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Exploring Academic Leadership in Higher Education Through The Lens of Leader-to-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

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Exploring Academic Leadership in Higher Education Through The Lens of
Leader-to-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

by
Dequies A. Lanier

An Applied Dissertation Submitted to the
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education
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Approval Page

This applied dissertation was submitted by Dequies A. Lanier under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

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Statement of Original Work

I declare the following:

I have read the Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility as described in the *Student Handbook* of Nova Southeastern University. This applied dissertation represents my original work, except where I have acknowledged the ideas, words, or material of other authors.

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Name

 December 6, 2020
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Abstract

A phenomenological study focused on Exploring Academic Leadership in Higher Education Through The Lens of Leader-to-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, Dequies A. Lanier, 2020: Applied Dissertation, Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice. Keywords: communication, leadership development, higher education, leader-member exchange, organizational leadership

This applied dissertation was designed to explore the communication between higher education leaders and faculty at the department level in the United States at a southeastern higher education institution. The study sought to explore (a) the communication relationship between leaders and followers; (b) commitment to the organization; and (c) suggested communication practices for post-secondary leaders. Higher education departments are faced with challenges concerning leadership development. Although leaders are prepared academically within their practice, there are concerns that leaders are not prepared to address organizational issues (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). A review of the literature highlighted that higher education institutions need leaders who are skilled beyond their acquired disciplines to combat strategic problems. In addition, prior research also pointed out that effective communication in higher education between leaders and employees can create a better workflow.

The researcher interviewed 10 participants to explore what were the communication experiences and how were they experienced. The principal investigator used the LMX framework to develop interview questions based on the LMX-7 tool (mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation). The interviews were conducted through a virtual platform and later transcribed using Moustakas (1994) eight-step systematic review.

An analysis of the data revealed that higher education governance is sustainable with shared leadership, which aligns with previous scholars. The LMX theory contextualized departmental leadership communication experiences. The overall essence revealed that department chairs are a source of support rather than managers of faculty. Findings from the study showed that departmental leadership is based on respectful communication that promotes partnership to fulfill the academic mission.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Leadership development is a common issue across organizations, for this reason,

leadership and communication are often linked (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Ruben

& Gigliotti, 2017, p. 12; Martin, 2017). Ineffective communication can impact

organizations through the transference of messages, sense-making through information

exchange, and organizational processes. Specifically, this study will explore an

environment less studied, the higher education environment (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017;

Iordanoglou, 2018). Leaders in higher education make decisions to guide the future

trajectory of their organization and communicate plans for reaching a desired state.

Sadiartha and Sitorus (2018) explicated how the development of an organization relies on

the vision of leaders and effectively sharing the vision with stakeholders. Leaders'

communication efforts can affect employees and organizational practices.

Historically, higher education institutions (HEI) have not engaged in leadership

development through programs or training because of the perceived notion that only a

few are experts and experienced to lead this effort (Debowski, 2015; Dopson et al., 2019;

Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Iordanoglou, 2018). Furthermore, Gigliotti and Ruben (2017)

argued the importance of leadership development in the higher education setting. Leaders

at colleges and universities must develop and implement capabilities beyond their

acquired disciplines in today's world (Debowski, 2015; Dopson et al., 2019; Gigliotti &

Ruben, 2017). Challenges in post-secondary education prompt leaders to communicate

effectively and develop leadership skills to sustain the organization (Gigliotti & Ruben,

2017; Renani, Ghaderi, Mahmoudi, 2017). While studies exist on leadership development

in higher education, the body of work on leadership communication is scarce. "As Gail Fairhurst and Robert Sarr explain, effective leaders use language as their most tangible tool for achieving desired outcomes" (Hackman & Johnson, 2013, p. 2). Likewise, the influence of leaders on stakeholders may shape the organizational process, such as operational challenges, cultures, and collaborative engagement (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017).

Gaubatz and Ensminger (2017) argued department chairs are active change agents and leaders in higher education. University leaders are considered presidents, chancellors, provosts, deans, and directors. Furthermore, department chairs have a crucial function involving close-level access to employees carrying out organizational procedures because they function as not only administrators but also colleagues (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). Some of the responsibilities of department chairs include developing employees, instructional design, evaluating programs, and managing budgets (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). Based on the aforementioned understanding, intricate research will develop a better understanding of departmental leadership and followership communication.

Furthermore, the researcher will consider department chairs and faculty viewpoints on strengths and opportunities to optimize communication efforts. Gardner and Ward (2018) found without department chairs, universities would not experience sustainable institutional change. Gaubatz and Ensminger (2017) also explored university department chairs and organizational change in their study. Department chairs engage in future planning and are considered instrumental to change (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). Communication happens in a multidimensional direction between department chairs, faculty, and the organization; department chairs as leaders are positioned to influence the

whole organization at more than one level (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). University chairs, therefore, are the initiators for faculty, staff, and organizational development.

Renani, et al. (2017) found communication effectiveness and organizational structure increases the understanding of the organization and creates healthy working relationships. Organizational communication has been studied in various contexts; however, researchers have focused primarily on the direction of discourse. For example, researchers have studied communication movement upward, downward, horizontal, and diagonal (Renami et al., 2017; Sadia, Salleh, Kadir, and Sanif, 2017). Communication methods are also categorized as three-dimensional, either formality (instructions or task description), complexity (sub-systems or separation), or centralization (hierarchy of authority) (Renani et al., 2017). In other words, organizational communication is most often examined through how messages are delivered within certain conditions. Scholars in the field of communication began to examine messages beyond transference and are interested in understanding communication influence within the organization.

According to Fan and Han (2018), organizational communication studies often explore the dynamic of employee relationships, which is one form of dyadic communication. Fan and Han (2018) argued there has been limited research on the relationship between leader and follower communication, therefore, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory helps better understand the two-way relationship between supervisors and subordinates. "When their dyadic communication fits well, a leader and follower may achieve a high level of dyadic agreement that can lead to high-quality LMX and enhanced work outcomes," (Fan & Han, 2018, p. 1084). Employees and leaders who experience ineffective communication may face challenges related to differences

interpreting expectations, unsatisfied work environments, and organizational process

dysfunction (Fan & Han, 2018).

Phenomenon of Interest

Leadership communication is a prevalent issue between higher education leaders

and faculty; "Communication thus, serves as an orientation, a world view, a way of

understanding leadership that focuses more broadly on the process of social influence"

(Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017, p. 98). Solaja, Idowu, and James (2016) found poor

communication that exists between internal stakeholders and leaders can create

production loss, vague understandings of expectations, and hinder organizational

productivity.

Wolcott and Bowdon (2017) and Dopson et al. (2019) argued post-secondary

education leaders are challenged with developing necessary skills for emotional

intelligence, effective communication, and employee development. Wolcott and Bowdon

(2017) explored the relationship between department chairs (leaders) and followers in

higher education by utilizing the LMX framework. As indicated by the study, there is a

need to understand the level of satisfaction between the leader-to-follower exchange

because it can affect leaders' fulfillment. In addition, it affects leaders' ability to

maximize follower potential, foster supportive relationships in the organization, create a

positive climate, and enhance organizational efficiency (Dopson et al., 2019; Panicker et

al., 2017; Pongton & Suntrayuth, 2019).

Manafzadeh et al. (2018) found "communication is like a link that relates actions

and activities of individuals and organizations to desired goals (p. 25)." Communication

is often related to relationships among groups and individuals, communication also

governs how tasks are carried out in businesses. Manafzadeh et al. (2018) expressed the necessity to determine effective communication with organizational silence and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Their study showed organizational silence or ineffective communication can directly impact business affairs (Manafzadeh et al., 2018).

Furthermore, leaders are the agents in university settings to articulate a desired state of the organization; it is necessary for leaders to engage in effective communication among internal stakeholders. Renani et al. (2017) found "An effective communication is required, not only for maintaining human relations but also for achieving good business performance and organizational structure" (p. 991). To this end, this study aims to explore leadership communication between department chairs and faculty in higher education.

Background and justification

Fairhurst and Connaughton's (2014) and Dopson et al. (2019) literature review discussed leadership communication in organizations. Historically, leadership communication has been studied across multiple disciplines; leadership communication is influence-oriented, symbolic, linguistic, and multi-dimensional (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Fan & Han, 2018). In addition, the researchers claimed leadership communication influences organizational composition (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Fan and Han (2018) found, researchers have completed theoretical and empirical studies on organizational communication in prior years; however, there is a limited body of knowledge on leader to follower communication. Hence the need to further explore leader to follower communication.

Mayfield and Mayfield (2017) highlighted individual and collective communication perspectives. Leadership communication does not exist unilaterally, rather in group context, it exists in a dynamic and shared design. For this reason, organizational communication should be considered from not only the perspective of leaders, but also followers. Similar viewpoints by Cote (2017) posited that communication is dynamic and coexists in the foundation of what it means to be a leader. To provide a comprehensive position on organizational internal communication, the viewpoint of supervisors and subordinates are equally important in the context of organizational structure. Effective leadership engages followers through effective communication (Cote, 2017; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017).

Like Mayfield and Mayfield (2017), Ruben and Gigliotti (2017) emphasized investigation on leadership communication beyond a systematic approach, to study the role in organizational dynamics. For example, understanding the flow of communication is not enough, but understanding its impact on organizational processes is crucial. There are challenges facing higher education such as transparency in decision-making, economic turbulence, and changes in student preferences, this will require comprehensively-trained leaders who are able to interpret organizational needs into practice (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) found higher education organizations face diverse challenges to maintain institutional sustainability.

Specifically, there are issues within leadership development at universities; leaders are challenged with influencing strategic change and engaging stakeholders (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). University leaders must

encompass the ability to cultivate strategic change through decision making efforts, communication, and evaluation. Communication gaps between leaders and staff can impact workflow, culture, and create problems executing tasks (Sadiartha & Sitorus, 2018).

Manafzadeh et al. (2018) argued relationships between people can determine whether or not efficient business will take place. Manafzadeh et al. (2018), Brown et al. (2019), and Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019) also stated effective communication can lead to attaining organizational goals. This perspective is consistent with other scholars who believe that leadership and communication can influence employee behaviors and productivity (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Manafzadeh et al., 2018). Therefore, the culture of the organization should be considered in understanding effective communication between supervisors and employees. Individuals within organizations share their needs and expectations through communication, for this reason, it is important to understand that leaders and followers may share different perspectives on the level of communication between them. Researchers posited that there is a need to not only understand the level of communication between people relative to high quality relationships but also the organizations' culture.

Deficiencies in the evidence

Scholars have studied the broad field of communication from various perspectives. The field of leadership communication is multidisciplinary and is studied across the fields of psychology, business, communication, and sociology. (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). There are studies on dyadic and societal, individual and collective, and psychological and discursive communication (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017). There is

exhaustive literature on leadership styles and literature on communication styles (Solaja et al., 2016; Sadiartha & Sitorus, 2018)

This study is intended to focus on leadership communication effectiveness and its possible impact within the organization between chairs of the department and faculty. Organizational communication studies have offered limited research on the organizational process (Solaja et al., 2016). Relative to higher education, Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) postulated leadership development is foregrounded in effective internal communication and influence with stakeholders.

There are considerable concerns in developing leaders in higher education; researchers in the field of higher education should explore leader-follower communications and organizational development (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Kok & McDonald, 2017). Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) urged researchers to conduct studies on strategic educational leadership and connections to operational leadership, which focus on efficiency and effectiveness. Effective leadership communication serves as the pathway to continue to explore these areas. Due to the limited research on leadership and communication in post-secondary education environments, there continues to be an opportunity to further understand effective communication between leaders and followers in this arena.

Audience

Higher education leadership, administrators, and university employees will benefit from the study by learning to implement strategies and programs to foster effective communication and better processes within higher education leadership. Organizations with dyadic relationships (i.e., leaders and followers) and researchers in

the field, will use the findings by gaining awareness of organizational leadership communication issues in higher education, and building upon future research areas.

Setting of the study

This study will take place in a nonprofit, 4-year public higher education intuition. The participants observed will be department chairs and faculty within the same department.

Researcher's role

The role of the researcher will be to explore and understand how participants feel about communication in their environment. The researcher will use interviews and a questionnaire to retrieve perspectives of participants to organize data collected from the study. The researcher is an employee of the organization and will only act as an administrator of the interviews and will not function as an active participant.

Definition of Terms

Diagonal communication. A rarely used form of communication is the diagonal approach. This type of communication occurs with individuals on different levels and departments. Renani et al. (2017) provided an example such as labor unions coordinating a meeting between employees and their top management.

Downward communication. Communication that travels from management toward employees is considered downward communication. Messages from senders are authoritative (Renani et al., 2017).

Dyadic communication. The dyadic communication refers to the type of communication that exists between two individuals (Wolcott & Bowdon, 2017).

Higher Educations Institution. Post-secondary educational learning

environments governed by administrators with specialized disciplines to teach content in certain areas. Administrators are often considered department chairs, deans, provosts, and chancellors (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017).

Horizontal communication. Employees who communicate with other employees at the same level engage in horizontal communication. This type of communication allows employees to collaborate and build peer-relationships (Renani et al., 2017).

Ineffective communication. Johnson (2019) described ineffective communication by first defining effective communication. Effective communication occurs when planned messages are transferred from one party (senders) to the intended party (receivers), where shared meaning (decoding) takes place and processes are followed to achieve a common outcome (Johnson, 2019; Sadiartha & Sitorus, 2018). Ineffective communication conversely, interrupts messages and the meaning of messages that are transferred. Ineffective communication can hinder processes through poor relationships, communication style differences, and language barriers (Johnson, 2019).

Leadership development. Ruben, De Lisi, and Gigliotti (2018) described leadership development as preparation for managerial roles that engage in social influence whether planned or unplanned, it is co-constructed through thoughtful collaboration with employees, knowledge and skill-set competent, and enacted through communication. Leadership development focuses on purposeful training and development of programs, goal setting, applying or implementing action items, reviewing and debriefing (Ruben et al., 2018).

Leader-member exchange (LMX). The LMX theory focuses on dyadic relationships that exist among leaders and followers, further exploration of the LMX

theory explains dynamic relationships among groups as well as individuals. The LMX

theory is used to help understand the level of exchange between leaders and followers.

Leaders and followers may share different opinions about the level or quality of

exchanges. For example, the level of trust and respect within the relationship are either

high-quality or low-quality and may vary from one dyad to another (Wolcott & Bowdon,

2017).

Organizational communication. Individuals who belong to a group who share

information to carry out processes are considered a part of an organization. Members who

are linked to activities and desired goals through message exchange are considered a part

of organizational communication (Manafzadeh et al., 2018).

Organizational process. Cetin, Altintas, and Tufekci (2010) described

organizational process as a set of systematic activities and tasks to achieve desired

outcomes set forth by the organization. In a collective description, this includes

infrastructure processes and management processes.

Upward communication. Employees within the organization who exchange

information with supervisors engage in upward communication. Generally employees

exchange concerns within the work environment, ask questions about processes, and

notify management of issues at the subordinate level (Renani et al., 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of

higher education leaders and faculty to better understand the central phenomenon

leadership communication and to optimize organizational communication processes at an

Alabama southeastern university. Higher education leaders are challenged with acquiring

leadership development capabilities beyond their field of discipline to enhance

organizational culture and workflow (Dopson et al., 2019; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017;

Iordanoglou, 2018). Organizational culture is a set of values held by stakeholders within

the organization to define how they identify with the company (Sadiartha & Sitours,

2018).

Department chairs and faculty share different cultural experiences within the

organization, which may determine how each group feels about the level of

communication. This research will consider strengths and opportunities of relationships

between leaders and faculty and organizational communication. The study raises

attention to communication as a tool to better achieve successful strategy and workflow

for leaders and followers. The data collected from participants through interviews will be

used to propose suggestions for future communication strategies.

Chapter Summary

Effective communication in organizations between leaders and followers can help

improve organizational processes (Gramatnikovski et. al., 2015; Solaja, Idowu, & James,

2016). By further exploring communication effectiveness in higher education between

supervisors and employees, researchers can learn how to implement communication

practices that positively support the organization's members and productivity. In

addition, organizations can better understand how communication may affect

organizational culture. The researcher will explore the relationship between department

chairs and department faculty as it relates to their communication practices and

experiences. HEIs focal point for sustainability has historically centered on strategic

planning and outcomes (Gonaim, 2016). The researcher aims to raise attention to

effective communication as a tool to better achieve successful strategy and processes.

Concepts such as leadership development, leadership influence, organizational

citizenship behavior, communication styles, and organizational process are all linked to

communication perspectives. It is important to understand how leadership and

communication are anchored together to better explore HEI leadership interactions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Effective communication is the process of transferring messages and creating meaning to fulfill goals or output of activity (Muszynska, 2018). Gramatnikovski et al. (2015) and Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019) argued communication barriers that exist among companies can affect organizational culture and organizational processes. Effective communication has also been linked to leader and follower relationships (Gramatnikovski et al., 2015; Rajhans, 2018). Previous research studies in higher education have led to studying leaders' capabilities to enact successful organizational processes through efficient communication (Kok & McDonald, 2017). The primary area of concern is communication between leaders and followers in higher education departments. Secondary areas of concern are leadership development from a communication perspective and organizational processes.

While HEI's leadership research vastly covers other countries, there is limited research within the U.S. (Alonderiene & Majauskaite's, 2016). There are widespread studies on leadership in HEI's throughout Malaysia, India, Pakistan, and U.K. universities (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). Therefore, the study focused on the trajectory of leadership research in other countries and the growing need to study leadership within HEI's in the U.S.

Theoretical Perspective

Ineffective communication between leaders and employees in organizations can occur through misunderstandings in message exchange and poor relationships. Hence, the research considers ineffective leader-follower communication framed in the LMX theory. Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) earlier work is considered a seminal study, which expanded

from the vertical dyad linkage (VDL) theory established by Dansereau et al. (1975). The authors argued conceptually, that the LMX theory focuses on the effectiveness of leader and follower interactions as well as the advantages achieved through these relationships. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explained the initial design of the LMX theory was developed to propose a different style of leadership, which focused on vertical dyadic connection. As the theory began to evolve over time, researchers suggested that LMX no longer merely supported dyadic bonds but could also be used as a model in leadership to observe effectiveness and development of multi-dimensional exchange.

Some of these relationships include leaders and working groups, followers and working groups, employees and job satisfaction, and employees and organizational commitment (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Lloyd et al., 2017). LMX theory has received critiques by scholars on whether or not the theory is transformational (social) or transactional (exchange). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) argued, LMX theory is actually both because through the exchanges taking place, social exchange is happening simultaneously. Social exchange is a form of communication, for this reason, the LMX theory is consequently an appropriate model to frame communication with leaders and followers.

Effective and Ineffective Communication

Communication effectiveness. Muszynska (2018) researched communication effectiveness in project teams. The goal of this study was to find a framework for measuring communication effectiveness. The researcher used aspects of communication to measure how successful communication is within teams. In order to determine how to accurately measure communication, this led to the development of *Compass,* which is a

communication project assessment tool that measured the level of communication satisfaction in construction project management teams. Some aspects that were found important to measure effective communication were feedback, message relevance, timeliness, and the channel or method used for delivering messages (Muszynska, 2018).

While Muszynska (2018) focused on the message itself and delivery, Rajhans (2018) posited that stakeholder management can lead to a prosperous organization. This means focusing more on the relationship with stakeholders. By looking at the needs of the people within the organization, a connection forms creating an avenue for prosperous communication and organizational productivity (Chen et al., 2018; Rajhans, 2018).

