languages, beliefs, and behaviors that individuals in an organization/community share together and are passed on from one group or generation to another (Martin, 2014). Multiple organizational and individual cultures are usually found in a public-private partnership (PPP) that was formed by the government but includes private sector actors. This study was designed to determine which aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universalities) of cultural integration were present in PPPs and to what extent they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in these organizations.

To carry out this research, the employees working in a PPP (FDOT) were interviewed to find out how they experienced the phenomenon of intercultural communication in their workplaces and how cultural integration was fostered by the management of the PPP. A qualitative research paradigm was chosen over a quantitative one because of the exploratory, observational, and interviewing strategies of the qualitative paradigm that can be applied to successfully capture the lived experiences of the participants.

Qualitative research stayed realistic in nature because it takes place in the lived context of the phenomenon and does not require the manipulation of data to get results (Patton, 2002). I used the hermeneutic phenomenological approach for this study because it allowed me to study a number of individuals in depth to understand their lived

experiences and the meanings (Creswell, 2007) that they ascribed to the phenomenon under study: intercultural communication.

Key Findings

The analysis of the data collected revealed some interesting and important findings about this study. The first key finding was that social interactions on the job with people from both the majority and the immigrant or minority cultures was a cultural universality that all the respondents interviewed for the study affirmed as a normal occurrence both at the personal and team levels. Respondents stated these social interactions took place daily on the job, at home, during happy hours and other social events involving the employees. Another core finding from the data was that the employees of FDOT value the different experiences that diversity brought to the organizations. The respondents added that diversity was an asset to intercultural communication in the organization as it gave them opportunities to learn and understand more about other cultures and to comingle with people from other cultures. Additionally, seven out of the 11 the respondents (who were from the majority cultures) stated they had never experienced workplace discrimination, prejudice, and /or stereotyping on the job, while one-third of the respondents (mostly from the minority cultures) had experienced some form of discrimination, prejudice, and/or stereotyping on the job.

Another common aspect of culture that was found in this study was the support that the employees of FDOT received from their managers. All the respondents agreed that their managers supported their interactions both on personal and group levels. They also agreed that the employees themselves were supportive of each other and were open

minded about people from other cultures. Respondents found this to mean that

intercultural communication had been achieved.

Another important finding in this study was that nine out of the 11 respondents

stated that they had a great deal of comfort dealing with people from a different culture

than their own (the dominant, immigrant, and minority cultures). Respondents asserted

that they respected other cultures that the different employees brought to the PPP

organization.

In addition to finding a great deal of common ground between cultures in the

workplace, my research also revealed different barriers and challenges that could impede

intercultural integration and communication in the PPP under study. According to seven

of the 11 respondents, language was a main barrier while the remaining 4 of the

respondents believed otherwise. Additionally, the majority of the respondents were

unable to ascertain if the managers of the PPP (FDOT) received diversity training on the

job or not. This was not surprising given the workplace authoritative distance between the

respondents and the managers.

Interpretations of the Study

Respondents' awareness of their own cultural competencies, based on job-level

interactions, was a core theme throughout the findings. Alpert (2018) stated that for

effective communication to take place in a multicultural workplace, employees have to

develop cultural competences, which will aid them to interact effectively with people

from other cultures. The social interactions and competences developed by the immigrant

or minority employees of the PPP gave them the ability to be aware of their own cultural

worldview, learned more about other people's cultural practices, and became tolerant of other cultures that were different from their own. These competences created opportunity for the employees to see themselves in others, let down their guards, and broke down their communication barriers. This appeared to facilitate intercultural communication.

The academic literature supported this finding. For example, Dixon and Dougherty (2010) stated that diversity affected the daily interactions in an organization as employees shared and interpreted their common phenomenon in a different way. Similarly, these social interactions attested to the work of Genest (2005) who found that communication occurred between members of organizations and community members, but only when there was an open discourse between the parties involved. The open discourse allowed the employees from the different cultures to loosen up, identify themselves with the cultural context, and assumed multiple identities as they work with other employees from different cultural backgrounds (the dominant, minority, and immigrant cultures) in a team setting. Furthermore, Cleary (2013) stated that people have the capability to assume different organizational and personal identities at any given time as they crossed from one culture to another. This fluidity that she termed *hybridity* helped to facilitate intercultural integration and cultural missing in the workplace.