Unlike Muszynska (2018) who viewed effective communication through the message, Rajhans (2018) and Chen et al. (2018) claimed one way to attain stakeholder management is through effectively communicating as leaders. This means developing leaders who can productively exchange information and build relationships. Muszynska (2018) used a questionnaire, a set of rules, and graphic tools to evaluate communication effectiveness in project teams. There were 22 questions that focused on the sender of messages while four questions in a separate section focused on the receivers of the communication. There were a total of 23 respondents and their answers were compared against a reference model that held three levels of communication effectiveness described as high, medium, and low; the model also measured responses as favorable or unfavorable. The results showed that the questionnaire is applicable for measuring communication success (Muszynska, 2018).

However, Rajhans' (2018) study consisted of 5 steps that are based on stakeholder management instead of messages conveyed. The steps include identify members of the

project, prioritize their needs, visualize and decide on a strategy, and engage and monitor communications in all 5 steps. Rather than the characteristics or aspects of the message, Rajhans (2018) observed characteristics of the people involved in the exchange. Rajhans (2018) aimed to fill in gaps of literature to explore effective communication relationships in stakeholder management. There were 25 professionals (consultants, contractors, IT, and manufacturers) observed in two phases. The first phase was done in semi-structured interviews and the second phase was done with a questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. Results showed organizations are aware of managing stakeholders' relationships, however there is a lack in actual planned communication to facilitate growth of relationships and communication efficacy (Rajhans, 2018).

What is most significant about Muszynska's (2018) research is that the level of communication effectiveness is best understood by measuring the influence of communication in descriptive criteria since respondents describe their experience. While Muszynska (2018) supports the paradigm, the study fails to identify a method for verifying perspectives of the respondents. There are no data to verify claims of respondents, findings are solely dependent upon perspective. An examination of previous research is leading toward future studies on quality communication exchange. The study focused on project teams and did not explicitly separate job levels. While a team-based perspective is valuable from a comprehensive viewpoint, it is important to distinguish between leaders and followers because cultural perspectives are inherently crucial.

Rajhans' (2018) findings are imperative because it shows the opportunity to further study leaders' and employees' communication relationships. Communication can impact the behavior within the organization, it is evident that message relevance, message

delivery, and working relationships can affect project teams and leadership relationships with stakeholders (Muszynska, 2018; Rajhans, 2018). Although Muszynska (2018) and Rajhans (2018) studied communication within the organization quite differently, the consensus between the two studies is that communication between members of the organization can affect the organization (Muszynka, 2018; Rajhans, 2018).

Communication and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). In order to develop a better understanding of organizational relationships, researchers have coined the term OCB to better explore the relationships. OCB is the degree of commitment an individual or group has toward the organization through behaviors; the desire to go above and beyond required responsibilities for the job based on the level of fulfillment (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Gerpott et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016). Previous research studies have focused on quantitative methodology in an effort to consider the level of employee OCB (Curran & Prottas, 2017). Through exploration of previous literature, researchers suggested conducting a qualitative study in order to observe the quality of relationships between employees and the organization (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Gerpott et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2017).

Curran and Prottas (2017) and Ueda(2019) argued there are two types of performance in an organization. There are individual and organizational types of performance (Ueda, 2019). The individual perspective are behaviors of employees related directly to role-related tasks. The organizational perspective are behaviors of the organization as a whole to accomplish a shared goal. The two distinctions are made to address the growing culture of organizations that are performing in teams that foster collaborative work environments. Furthermore, Curran and Prottas (2017) sought to

better understand influencing mechanisms of OCB. Organizational outcomes are positively related to effective decision making, level of satisfaction, attrition rates, profitability, and moral behaviors (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Gerpott et al., 2019; Ueda, 2019).

Curran and Prottas (2017) conducted a quantitative study to determine the aspects influencing work behaviors in 17 US HEI's (Curran & Prottas, 2017). The researchers collected data from 349 employees by deploying a survey to public and private HEI's. The responses were captured through a 5-point Likert response scale and a 7-point Likert response scale. Their findings revealed that role stress such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload can impact the level of OCB. The results of the correlational study indicated that role ambiguity had a higher level of impact than the other two aspects. If employees are uncertain about their role duties or the expectations of their supervisors, then employees are frustrated and are not motivated to do their jobs (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Lee et al., 2016).

Similar to Curran and Prottas (2017), Lee et al. (2016) conducted a statistical analysis to identify the influence of role ambiguity on OCB. Both Curran and Prottas (2017) and Lee et al. (2016) argued previous OCB literature focused primarily on the individual and not the organization. These authors stressed the importance of supervisors setting clear parameters for their expectations. This means that leaders should communicate effectively and exhibit behaviors that followers can respect.

While Curran and Prottas (2017) supported effective communication, training subordinates, and conflict management, this study has a limited viewpoint due to only obtaining managerial feedback. The authors further explained, to comprehensively

understand OCB in different dyads, other researchers should study leader-to-follower relationships and collect perspectives from both parties. Lee et al. (2016) used the structure and OCB framework to explore role ambiguity. The data were collected from 280 managers in Malaysia in manufacturing and construction industries through stratified random sampling from large databases. The purpose of this study was to also understand role ambiguity and OCB.

Role ambiguity in OCB is important because in a growing globalized economy, organizations face issues such as diversity and competitive pressures (Lee et al., 2016). High role ambiguity can threaten effective communication and the ability for employees to perform their jobs ultimately affecting the organization. Lee et al.'s (2016) findings show that structure influences behaviors. This means that when the reputation of the organization and the administration are well respected then OCB is greater.

Like Curran and Prottas (2017) and Lee et al.'s (2016) research has a narrow observation, the perspectives of subordinates are omitted. Lee et al. (2016) indicated the issue with role ambiguity is uncertainty and unclear expectations, however, the studies do not effectively discuss the role of communication or exchanges between leaders and followers. Thus, the extent of Lee et al.'s (2016) study does not discuss how to achieve high OCB through reducing role ambiguity. Their claim targeted the importance of having an effective structure instead (Lee et al., 2016).

Leadership communication behavior. Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) argued that the quality of exchanges between leaders and employees, whether negative or positive can affect the workplace experience. Further, their study aimed to measure leader's communication behavior through a mixed-method study. First, Omilion-Hodges

and Baker (2017) examined positive and negative communication, second, they used a qualitative approach with focus groups to explore decision making and how leaders engaged with subordinates (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2017). Since communication is viewed as the pillar to social interaction within the workplace, low LMX can create low job satisfaction, high turn-over rates, and less engaged workers (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2017; Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Carville and Sudha (2016) also discussed workplace commitment importance related to the educational and financial sectors. Carville and Sudha (2016) attributed high commitment with openness, trust, authenticity, autonomy, and collaboration.

Leaders who exhibit high quality exchanges with subordinates practice openness, provide advice, reassure employees, and consider their problems (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2017). These actions create trust between subordinates and their leaders. Other communicative behaviors that positively impact followers are organizational leader's ability to coach, collaborate, and reach desired goals with colleagues (Carville & Sudha, 2016). Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) defended the position that LMX relationships may differ from one individual to the next, however it is ultimately the responsibility of the leader to establish a quality exchange with employees.

Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) conducted their first study with 119 full-time employees at a graduate Midwestern university using the leader communicative exchanges tool on a 5-point Likert scale. The second study was completed by drawing on the lived experiences of leaders and members, which included participants who were mangers and subordinates. There are distinct differences in management and in leadership, managers are concerned with task-oriented behaviors, staffing, and costs,

while leaders are concerned with developing subordinates, managing relationships, and collaborating on the vision (Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2017; Pereira & Cardoso, 2018).

Leader-Follower Communication in Organizations

 LMX high quality exchange. Peterson and Aikens (2017) explained the LMX theory has roots in the role theory and the social exchange theory, previous research studies on the LMX theory maintained that leaders and followers in organizations develop relationships and those relationships can impact business outcomes (Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Later, studies focused more on the quality of relationships between leaders and followers (Lloyd et al., 2017; Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Peterson and Aikens (2017) argued although scholars have predominately studied LMX and organizational outcomes in terms of individual performance, other dyadic relationships are present.

 Peterson and Aikens (2017) researched that performance can be observed either objectively or subjectively. Further, the authors indicated that subjectively, supervisors engage in reviewing individual performance through an appraisal period. Objectively, performance is reviewed based on organizational outcomes. The authors discussed the importance of high-quality exchanges. Similarly, Lloyd et al. (2017) underscored the need to study high quality relationships within LMX by expanding research that observes relational quality in different dyads.

 LMX theory is not a new concept in most bureaucratic organizations, however in the field of higher education LMX research has not vastly spread (Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Other organizational culture studies highlight employees' job satisfaction and organizational behavior (Carvalho et al., 2018; Carville, & Sudha, 2016). More recently, LMX studies are beginning to gain more exposure as it relates to organizational culture

(Lloyd et al., 2017). Peterson and Aikens (2017) explained that higher education can benefit a great deal from expounding on the LMX theory because in higher education there are a multitude of dyads. Some of the dyads that are present are teacher-student, student-student, and supervisor-employee (Peterson & Aikens, 2017).

Similarly, Martin et al. (2016) expound upon two major measurement instruments for the LMX theory, one is the LMX-7 that measures three areas (respect, trust, and obligation) and Leader Member Exchange-Multi-Dimensional measurement (LMX-MDM) that measures four areas (affect, loyalty, contribution, and professional respect). Peterson and Aikens' (2017) research used the LMX-MDM tool to gauge the quality of relationships between the student-student dyad because the LMX-7 is more often used in working relationships. Peterson and Aikens (2017) found that peer-to-peer relationships have high quality exchanges when there is a high level of respect. The high level of respect that is achieved when one peer who may function as a peer lead or peer support is knowledgeable and has expert power.

Peterson and Aikens (2017) highlighted a key concept in the LMX theory, expertise and knowledge can lead to respect. This is important because in organizations with various dyadic groups, understanding may not occur in the exchange if respect is nonexistent. It is not mentioned by Peterson and Aikens (2017) how respect is achieved, only that if other peers perceive the lead peer's experience as expert power, respect will occur. The authors indicated that peer leaders have more experience than a first year student because they are upper classmen who have successfully moved forward in the program. The authors did not further explore that a part of the communication exchange between student-student is listening. High quality exchanges cannot survive exclusively

on information exchange but will require interactions that involve relationship building
and listening (Lloyd et al., 2017).

Lloyd et al. (2017) argued that previous research on the LMX theory does not
explicitly indicate how to achieve high quality exchanges, instead they focus on the
transaction of the exchange. Their study aimed to further explore supervisors' listening in
order to better lead employees. The authors explained empathetic listening between
leaders and followers can create a level of trust within the exchange. The framework used
by Lloyd et al. (2017) was active empathetic listening (AEL), the researcher used this
construct within the LMX theory.

Lloyd et al. (2017) developed four hypotheses that were based on quality
listening, interaction with supervisors, job satisfaction, and interactional justice. Lloyd et
al. (2017) studied 250 German employees from different companies with a wide range of
professional backgrounds. Listening was measured with a 7-point Likert-type scale 1 =
strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The participants of their study were sent online
surveys through discussion forms. The results showed supervisor listening has a positive
association with LMX and outcomes. The research highlights the significance for high
quality exchanges. This study has relevant findings related to the LMX theory, however
the AEL construct requires a positive relationship to exist first in order for listening to
occur.

Consistent with previous studies, (Lloyd et al., 2017; Muszynska, 2018; Peters &
Aikens, 2017; Rajhans, 2018) all support the need to further study the relationships
within LMX. There is an opportunity to further understand the connection between the
level of relationship (leader-to-follower) and high-quality exchanges. Relationships

among leaders and followers will vary based on positions within the company, in addition communication will also differ from one dyad to another (Chen et al., 2018; Peterson & Aikens, 2017).

LMX differentiation. Seo and Lee (2017) highlighted the role of leadership in the LMX theory. The authors argued the emotional state of leaders can affect the tone of organizational members. Like Chen et al. (2018), Seo and Lee (2017) also suggested that the relationship between leaders and employees may vary from one group to another group based on their position within the organization. This means employees hold different roles in comparison to their leader, some employees hold different roles in comparison to their peers. Differentiation is often used to describe the level of differences between such dyads (Chen et al., 2018; Seo & Lee, 2017).

Chen et al.'s (2018) study proposed that the two perspectives of LMX differentiation, justice and role theory have limitations in their studies. The justice perspective suggests LMX differentiation has a negative impact because it violates equality between members of the group. Whereas the role theory suggests that LMX differentiation is necessary due to positions, job duties, or roles of individuals that may differ in the group.

Scholars Chen et al., (2018), Seo and Lee (2017) found differentiation in the LMX theory is necessary based on different levels of tasks carried out by members in the group. Chen et al. (2018) conducted two field studies to further research the role and justice perspectives. The construct and assumption of this study suggested that task performance or organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) of members is less likely to be perceived as procedural justice, which is related to intragroup relational quality. There

were six hypotheses based on group cohesion and group relationship conflict. The study

was completed through meta-analysis, members' characteristics, leaders' characteristics,

and relational demographics, and utilized a 6-point Likert-scale for the questionnaire. The

results showed LMX differentiation can be positive when related to task performance

(Chen et al., 2018).

Chen et al.'s (2018) research on LMX differentiation is vital because it points to

the importance of observing followers differently according to task performance at the

group level. This means that leader and follower exchanges will vary from one dyad to

the next because different people share different roles in the organization. However, this

study does not extensively consider the relationship between leader-to-follower and

organizational culture, which can lead to further research.

Followers respond differently to leaders based on their position within the

organization; organizational processes that are carried out may also depend on the level

of leader-to-follower cultural context. Leaders influence members of the organization and

can create the tone of the environment (Seo & Lee, 2017). Leaders are also required to

obtain a certain level of skills to develop followers and move the organization forward.

Leader-to-follower communication and processes are dependent on leadership

development.

Leadership identity and influence on OCB. Leaders' behaviors can shape the

behaviors of their followers. Welbourne and Paterson (2017) argued that individuals in

the work environment can increase work interest with a better understanding of self.

Extensive research has been conducted in behavioral sciences on identity. Ethical

leadership is important in motivating followers. Self-awareness has become the

foundation of OCB studies to understand what motivates employees. The identity theory suggests that changes in an individual within a situation can alter an individual's response. This means that an individual can respond to expectations and social relationships based on the context of the environment. Therefore, studies on identity primarily exist in empirical studies (Gerpott et al., 2019; Welbourne & Paterson, 2017).

Gerpott et al. (2019), Reiley and Jacobs (2016), and Welbourne and Paterson (2017), found moral leadership can increase OCB. Two studies were researched by Gerpott et al. (2019), an experiment was conducted with 138 participants and a field study was conducted with 225 employees. The purpose of Gerpott et al.'s (2019) study was to ultimately prove that followers' work outcomes are influenced by the identity of moral leaders. For this reason, this study was framed with the social identity model. Random sampling procedures were used with a 2x2 factorial design. The findings indicate that followers' altruistic behaviors are shaped by highly moral leaders. Gerpott et al. (2019) defined moral leaders as those who have quality interpersonal relationships, communicate with followers effectively, and practice good decision making. Followers will respect leaders who show a willingness to serve others instead of themselves (Gerpott et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2017; Wickramasinghe, & Perera, 2014).

Future research should seek to further understand how follower's identity can impact leaders. In the previous study, leader's identity is shown to affect followers. However, it is worth studying whether or not follower's identity can impact leaders as well. By researching followers' and leaders' perceptions of their identity in the workplace, researchers can add to the overall body of knowledge healthy exchanges between leaders and followers that may increase OCB. Future research should also take

into consideration other industries less studied and types of leadership styles and communication efforts (Gerpott et al., 2019).

Servant leadership and the role of LMX. Although studies on identity can help individuals become more self-aware and better understand their engagement with the organization, leadership style can also impact the level of quality exchanges between leaders and followers. Similar to researchers Gerpott et al. (2019), Reiley and Jacobs (2016), and Welbourne and Paterson (2017); Newman et al. (2017) agreed that individual personalities can contribute to the level of OCB. However, Newman et al. (2017) introduced the LMX construct to further explore how personalities identify with the servant leadership style. In Newman et al. 's (2017) study 446 supervisor-subordinate relationships were surveyed in a Chinese organization. The purpose of this study was to understand to how followers are motivated and their level of commitment to the organization through servant leadership style.

Servant leadership is defined as leaders who serve followers in a capacity that motivates them beyond self, to also have a mindset of service to others, and to serve the communities around them (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Newman et al., 2017). In Newman et al.'s (2017) study, questionnaires were distributed to 500 subordinates in two phases. The data collected intended to measure servant leadership, LMX, psychological empowerment, proactive personality, and OCB. The instruments used in this study were a 5-point Likert-scale, the LMX-7 scale by Uhl-Bien (1995), and the Individual level Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB-I) and Organization level Organization Citizenship Behavior (OCB-O). Ueda (2019) also used the OCB-I and OCB-O instruments to measure OCB. The findings in Newman et al. 's (2017) study showed that

LMX facilitated a positive relationship between servant leadership and OCB (Newman et al., 2017).

This means that servant leadership influences social exchanges between leaders and followers in a way that motivates followers to be proactive and exhibit high level OCB. Empowered employees are more likely to engage with the organization and exude a higher job commitment (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016; Newman et al., 2017; Podsakoff et al., 1990). In addition, employees will feel that they belong to an inclusive environment that promotes a sense of fulfillment (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Newman et al. (2017) study is significant because it moves research in a direction that seeks to understand how to achieve quality OCB for employees. Specifically, Newman et al. (2017) argued that high LMX and servant leadership can contribute to society and effective decision making.

Servant leadership can reduce differentiation and promote the development of employees through the growth of interpersonal communication (Newman et al., 2017). Researchers who continue to study organizational communication and commitment should seek to study other industry settings and other leadership styles (Newman et al., 2017). HEI's are not frequently studied in areas of management and infrastructure, primarily research has focused on HEI's climate and stability regarding matriculation rates (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018). However, HEI's are a growing environment for producing future leaders (Hassan et al., 2018). For this reason, HEI's are a practical avenue to research leadership and communication.

Higher Education Leadership Development and Communication

  Higher education leadership. Academic leadership shares similar aspects of traditional leadership, however academic leadership differs from traditional business leadership in systematic structure and overall goals. There is limited research on academic leadership (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018). Anthony and Antony (2017) discussed traditional leadership is goal driven, focuses on salary increase and promotion, and financial rewards. Traditional and academic leadership share similar concepts like managing change, social skills, self-regulation, motivating individuals, trust and credibility, empathy, and setting a vision for the company. Researchers Anthony and Antony (2017) studied whether or not academic leadership is unique or if academic leadership has the same parameters as traditional business leadership. This is important because HEI's have begun to assess the nature of leadership and the specific needs of an effective leader (Ruben et al., 2018).

  Like Anthony and Antony (2017), Ruben and Gigliotti (2017); Kok and McDonald (2017) agree that HEI's leadership is quite different from traditional leadership. In HEI's academic leaders must possess academic disciplines to lead their departments, maintain the integrity of research, create staff autonomy, promote collaboration, and networking (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Kok & McDonald, 2017). Ruben et al. (2018) explained that it is not enough to manage operations and hold specialized degrees, rather leaders must develop people. HEI leaders must have effective relationships with employees, hence the need to study LMX within HEI's (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018).

Often academic leaders are selected according to their academic capacity and not their leadership expertise and training (Anthony & Antony, 2017).

Antony and Antony (2017) defined academic leaders as departmental or institutional leaders in higher education who manage the change process, motivate during change, leverage resources, promote excellence in research, teaching, and learning. The definition does not include the significance of communication, although communication is referenced in the research as an important quality for academic leaders. Kok and McDonald (2017) also noted that successful academic departmental management requires certain behaviors. Kok and McDonald's (2017) study showed that some of the behaviors of department leaders were communication, staffing, and dynamics of the department. It is important to mention that communication is a common theme that is found in several studies concerning leadership effectiveness (Karadag, 2017; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). In HEI's leaders are considered those who help implement change or new processes, which are department chairs or deans (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). "Academic leaders are responsible for the evolution and growth of the educational institute" (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017, p. 408)

Hassan et al. (2018) researched leadership effectiveness in HEIs. Their study placed emphasis on the business school department and the deans of the business school. Hassan et al. (2018) discussed the importance of effective leaders and moreover, placed significance on business school leaders. This is because it is assumed that the business school produces future leaders, therefore leaders within the business school must also embody effective leadership proficiencies.

Future studies in HEIs should consider middle management like department chairs. While Hassan et al. (2018) researched deans as top level leaders within the business school department, the study has limitations in observing the entire workflow from top leadership, middle leadership, and finally subordinates. Gaubatz and Ensminger (2017) on the other hand explored the leadership dynamics of department chairs because of their unique roles between policy makers and policy implementors. Although researchers (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017; Hassan et al., 2018) observed two different types of leaders within the university setting, it is clear that effective leadership development is a growing topic in regards to organizational culture.

Leadership development in HEIs is a key concern for organizational stability (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018). Kok and McDonald (2017) researched leadership, government, and management (LGM) behaviors that successful academic departmental leaders demonstrated. This study aimed to emphasize LGM behaviors are linked to departmental success in higher education. Behaviors in this study are considered processes of leaders. Researchers Kok and McDonald (2017) posed the question, what makes an effective leader? Kok and McDonald (2017) collected data in three phases from 5 UK universities. The first phase used an open-ended questionnaire based on the McKinsey 7S framework, distributed to 15 departments with 5 collaborating intuitions. Research findings indicated in summary, eight-thematic behaviors for successful departments that were rewards, staffing, change management, dynamics and culture, research and teaching, communication, direction and strategy, shared vision, and leadership. Kok and McDonald (2017) also found that respondents identified successful departments as those with clear and concise communication of goals. In addition, Ruben

et al. (2018) expounded upon the lack of leadership development in higher education. Ruben et al. (2018) argued that communication is a central component of successful leadership.

The studies by Kok and McDonald (2017); Ruben et al. (2018) are crucial to future research opportunities in the field of higher education because there are limited studies that seek to better understand communication and leadership development in post-secondary institutions. It is worth noting that these studies placed emphasis on leadership behaviors and links those behaviors to HEIs success (Kok & McDonald, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018).

Academic leadership preparedness. HEI are complex structures that require unique skills for leadership preparedness. Specifically, Mohnot and Shaw (2017) and Dopson et al. (2019) studied the type of behaviors exhibited by prepared leaders. Mohnot and Shaw (2017) collected data from 372 leaders in Indian HEI's through online and printed surveys. Leaders were considered presidents, provosts, deans, and directors. The ALPS or academic leadership preparedness scale was used; the tool was created by the researcher in addition to the use of the 5-point Likert scale. Their findings indicated that leadership styles are linked to leadership readiness (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). Dopson et al. (2019) argued that globalization and marketization are current issues facing university leadership.

Ziskin et al. (2018) and Dopson et al. (2019) supported the idea that open discourse among administrators in the planning stages can promote strength in creating policy; open dialogue promotes different views that encourage policy design. Furthermore, Dopson et al. (2019) Explained that previous leadership development

studies learned that the academy desired leadership characteristics that are direct, create a direction for others to follow by being clear in the path towards the goals, and having strategic vision. In addition, it was also noted that being considerate and respectful of autonomy was preferred by colleagues. Colleges are not receptive of traditional management structures (Dopson et al, 2019).

Similarly, Kok and McDonald (2017), Dopson et al. (2019), and Debowski (2015) supported the idea that effective leadership stemmed from a set of behaviors. Although Kok and McDonald (2017) did not identify a particular leadership style, they argued leadership is not a technicality of procedures but instead reflects conduct and creating an influential culture. Anthony & Antony (2017), Dopson et al. (2019), Mohnot and Shaw (2017) and Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019) on the other hand noted key areas of academic leadership include interpersonal behaviors, leveraging resources, learning and teaching, research and strategy, vision, and autonomy.

Certain behaviors that govern the actions of leaders is also considered leadership style (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). The bureaucratic approach focuses on a set of procedures and policies instead of people (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). However, the humanistic approach governs job satisfaction and relationships. In academia, the humanistic approach to leadership is valued more than the bureaucratic approach because it offers collaboration (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). Two styles mentioned in HEI literature are transactional and transformational leadership styles (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Mohnot & Shaw, 2017).

Karadag (2017) and Debowski (2015) found academic leaders who practice bureaucratic leadership and create role ambiguity affect overall job performance.

Karadag's (2017) phenomenological qualitative study was conducted through maximum

variation sampling. 13 managers were interviewed at a university in Turkey to better

understand roles and responsibilities of academic leadership. Karadag (2017) and

Anthony and Antony (2017) agreed that academic leaders carry a vision to motivate and

inspire employees, which means HEI leaders must encourage and influence followers.

Some influential behaviors researched are collaboration, character, trust, and morale

(Karadag, 2017).

In order to reduce role ambiguity and promote a culture of encouragement,

leaders should hold frequent meetings, exhibit clear communication and expectations,

have self-awareness, and create a culture of learning (Karadag, 2017; Lee et al., 2016).

Employees value leaders who demonstrate equality, support diversity, are culturally

aware, have tolerance, and respect (Panicker, 2018; Karadag, 2017). The limitations of

Karadag's (2017) study does not effectively cover academic leaders' ability to manage

their own leadership styles. While the research covers unique qualities of leaders, it does

not effectively discuss how leadership styles impact followers.

Transformational leadership is positively related to high job satisfaction because it

supports subordinates and allows employees to provide feedback that leaders often

consider (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). In academia, transformational leadership is

also linked to better organizational outcomes (Herbst & Garg, 2017). Transformational

behavior is linked to job satisfaction (Herbst & Garg; Mohnot & Shaw, 2017; Nicdao,

2019). HEI literature has extensively defended that leadership in academia is distinctive

from traditional business leadership and should address leadership development concerns

differently from traditional metrics (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Dopson et al., 2019).

Alonderiene and Majauskaite's (2016) conducted a quantitative study with 72 faculty members and 10 supervisors from Lithuania, to understand the impact of leadership style on job satisfaction in HEI's. Their findings showed that bureaucratic leadership style was less effective and job satisfaction was low. Their research suggested further research should expand to other countries or institutions and study relationships. The consistent theme among the research is that there is a need to further study the development of university leaders at the department level and to study relationships between leaders and employees.

Further, effective communication is also a reoccurring theme as it relates to OCB and business sustainability (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Nicdao, 2019). Mohnot and Shaw (2017) argued paired leadership styles have a greater outcome on job satisfaction. For example, leaders who utilize transformational and transactional leadership styles are more effective because employees trust leaders and are more productive (Mohnot & Shaw, 2017). Employee's OCB is linked to the preparedness and communication of their leaders. Nicado's (2019) research on university presidents and transformational leadership revealed that collaboration, delegation, and inspirational leadership were positive outcomes of transformational leadership approach.

Higher education leadership communication and job satisfaction.

Hendrickson et al. (2013) explained that university leadership is broken down into three core parts. The strategic apex consists of the presidents and the board of directors. The operating core are the faculty and those who are delivering the programs. The middle

line are deans and directors who function as the connecting medium between faculty and upper level leadership. Colleges and universities also are governed by state structures. The state governs the postsecondary system and its connection between the institution and the state (Hendrickson et al., 2013). Similarly, Lunenburg (2012) also defended the basic structure of an organization has key parts containing the top management, the workers who carry out the duties, the middle line or middle management, and the technostructure and support staff. Lunenburg (2012) and Dopson et al. (2019) argued that educational leaders must understand that the strategy of the organization is directly related to the structure and leadership development.

Sharma, et al. (2015) explored organizational communication by studying the level of communication and job satisfaction of employees within the university setting. Communication satisfaction has been linked to job satisfaction and the overall communication competence of supervisors, which directly affects the level of employee job satisfaction (Pongton, P., & Suntrayuth, 2019). The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) was used to determine the level of communication and job satisfaction. The population sample included non-teaching 2,600 staff members at three campuses in Northeast Tennessee. A 7-point Likert-scale was used in the research study and data were collected through SurveyMonkey, an online service.

The results of the study revealed moderate level of communication satisfaction against all eight dimensions (Sharma et al., 2015). This study illustrates that employee job satisfaction is related to the level of communication satisfaction of supervisors. Sharma et al. (2015) and Brown et al. (2019) underscored that the LMX theory has connections to communication effectiveness and job satisfaction. However, Sharma et al.

(2015) does not explore LMX and commitment to the organization and workflow. This information leads future researchers to question the significance of those variables and organizational leadership development.

Academic leaders' learning and performance. Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) postulated that there is a positive correlation between learning organizational culture and academic leadership performance. There were 420 faculty members surveyed in 20 Indian HEIs. The surveys were deployed through email and were measured with a close-ended questionnaire, which was measured with a 6-point Likert scale (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Like Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019), organizational learning can impact leaders' influence with subordinates and subordinates' level of commitment or performance to their jobs. Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) and Ruben and Gigliotti (2017) found HEIs like other businesses face challenges to remain competitive.

For this reason, the paradigmatic climate of HEIs seek to focus on performance. In order to effectively gauge performance, there is an urgent need to develop effective leaders (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Organizational structures can influence individual and group achievement, furthermore, leaders who plan and shape organizational structures can either empower employees or demoralize employees (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Solaja et al. (2016) also highlighted the cornerstone notion that leaders must learn their own personalities and traits to effectively encourage subordinates, which will ultimately lead to better organizational outcomes.

Leadership style, cultural awareness, and a commitment to learn as a leader can impact the level of engagement for followers (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) researched learning as a concept in academic leadership. Learning has been linked to the transformational leadership style to accomplish a shared vision for the institution. This is important because transformational leadership highlights empowerment, advancing team morale, influencing followers and changing people and the organization. Departmental level leadership focuses on the work culture and partnership of leaders and employees. Therefore, managers who engage in learning should exercise focusing on forward thinking for the organization and the cultural pulse (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016). Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) and Ponnuswamy and Manohar (2016) agreed that leaders must continuously learn and empower followers to maintain individual and group satisfaction.

Communication and Higher Education Workflow

Effective leadership and communication. Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) researched the relationship between subordinate's OCB and leader's self-efficacy. The study was conducted at 10 HEIs in Nigeria. There were 420 responses collected from employees where results indicated a positive correlation between staff's OCB and each leader's self-efficacy (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019). Researchers agreed that HEIs are the foundation for developing people and as such, serve as a justifiable research site to further study effective leadership (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Hassan et al., 2018; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017).

Self -efficacy is described as the extent to which an individual is self-organized, proactive, and driven (Zahra et al., 2017). It is unlikely that employees will work on a

task that make them feel uncomfortable or unsure. Since academic leaders are at the center of carrying out the organizational vision, it is important for academic leaders to practice high self-efficacy (Zahra et al., 2017). Similar to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016), and Mohnot and Shaw (2017); Adewale and Ghavifekr supported that transformational leadership and self-awareness are paramount to subordinate success.

Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) utilized two theories in their study in order to demonstrate the influential role of self-efficacy and OCB with leaders and followers. Leaders are responsible for influencing followers towards a common goal often considered the organizations' vision or purpose (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Seo & Lee, 2017). Furthermore, Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) stated that effective leaders assume certain qualities like forward thinking, subordinate support, promote change, and plan for the effectiveness of the entire unit. Like Newman et al. (2017), Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019), and Brown et al. (2019) explicated how to manage quality relationships through motivation, providing a feeling of worth and acknowledgment. In contrast, when employees feel unappreciated and are not recognized for hard work, the organizational climate may lead to demoralization. A negative climate is most related to autocratic leadership structures, poor communication styles, and role ambiguity (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Curran & Prottas, 2017).

Previous literature on effective leadership and communication in higher education espoused several positive leadership attributes. Specifically, Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) defended the concept that effective leaders are those who have learned from previous experiences, demonstrate self-growth, are role models for subordinates,

and prioritize motivation of staff. In addition, leaders who are willing to learn difficult tasks can gain the respect of their subordinates. Finally, effective leaders empower subordinates to create, this means leaders encourage and equip subordinates with the ability to make decisions and practice autonomy (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Zahra, 2017). Allowing employees to create builds trust and helps relationships grow (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019). The authors, Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) recommended leadership training and for leaders to engage in responsive behaviors toward staff to achieve a high performing organization.

       Communication style and commitment. Luo et al. (2016) and De Vries et al. (2010) argued there is a limited body of research on supervisor and subordinate communication with emphasis primarily on supervisor communication style. Luo et al. (2016) researched the different dimensions of communication style and how the leadership communication style effects the organization in the context of commitment in change. This is important because leader-to-follower communication in organization studies have previously focused on the flow of communication between them and have not focused on the relationship outcomes and how that may or may not affect the direction of the organization. Future organizational development and processes may be impacted by leader-follower communications (De Vries et al., 2010; Luo et al., 2016).

       This study was framed using an integrated model of leader communication style during organizational change. There were 4 orientations of the communication style model used, the hope orientation (fear of change failure), reality orientation (complete information), subordinate orientation (focus on benefits), and the support orientation (inadequate support). Luo et al. (2016) collected data from leaders and team members,

leaders who operated a part-time MBA program at a highly ranked school in China. Questionnaires were delivered to leaders for themselves and another set of questionnaires contained in a sealed envelope were sent to team leaders to distribute to their teams. The final sample size was 31 leaders and 194 team members. This exploratory study yielded results that indicated subordinates' commitment to change is linked to leaders' effective communications style. More importantly, subordinates feel more committed to the direction of the organization (change) when their hope, support, benefits, and reality are clear. This means that communication of leaders is a key role in subordinates' commitment to the organization's vision and future planning (Luo et al., 2016).

Communication style and organizational workflow. Solaja et al. (2016) researched the effect of supervisors' personality trait and communication style on organizational productivity. The purpose of this study was to provide logical methods for leaders' to build on their communication styles and personality traits, in a way that positively influenced employees and organizational productivity. The authors used the Affective Events Theory or AET framework that discovers how emotions influence job performance and satisfaction. Researchers of this study suggested that emotions affect outcomes. This study used a cross-sectional survey for 112 academic staff at a university and data were collected through personal observation and questionnaire. The results indicated that leadership communication style can determine organizational efficiency (Solaja et al., 2016).

Similar to Solaja et al. (2016), Brown et al. (2019) and Pongton and Suntrayuth (2019) research explicated that leadership communication style can impact employee performance. Leadership and communication research are relevant because it highlights

the importance and relationship between the two concepts and the connection to

organizational productivity (De Vries et al., 2010; Lou et al., 2016; & Solaja et al., 2016).

While Solaja et al. (2016) argued the positive relationship between communication style

and productivity, the study does not effectively address organizational processes that are

conduits of getting to a desired outcome.

Communication and leadership styles. "Leadership is considered a relationship

that is reciprocal process" (Cote, 2017, p. 52). Leadership occurs as an action that

engages in transactional behavior between leaders and followers. There is exhaustive

literature on what leadership is and what it is not. Like Mamula et al. (2019), Cote (2017)

supported the theme that leadership is influential, promotes innovation, and

implementation. The case study by Cote (2017) considered the type of leadership styles

that can impact organizational behavior.

Cote's (2017) study focused primary on the idea that leadership carries out an

effective vision for followers to adopt and implement. Researchers Alonderiene and

Majauskaite (2016) and Cote (2017) maintained that transformational and transactional

leadership styles are well received by followers. However, Cote (2017) drew attention to

other leadership styles like situational leadership, which means leaders may adapt their

leadership based on the situation faced at hand. In addition, the author explained the

positive and negative attributes of charismatic leadership.

In this study, charismatic leadership is defined as a phenomenon, which leaders

act as a guide for adopting a set of values or beliefs, often derived from personal traits of

the leader (Cote, 2017). Unlike Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016), (Cote, 2017)

continued research on the dark side of leadership such as pseudo-transformational

leadership style. Leaders can lead their followers into negative and immoral decisions based on the personal pursuit of the leader in pseudo-transformational leadership. (Cote, 2017) suggested that leaders who have an effective leadership strategy can avoid negative leadership behaviors that may affect business outcomes. Furthermore, developing a healthy trustworthy relationship with followers can combat possible ill intended advancements in the workplace. Leaders must allow followers to provide feedback to create an open flow of communication and manage the emotional state of the organization (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Cote, 2017; Muszynska, 2018).

Cote's (2017) case study found effective leaders use a combined leadership approach that supports motivation, vision, and task-oriented behaviors. Leaders effectively communicate, set clear goals and expectations, check performance, evaluate, and position people in the right roles (Cote, 2017; Herbst, & Garg, 2017; Zahra et al., 2017). However, Cote (2017) does not distinctly explain the effects of poor leadership on the organizational workflow. While the author stated that a clear strategy can help leaders exude positive leadership styles, the author does not detail the negative impacts poor leadership can have on the business.

Communication and Organizational Processes

Organizational workflow, change, strategy, and planning. Gramatnikovski et al. (2015) showed communication in the organization is related to effective agreements, planning, and decision making. The continuous exchange between members of an organization is considered essential to the growth of the organization. Gramatnikovski et al. (2015) researched the improvement of business communications on the development of organizational culture. The research study postulated inappropriate communication can

influence the development of the organization. Ten organizations were examined with a total of 282 participants. This study focused on the employee and client perspectives through a closed type questionnaire (i.e., yes, no, sometimes).

The findings showed a positive and high result to the research question. This study is important because effective communication is necessary through business change, strategy, and future planning (Gramatnikovski et al., 2015; Peterson & Aikens, 2017; Welborne & Peterson, 2017). However, Gramatnikovski et al. (2015) did not explicitly show how to achieve effective communication. Similarly, a study by Ohemeng, et al. (2018) used a mixed-methods approach to explore sense-giving in organizational change. Sense-giving is the process that occurs in effective communication. This study does explore methods for effective communications. Their findings show that trainings, one-on-one meetings, and workshops were effective in achieving sense-making in change Ohemeng et al. (2018). The importance of both studies is that communication is a vital component in recognizing the need to develop leaders and effectively communicate with members of the organization; which, in turn can have an impact on organizational processes (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Peterson & Aikens, 2017; Ohemeng et al., 2018).

Business changes and leadership communication. Mamula et al. (2019) found businesses need improved communication across teams in developing cross-functional collaboration that encourages creation. Businesses are moving away from traditional leadership knowledge and skill-based approaches towards an imaginative creative mindset. This is because the market is constantly changing requiring creative solutions (Mamula et al., 2019). A qualitative study was conducted on Millennials ages 30-38 and

Generation X. The first study was completed with interviews through video teleconference, and face-to-face. The second study was done through focus groups.

Like Antony and Antony (2017) and Nicdao (2019), Mamula et al.'s (2019) findings are consistent with their studies on leadership and management where researchers identified life-long learning and establishing good relationships as crucial components of successful leadership. The study also unveiled the difference between generational preferences. Millennials and Generation X clearly identified the difference in management and leadership and the need to continuously engage in learning, however, millennials prefer to learn differently than Generation X. Millennials prefer the Internet and social platforms to learn, while Generation X prefers traditional formats like books, research journals, and university settings (Mamula et al., 2019).

Due to the economic shift in globalized businesses and moving towards a creative design thinking approach, leaders should build interpersonal relationships and value team member's concerns in a turbulent enterprise (Dopson et al., 2019; Herbst & Garg, 2017; Mamula et al., 2019; Ruben & Gigliotti, 2017). For example, this study showed that cultural diversity requires workplaces that value employee's personal time, a balanced work life, feedback, knowledge sharing, self-respect, and assurance (Mamula et al. 2019). Employees value the opportunity to receive training as well because training supports the idea of growth and security (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Anthony & Antony, 2017; Curran & Prottas, 2017; Mamula et al., 2019) Learning more about the communication between leaders and followers can shed further light on the work environment.