The fact that the employees from different cultures, like the French Concessioners and other workers from the different countries with different cultural backgrounds, who worked at this particular PPP were able to cross cultures and easily assumed the regional cultural context affirmed the work of Cleary (2013) who found that culture was not as

rigid as earlier thought and that culture was more fluid and dynamic. In other words, people assume multiple identities and cross borders more easily than before.

Employees of the PPP formed values based on the different experiences and innovations that diversity brought to the workplace. Thus, respondents treated diversity as an asset to intercultural communication in the organization. This finding confirmed that diversity brought specific benefit and improvement to the workplace and it helped to integrate the different cultures through empathetic interaction between the employees. This finding affirmed the work of Belfield (2016) who stated that diversity can help us to understand, build bridges, trust, and respect the "ways of being" of other people as individuals engage in intercultural communication.

Cultural diversity remained critical and beneficial to the survival of organizations in that it increased their productivity and enhanced better performance as the workforce was mixed with employees from different cultural backgrounds (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2013). Belfield, (2016) stated that as organizations become culturally diverse, it became important for us to have a level of understanding for each other's culture so as to facilitate collaboration and cooperation in the organization. As was evidenced in this study, intercultural collaboration helped to integrate cultures in the organization and strengthened organizational culture. Similarly, the cultural diversity of a team brought many benefits of diverse views, creativity and innovations, new ways of thinking, new knowledge and skills, experiences, and attributes of the different employees to the organization (Belfield, 2016). The values that diversity brought to organization cannot be

overemphasized when you consider the different knowledge and expertise the Engineers from the different cultural backgrounds brought to the POMT project.

Respondents reported that working with people from other cultures helped them to increase their knowledge about other cultures. Abreu (2014) stated that diversity can help organizations recruit top talents with different experiences and from different backgrounds. This understanding and knowledge of other cultures facilitated employees' interactions and aided cultural integration in the organization. This finding confirmed the work of Belfield (2016) and Martin (2014) who stated that diversity can help increase our level of understanding of other cultures through our interaction with people from those cultures.

Another important attribute that this study analyzed was discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. Seven out of the 11 respondents stated they had never experienced workplace discrimination, prejudice, and /or stereotype in the workplace while one third of the respondents had experienced some form of discrimination, prejudice, and/or stereotype on the job. The respondents who stated they had never experienced discrimination were from the dominant culture compared to those from the minority culture that have suffered discrimination and prejudice in the workplaces. This wasn't surprising because the location where the study took place was a municipal city with many diverse cultures.

Research has confirmed in the past that diversity in the workplace can be problematic when one culture was dominant over other cultures. Bhabha (2012) stated that when two cultures come together, one cultural group often becomes dominant and

imposes itself on the other group. The results in this study confirmed the work of Cavico, Muffler, and Mujtaba (2013) who reported that nonprimary English speakers in the workplace might have language misunderstandings and face possible discrimination in the workplace due to their inability to effectively express themselves in the workplace. The discrimination or prejudice reported by the minority respondents in this study was as a result of accent, language, communication, and cultural barriers between the employees from the minority cultures and those from the dominant cultures. Further, when the respondents were asked how readily they were to change their positions on issues when dealing with people from the minority or immigrant cultures, all the participants' answered in the affirmative and stated they would change their positions easily if the employee suggestion was the best for the group regardless of differences in their accent, language, communication, and culture. This appears to show that the participants in the PPP held a belief in cultural universality (an aspect of culture).

I also found from the study that the employees of FDOT were very supportive of each other and that they were also open-minded to people from other cultures during intercultural communication. This open-mindedness and support for each other changes the mindset of the employees (Aviolo, 1999) to accept each other's cultures. Van Oudenhoven, Mol, and Van Der Zee (2003) in their study of culture identified five components of integrating cultures to be cultural empathy, open-mindedness, emotional stability, social initiative, and flexibility. This finding confirmed that open-mindedness was an important step in aiding cultural integration especially in a multicultural

organization due to the opportunity it created for the employees to embrace and become more acceptable of the cultures and behaviors of others.

All respondents stated that they had a great deal of comfort and emotional stability when dealing with people from other cultures and that they actually respected other minority people and the cultures that they brought to the organization. For example, when asked how comfortable and respectful participants felt when dealing with people from other cultures, Participant 2 stated "I am very respectful and comfortable" while Participant 10 stated" I am very comfortable and respectful even when I sometimes don't understand their accents." Similarly, the respondents answered in the affirmative when asked how culturally empathetic the participants were to people from other minority or immigrant cultures. When the participants were asked a follow up question of if the empathy, comfort, and open-mindedness was the same when working with other employees in a team or individual setting, more than half of the participants responded in the affirmative. This confirmed that cultural empathy, comfort, and open-mindedness helped in fostering intercultural communication and integration in the PPP.

Another important thing I found from the research was that Nine out of the 11 participants stated that language and heavy accents were major barriers to overcome in achieving effective intercultural communication and integration in the PPP. Hall (1959) stated that language acted as a gateway to cross-cultural interaction and understanding. Understanding the Languages spoken in an organization remained very important to get the job done, and avoid discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.

This finding was not surprising because understanding the languages spoken in a multicultural workplace still remained a very important first step to achieve effective intercultural communication, which helped in facilitating cultural integration in organizations.

Padilla (1999) stated that language and culture are strongly connected and interwoven. Similarly, Hall (1959) stated that culture and communication were intertwined since they both affected each other. Some examples of these were provided by Participants 11 and 5 when asked what challenges they encountered when communicating with people from other cultures in their workplaces. Participant 11 answered, "language and accent. The Spanish employees are very disrespectful—they switch to Spanish in the middle of the conversation without warning. No, the challenges are not same when the communication is with people from your culture." Similarly, Participant 5 noted "language, accents, vocabulary are all challenges when working with others from another culture or country." heavy accents and poor English vocabulary were seen as challenges. "I try to remain calm and not further make them nervous. With my people from same culture, it is less challenging." Conversely, Participant 7 stated that "miscommunication due to lack of trust. People are very guarded but good credibility allows people to open to you. Yes! I am from the North East and the challenges are the same when I talk to people from the South West." While Participant 2 stated "no negative stereotype. No annoying behavior. Always find a way to identify their expertise and use that to leverage positions and get to their talent and effective contributions to the work."

This showed that to learn more about a particular culture, one must first understand the language of communication in that culture.

Language and culture enable social interaction and knowledge acquisition. To understand a language, one needs to identify with and be able to communicate in that language. Saxton (2007) stated that effective communication was very useful in bringing people together in organizations especially in situations where language difference and misunderstandings were prevalent. This appeared to suggest that as the employees of a PPP interacted and got to understand the language of their colleagues, the different cultures in the organization would become more easily integrated.

I also found out from the study that almost half of the participants were not aware if their managers received diversity training on the job or not. This question was important to gauge the manager's readiness to lead in a multicultural workplace, to see if they were prepared to handle intercultural conflicts, and if they received training on how to foster intercultural integrations in the PPP. The responses received was not surprising as the field officers and line Engineers often do not know the work of the managers on a daily basis. I found that only those participants who were either managers or work closely with managers responded affirmatively.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in scope by my biases, time, and the study of other variables—the attributes of culture that might directly impact cultural integration. Simon (2011) stated that the limitations of a study are the weaknesses in the study, which are out of the researcher's control. The main focus of this study was to determine what aspects

(cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universality) of intercultural communication were present in PPPs and to what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in these organizations. First, I declared my biases during the interview process to let the respondents know ahead of time that I am an immigrant; who has also experienced discrimination and prejudice on the job.

My disclosure declared my position and perspective on the phenomenon under study and helped to build credibility for the study. It also helped to reduce my biases and assured the respondents that my biases due to past experiences and/or prior exposure to the phenomenon did not influence the study. It also prevented me from imposing meaning and assumptions that I brought to the project so that it did not affect the interpretation of the research results. Other limitations were time and the study of other variables such as the other attributes of culture not covered in this study. These attributes (respect, trust, adaptability, teamwork, employee engagement, learning opportunities, purpose, results orientation, strategy, decision making, and accountability) might directly impact cultural integration. Due to limited time and the scope of this study, these variables were not included in this research. Another limitation was some of the participants initial caution in answering the interview questions. I had to reassure the participants that their answers to the interview questions, the personal information collected, and their names indicating participation were not included in the completed work/study as all these were protected and kept in strictest confidence.

Recommendations

This study was designed primarily to determine what aspects (cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universality) of intercultural communication were present in PPPs and to what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in these organizations. I found from the study that the three aspects of cultural integration–cultural variations, cultural peculiarities, and cultural universalities were found to be present in the PPP. However, since this study did not explicitly explore the attributes of culture, it was recommended that a more in-depth study of the attribute of cultures will need to be carried out in the future to see how it directly impacts cultural integration in the PPP. A better understanding of the attributes of culture will hopefully help to facilitate a more effective cultural integration in organizations.