Communication and Leading Teams

Leadership challenges in teams. Bui et al. (2016) found similar to other traditional businesses, HEIs have noticed a change in business culture. Changes that HEIs have witnessed involve a change in students' demands, fiscal changes, and employee roles across teams. Organizations are growing globally, which presents opportunities to expand job functions and build larger teams. Technological advancements, changes in market demands (online learning), and effective communication across teams are barriers for academic leaders. Moreover, leadership development issues in HEIs have moved toward learning how to lead dynamic and diverse geographic societies. Team learning is an increasing concern in businesses however, current literature on team building has focused on students and not on employees (Bui et al., 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016).

Cleverly-Thompson (2016) studied the correlation between university deans' characteristics as leaders and entrepreneurial leadership orientation. The study has a positive correlation indicating that deans should embody an entrepreneurial mindset to be successful at leading HEIs. This means that deans as academic leaders should take risk, build teams, act as visionaries, and function as change agents (Cleverly-Thompson, 2016; Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). Deans evaluated their leadership as proactive and team builders (Cleverly-Thompson, 2016). Team learning is associated with organizational learning, employee motivation, team commitment, knowledge sharing, and increased performance (Cleverly-Thompson, 2016; Bui et al., 2016).

Bui et al. (2016) like Steffens et al. (2016) and Freund (2017) agreed that organizational leaders must have a collective vision outlook. Bui et al. (2016) also suggested that training and development divisions in organizations promote social

knowledge in addition to task knowledge. This concept introduces the need to explore relationship dynamics among leaders, followers, and teams. Team learning is imperative in order to better understand relationships between leaders and followers because team relationships can affect team synergy and overall workflow performance in dynamic organizational cultures (Bui et al., 2016; Cleverly-Thompson; Curran & Prottas, 2017)

Anthony and Antony (2017) revisited the history of university leadership. The authors explicated the complexities of leadership within HEIs, which are relative to a distributed or shared collaboration approach (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Steffens et al., 2016). Historically, universities have promoted leaders to chair and dean positions based on their academic ability. Due to the rise of challenges in the collegiate landscape, there is a widespread need to produce leaders who are able to address sustainability, organization functionality, productivity, and consumer behavior. Some of the aforementioned challenges have surfaced because of the birth of technological advancement. Students are able to take classes in distal formats. Next, curriculum must meet the challenge of market demands, preparing students adequately for the job market instead of degrees that are not profitable. Finally, academic leaders are challenged with leading nontraditional business environments (Anthony & Antony, 2017).

Hart et al. (2017) posited that HEIs need a new leadership model that bridges the gap between academic leaders and staff members. HEI's are described as complex structures, the dynamics between leaders and followers are multifaceted because in academia there are various types of leaders. There are departmental leaders such as faculty members, deans, directors, and chairs; there are also university level leaders such as presidents (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017; Hart et al., 2017). HEIs are complex in

structural design and therefore require unique solutions to reduce interruptions in workflow (Hart et al., 2017; Solaja et al., 2016). One of the major concerns in workflow interruption is communication (Hart et al., 2017; Solaja et al., 2016) Researchers Hopkins, Meyer, Shera, and Peters (2015) argued that organizations need more access to leadership training and should shift their mindset towards a strategic management model that involves shared decision-making that focuses on an ultimate goal. In some cases, organizational leaders have unclear communication due to the disconnect on job responsibility and the future trajectory of the organization (Bromely & Meyer, 2017). It is important to identify these challenges and further research opportunities to create better leadership models for university departments.

Specifically, organizational leaders face challenges navigating complex structures and managing teams (Freund, 2017; Hart et al., 2017). Historically, organizations have maintained traditional leadership formats. However, this structure has become increasingly less favored by organizational employees (Freund, 2017; Hart et al., 2017; Steffens et al., 2016). First, it is important to define the meaning of shared leadership, which is the ability to demonstrate delegation and decision making throughout the organization (Freund, 2017). The term shared leadership is desired most, by not only staff members but also complex leadership teams. Furthermore, traditional leadership does not adequately represent the relationships of staff members and collective culture within the organization, this issue has created a need to research team management from a leadership perspective.

Previous literature explored the interpersonal relationship and influence of shared leadership, however Freund (2017) and Steffens et al. (2016) posited that shared

leadership involves sharing information through influence, understanding role differentiation, the amount of time it takes for behaviors to change, and authenticity. These three complexities introduce a larger phenomenon, which is the team-oriented view. This means that leaders of the organization take on a cultural and empowering mindset (Freund, 2017; Steffens et al., 2016). Organizational leaders have difficulty sustaining the overall goal of the organization when the leader cannot communicate their ideas effectively (Curran & Prottas, 2017; Hart et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2016)

Steffens et al. (2016) researched authentic leadership, more importantly, how to attain authentic leadership. There are particular attributes that a leader can demonstrate that followers perceive as authentic. This includes having a collective interest with the group. Organizational teams assess leader's authenticity based on their shared beliefs, values, and actions that can support a team atmosphere. Leadership behaviors that are consistent with a collective interest can improve job satisfaction, job performance, and helps manage synergy within the work culture (Freund, 2017; Hart et al., 2017; Steffens et al., 2016). The significance of Freund (2017) and Steffens et al.'s (2016) research is that leaders who express a collective interest can positively influence and empower followers in their jobs, ultimately positively affecting the workflow of the organization (Steffens et al., 2016). Finally, future research points toward learning more about the collective self. This means that scholars in the field of pedagogy should incorporate a focus on teams in future literature.

Leadership training and team development. Freund (2017) argued that champions of shared leadership encourage and empower by seeking opportunities to develop staff. Developing staff can create an avenue for leaders to trust employees to

handle certain matters of the business. Researchers Freund (2017) and Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) suggested training organizational leaders on implantation, mentorship, promoting autonomy, sharing in goal setting, sharing in setting budgets, training peers, problem solving, and defining the communication. Notably, communication is one of the aspects that can impact organizations greatly. This is because miscommunication or even scarce communication can lead to different opinions about the trajectory of the company (Hart et al., 2017; Solaja et al., 2016). Often times conflict can arise simply because stakeholders fail to communicate with one another about their concerns or their job functions (Freund, 2017).

Freund (2017) stated that leaders should clearly define the roles of leadership, develop efficient processes, have open discussion about leadership styles, and identify a consistent flow of communication. It can become hard to hold members of the organization accountable for actions taken, therefore, creating a plan for communication can help circumvent issues of accountability. Leaders among various organizations have placed more focus on developing human capital and less on developing people. Behaviors are difficult to transform, but over time through team encouragement, learning, and outlining a strategic process, stakeholders can share in the same vision and proceed according to the shared purpose (Bui et al., 2016; Freund, 2017). Leaders do not usually consider the value of feedback (Freund, 2017). Feedback plays a vital role in reshaping leadership behaviors and accountability, it is necessary to also create a process for consistent constructive feedback in the cycle of communication (Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016; Curran & Prottas, 2017; Freund, 2017). This can help the leadership team avoid a bottleneck of emotions within the team that will eventually explode

(Freund, 2017). Future research should seek to inform organizations on investing time in changing the mindset of the leadership team, build interpersonal relationships, empower others through autonomy and trainings, and create a functional communication process (Bui et al., 2016; Freund, 2017, Cleverly-Thompson, 2016; Steffens et al., 2016).

Chapter Summary

The theoretical framework for this study included the LMX theory, which posited that quality relationships between leaders and followers point toward effective leadership as well as successful work environments (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Through an exhaustive literature review, the commonality among previous research indicated that growing globalized infrastructures seek to better understand the relationships among people (Cote, 2017; Gramatnikovski et al., 2015; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Lloyd et al., 2017). More specifically, the higher education market demonstrated a need for leadership development that focuses more on developing people, innovation, managing change, and implementation (Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Kok & McDonald, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). The literature also highlighted effective leadership is grounded in effective communication (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Gramatnikovski et al., 2015; Hart et al., 2017; Hassan et al., 2018). By studying the communication experiences between leaders and followers in HEIs, the body of knowledge can expand upon how to achieve sustainment and a successful organization.

Furthermore, academic leaders have traditionally directed departments based on their academic achievement. HEIs today are in need of leaders with an academic specialty and specialized leadership capabilities (Peterson & Aikens, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018). Although academic institutions are complex in managerial structures, for the

purpose of this study, chairs of the department and employees were the focus.

Researchers conclude that university growth and implementation begin at the department

level where chairs are viewed as change agents, this introduces team-oriented

environments (Bui et al., 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Gardner, 2018; Gaubatz &

Ensminger, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to study the relationships between

department chairs and employees to better understand their leader-to-follower

communication. Ultimately the goal is to promote successful LMX structures and to

enhance OCB.

Research Questions

The following research questions were designed to explore the phenomenon

addressed in this applied dissertation. What are the communication experiences of

department chairs and department faculty (explored by mutual respect, reciprocal trust,

and obligation)? There were three subsequent questions:

1. How do department chairs and faculty describe their verbal and non-verbal
   communication experiences? (mutual respect)

2. How and in what ways do department chairs and faculty describe instances of
   communication issues if any? (reciprocal trust)

3. What do department chairs and faculty suggest to enhance communication and
   their commitment to building relationships? (obligation)

Chapter 3: Methodology

Aim of the Study

Communication issues can create dissension in leader and follower exchanges (McNaughtan et al., 2019). Leadership structures in HEIs are complex. This study aimed to understand the communication experiences of department chairs as leaders and department faculty as followers. It is important to understand these exchanges to better support higher education departments. Researchers have connected communication within HEIs to the development of leaders (Ruben et al., 2018).

Departmental chairs have historically led universities in change, curriculum design, hiring faculty, and furthering specialized academic research (Bui et al., 2016; Cleverley-Thompson, 2016; Gardner, 2018; Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017). The aforementioned findings from previous studies are pivotal points in the launch of this research study. This chapter will commence with the chosen qualitative research approach, selection of participants, data collection tools, procedures, and data analysis. The chapter will culminate with ethical considerations, trustworthiness, potential research bias, and limitations of this study.

Qualitative Research Approach

This study was explored through a phenomenological approach. Creswell and Poth (2018) found "whereas a narrative study reports the stories of experiences of a single individual or several individuals, a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (p. 75). Historically, phenomenology has been rooted in sociology, psychology, health sciences, and education (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach draws on a philosophical

perspective and was introduced as a knowledge of theory by the German mathematician Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) in the early 1900s (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, 2013). Although the act of studying phenomena prevailed before Husserl's (1900-01) Logic Investigation's, it was Husserl's work that launched the idea, the essence of consciousness, which shifted from logic to philosophy (Smith, 2013). This means that phenomenology is a method used to explore what human beings experience and how (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, 2013).

Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018), Laverty (2003), and Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) delineated the types of phenomenology, hermeneutical (interpretive) and transcendental (descriptive). Hermeneutical phenomenology is oriented by considering themes, reflective interpretation of text, maintaining a relationship to the topic, and is often used in health science literature. Thus, transcendental focuses on the human experience and epoche´ (bracketing out) of the investigator's experiences. In transcendental phenomenology, the investigator establishes the phenomenon of study, identifies their own experiences, collects data, analyzes and reduces the data to common themes, and then represents the findings in substantial testimonials. The final representation of the study includes statements that capture the overall common essence of the lived experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Smith, 2013).

Moustakas (1994) found a systematic guided process for conducting a transcendental study that includes textual descriptions and structural descriptions. The process requires the researcher to identify statements of participants to explain what they experienced. Next, the researcher creates clusters of meaning to turn the statements into themes identifying how the participants experienced the phenomenon, finally, the essence

of the experience is collected and reported (Moustakas, 1994).

For example, a study by Thompson (2018) explored the emotional and cultural

intelligence of the social integration of international students in the U.S. through a

transcendental phenomenological approach. Thompson (2018) chose this qualitative

method to study and analyze the social experiences of the participants. The participants

expounded upon their described emotions, words, and perspectives. Thompson (2018)

stated, "Phenomenology is a popular approach in qualitative research because it provides

detailed, first-hand information of individual's experiences" (p. 1230).

Further, he defends the use of a transcendental perspective because it removes the

focus on the investigator and places the experiences of participants as a primary conduit

to gain understanding (Thompson, 2018). The researcher adopted the transcendental

phenomenological approach because the researcher is a member of the research site.

Therefore, the researcher engaged in bracketing out her own experiences to remain

impartial. The phenomenological approach assisted the researcher in finding the essence

of communication and the lived experiences of the participants.

Participants

The participants were those who served as department chairs (leaders) and

department faculty (followers) of a nonprofit 4-year public southeastern university.

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that historically phenomenological studies focus on a

sample population who have all experienced the same phenomenon, usually 5-25

participants. Similarly, Padilla-Díaz (2015) stated that phenomenological studies

commonly utilize 3-15 members. Marshall and Rossman (2016) reported that

phenomenological studies typically use about 10 individuals. The researcher selected

participants through purposeful sampling. This sampling technique aligns well with a phenomenological design. Purposeful sampling allowed the researcher to select participants who have experienced the same aspect of the study.

Creswell and Poth (2018) found, this is the primary sampling strategy used in qualitative research. It means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study (p. 326).

Previous phenomenological research also used purposive sampling to identify informants who have experienced the same phenomenon and could effectively provide an insightful understanding of their experiences (Charles, 2016; Hall, 2017; Moore, 2016). The selection of participants were chosen by the following criterion: (a) department chairs (leaders) who have served in the department for at least 3 years, (b) faculty (followers) who have served in the department for at least 3 years, (c) members of the college of education.

The researcher also reached out to faculty for recommendations of other participants who have experienced the aspect of the study. To maintain consistency, the researcher gathered a participant sample of individuals within the same department. Previous researchers postulated the school of business as an appropriate population to sample because the school of business was responsible for producing future leaders (Hassan et al., 2018). However, the researcher selected the college of education at the southeastern university because the education department houses the leadership division. Before conducting the research, participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix A) that provided the purpose of study, acknowledged participants'

confidentiality, the role of the researcher, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Because the researcher has an affiliation with the research site, it was necessary to identify the researcher's role and to select participants in a different department. The investigator did this in an effort to protect the individuals of the study. The researcher knows one of the faculty members professionally, therefore the researcher consulted the individual to recommended other potential participants. Initially, participants received an email (Appendix B) with a request to participate in the study. The researcher attached the informed consent with instructions to sign and return by e-mail at the requested deadline. Participants were given one week to decide whether or not to participate in the study.

Data Collection and Instruments

In qualitative research, the principal investigator serves as the primary instrument. However, the data collection process involves several steps in which the researcher must engage (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collection involved completing in-depth interviews containing questions based on the LMX-7 tool. Authors Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) are credited with the development of LMX-7. The researcher used semi-structured open-ended questions to permit each individual to recount their communication engagement experience (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Faulkner & Trotter, 2017; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Semi-structured open-ended questions in qualitative literature will allow the voices of participants to be heard authentically (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Galletta, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Specifically, the researcher explored how participants described their interactions in a higher education department between department chairs

and faculty members. An interview protocol was used (Appendix C) to ensure proper execution of the interview process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The principal investigator requested permission (Appendix D) to design questions that maintained the essential elements of LMX-7, which include mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation (Fan & Han, 2018; Omilion-Hodges & Baker, 2017). The researcher interviewed participants through a virtual platform, Zoom, while maintaining the comfort of the individual. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Marshall and Rossman (2016) explicated participants should feel comfortable in the interview environment.

Furthermore, Creswell and Poth (2018) and Marshall and Rossman (2016) illustrated the phenomenological framework, which focuses on what was experienced and how it was experienced. A review of the literature prompted the researcher to reference the theoretical framework for this study, the LMX design by Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995). Historically, LMX studies have used the LMX-7 tool in quantitative research (Fan & Han, 2018; Lloyd et al., 2017). Omilion-Hodges and Baker (2017) conducted a mixed-methods design delineating two studies. The second study referenced the LMX-7 instrument to create semi-structured interview questions. The authors applied a qualitative variation of the LMX paradigm to help researchers understand the lived experiences of participants (Omilion-Hodges and Baker, 2017).

A newer instrument, LMX-MDM has been used in efforts to study multiple dimensions of the LMX construct for groups other than the leader-to-member dyad (e.g., student-to-student) (Peterson & Aikens, 2017). Nevertheless, the researcher explored leader-to-member relationships in higher education departments. Similarly, Wolcott and

Bowdon (2017) referenced the LMX design relative to higher education department chairs and faculty.

"However, department chairs are faced with leading support staff as well as faculty members who have high levels of autonomy and low levels of interdependence with their colleagues" (Wolcott & Bowdon, 2017p., 45). Because there are limited qualitative studies on LMX, the researcher determined it was paramount to create a qualitative study, which focuses on the quality of relationships between people in the work environment. A literature review critique of the LMX paradigm by Martin, et al. (2010) stated that little qualitative research exists.

Additionally, Martin et al. (2010) agreed, "Given that LMX is a relational construct we would welcome more diverse methods, ones that could potentially reveal fresh insights into what is, in essence, a complex notion" (p. 44). The investigator used the primary three elements of the LMX-7 tool to create a qualitative instrument. The goal was to create interview questions that appropriately cover the three areas.

Procedures

The researcher first sought and obtained approval through the Institutional Review Board at the research site, a southeastern university, and Nova Southeastern University. Upon receiving appropriate approvals, the researcher emailed participants an official invitation to participate in the study. Each participant received their email containing a brief overview with the purpose of the study, a deadline to schedule the virtual interview, the deadline to confirm participation, and an attachment containing the informed consent. Participants were instructed to sign the informed consent and to e-mail the document back to the researcher.

Informed consent contained the purpose of study, the possible risk associated to the participant, a voluntary participation disclosure, acknowledged the benefits to the participant, the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time, and signatures from the participant and researcher (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The researcher also included her intent to use pseudonyms to provide anonymity to participants. She disclosed her role as the researcher to provide a clear distinction between herself and the participants. Marshall and Rossman (2016) referred to role distinction as establishing role boundaries or role maintenance. This is important to create a safe environment for participants and to provide structure for the researcher before engaging in the interview process. The researcher informed participants that a copy of the study's results will be available upon request in efforts to share knowledge.

Participants were granted one week from the date of the invitation to deny or confirm their willingness to participate. The investigator followed up with a second email before the deadline for any unresponsive individuals. Once the researcher received the participant's informed consent and desired interview time, she began the data collection process. Before engaging in the interview questions, participants were asked to complete a demographic form (Appendix E) and to scan and email back the completed copy.

Interviews were conducted in a non-threatening and trustworthy environment preferred by the informant (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The researcher used a virtual platform, Zoom to conduct and record the interview session. The researcher anticipated that each interview would last no more than 60 minutes. The collected data was transcribed through Otter.ai to capture the raw experiences of the informants. The researcher designed interview questions based on the themes of the LMX-7 instrument.

The researcher completed a three-part interview in alignment with the phenomenological approach and thematic concept (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The three-core areas helped the investigator explore how and what communication experiences occurred for department chairs and faculty and the overall essence of their experiences. The researcher took handwritten notes during each interview to assist in transcribing the recordings. The open-ended questions allowed the researcher flexibility and the opportunity to probe the interviewee. Creswell and Poth (2018) and Faulkner and Trotter (2017) found open-ended semi-structured interviews can create an opportunity for the researcher to gather additional rich data to understand the lived experience. The authors also stated that a less formal process increases trust between the investigator and the informant (Creswell & Poth, 2018 & Faulkner & Trotter, 2017).

After completing the interviews, the researcher stored the audio recordings on a computer and external hard-drive with password protection. The handwritten notes were also stored in a locked box in the home of the researcher. After transcribing the data, the researcher provided participants the opportunity to review the transcriptions to allow member checking and ensure trustworthiness (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2017).