Another recommendation was for the study to be carried out with a larger sample size and in an urban or semi-urban location that was less culturally diverse as the large metropolitan area used for this study so that the results obtained from the study can be generalized to a larger population. In addition, it was recommended that this study would need to be carried out in the future in a public and other private organization to see if the results obtained can be similar to that obtained in the PPP studied in this research. Another recommendation for future study would be to review how the cultural identity and cultural barriers experienced by an employee from an immigrant or minority culture would impact cultural integration in an organization.

Finally, to understand an in-depth role of leadership in fostering cultural integration in organizations, it is recommended that more research be conducted to look

into the different cultural practices, policies, and ways that the leadership of organizations use to reduce power distances amongst the employees from the dominant cultures and those from the minority cultures so as to encourage cultural mixing and integration in organizations.

Implications

The implication of this study was to add information about cultural integrations in PPP by contributing to the existing literature and informing public sector managers about intercultural communication and integration in the field of public policy and Administration. The results of this study might affect positive social change by giving the administrators of PPPs and other organizational mergers insights into the cultural challenges and barriers that impaired employee performance in organizations when the multiple cultures brought to the organizations are not properly managed.

This study was largely intended to create and encourage dialogue on intercultural integration in organizations for improved organizational efficiency and effectiveness. This dialogue was intended to further stimulate appropriate training skills so that employees can learn about other cultures, how to accommodate the employees from the minority/majority cultures, and how to break down cultural barriers and avoid work-related issues such as cultural conflicts, poor communication, and misunderstanding common to a multicultural workplace.

This research might provide policy makers new information about the aspects of culture that could be beneficial in determining future training policies on how to foster effective intercultural communication in organizations. This training would be useful to

teach teamwork collaboration and ways to bridge the cultural gaps between employees in an organization. Additionally, the result might help managers to not only effectively manage employees with different cultures in the PPP, it might also help them to learn new ways of leadership needed to effectively and successfully resolve conflicts, manage biases, and misunderstandings caused by cultural barriers in an unstable, fast-paced, prejudice, and multicultural work environment.

Conclusion

Culture influences our everyday life and behaviors. Every organization like PPP has multiple cultures that the employees from the different cultural backgrounds brought to the organization. These multiple cultures usually found in PPPs need to be properly managed to avoid discrimination, conflict, and prejudice in the workplace. Guajardo (1999) stated that cultural conflicts in the workplace arose from prejudice and discrimination, which are perpetrated when organizational leaders fail to effectively measure and monitor diversity in the workplace. These multiple cultures do sometimes cause conflict and negative team outcome (Hofhuis, Van Der Zee, & Otten, 2013) in the PPP organization when they are not properly managed. Ochieng and Price (2009) stated that cultural differences and or lack of cultural integration among employees can lead to conflict, misunderstanding, and poor performance among the employees. In order to resolve future issues that may emanate from diversity mismanagement and poor cultural integration, it is therefore important to integrate cultures in organizations today. Researchers have argued that leaders of organizations must promote a sound organizational culture and integration of employee cultures and subcultures in the

organizations. This was affirmed by Roberge et al. (2011) who stated that managing diversity in the workplace required organizational leadership to assume the appropriate tactical leadership skills and human resource competences that will increase awareness about diversity to resolve or prevent the conflicts that diversity brought to the organization. Similarly, Guajardo (1999) added that to resolve cultural conflicts in the workplace that arose from prejudice and discrimination, institutions should not only embrace diversity but also assure social integration in organizations. It was on this backdrop that this research was conceived and necessitated to answer the main research question of "what aspects of intercultural communication are present in PPPs and to what extent did they hindered and/or facilitated cultural integration in PPP organizations." This research also explored how intercultural communication was fostered by the management of the PPP to achieve effective cultural integration and organizational effectiveness. The interview questions that were developed and the methodology used for the research were found to be appropriate.

The coding and analyses of the data collected showed that cultural universality, cultural variations, and cultural peculiarities (the aspects of intercultural communication) existed at the PPP (FDOT) studied. The results obtained showed that cultural aspects like social interactions, comfort in interacting with people from different cultures, empathy showed to people from other cultures, respect for others, knowledge and willingness to learn about other cultures, open-mindedness to people from other cultures, and the support that the employees enjoy from the PPP/FDOT managers and colleagues all helped in facilitating cultural integration in the PPP.