Participants received one week to make suggestions by email regarding any changes to the data collected. The researcher updated any necessary areas of concern to properly reflect the feelings of the interviewee before reporting the data. The researcher transcribed and analyzed the information through Moustakas' (1994) systematic data analysis, gathering significant statements, clusters of meaning, grouping together themes, and finally capturing the described essence of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018;

Moustakas, 1994). After a period of 36 months, the researcher will destroy all audio recordings, written notes, email messages suggesting modifications, and all other data used in the final dissertation.

Data Analysis

The phenomenological approach is preferred because participants will be given the opportunity to provide detailed meaning to their lived experiences. Also, this qualitative exploration will allow the researcher to avoid reducing individual's experiences to statistical testing in order to gain a full understanding of their emotional responses (Martin et al., 2010). In conducting this qualitative study, the researcher interviewed 10 participants. Moerer-Urdahl and Creswell (2004) explicated the eight-step process for phenomenological transcendental data analysis by Moustakas (1994):

1. Identify a phenomenon of study

2. Extricate philosophical assumptions (Epoche´)

3. Collect data from individuals who have commonality with the phenomenon through semi-structured interviews

4. Cultivate textural and structural descriptions through horizontalization (identify significant statements from the transcriptions that are non-repetitive and non-overlapping)

5. Develop significant statements into clusters of meaning by identifying themes

6. Construct textural (what was experienced) and structural descriptions (how it was experienced) using the significant statements and themes

7. Report the overall essence of what was experienced and how in a composite description (essential invariant structure or intuitive integration)

8.   Present the understanding of the essence of the experience in written form

Moustakas (1994) systematic analysis is a suitable process because it helps provide structure to the analysis while still allowing flexibility for the qualitative researcher. Furthermore, because the researcher aims to understand what was experienced by participants and how; Moustakas' (1994) model will frame the analysis in sequential order to collect the desired data in a funnel design. This will help to understand the ultimate essence felt by participants. The investigator conducted pilot tests to check the data collection instrument for trustworthiness before launching the study. After the instrument was tested the researcher made necessary amendments. The researcher engaged in bracketing out her own bias based on her professional and personal background. Next, she collected data from the purposeful sample through virtual interviews and transcribed the recordings.

The researcher then utilized the horizontalization practice to highlight significant non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements. Any data that was not highlighted was removed from the evaluation. She then used the highlighted statements to develop clusters of meaning (themes). Once the author identified the common themes in the data, she completed the textural and structural descriptions. This process is when the author uses thematic material to develop textural and structural statements. The textual statements provide an imaginative structure to understand how the experiences happened.

The investigator evaluated the aforementioned steps by aligning the significant statements and clusters of meaning into categories. This practice assisted the investigator's account on what was experienced and how it was experienced by each participant. Finally, the investigator reported the combined essence and present the

understanding of what participants felt and their suggestions for the future in the conclusion. Through this course of action, the researcher engaged in thorough analysis and synthesis to better understand communication at the department level within a U.S. southeastern university. Ultimately, the researcher plans to provide areas for future research and best practices for leadership and communication.

Ethical Considerations

Creswell and Poth (2018) argued that scholars enter into several phases of research that may affect human subjects. Therefore, researchers should consider ethical matters. The author of the applied dissertation submitted the official proposal and application for research to the Institutional Review Board for Nova Southeastern University and the institution of study, a southeastern university for approval. The review process involved reviewing the researcher's attention to respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The investigator assigned pseudonyms to participants to maintain anonymity. Participants did not endure any physical or psychological harm by participating in the study. The researcher protected participants from deception by informing them about the purpose of the study, their confidentiality, the researcher's role, the right to withdraw at any time, and how the study will be used. Participants were chosen through purposeful sampling to select participants who can rightfully inform based on the phenomenon of study. Through purposeful sampling, the researcher attempted to make certain to build trust and establish a healthy rapport. The researcher also provided participants with the opportunity to review the transcribed data to properly reflect their experiences. Throughout the research process, the researcher secured documents, audio recordings,

handwritten notes, transcriptions on password-protected files, an external hard drive, and a locked box in the researcher's home. After the study, the investigator will destroy all data as indicated in the procedures.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) documented how to determine trustworthiness in qualitative research designs. The authors indicated that trustworthiness means, to what extent does a qualitative study have credibility and validity. Although quantitative studies look to examine a cause-effect relationship, qualitative research aims to understand individual or group experiences. Because qualitative literature is rarely objective, it is necessary to identify how to trust whether or not the study is credible, dependable, and has transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

For this study, the researcher followed a series of systematic steps to ensure trustworthiness. She used Moustakas (1994) eight-step process to complete data analysis and to maintain the structure of data collection. By selecting this approach, the researcher avoided her own bias in synthesizing and analyzing data. In addition to Moustakas' (1994) process, the researcher conducted member-checks. Like Lincoln & Guba (1985), Marshall and Rossman (2016) agreed that in phenomenological studies another method to ensure participant's voices are heard accurately is member-checks; the researcher should allow participants to review the transcribed data to suggest any necessary recommendations for changes.

The researcher aims to practice triangulation, a variety of methods to collect data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The principal investigator held interviews through a virtual platform that was recorded, she

took handwritten notes to help transcribe data, she also utilized peer-debriefing. As

mentioned by Marshall and Rossman (2016), peer-debriefing is a process in which the

researcher consults with critical scholarly peers to review the data for objectivity. The

author of this paper conducted research through the LMX theoretical lens to align

interview questions with the aim of study appropriately.

By following these steps, she outlined a reasonable method to protect the integrity

of research. The researcher's work will be considered credible because she implemented

member checks and triangulation. Further, the study is dependable because Moustakas'

(1994) eight-step structured process was used and it has transferability because the author

used the LMX framework to guide the study.

Potential Research Bias

Epoche´ or bracketing is essential to the execution of a sound phenomenological

study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moerer-Urdahl, & Creswell,

2004; van Manen, 2014). It is imperative for phenomenological researchers to state their

own experiences that could cause bias in effectively conducting and presenting findings.

Hurssel (1859-1938) also referred to this act as setting aside one's own beliefs (Smith,

2013). The researcher provided her professional background and personal influences that

led to this paradigmatic exploration (Appendix F).

Limitations

The main goal of a phenomenological study is to report the essence of shared

human experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994; Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Smith,

2013; Thompson 2018). While there are significant positives to interviewing, there are

also notable weaknesses. For instance, this study aims to understand communication

experiences between leaders and followers through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviewees could have been hesitant to disclose authentic responses regardless of assuring confidentiality and the data collection process took significant time to complete (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Another weakness is whether or not the interviewee felt a level of comfort with speaking aloud to the interviewer (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher used a sample size that can impact the true essence of the departmental employee's perceptions. While notable limitations exist, the researcher completed a thorough investigation of the initial research questions and added to the overall body of knowledge for LMX qualitative literature.

Chapter Summary

A phenomenological research design is an appropriate choice for research studies that consider the feelings of what participants have experienced. This chapter demonstrates a pragmatic approach to study HEIs leadership interactions. Because postsecondary environments are not traditional business structures, there is a multifaceted design towards leadership practice. The goal to understand department chairs' and faculty members' interactions will be guided through the LMX paradigm. Academic leadership was considered through this relational concept by studying 10 participants.

The investigator developed a research instrument based on the LMX-7 by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews. The researcher used a systematic data analysis framework by Moustakas (1994) to find common themes. The findings from this study will be used to help guide future academic leaders in complex leadership structures.

Chapter 4: Findings

The focus of the research study was to explore leadership communication experiences of department chairs and faculty at a U.S. southeastern university in Alabama. A phenomenological research design was implemented to study the participants. The researcher engaged in a transcendental phenomenological methodology. Data were collected by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with 10 participants through a virtual platform. The LMX theoretical perspective guided the interview questions concerning mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation. Furthermore, department chairs and faculty shared their experiences about leadership communication within the context of higher education environments.

In this chapter the researcher detailed the findings from the participants' experiences related to the study's research questions. The participants discussed forms of communication they preferred, situations that have guided their approach to quality exchanges, and examples that have shaped their leadership development. The researcher sought to understand the participants' interactions based on verbal and non-verbal experiences, possible communication issues, and commitment to building relationships and the organization. Outlined in the chapter are participant profiles to provide an overview and illustration of their personality, pseudonyms were used. Thereafter, the researcher presented the themes that emerged at the conclusion of the study and the participants' responses that represent the thematic findings of HEI departmental leadership.

Participant Overview

Rose. Rose is between the ages of 56 and 65 with a discipline in Education. She

has leadership experience for over 10 years and is a white female. She has served as a Department Chair and Assistant Dean. Rose is a former PK-12 school administrator. She feels that her 19 years of experience in higher education and 16 years in PK-12 environments have shaped her decision-making process.

She has a love for connecting with others and helping colleagues, instructors, and students. She feels that encouraging others comes naturally to her and she enjoys it. She is soft spoken and gentle. Rose likes to use humor when connecting with others, she likes to enjoy what she is doing and have fun. A quote that she feels describes her is "At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel"—Maya Angelou.

Poppy. Poppy is a white female between the ages 46 and 55. She holds over 10 years of leadership experience. For 25 years she has served in secondary and post-secondary institutions. She is an Associate Professor, her discipline is Secondary English Langue Arts. She is very outgoing and passionate about helping others reach their academic goals, especially adults who may have felt that it would never be a reality for them. She tries to communicate with others in a way that allows them to know she cares and wants to see them succeed.

Poppy feels that she is dedicated, loyal, and enjoys being a part of a team. It is important to her to model the expectations she has for others because often they may rise up to those expectations. She finds comfort in working with people with similar mindsets although she knows that will not always be the case. She is bubbly and smiles while speaking and exudes excitement about whatever she is discussing.

Sam. Sam is between the ages 21 and 35. She is an Asian female with 3 years of

leadership experience. Her discipline is Educational Psychology and she is an Assistant Professor. Sam is very linear and efficient. She has great follow through and she doesn't like busy work. Sometimes she feels that her blunt and straight-forward nature can cause issues when dealing with others who may be a bit more sensitive. She listens intently and she corresponds in a direct manner. Sam is focused and likes to deal with things without any gray areas, she does not like ambiguous communication.

Gigi. Gigi is a white female between the ages 46 and 55. She has leadership experience from 4-6 years. Her discipline is Education and Curriculum Instruction and she has served in K-12 for 10 years and higher education for 10 years. She worked in the medical field for 8 years prior to the field of education. Her plan is to retire from higher education. She has served as is an Associate Professor and a Director of Institutional Effectiveness. Gigi feels that she is a sensitive and reflective person.

She believes in collaboration and teamwork. She values honesty and authenticity. It is important to her to keep the peace. Gigi does feel that if she is betrayed, she will forgive but she would never forget the betrayal. She is welcoming but she only has a few friends. Gigi is intentional about her communication and she takes her time to think about her responses. She is empathetic and considerate of how she makes others feel. A quote that she feels describes her is "You cannot make everyone think and feel as deeply as you do. This is your tragedy, because you understand them, but they do not understand you"—Daniel Saint.

Jwin. Jwin is decisive, outgoing, optimistic, and fun. He is a white male between the ages 36-45 with over 10 years of leadership experience. He began his career in the classroom with the K-12 school system and served as the Principal at some of the largest

schools in the state at that time. Later, he transitioned into a small leadership role and faculty within higher education.

Jwin continued to progress through promotion and lead various units in the university. He currently serves as the Assistant Dean. Jwin is hardworking and he likes a straight-forward approach, he does not like to beat around the bush. A quote that he feels describes him is "I don't live to work; I work to live"—Noel Gallagher.

Wally West. Wally West is a white male between the ages 46 and 55. He is an Associate Professor with a discipline in Special Education. He has leadership experience between 4 and 6 years. Wally considers himself to be laid back and is not given to extremes. He adopts the Stoic philosophy and has read about the concept, which is not to stress over things that are not within our control.

He feels that his role as a faculty member is not to simply serve as a giver of knowledge but to support students. He feels that he is an approachable guy. For Wally, success is measured by the success of his students and colleagues in their collaborative efforts. Wally cares about the good of the team and for others voices to be heard. A quote that he feels describes him is "Remember this my dear friends: Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry"—James 1:19.

Sunflower. Sunflower is a white female with 3 years of leadership experience. Her discipline in Elementary Education and she is between the ages 46 and 55. She is an Assistant Professor who feels that she is conscientious, compassionate, and structured. Sunflower prefers boundaries but she is willing to be flexible if there is a justifiable reason to do so. She described her leadership as positive and motivational, though when necessary she is able to be firm.

Sunflower ultimately believes in a good balance. She is supportive and down to earth. She is open about her feelings but mindful of how she conveys what she is feeling. Sunflower is willing to speak up when needed to move the department along. A quote that she feels describes her is "You may not control all the events that happen to you; but you can decide not to be reduced by them"—Maya Angelou.

Subject 2. Subject 2 is between the ages 21 and 35, he is a white male. He is an Associate Professor and Department Chair with a discipline in Curriculum and Instruction Integrative STEM Education. He has leadership experience between 4 and 6 years. Subject 2 is a respectful guy who likes to meet new people and learn about them.

He is open-minded and enjoys hearing different perspectives. He feels that he is outgoing and likes to spread positivity. Subject 2 does not really care for titles and rankings, he prefers to connect with individuals outside of the traditional business structure. He is a personable guy and tries to carefully communicate with others. He believes leadership should be open and trusting and avoid authoritative methods. A quote that he feels describes him is "Approachable and always open to new ideas and different perspectives."

Max. Max is an Assistant Professor with a discipline in Psychology Behavior Analysis. He is a white male between the ages 36 and 45. He is inquisitive and will follow his interests without a clear plan for where they will lead. He likes harmony but not at the expense of supporting incompetence. Max prefers democracies over dictatorships, he feels that his leadership style may be related to his experience as a northeasterner though he works in the South.

He enjoys small groups over large gatherings. Max naturally gravitates to smaller

settings that create a creative and curious space to work. He is also candid and will defend his beliefs; he especially defends the greater good for all. Max believes in everyone having their ideas heard and allowing a fruitful process for those ideas to become a reality. A quote that he feels describes him is "During the night I saw several meteors and in fact could not be in a better position for observing them than lying on my back in a small boat in the middle of the Atlantic"—A.R. Wallace.

Tulip. Tulip is a white female between the ages 21 and 35. She is a Lecturer and Secondary P-12 Program Coordinator. Her discipline is Secondary Education and Mathematics. She has 3 years of leadership experience. Tulip is a gentle woman and refers to herself as very type A personality. She is very neat, organized, and straightforward. She takes on a great deal of projects and believes in hard work. Furthermore, she feels that growing up in a southern rural town shaped her leadership behaviors. She is a first-generation college graduate. Her family instilled in her hard work and valued education. Her family's values and examples through childhood are what pushed her to be the person she is today. She is thoughtful with her words and she aims to exemplify her thoughtfulness not only with her words but also in her actions with others. She feels that she carries a great deal of responsibility with social and relational aspects of building a network of people who can learn and grow together. A quote that she feels describes her is "In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all, is a kind and gentle spirit"— Anne Frank.

Themes

There were 5 themes that emerged from participants' lived experiences. After the researcher analyzed the data using Moustakas' (1994) data analysis to find the unique

experiences through horizontalization, she categorized the findings to arrive at each theme. The categories were chosen based on the clusters of meaning according to their uniqueness. The categories were (a) workflow, (b) emotion, (c) collaboration, (d) relationship, and (e) accountability. The following themes were significant to the research questions:

1. Direct and Strategic Thinking Leadership.

2. Compassionate and Empathetic Leadership.

3. Leadership that Engages in Partnership and Mentorship.

4. Leading with Humility and Connectivity.

5. Faculty Voice and Department Chair Governance.

The themes are organized by reporting the significant textual and structural descriptions of what was experienced by the participants according to each identified theme. Direct quotes are used to contextualize the themes.

Direct and strategic thinking leadership. Findings from the study revealed that faculty and department chairs prefer direct communication. Direct communication was explained as getting to the point of a thought or process without vague responses. More specifically, participants favored e-mails where bullet points are used instead of several paragraphs to make a request. Participants also expressed appreciation for consistent correspondence with clear action items.

Jwin, a previous Department Chair and current Assistant Dean, described his leadership style and how he prefers to communicate in the following statements:

I'm very direct in the sense that here's what it is. Let's look at it. Let's see if there's a solution. Let's not beat around the bush with it. Let's hit whatever we need to

head on, make it happen. Improve, improve the situation if need be, or make it

better in the sense that everything's rolling well, there's a couple of hiccups. What

do we need to do to smooth everything out?

I prefer to communicate almost in bullets. Let's not beat around the bush, give me

what you would need, what it is you want. What are you looking for? What are

you expecting? Give it to me quick and dirty and then let's look at it head on.

Sam, an Assistant Professor described that she desires a leader who is direct and avoids

ambiguity in the following statement:

For a department chair, I guess I value the ability to be direct and not passive

aggressive. The ability to say what they're thinking, and not trying to sugarcoat it

or make it so that it's ambiguous. Being able to be calm in situations don't like a

yeller.

Sunflower, an Assistant Professor explained what a direct leader means to her in the

following statement:

I want to say this, when I say direct and straightforward, they're not overbearing,

they're not like, you're gonna do this when, you know, blah, blah, blah. It's more

of, hey, this is what we need done. This is when I need it done by, can you do

this? It's not a whole lot of steps in between. And so there's not a whole lot to be

misconstrued there and then they leave you to do it. It's not a micromanaged

situation.

Tulip, a Lecturer shared the type of communication that she values is consistent and clear

in the following statement:

And then I like consistent and clear communication. Those are definitely some

key words that I would for sure throw out there consistent of, hey, this is what's

going on. And then and also thinking like, if there's a long-term project that's

going on, there are some type of intermittent updates or something. Hey, I know

you haven't heard from me but we're still working like I haven't forgotten this. It's

not on the back burner. It's just taken some time.

Gigi, Associate Professor and Director shared how it makes her feel when people neglect
to respond to her and she strives to be a responsive leader, she explained her feelings in
the following statement:

Now one thing that, as a faculty member, I've had chairs and other people in

positions that were my supervisors I just could not hardly stand it whenever I had

a question and I would email someone, and they never responded to me. They

never called me back. They never replied to an email. They never made any kind

of efforts. Or if we were in a meeting, and I had a question, it was, well, I'll get

back to you on that they never did. Um, I can't stand that! You know, I just, it

wasn't, you know, it might not be important to you, but it was important to me or I

wouldn't have asked. So I make sure that I reply to everybody...

Max, an Assistant Professor recalled a time when administrators changed class offerings
without any explanation or direct communication. He described his experience in the
following statement:

But when people don't even pay you the respect, they don't hold faculty in any

kind of regard where like faculty should even be like informed about the reason

for why this massive change happened. You know, it makes you…(incomplete

thought)

and the decision makers won't even talk to you face to face. It gets really hard to

not regard them as, cowards and as people that you can't trust. So I think that is

particularly damaging. When you pull the rug out from underneath people, and

you're in one of those administrative positions. You've got to look faculty in the

face and explain the rationale. And you've got to be willing to engage in meetings,

town halls, what have you, in order to actually hear from the people who are

doing the work, which by in large at a university if you're talking about the

academic work, you're talking about faculty.

Wally West, an Associate Professor explained that he believes effective communication

is timely and concise in the following statement:

But I like short bursts. When I was going through my doc program, my advisor,

he had this thing about stick to the protein cut the fat, and that was in writing, but

I think that's very true. Also, in communication, there are some things that just

have to be shared directly, concisely, and not have a lot of wiggle room or gray

area. So, for me, effective communication is timely. It is concise and it is

comprehensive.

Faculty described that it was important to have forward thinking leadership who

can see issues from almost every angle. Department chairs described a feeling of

protectiveness. It was pivotal to department chairs to protect faculty from the

administrative threshold that could inhibit their ability to teach and serve students.

Faculty explained their respect for department chairs who had their back in decision-

making. The faculty felt that having their backs was also a form of protection.

Jwin explained that he envisions his role in departmental leadership as a protector of the

faculty to help them move forward in their roles. In the following statement he shared

that concept:

> My role is to protect the faculty from all the outlying noise that takes place in
> administration. That's the way I view my role. My role is to keep them focused on
> what they need to do, what they need to have to be successful, to teach students,
> to do their research, to provide service to the university and to the community.

Poppy, an Associate Professor explained how she feels about building her relationship

with her department chair in the following statement:

> Those two are the ones I really have felt like fight for me. And that they are, that
> they are really looking out for my best interest. And I've had multiple department
> chairs at my organization, and I wouldn't say that I've always felt that way. And
> so, I think that's just really important is just to always have confidence that I've,
> that I have confidence in them and that I know that ultimately, they care more for
> me as a person than they do as an employee.

Max used an analogy to explain how faculty need a department chair who will protect

them from administrators' decisions that could negatively impact their programs.

Furthermore, he explained that a department chair who cannot do that is problematic for

faculty in the following statement:

> You know, I think, you know, if anybody's ever seen have you ever listened to
> like an amazing album, or read an amazing book or a great TV show or movie? I
> can guarantee you that like 99 times out of 100 that the history of that, of that

album, show, movie, etc. was that there was somebody who or somebodies, who

were the actual ones doing the work felt powerful about the project. And they

defended it and every time a suit called them up and told them Hey, why don't

you change this? And why don't you do that? Like they told him to fuck off. And,

and that, and that made the product better. And every time you see a bad TV show

or watch a bad movie, it's generally the product of directors and actors doing

whatever the people with the money told them to do, and then making the changes

that those people suggested. And I think departments kind of run the same way

that administration, what do they possibly know about psychology? What do they

possibly know about behavior analysis, they know nothing about what I do. But

they but they, but they have ideas about what I should do, and they need to

generally be told the fuck off. And if you don't have a chair, who will do that? It's

problematic.

Rose, a former Department Chair and current Assistant Dean shared that in her

experience serving faculty and students, she feels that she is an advocate for them. She

explains what that means in the following statement:

I see the department chair as a servant leader, meaning I serve at the will of the

students in the department and the faculty. And I'm there to advocate for them and

what it is that they need. At times, however, like above me from top down,

sometimes I have directives that I have to pass along. That we just, that's just the

way it is. Let's figure out as a team across the department, how this will best work

for us. If need be, I'm willing to go to bat for them…

Subject 2 a Department Chair explained the concept of what trust means to him not only

as a leader but also as faculty. He felt that trust means having each other's back.

> So, it means trust goes both ways. And so to me, the faculty have to trust me and
> that I've got their back. But then I've got to trust the faculty that they've got my
> back. And so if we do something, you know, if I ask someone to do something, I
> have to trust that they're going to do it. And so if they, you know, if they can't do
> it, or, you know, we have a conversation, that's fine, but um, it's all about being
> able to, you know, just be honest and trust each other. I can't trust them if they
> don't trust me, so pretty kind of goes both ways.

Tulip shared that a department chair is forward-thinking and has the ability to look at
ideas from various angles from a departmental perspective in the following statement:

> And oftentimes we as faculty, and me, in particular, I'm thinking about my
> program, my students, my classes. And so, when I think, oh, this is a great
> change, or decision or thing that I can do or say, he's the person that we can go to
> and say, I've got this idea. What do you think? And he'll be like hold on, this
> affects these departments and these programs in this way. Is that an intended
> effect that you want to have? Or is that something that we want to kind of work
> around? And so, it definitely has that upper level viewpoint where I'm more
> focused on my classes, my programs, and my students.

Compassionate and empathetic leadership. Data from the second theme
showed that faculty and department chairs exuded compassion and empathy. Participants
reported their experiences in getting to know faculty members personally. They also
explained that communication qualities like kindness and respect were valued. It was also
found that leaders who have discernment when dealing with public and private

conversations helped build trust.

Rose shared that her trust is built through getting to know things about the faculty members' families in the following statement:

> I feel like I have the trust of everyone in the department, that I've demonstrated that by showing that I have a real relationship with them. Like I know about their families. I know right now, you know, one of them that called me yesterday to say she tested positive for COVID. I have another one that I know has to care for an elderly mother and they've opened up and shared these things. So um they…even now this morning I had a meeting with some of them and I had my camera on and they saw that my son was here and he was getting ready to leave and I'm very open…

Poppy discussed the type of communication enhancements at the university level that were important to her in the following statement:

> I think it's important that students I mean, that the department chairs take time to talk to their faculty and get to know them, get to know and let them in, let the faculty get to know the chair as well. And then I think that just provides a pathway to all other situations. And so, I think it's important that whether it's meeting in person, or talking on you know, through a social or media platform, like Teams or Zoom, just to have that opportunity. Everything doesn't have to be about work either. I think some people don't see it that way. Some people think work and personal lives are separately, they're separate. But I think the more I know about my chair to make him more of a person to me, the more likely I am to give him a bit of a break or give him… or understand things a little bit differently.

She also shared that a good department chair demonstrates compassion in the following statement:

> That I believe that my chair is, and I believe that a chair should be approachable. Demonstrate wisdom. And listen, they should be a listener and I believe that he or she should have experience in the area in which the leading is taking place. And I believe that umm compassion is good. And trying to think if there's anything else just a genuine concern for the faculty and for the people that he or she leads.

Sam shared that she enjoys the causal and personal relationship she has with her department chair and how that makes her feel in the following statement:

> But a lot of times we text back and forth about work things and personal things because we both play video games, which I know is weird about that, but we connect on sort of a personal level. So he makes me feel, I guess, respected by, I can shoot him a text message about I'm worried about what next semester is going to look like, and he will send me a text message back. And I feel like that makes me feel like there's an open exchange. Like I can say, whatever I need to do him and get a good response.

Subject 2 shared that he appreciates when colleagues treat each other with kindness and speaking to them on their level in the following statement:

> I also think, you know, not kind of talking to people on the same level, you know, not talking down to people I've seen that as well. So probably being direct and talking to people on their level. You know, even if you're saying something that's gonna get folks riled up or something, you know, it's important that you're at least kind to those people and that you will meet them at their level. In my experience,

you know, kindness always wins, there's no reason to be, you know, mad over

something or vindictive or whatever.

Wally West explained that his experience with his department chair in communication

has been polite and respectful in the following statement:

I believe that both he and I try to be polite. I'm one of those people that's learned

over time with electronic communications. You've just got to read things before

you hit send. And I've never gotten an email message from him. And I think he

would say the same thing. He's never gotten one from me that was taken the

wrong way or violated any kind of professional practice. So, I think there is the

appropriate level of respect and even politeness in how he communicates in

whatever form he takes.

Tulip explained that her trust is built by her department chair having discernment with

public or private information in the following statement:

But and just the idea that there's this understanding of where we're able to

communicate and talk through these things. And maybe it's something public,

maybe it's something private, but that the person who you have that mutual or

reciprocal trust with has the wherewithal or discipline or discernment to know the

difference, right? And so that you can be an open communicator and a consistent

communicator with them, and then have the discernment I guess, is probably the

best word to know when something should be talked about or not.

Gigi shared that her leadership role is to be supportive and provide resources in the

following statement:

My role is to support them. I feel like I work for them, they don't work for me, I work for them. So, I listen to what their needs are, and then I do everything in my power to make sure I provide those resources and their role is to do their high-quality work that that they do. And if they need anything, then they let me know. And it's like I've told them, you know, I can't help you if I don't know there's an issue. So, we've got to talk to each other. We've got to communicate.

Leadership that engages in partnership and mentorship. In the third theme, faculty and department chairs shared that decisions are made as a team. Faculty shared that favorable department leadership involved mentorship and working together to implement yearly plans. Department chairs discussed that they are open to questions and sharing knowledge because they do not have all the answers. They explained instances that led to becoming democratic leaders. Faculty also explained the importance of working closely together with a chair who has a like-mindset and allowing them to work on projects with liberty. Finally, it was shared that expectations for faculty projects are supported by department leaders to help faculty achieve success.

Tulip feels that department chairs, especially her chair, functions as a mentor to faculty and she explains that in the following statement:

I could say to in addition to that, and similar to how I as a faculty member, mentor my students through my programs as advisees I feel like he has a parallel position as the chair to mentor our faculty members. And, and not just necessarily in a class aspect, but for those seeking tenure as they work towards that as a part of their degree. So in their personal advancement, their career goals, as well as in classes and programmatic mentorship.

Sunflower explained that she is motivated to building commitment to the relationship between her and her chair when they work together to execute department plans for the year in the following statement:

> Um, I think…what motivates me, I respect the person, and I feel that they are qualified to be in that position. So, it's just inherent that you respect that. Um second, when they lay out their agenda for the year and their department, you certainly want to support that person in providing that support in working through that agenda as you can. And third, I think its the process of helping move the department along that is if you have a good relationship with chairs, and that goes for anybody, it will progress, positively progress the department, which in turn, leads to better student success.

Subject 2 described communication qualities of a good leader include being open to questions by others and engaging in mentorship in the statement below:

> And so and telling people, you know, this is the expectation and then allowing people to ask questions. I feel like when you're in a meeting, and people are asking questions, you know, sometimes those questions may be uncomfortable, but you as a leader may not have thought through, you know, all these things, because really, you're just one person. And so that's the other thing, you know, no one leads alone, and no one leads in a vacuum. And so, it's super important to get to get other people's opinions on things and that speaks to mentorship. You know, and that can be on another conversation, but, you know, leaders finding a good a good mentor to talk to.

He also shared that he feels it is important for faculty and chairs to work together without a list of expectations to figure out what needs to be done and to help empower the faculty in the following statement:

> And so I think that it's, it's kind of important for the chair and the faculty to work together, you know, to kind of figure out what, you know, what needs to be done, but I never really like a list of expectations just because I feel like the minute you do that, um, you know, a lot of faculty would just say, well, this is all I need to do, and that said; I think when you, and it goes back to that trust. When I say to somebody, and I've seen this with other leaders in the past, is if I'm going to ask someone to do it and then I micromanage them, you know, this person is not going to feel empowered.

Gigi expressed that she does not have all the answers and that it is important for her to meet with the team to hear their thoughts, which she says also creates mutual respect. She explains her experience in the following statement:

> So, I make a point, we have staff meetings, at least monthly and even more frequently, as needed. And a lot of times they even request the meetings. I just view it more as a team. We're a team we work together, I don't have all the answers. So, you know, we get together and talk and that's probably the best communication is that we ask questions and we talk and have that mutual respect between one another.

Max detailed an experience that created a shift towards a democratic department chair. He explained how the experience resulted in future decision making that involved the group instead of an individual in the following statement:

It was a terrible display of interpersonal behavior, where I yelled at him and another person who was behaving like a dictator, and running our program into the ground getting us in trouble with outside accreditation because of their poor decision making, because ultimately, you know, why do democracies tend to thrive and dictatorships tend to fall apart? Well, when you include more people's viewpoints, and you make decisions based on what is the majority view after a thoughtful discussion, and after information is presented, those decisions tend to be better than decisions of just one person. And we were running into this issue of like, dictatorship, you know, people who didn't have to defend their positions, just doing what they wanted, and it was getting us in trouble. And so, I sort of made a calculated gamble to just sort of flip out and tell him that, you know, if he continued to behave this way, everybody, you know, who was good on this faculty was going to end up quitting. And that he had changed and that he was a good person when he was a faculty member, but he had turned into a complete asshole as a chair, and that public display as disgusting as it was, was the beginning of a shift in which more democratic controls were put in place. And we started following the wisdom of the group instead of instead of the positions of one or two poorly informed people.

Poppy shared that she has ideas and works on projects that are sometimes outside of the box. Her motivation to build the relationship with her chair is based on thinking outside the box with her. She explained how that makes her feel in the statement below:

Well, I mean, in the area in which I work, I mean, and what I'm doing is I'm doing some things that are kind of outside the box of what's normally being done. And

so it's really important that I have a good relationship with my chair, and that he thinks outside the box also. Because in some environments, if you have somebody that doesn't then and you do then that would never, never work and umm so I think it's important to have that relationship. So that if I agree or don't agree with something that I can, that I can, you know, speak up and be able to say that or to feel comfortable coming to him with a different idea and knowing that he's gonna umm he'll consider it and not just shut me down because it's not the way things have always been done.

Sam explained that she is committed to building a communitive relationship with her chair when he trusts her to do projects and does not micromanage in the following statement:

Um, him trusting that I'm doing what I'm supposed to would encourage me to allow the communication, most of the things that I do as long as I'm doing my job, he pretty much leaves me alone. And that increases my communication because at the end of a large project or task for the university or the dean once those are completed, I just send him an update of what happened instead of him persistently like asking me questions and micromanaging.

Jwin shared that as a leader in the department he inspects what he expects. He went further to explain that faculty expectations are clear and that whatever the expectation may be, he will follow up to support the faculty in their work to help them succeed. Jwin used the following statement to explain:

And they [faculty] know I inspect what I expect. So, with that being said, if you know, they have an expectation to do something they know I will circle back to

them and say, where are we? How's it going? I don't micromanage them by any

means. But I like to be in …like I said, I need to be in the know. I need the

information so they, they can provide me where they're at with a task or a project,

whatever it is that they're passionate about, that they wanted to move forward. I'll

follow up and then offer assistance and help to make sure they're successful in

their endeavors.

Leading with humility and connectivity. The next theme, leading with humility

and connectivity was described by department chairs as building rapport, not feeling the

need to be addressed as doctor, connecting with faculty in different environments, and

showing gratitude. The data also revealed that faculty felt that miscommunication

occurred when chairs of the department neglected to reach out to them to discuss issues.

Findings showed that faculty wanted to see more cross departmental communication.

Faculty expressed that it was important for chairs to stay connected with them so that

they would feel like their leader cared.

Subject 2 shared his experience connecting with faculty is based on creating a sense of

comfort. He also shared that he does not need to be addressed as doctor by his title with

his colleagues. He described connecting with faculty as building up rapport in the

following statement:

I don't need an honorary, you know, so I try to do that as much as possible.

Obviously, around students, it's different but when I'm around, you know, folks

that I'm working with there's no need to throw a doctor in the front of it. And so I

tried to be really laid back with that, and so I hope that helps people feel more

comfortable with me. And I feel like then they're more willing to open up to me,

you know, and then honestly, that kind of connection grows, and that relationship

grows, and leadership and working in general is all about relationships. And so,

by building those relationships you know, that helps you through the good and the

bad times because then too when I've got to tell a faculty member or somebody

some bad news, well, we've already built up a rapport.

Subject 2 further explained how he connected with faculty when he became their leader.

He explained his first encounter with them individually and his preference for meeting in

different environments in the statement below:

And so, I ended up taking some advice, it was sitting down with every single

faculty member and just having a discussion in their office, not them coming to

me, but me going into their office. So, what I did is I scheduled 30-minute

meetings with every single one of the direct my direct reports. And, and, you

know, I went to their office and we just had a discussion. I didn't have an agenda.

No, nothing it was, I had two questions, how are you doing? And what can I do to

make your life better? And that's pretty much the two questions that I tried to do.

And then those conversations, you know, kind of went in different directions with

different people. And so, I think that that stuff is crucial. The other thing is I think

that um, you know, seeing people in different locations and what I mean by that

is, you know, we work together so, so much, maybe take someone out to lunch or

let's go, you know, let's go get some food and, talk over that. I think that getting

someone in a different environment, you know, is incredibly helpful and so I try

to do that too.

Rose explained the importance of meeting with faculty each month in a virtual setting even during times of COVID-19. She shared that she likes to see the faculty because as a leader, it helps her to know if she is connecting with them when she is speaking with them. Rose described her experiences in the following statement:

So that, you know, if I get those verbal cues like that, they're smiling or they're laughing, or I can read that they're I don't know maybe they don't have good eye contact with me [virtual meetings]. All of those things are important for me to know if I'm connecting with them, and if we're on the same page. I can also take away a lot of things that I really found when I started doing these biweekly meetings with him every other week, or bi weekly, bi monthly, I guess you'd say twice a month? And I'll hear from others, they'll mention it or one of the others. They'll go, oh, gosh, you know, when he mentioned his wife, or when so and so…I'm going to check on them. Yeah, I can tell that they were really bothered.

Gigi shared that she builds trust in her department by sending thank you cards in the mail. She explained that she likes for them to feel appreciated for their service to the students. Gigi described this in the following statement:

They are doing this great work, and they have great ideas and they're proficient you know. They just get better and better. So, I just want to make sure that they know how much I appreciate them. And a lot of times, I will just send them a card in the mail and just say, thank you so much for all that you're doing. Not just for our team, but for our students. I appreciate you going above and beyond just some type of just a small acknowledgement to make a big difference in somebody's day.

Tulip explained that an area of communication she would like to see enhanced at the university is cross departmental communication in the following statement:

> And something that I would love to see improved, is across department communication between my department and another department that we heavily rely on. And as a part of our program, and that's just something that, obviously with personnel changes, has been really hard to shore up some good communication between our department and theirs. And because that ultimately affects our program, and that's not always the case, right. And I have a program committee with several different departments across campus. And it works really well, for us to have a communication where we meet monthly and then I have an email distribution list that I send out to them. I learned that from my chair to do that, to meet with them and then have that distribution list to send. And I wish more people would do those types of things. But I think in our department, I think we do really well communicating, obviously, I feel that communication is one of the things that can always be improved upon.

She also shared that faculty should present a unified front when miscommunication may occur. Tulip felt that it is important to be honest and own your mistakes when resolving miscommunication. She explained her feelings in the following statement:

> And going back to that idea of being a unified front and a unified message giver, and being able to then say, you know, go back to your class and say, hey, I'm sorry, we had a miscommunication. We messed up. But this is the real date, and you're going to hear it from all of your professors today. And that's what it is. And so, I think that honesty goes with that to be able to say, whoa, we messed up. I

think it also necessitates mutual respect where somebody can admit when things are wrong. And again, respect where people can say, we're all people and everyone makes mistakes.

Sunflower shared an experience where the administration at the university did not reach out to faculty to ask their opinion about making purchases to shift courses online. She expressed the lack of communication and how that made the faculty feel in the following statement:

Um, presently speaking right now. Um, I think communication decisions sometimes are made without full communication. And I do not mind giving you an example without calling names or, you know, pointing to the institution. We're in this COVID process right now. And when all of this happened in March, and everybody, all institutions were trying to flip online, um, they were having to make rash decisions on the cuff. And if they would have just reached out to faculty, a little bit more, some faculty that has more experience, much more years like I had, I've got almost 23 years in as a classroom teacher, I could have told them what they spent $5,000 on was worth garbage. Um, so that's the kind of thing I think if they would just add that little fine piece of step of communication to faculty, we could have done something much greater with probably less money and in fact I know less money. It would have been for free. So, um, but that the only thing I can say, right there. But that's a unique situation, because we, none of us have ever been through this.

Wally West experienced a time where miscommunication occurred between him and his department chair. Wally described that he felt the issues stemmed from a 3-page job

description that he signed 7 to 8 months prior. He explained what this experience was like in the statement below:

> Yeah, I had an experience a couple of years back, where I was given a lot of administrative duties on an unofficial basis and it wasn't like they made me a 12-month employee and nobody actually appointed me to assistant chair and it goes back to that three page job description I was telling you about. One part of that had something to do with study abroad. And there was a time where I got a email from my chair at the time saying you should go to this meeting about study abroad. Well, when I got it, I just interpreted it totally as a faculty member, not as administrator. And I wrote back and said, at this point, I'm not interested in study abroad. I'm kind of booked for the next academic year. The response I got from my chair was a copy and paste from that job description that I'd signed seven or eight months before saying that I'd agreed to assume a leadership position and study abroad and it rubbed me entirely the wrong way. And I think that communication there, it was totally miscommunication. But that goes back to a fundamental flaw in they've given me too many jobs with no true authority, no compensation, no nothing. And I was doing the ones I could handle the best I could. And that one slipped off my radar and so that that was my experience and there was definite miscommunication in that story.