My research found that the challenges encountered by employees when communicating with people from other culture were language and accent. While majority of the participants agreed that language and accents can be barriers to effective intercultural communication; being open-minded, exercising patience when dealing with people, and understanding/listening to people from other dominant, immigrant, and/or minority cultures can help bridge this gap and facilitate intercultural integration in the PPP. This suggests that managers of PPPs should facilitate and create the enabling environment for the different employees of the organization to come together, interact, and accept each other's culture. This enabling environment will create people who Cleary (2013) termed cultural *hybrids*—people who can assume multiple cultures and cross borders more easily.

Finally, prior research has affirmed that if diversity was not properly managed, it can lead to low morale, relationship conflict, and communication problems in organization (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Conversely, Cox and Blake (1991) and Rodgers (2014) argued that a successfully managed workplace diversity might enrich organizations by creating competitive advantage through quality decisions, enhance flexibility and organizational change, and the ability for organization to reap the benefits of a culturally-diverse pool of employees rich in problem solving skills and creativity. It was hoped this research will help institutions, managers of PPPs, and add to the extant literature on cultural integrations in PPPs. From the aforesaid, it was evident that the need to integrate cultures in organizations cannot be overemphasized.

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Appendix. Research and Interview Questions Mapped

Main RQ: What aspects of intercultural communication are present in PPPs and to what extent did they hinder and/or facilitate cultural integration in PPP organizations?

Q1: Do you normally interact with other employees from minority or immigrant cultures in your workplace while you are on the job? [Probe: if yes, how often? And what kind of setting do you interact with them—was it when you are working together as a team or on a personal level?]

Q2: What kind of intercultural communication do you observe to be present in your workplace? [Probe: Are there free group interactions during meetings, events, or on a personal level?]

Q3: Do you think these interactions encourage employees from different cultural backgrounds (dominant/minority/immigrant culture) to come together as a team? [Probe: Why? Could you give me an example?]

Sub Q1: To what extent do FDOT employees perceive diversity as an asset or a hindrance to intercultural communication?

Q1: Tell me more about the different employees from different cultural backgrounds in your workplace [Probe: Do you think it benefits your job to hire people from different cultures (dominant/minority/immigrant)? Why or why not?]

Q2: Have you ever experienced workplace discrimination, prejudice, or feel that you have been a victim of stereotyping while working with people from another culture? [Probe: If so, please briefly explain the circumstances.]

Q3: What do you value most working with people from different cultures in this organization? [Probe: why?]

Sub Q2: To what extent was the leadership of FDOT perceived to be supportive and nurturing of employees' intercultural communication in a PPP?

Q1: Do you feel your managers are supportive of your interaction with other employees from a different dominant/minority/immigrant culture? [Probe: Why or why not?]

Q2: How do you view a manager that values diversity and cultural integration? [Probe: How do you know s/he values diversity?]

Q3: Are you aware if you managers receive diversity training on the job?

Sub Q3: To what extents are FDOT employees perceived to be supportive of each other and open-minded to intercultural communication in a PPP?

Q1: How comfortable and respectful do you feel you are with people from other cultures (dominant/minority/immigrant) in your workplace?

Q2: Do you normally feel comfortable working with people from other cultures in a group or in an individual setting? [Probe: if no, why was that? Do you feel dominated by your colleagues from other cultures when working in a group setting? If yes, how?]

Q3: How aware and knowledgeable are you about other cultures in general?

Sub Q4: What barriers do FDOT employees need to overcome to achieve intercultural communication and effective cultural integration in a PPP?

Q1: What challenges do you encounter when communicating with people from other cultures (dominant/minority/immigrant) in your workplace? [Probe: Tell me more if these challenges are the same when the communication was with people from your culture? Why? Further probe: From your own point of view, how can these challenges be overcome to get your point across?]

Q2: How empathetic are you to others from a minority/immigrant culture? [Probe: how flexible are you to change your position on issues when dealing with others from a minority/immigrant culture?]

Q3: What are the things that get in your way of achieving successful intercultural communication in your organization?

Probes to be used in getting more information from the participants:
- "Why?"
- "Really?
- "Can you tell me more about that?"
- "Let me make sure I understand you correctly"
- "Could you please repeat that?"
- "Could you expatiate on that?"
- "How was that relevant?"
- "Okay"
- Nodding
- "I see"
- "This was important information for this research"
- "Could you give me an example?"