Poppy shared that she feels it is important to hear from your department chair so that faculty feel that they matter in the following statement:

> And I've watched other situations where…there was not communication, and I'm actually thinking outside of even in the educational world, where, you know, from

one standpoint, from the, the administrative standpoint, they thought you would

understand that, no, you know, no news, no input means you're doing a great job.

But that doesn't always come across that way. So I think it's important that there is

connection because a lot of times on the other side of that, if you don't feel like

you're hearing from your chair, or your chair is not, you know, you feel like they

don't care about you. And it's really just that you're not the problem. You know.

So I just think it's important just to make that make that effort to let everyone

know that you supervise or, you know, whatever, to know that they're important,

and that they do matter. And that you know, you appreciate them.

Faculty voice and department chair governance. The theme faculty voice and

department chair governance encompassed making critical decisions by sharing

leadership decisions with faculty. Faculty expressed being able to go to their chair when

help is needed when mistakes occur that impact others. Faculty also explained their

viewpoint of the chair's role in contrast to higher education norms, departments that are

run by the faculty. Findings also showed that faculty want their voices heard, a chair who

actively listens, and has integrity.

Poppy also shared that in her experience with a past mistake her chair did not condemn

her, he helped her through the situation in the following statement:

Recently, I had an issue where I made a mistake and it affected not only me, but

some other people and I didn't feel bad going to him. I wasn't worried about going

to him because he's so approachable, that I knew that even though I was going to

him about making a mistake, that he would handle it in such a way that he

realized that, you know, I've regretted the mistake and felt bad about it and he

didn't condemn me or wasn't pushy and said, you know, you know, you should

have done something different. He recognized that I knew that already.

Max shared his perspective of sharing leadership with faculty and how he views the role

of the department chair in the following statement:

Yeah, I mean, I think I think faculty ultimately run departments when they're,

well run. The role of the chair and actually I would almost bulk like, I know at X,

we use the term Chair, but I think it's actually an inappropriate term. I think that

what we actually have are department heads because conventionally Chairs are

elected, and our Chairs are not elected. They are they're kind of handpicked shills

for administration. So, you can't, they're not really Chairs, you know. Typically

talking about like the Chairman of the boards, you know, to use an old term that is

perhaps outdated and sexist, it infers that the board elected that chair right. So that

I think that you know, if you go by norms in higher ed, departments ought to be

run by the faculty, especially the tenure track faculty in that department. And that

Chairs ought to be elected positions and that the true role of the Chair is to present

the position of faculty to administration. Administration should really start with

the Dean. But in X it starts with the Chair.

Max also shared that faculty want their opinions to be heard and by sharing their ideas

with administration it can create a fair and transparent process for decision making. He

describes how he feels in the following statement:

Discussions continue, and information that's gathered until the group feels like

we've reached a point where we can make a decision and I think most people are

reasonable and understand that, hey, if you are operating in that kind of

environment where everybody gets a chance to, to passionately present their point of view, while still being open to new information, changing their mind, and that even when you don't get your way, geeze, it was a fair and transparent process that resulted in that.

Jwin explained how he engages in the decision-making process with faculty. Explained how that process makes him feel when he has to make a critical decision in the following statement:

All the decisions, this is… higher ed is based off, bottom up, so the support from the faculty must be there. However, they also understand and I feel respected and trusted enough to know that at the end of the day, I listen to the input from all faculty, they know a decision has to be made. And I'm going to make the decision with everybody's concerns or issues or their perspectives in mind, but a decision will still need to be made. And I will make the call. Sometimes they're not happy about it, but that doesn't mean they don't still support me in the decision making. And that's key, that as long as I think faculty understand that decisions have to be made. They [faculty] want to be heard, they want to be truly listened to, and then they're going to leave it up to you to make the decision.

Sam shared that she feels communication enhancements are needed to define leadership power especially during times of crisis in the following statement:

Um, I feel like I would like to know more about their limitations of power because I feel like my department chair should be able to do more. But then I guess that depends on the dean, and how much they can actually do when it comes to, for example, COVID-19. Like when how many kids in our class have to

get it before we can call out like this is something that I still can't find the answer

to. So, something I guess defining their powers, what they can actually do, would

be something that's reassuring during this time, but I think overall, that would be

something good to know.

Rose recalled a time when faculty members shared their feelings expressing their

thoughts about how they view the chair's role in the following statements:

Oh, so that really, I mean gosh, I was like…they're actually thinking about what,

what all I'm trying to juggle and what I have to do. Whereas, whereas most of the

time I feel like I just need to shoulder all those burdens myself. This morning, I

received an email and it was just it made my day because it was from a faculty

member. And she was basically telling me, you know, I just worry about you at

all that you have to do and you're trying to take care of all of us and take care of

the students and I want to remind you to take care of yourself. And if there's

anything I can ever do, I know that I have a lot, let us know we want to help you?

She also shared:

So, it got me to thinking I have another faculty member that said something

similar to me, but not with that same tone. Earlier during this past academic year,

that was new. She's a first-year faculty member and she, (laughter) but the way

she said it, this was verbally, but anyway, she said, you know, we really don't

need a department chair we can take care of ourselves. So, at first, I was kind of

put back like, you know, and so but then as we talked, I was like, well I don't see

myself as your boss. Now there are things that I'm required to do as far as, you

know, your performance evaluation or we have to work within the rules and

regulations and to guide and direct and I have to oversee those things.

Gigi shared that she believes in being the type of leader that is accountable when things

go wrong in the following statement:

To me if something goes wrong, then I'm always like, well, that's my fault. I take

full responsibility for that or accountability for that. Yeah, it's just um having each

other's back, you know, and not just for the good things, you know. But I try very,

very hard. I give praise to my team. If things go well, then I praise them because

they're the ones that are, the ones that I like to call the boots on the ground.

Sunflower explained that a quality she values in her department chair is the ability to

listen, she felt that it is important for faculty and department chairs to listen to each other

in the following statements:

Listening. I think part of communication is listening. And I think that's a huge

part actually. Um, and so I will say both of my department chairs have done that

greatly. They are willing to listen to you to us as faculty.

We just have a great communication, however, I have to do a caveat and say that

the person that is my department chair actually their office was right next to mine,

my first couple years and so we had already formed a relationship just by working

next door to each other. It was just an easy transition for me where it wasn't for

other people. Because their style was completely different than the first

department chair. And again, I will just simply say it's about listening. It's about

being transparent. It's about supporting your faculty. It's about the faculty

supporting the department chair and moving the department forward, because

that's at the end of the day. That's what you're there for is for the students.

Poppy expressed that reciprocal trust for her means that her department chair has good

intentions and qualities that she feels she embodies in the following statement:

To me reciprocal trust means that we both understand that the other has the best

intentions and the best, well intentions kind of covers a lot of it. That, you know,

we're both on the same team, we both have the same outcome in mind. And I

believe that it means umm that, and that he or she has integrity. And I want to see,

I want to see the same things mirrored in what I feel and what I feel like I bring to

the table. I need to see that in my leader as well in my department chair and so

that that provides that mutual sense of trust there.

Chapter Summary

The chapter reviewed a phenomenological study deployed at a southeastern

university with department chairs and faculty members. The participants shared their

experiences with departmental leadership communication. The data analysis revealed 5

themes, which were Direct and Strategic Thinking Leadership, Compassionate and

Empathetic Leadership, Leadership that Engages in Partnership and Mentorship, Leading

with Humility and Connectivity, and Faculty Voice and Department Chair Governance.

The researcher used significant statements from participants to present the findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion.

Introduction

Postsecondary institutions have experienced enrollment, technological, and academic management changes (Akbulut et al., 2015; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Hamlin & Patel, 2017). More specifically, departmental leadership has become a topic of interest for leadership development within HEIs. "To meet the challenges posed by these organizational transformations, there has been an increasing dependency on managerial and leadership skill, competence, and effectiveness in HEIs, particularly at the department level" (Hamlin & Patel, 2017, p. 293). To better understand leadership development, this study was framed using the LMX theory to explore the interactions between department chairs and faculty.

Akbulut et al. (2015) explicated that faculty members perceived a supportive work culture and shared decision making as suitable attributes of department leaders. Their study also identified that faculty mentorship for research activities and publishing were crucial to work outcomes. Departmental leaders were described as strategic visionaries that held the ability to view situations from multiple angles including those that were controversial viewpoints. Leadership effectiveness was linked to trust, warmth, and respectful relationships. Similarly, the findings in this study aligned with Akbulut et al. (2015). Although, Akbulut et al. (2015), Hamlin and Patel (2017), and Gigliotti and Ruben (2017) posited that efficient academic leadership can combat strategic issues for universities, their research did not explicitly focus on the relationship between department leaders and faculty. The relational context is important because leaders must encourage their followers to achieve the academic mission.

Summary and Implications of the Study

In chapter 4, there were 5 emergent themes from the participants' experiences. The following themes shed light on how and in what ways the participants experienced leadership communication. The researcher determined each theme based on the unique shared experiences described by department chairs and faculty members. It was important to study their experiences to optimize communication efforts and to understand the complexities of HEI leadership.

The themes were (a) direct and strategic thinking leadership, (b) compassionate and empathetic leadership, (c) leadership that engages in partnership and mentorship, (d) leading with humility and connectivity, and (e) faculty voice and department chair governance. Participants described shared experiences that promoted clear and consistent communication and communication practices that support faculty through academic expansion. The study revealed that leaders who successfully communicate strategic goals are able to demonstrate successful governance, strategic collaboration with stakeholders, monitor plans and policies, and cultivate future leaders in the institution (Aithal, 2015).

Direct and strategic thinking leadership. Sarros et al. (2014) found that direct communication was necessary to achieve goals and that leadership is also strategic. Organizational operations rely upon leaders who can provide direction and create meaning through language to execute strategy (Sarros et al., 2014). In the study, faculty members reported that direct style leadership was preferred. "A direct style of communication refers to explicitly stating one's feelings, wants, and needs; the speaker says what he or she means" (Nelson et al., 2002, p. 40). It was explained that clarity and concise communication helped alleviate any misunderstandings. Wally West, a

participant, shared "also, in communication, there are some things that just have to be shared directly, concisely, and not have a lot of wiggle room or gray area."

Leaders inform colleagues of changes within the organization and promote the organization's direction (Aithal, 2015; Hendrickson et al., 2013; Manafzadeh et al., 2018; Renani et al., 2017). The goals of a university are traditionally executed from the president to department heads and then to faculty and staff (Hendrickson et al., 2013). Direct communication is important to ensure that expectations are clear and that stakeholders are informed in a timely manner. Sam expressed that, "for a department chair, I guess I value the ability to be direct and not passive aggressive." Similar to previous studies as reported in the literature review, authors Adewale and Ghavifekr (2019) and Curran and Prottas (2017) agreed that role ambiguity and communication deficiency can affect the organizational commitment and workflow. Passive aggressive leadership traits stimulate tension within the working team and diminish the quality of leader-to-follower exchanges.

Leaders who are direct in their communication can reduce ambiguity, strengthen trust and respect within the professional relationship; better work outcomes can be achieved (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019; Curran & Prottas, 2017; Lunenburg, 2011). On the other hand, leaders who are indirect develop environments where colleagues are confused about what to accomplish and followers can become unproductive out of frustration. Direct leaders in postsecondary institutions are prepared to address strategic problems because they are willing to ask questions, follow up on issues, and create action-oriented steps to navigate change. (Gaubatz, & Ensminger, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018).

Strategic thinking was a capability linked to efficient higher education leadership (Adewale & Gavifekr, 2019; Seo & Lee, 2017). Participants shared that leaders of departments should have a forward-thinking mindset, which means looking at situations from various viewpoints in order to strategically address challenges. Tulip recalled an experience with her department chair; "and he'll be like hold on, this affects these departments and these programs in this way. Is that an intended effect that you want to have?" She felt that this was a good quality to have as a leader because it showed his ability to strategically consider how decisions could create internal and external change for others.

A department chair shared how she felt when she had to give directives from higher-level administration, "let's figure out as a team across the department, how this will best work for us. If need be, I'm willing to go to bat for them." Department chairs viewed their role as being responsive, supportive, and protective of their faculty concerning university administration and teaching goals. Participant Jwin stated that "my role is to protect the faculty from all the outlying noise that takes place in administration." Protecting faculty was viewed as a method to help them focus on their programs and students. The department chairs felt like they carried the weight of administration and were a resource for faculty.

It is imperative for higher education leaders to bridge the gap between teaching and the academic strategic initiatives (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Karadag, 2017). Khan and Khan (2018), Hargreaves and Fink (2004), and Lambert (2012) researched the paradigm sustainable leadership. In the field of education sustainability was described as an economic factor. Although the aforementioned studies found a need to preserve

sustainability, there are fewer studies that expound upon the higher education context (Lambert, 2012).

Leadership sustainability is vital to higher learning environments due to the rapid globalization. Khan and Khan (2018) reported that sustainable leadership: (a) creates and conserves learning; (b) focuses on steady transformation; (c) fosters the development of new leaders; (d) values social justice; (e) implements diverse resources; (f) is economically focused; (g) and engages people with the environment (Khan & Khan, 2018). Faculty members and department chairs agreed that leaders should embody strategic thinking, which aligns with the sustainable leadership conceptualization. Furthermore, strategic thinking is described as having analytical and systems perspective while considering time, developing inquiry, and acting on innovative opportunities (Nuntamanop et al., 2013).

Compassionate and empathetic leadership. Department chairs and faculty expressed a commitment to building relationships with one another when a genuine concern for one's well-being was demonstrated. Jiang and Lu (2020) posited that leadership is connected to interpersonal communication and that educational leaders who exhibit emotional behaviors create a reciprocal empathetic relationship with teachers and staff. Jiang and Lu (2020) also believed that educational leaders are influenced by societal issues and therefore it is important for leaders to appropriately respond with sensitivity in challenging situations. In the study, faculty members shared feelings of respect and trust begin to develop when their department chair cared about them as a person and not just about the job.

Compassion and empathy were consistent topics that surfaced during the study. Faculty felt the more their leader showed consideration for their personal lives and checked in on them the more inclined they were to build the relationship. Empathetic department chairs who expressed care for faculty members and dedicated time to get to know faculty outside of the job, shaped a pipeline for faculty to see their leader as human. This behavior also helped faculty offer understanding in return during difficult circumstances. Poppy shared "some people think work and personal lives are separately, they're separate. But I think the more I know about my chair to make him more of a person to me, the more likely I am to give him a bit of a break or give him… or understand things a little bit differently."

Faculty felt that department leaders should demonstrate compassion and empathy by showing faculty that they are real people with families and other interests separate from their career. Participants shared experiences about feeling that their department chair was open and approachable. Openness encouraged the communication between department chairs and faculty.

Compassion was highlighted through a set of qualities, like discernment, listening, and wisdom. Tulip explained how she felt about sharing information with her leader, "and maybe it's something public, maybe it's something private, but that the person who you have that mutual or reciprocal trust with has the wherewithal or discipline or discernment to know the difference, right?" Department leaders have to decide when information is necessary to be revealed to others and when that information should remain private. Discernment was described as a reciprocal skill in higher

education leadership. Department leaders and faculty have to equally respect the margin between information that is public or private.

Listening was another quality valued by the participants. Because higher education environments depend on horizontal decision-making, listening is imperative for academic leaders. More importantly, the complexity of higher education structures, which encompasses several departments, campuses, and programs; leaders have to engage in active listening for honorable decision-making. As mentioned in the literature review, Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) and Lloyd et al. (2017) agreed that active listening is important in LMX relationships. Lloyd et al. (2017) explained that active empathetic listening is a method for perceiving information in a nonjudgmental capacity.

Active empathetic listening helps people feel accepted and appreciated (Lloyd et al., 2017). Showing compassion and empathy was not only valued by faculty members but also by department chairs. Gigi said, "and it's like I've told them, you know, I can't help you if I don't know there's an issue. So, we've got to talk to each other. We've got to communicate." Active listening is necessary for higher-level decision making in academia, but it is also imperative when trying to understand what may be occurring with the people one leads. Rose said, "I have another one that I know has to care for an elderly mother and they've opened up and shared these things." Department chairs and faculty described that learning about each other was just as important as learning about updates on the job.

Previous literature on the LMX theory suggested that dyadic relationships have expanded to include LMX differentiation (Chen et al., 2018; Seo & Lee, 2017; Xie et al., 2019). This means that exchanges between leaders and followers are more complex than

simply understanding the quality of exchanges between supervisors and employees. Instead, leaders can develop different relationships with each employee and the team. The relationship with the team is different than the one with the individual and etc. This is essential to higher education leaders because faculty and department chairs hold various roles in the university, at times these individuals can hold multiple positions.

Under the theme compassionate and empathetic leadership, wisdom was also identified as a preferred leadership quality. Grossmann and Brienza (2018) explicated that wisdom is difficult to define and a comprehensive explanation would be subjective. The authors provided a limited concept, wisdom is a collection of a person's life experiences, cultural influence, values, morals, and emotional awareness (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018).

> Throughout history, leaders who demonstrated epistemic humility and an ability to face up to complexity and change, inspired societal cooperation, and showed concern for the greater good have been marked as most influential, admired, and wise (e.g., Gandhi; Martin Luther King, Jr.) (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018, p. 5)

Wisdom is a quality that higher education leaders need to adequately respond to external and internal pressures. It is also a desirable quality when engaging with faculty who come from all walks of life personally and professionally. A leader with wisdom can effectively communicate with others who share entirely different worldviews based on their life and academic discipline. This is because faculty are culturally diverse, hold various degrees from different institutions, and generally have served professionally in different environments.

Subject 2 shared, "you know, even if you're saying something that's gonna get folks riled up or something, you know, it's important that you're at least kind to those people and that you will meet them at their level. In my experience, you know, kindness always wins, there's no reason to be, you know, mad over something or vindictive or whatever." Leaders with wisdom are open to ideas that are diverse and transformative.

Leadership that Engages in Partnership and Mentorship. Leadership is increasingly transforming in the 21st century. Organizations are moving away from vertical operating structures into a horizontal workflow (Brown et al., 2019). This means that leadership communication is transitioning from authoritative to participative climates and that followers desire leaders that engage in supportive relationships (Brown et al., 2019; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014). Consistent with the literature in this study, department chairs and faculty viewed higher education leadership as a collective experience. Furthermore, Freund (2017) viewed shared leadership as a partnership, he defended that partnership is about more than autonomy and sharing collective goals but sharing power.

Sam expressed, "I just send him [department chair] an update of what happened instead of him persistently like asking me questions and micromanaging." Postsecondary leaders should view partnership as sharing responsibility and not as delegation. Previous studies focused on the decision-making process and delegating tasks (Allison et al., 2011; Freund, 2017). However, the 21st century leader should look to achieve a quality leader-to-follower relationship by sharing power through empowering colleagues with opportunities to lead. Another participant, Max, shared "well, when you include more people's viewpoints, and you make decisions based on what is the majority view after a

thoughtful discussion, and after information is presented, those decisions tend to be better than decisions of just one person." Similar to previous research, postsecondary environments require leaders who will not bottleneck the process of problem-solving. Leaders are not required to have all the answers, instead leaders encourage those with unique skill sets and disciplines to strategize with them.

Subject 2 said "and so that's the other thing, you know, no one leads alone, and no one leads in a vacuum. And so, it's super important to get, to get other people's opinions on things and that speaks to mentorship." Mentorship in higher education plays a vital role between department chairs and faculty. Although the study did not expound on how mentorship occurs specific to these roles, it was mentioned as a necessary quality in HEI leadership. Scholars in the field of higher education provided a general context to faculty mentorship:

> While mentors have complex roles that range from emotional support to transmitting norms to advocacy and empowerment, part of a mentor's role is to listen and identify a faculty member's goals and to help the person conceptualize the issue and offer a road map to achieve this goal (Kezar & Lester, 2009)

Briscoe and Freeman Jr. (2019) agreed that mentorship provides opportunities, connections to professional networks, and is reciprocal. Colleagues who have been mentored often become a mentor.

Faculty in this study shared feelings of inclusivity when their department chair included them on carrying out annual plans. Higher education leaders who share priorities and power ultimately achieve departmental goals and form bonds with their peers. The partnership develops over time and fosters future opportunities for leading

within the university. Sunflower spoke about what motivated her relationship with her chair, "um second, when they lay out their agenda for the year and their department, you certainly want to support that person in providing that support in working through that agenda as you can."

Leading with humility and connectivity. Participants expressed that it was essential to admit mistakes and appropriately communicate a resolution. Leaders also shared that showing gratitude with small gestures is an avenue to let people know they are appreciated. Faculty connected with their peers beyond the departmental workload. The faculty checked on one another. Humility was important in order to lead the department, especially regarding transition periods of new leadership. Ultimately, connection and humility were expressed in various efforts.

Leaders in higher education are required to keep everyone connected not only during times of departmental projects but also in times of crises. Specifically, during COVID-19, faculty and department chairs expressed challenges with the unknown climate and the major shift and dependence on technological platforms. Postsecondary leaders must have the agility to lead with connectivity and humility through change. Previous studies on the LMX theory did not expound on the effects of humility and connection between the leader-to-follower relationship. In this study, emotions of connection and humility were shared experiences of the participants.

Subject 2 shared an experience from his initial days as a new leader of the department. He said, "and so, I ended up taking some advice, it was sitting down with every single faculty member and just having a discussion in their office, not them coming to me, but me going into their office." He also shared that he preferred not to be called

doctor by his colleagues. Because department chairs lead highly accomplished faculty that hold terminal degrees as well, it is noteworthy to understand how humility can foster better working relationships. Humility is a selfless act, leaders in organizations can practice selfless behaviors to better serve the people that are on the team (Li et al., 2019).

Li et al. (2019) linked employee voice to leader humility. Leaders that are willing to learn from their team, admit when they are wrong, and provide others a chance to voice their opinions engage in leader humility. The study also revealed that connecting in less formal methods promoted ease of talking to other colleagues. A formal tone can entice less authentic conversations.

Breaking away from formality for department chairs and faculty was favored because it helped maintain humility and promote respect, trust, and obligation. Formal communication should not be abandoned in HEIs, but faculty and department chairs felt that there is a time to pivot for better connection between others. Gigi said, "and a lot of times, I will just send them a card in the mail and just say, thank you so much for all that you're doing." Connectivity was not only important for department chair and faculty relationships but interpersonal dyadic relationships between faculty-to-faculty member. For example, a department chair, Rose, shared that during a meeting the faculty expressed concern for each other. "They'll go, oh, gosh, you know, when he mentioned his wife, or when so and so…I'm going to check on them."

Humility is a quality that leaders and followers can benefit from in connecting with others. When mistakes occur by either leader or follower, it is a good practice to take ownership for the situation and correct the problem. Because higher education organizations have multiple departments, campuses, and constituents, it is crucial to

maintain uniformity in communications (Akbulut et al., 2015, Anthony, & Antony, 2017; Gaubatz, & Ensminger, 2017). A participant from the study, Tulip, said "And going back to that idea of being a unified front and a unified message giver, and being able to then say, you know, go back to your class and say, hey, I'm sorry, we had a miscommunication." In her experience, when changes occurred the best method was to remain unified in responding to the public and correct the issue.

Faculty voice and department chair governance. A review of the literature showed that higher education governance is different from traditional corporate organizations. Although there are similarities between traditional upper and middle level leadership structures, there is a difference in how universities conduct business. University leadership is heavily dependent on a bottom-up approach. Jwin explained that, "all the decisions, this is… higher ed is based off, bottom up, so the support from the faculty must be there."

Universities have a long-standing history balancing power (Brewer, 2014; Hendrickson et al., 2013). Often times there is a power struggle with university administration and the state. The state provides policy for the university to follow. In addition, there are power struggles between administration and the faculty who oversee academic programs. Max said, "I think that you know, if you go by norms in higher ed, departments ought to be run by the faculty, especially the tenure track faculty in that department."

It is important for leaders to balance out power when leading in universities. Unlike corporate environments, HEI decision making depends on the voice of faculty. Participants shared that achieving the goals of the department and establishing teaching

goals was dependent on having a good relationship with their chair. Not only were faculty seeking a good relationship, but they preferred a leader who took interest in their opinions and professional development.

Moreover, Dopson et al. (2019) supported the idea that organizational strategy depends on the leadership structure and capability of leaders. University leaders require a unique set of skills to lead the mission of academic departments and promote scholarly research. Desired qualities for university leaders extend beyond academic discipline proficiency but an ability to have a global perspective and encourage collaboration (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Dopson et al., 2019; Khan & Khan, 2018; Nicdao, 2019; Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2016).

Pifer et al. (2019) argued that "negative organizational behaviors and contexts such as insufficient mentoring, academic hazing, personal and intellectual isolation, and the weight of administrative and service work can also present challenges for faculty members" (p. 539). Faculty need leaders who are adequately developed because department chairs function as tools of support and access to resources for faculty to carry out the academic agenda. Furthermore, department chairs are the key to faculty promotion and successfully achieving career goals (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Gonaim, 2016; Pifer et al., 2019). Faculty need their voices heard and departmental governance that will advocate on their behalf. The faculty expressed during interviews qualities that are appreciated and that led to trusting relationships with their department chair were notions of transparency and academic support.

Poppy shared, "that, you know, we're both on the same team, we both have the same outcome in mind. And I believe that it means umm that, and that he or she has

integrity." It can be challenging for faculty to trust the intentions of departmental

leadership because of the dual interest of teaching and administration. Faculty are

primarily focused on program while department chairs have to find the balance between

what is best for the college according to upper administrators' feedback, and what is best

for faculty and their programs. The lines can become blurred and tensions could arrive

without proper communication and faculty voice. Gigi shared how she felt about

reciprocal trust, "yeah, it's just um having each other's back, you know, and not just for

the good things, you know."

Faculty and department chairs respected difficult conversations because it opened

the line of communication and helped build trust between them during successful times

and during difficult times. An open discourse about how situations make them feel can

not only create quality LMX but encourage balance and equality when leading.

Rose shared a time when a faculty member voiced her opinion about having a department

chair, "she said, you know, we really don't need a department chair we can take care of

ourselves. So, at first, I was kind of put back like, you know, and so, but then as we

talked, I was like, well I don't see myself as your boss." Tough conversations allowed

colleagues the opportunity to be transparent with each other and to understand other

points of view.

Interpretation and Reflection

The essence of the study was that faculty voice matters and without the support of

faculty voice department chairs are not prepared to lead. Department chairs should not

view themselves as managers of faculty based on administrators' demands. Department

leaders should view their role as a resource to achieve administrative goals and support

faculty through administrative decision making. A quality communication exchange in higher education departments is based on faculty voice. The researcher interpreted the 5 themes that developed from the study.

The theme direct and strategic thinking means higher education leaders build their relationships with faculty by communicating directly and innovatively about the future of the department and the organization as a whole. The communication experience between department chairs and faculty was a co-operating responsive leadership ability. Both faculty and department chairs must engage in direct communication that cultivates leadership sustainability.

Compassionate and empathetic leadership is a skill that can help higher education leaders understand and value the emotions of others. Wise leaders encourage viewpoints that are different from their own to navigate uncertainty with ethically driven discourse towards societal problems (Grossmann & Brienza, 2018). Compassion and empathy in higher education leadership is about being more than an administrator and becoming human to faculty, having discernment, listening skills, and wisdom.

Showing an inability to be human can cause dissension amongst the team and exhibit poor leader-to-follower exchanges. Compassionate and empathetic leaders understand that information shared with them by their colleagues may require sensitivity. Furthermore, leaders should engage with faculty on an individual basis. This is because each person has their own life experiences that can contribute to how that person may express themselves and operate in their role (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). By treating a colleague as an individual and not always the collective, the leader shows compassion and understanding for someone who may exhibit different traits than their own.

Partnership and mentorship are on-going practices between the leader-to-follower dynamic. Higher education leaders should view the attribute as an intervention to maintain quality relationships and opportunities to develop junior faculty. Leaders in the 21st century should also understand partnership and mentorship are not dichotomous within the leadership development context. This means that veteran leaders focus on power-sharing while simultaneously guiding future leaders through the process of strategically solving problems. Partnership and mentorship are leadership development behaviors (Allison et al., 2011; Freund, 2017; Kezar & Lester, 2009). Postsecondary leaders must reimagine shared leadership by moving away from delegation to partnership. Although partnership and mentorship have entirely different definitions, the two are not mutually exclusive when coaching future leaders.

The theme leading with humility and connectivity is a reciprocal act on behalf of faculty and department chairs so that voices are heard. Leaders who are humble and are intentional about connecting generate non-threating professional learning environments. Leaders should listen to followers and actually take the time to consider what is being said. Followers are willing to respect leaders more when leaders show their respect for followers' ideas (Lloyd et al., 2017). Leaders and followers should demonstrate accountability for mistakes and invite an open discussion for solutions. Connecting with colleagues is the responsibility of each member on the team. While department leaders are viewed as the connectors between faculty and the university at large, faculty are responsible for connecting and engaging with the department as well.

Unlike higher education, corporate approaches to leadership focus less on connecting employees to senior management. Instead, corporate leaders connect

employees to the product or the bottom line. A corporate approach should not be completely emulated in HEI. It is necessary to understand that there are beneficial traits of a traditional organization that can be applied in a higher education; however, leaders should avoid abandoning HEI's distinctiveness (Anthony & Antony, 2017; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Lambert, 2012). Corporations offer a strategic trajectory for obtaining economic sustainability. Postsecondary leaders have come to learn to adopt strategic planning methodologies. Corporations' top-down management structure regarding employee voice should not be implemented between the faculty and department chair context. This is because faculty voice is vital for sustainability in the academy.

Faculty voice and department chair governance is about learning to balance power and transparency. Department chairs' connection with college deans leads toward connection with provosts and presidents. The role of department chairs offers an opportunity to perform with integrity and the best interest of everyone on behalf of the faculty. The faculty's voice guides the balance between academic leaders' decision-making for global and community impact.

Limitations

There were considerable limitations to the study. A global pandemic, COVID-19, occurred during the data collection phase. Although the researcher initially planned to do virtual interviews, the climate created difficulty getting participants to focus on the research. During that time, participants were trying to adjust to their new normal such as moving their entire face-to-face classes online, working from home with their families during a national quarantine, and holding meetings to determine the state of the university. The participants may not have been as engaged due to a world crisis.

Another limitation is that the researcher is an employee at the institution and that could have affected participants' willingness to disclose uncomfortable experiences. The university affiliation could have created a level of discomfort in answering certain questions fully. The final limitation is that the study was done with the college of education and not across departments. Because the employees all worked in the same college their experiences may have been a limited representation of departmental leadership, experiences could have been different across departments.

Recommendations

The results prompted recommendations for further research. Because HEIs are challenged with globalization, it is recommended that future studies develop inquiry for leadership communication at a global level (Debowski, 2015; Dopson et al., 2019; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Gonaim, 2016). This is because there are different cultural and social norms in societies, the college of education at a southeastern university in the U.S. was explored. It is also recommended that researchers consider studying leadership communication that will focus on cross-departmental interactions to better understand the complexities across colleges.

There is extensive research developing on African American women leaders' experiences trying to achieve upper-level leadership careers within the university (Delgado & Allen, 2019; Patterson-Stephens, 2019; Stiff, 2013; Webster & Brown, 2019). Future research should explore a diverse population, specifically women of color, to better understand the leadership development process for minority populations. This is important for HEIs because leading globally requires a diverse leadership perspective. While the research study included experiences of males, females, and varying age groups,

it had minimal ethnic diversity. The study could have generated limited experiences based on a small population of 10 participants with low diversity. Only one participant was Asian, the remaining participants were White.

Conclusion

The researcher explored academic leadership in higher education through the lens leader-to-member exchange theory. Department chairs and faculty members shared their leadership communication experiences at the department level. This study is important to the organizational leadership discipline because existing literature in higher education organizations has traditionally focused on student affairs, university presidents, and programs. The findings in this study shifted the attention to internal practice. Consistent with previous research, higher education leadership development is a growing concern but has yet to receive the attention necessary to begin developing a paradigm that can adequately respond to the problem (Gaubatz & Ensminger, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Ruben et al., 2018).

The findings revealed 5 themes unique to higher learning environments. Participants shared that quality leadership communication in higher education advances the academic mission. The themes were (a) direct and strategic thinking leadership, (b) compassionate and empathetic leadership, (c) leadership that engages in partnership and mentorship, (d) leading with humility and connectivity, and (e) faculty voice and department chair governance.

It is important to understand that life experience can shape how a person approaches leadership (Hackman & Johnson, 2013). Participants explicated their experiences with departmental leadership communication. Leaders who were responsive,

innovative, and strategically sound were preferred. The capacity to embody empathy and compassion showed wisdom and discernment. Partnership and mentorship created an avenue to share power and build future leaders. Through humility and connectivity, participants felt respected and appreciated. Faculty and department chairs valued accountability, listening, and transparency. Faculty voice is at the heart of leadership communication in HEIs.

The findings provided a pathway for faculty and department chairs to engage in quality communication and develop future higher learning leaders. The themes are at best inaugural leadership practices for pedagogical leaders. Although the research is congruent with previous literature, it should be noted that HEI leadership extends beyond the faculty and department chair roles. Departmental leadership prepares future HEI leaders, therefore, the emergent themes in the study are based on department level leadership communication.

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Appendix A

General Informed Consent Form

Appendix A

General Informed Consent Form

NSU Consent to be in a Research Study Entitled
Exploring Academic Leadership in Higher Education Through The Lens of Leader-to-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

Who is doing this research study?
College:
Abraham S. Fischler College of Education and School of Criminal Justice

Principal Investigator:
Dequies A. Lanier, M.S., B.S.

Faculty Advisor/Dissertation Chair:
Matthew Delaney, Ed.D.

Site Information:
Troy University
600 University Avenue
Troy, Al 36082

Funding:
Unfunded

What is this study about?
This is a research study, designed to create new ideas that other people can use. The purpose of this research study is to explore academic leadership through the leader-to-member exchange (LMX) theory. This theory focuses on the quality of relationships between people based on mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation. Participants in the field of education who choose to participate in this study will have access to the findings and may incorporate best practices in their field of work. Any communication suggestions found will be accessible to the participants upon request.

Why are you asking me to be in this research study?
You are being asked to be in this research study because of your experanice as a department chair or faculty member. Your experience will help provide pivotal insight into the interactions between this relational dynamic.

This study will include about 10 people.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in this research study?
While you are taking part in this research study, you will be asked to sign a voluntary consent form, which reviews the purpose of this study and your rights as a participant. You will be asked to interview at two separate sessions. The first session will cover how

and in what ways have you experienced communication. The second interview is intended to cover your summarized essence of your experience. The first interview is expected to last 45 minutes. The second interview is expected to last 20 minutes. You will be asked to interview through a virtual platform, Zoom.

Research Study Procedures - as a participant, this is what you will be doing:
As a participant selected for this research study, you meet the criteria of holding either the position of department chair or faculty member for a minimum of three years in the education department. You will be initially emailed a brief invitation to the study with a copy of the informed consent attached. If you decide to participate, you will sign and return the informed consent to the researcher. Next, the investigator will email over the demographics form to complete and return prior to the interview. The researcher will schedule the initial interview and the second interview (indicated in the invitation to participate) to conduct the study. There are three sections covering mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation. You will be asked questions to share your experiences related to those topics in the interview. The researcher will conclude the second summative interview and transcribe the data received by utilizing the Moustakas (1994) framework for evaluating the final report in the applied dissertation.

Are there possible risks and discomforts to me?
This research study involves minimal risk to you. To the best of my knowledge, the things you will be doing have no more risk of harm than you would have in everyday life. The participant will not endure any physical harm. The extent of risk included is a possible inconvenience of time, recalling emotional moments, and confidentiality.

If you accept to participate in this study, it will require time away from your daily schedule. The researcher will request up to 45 minutes of your time for the first interview and 20 minutes for the second interview. In order to best accommodate your schedule, the researcher will set the first interview and second follow up interview at the beginning of the study.

You may find some questions we ask you (or some things we ask you to do) to be upsetting or stressful. You may experience emotional discomfort during the interview process while remembering sensitive moments.

If so, I can refer you to someone who may be able to help you with these feelings. If at any moment you become uncomfortable I will move on to a different question or reschedule the interview.

There are minimal risk to confidentiality. The researcher will take necessary precautions to maintain the trust of the participant by keeping in touch and will use data protection measures.

What happens if I do not want to be in this research study?
You have the right to leave this research study at any time, or not be in it. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to be in the study anymore, you will not get any penalty

or lose any services you have a right to get. If you choose to stop being in the study, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the end of the study, but you may request that it not be used.

What if there is new information learned during the study that may affect my decision to remain in the study?
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available, which may relate to whether you want to remain in this study, this information will be given to you by the investigator. You may be asked to sign a new Informed Consent Form if the information is given to you after you have joined the study.

Are there any benefits for taking part in this research study?
There are no direct benefits from being in this research study. The researcher hopes the information learned from this study will be valuable to members of the higher education community and other educational leaders in regard to strengthening communication practices.

Will I be paid or be given compensation for being in the study?
You will not be given any payments or compensation for being in this research study.

Will it cost me anything?
There are no costs to you for being in this research study.
Ask the researchers if you have any questions about what it will cost you to take part in this research study (for example bills, fees, or other costs related to the research).

How will you keep my information private?
Information learned about you in this research study will be handled in a confidential manner, within the limits of the law and will be limited to people who have a need to review this information. To protect your confidentiality, the researcher will request that the participant provide a pseudonym to identify themselves. In addition, the researcher will review data for any other possible identifiers and remove them. This data will be available to the researcher, the Institutional Review Board and other representatives of this institution.

If I publish the results of the study in a scientific journal or book, I will not identify you. All confidential data will be kept securely. The researcher will password protect all audio recordings and data associated with the participant on her laptop. All handwritten notes will be stored in her home in a locked box. All data will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study and destroyed after that time by shredding all handwritten notes and deleting all audio recordings from the hard-drive of the researcher's laptop.

Will there be any Audio or Video Recording?
This research study will include audio recording of verbal responses to the research questions of the study. The audio recordings will be transcribed through the instrument Zoom. The researcher will review the transcription and handwritten notes taken during

the session to verify the transcription. The researcher will allow the participant an opportunity to review the transcription for accuracy. The participant will email their request for changes if any.

The audio recording and handwritten notes will be made available to the Institutional Review Board, the dissertation chair, and other representatives of this institution. Because what is in the recording could be used to find out your identity, it is not possible to be sure that the recording will always be kept confidential. The researcher will try to keep anyone not working on the research from listening to or viewing the recording. The recording will be kept, stored, and destroyed as stated in the section above.

Whom can I contact if I have questions, concerns, comments, or complaints?
If you have questions now, feel free to ask. If you have more questions about the research, your research rights, or have a research-related injury, please contact:

Primary contact:
Dequies A. Lanier, M.S., B.S. can be reached at 770-367-7791, readily available during and after normal work hours

If primary is not available, contact:
Matthew Delaney, Ed.D. can be reached at delaneym@nova.edu

Research Participants Rights
For questions/concerns regarding your research rights, please contact:

Institutional Review Board
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(954) 262-5369 / Toll Free: 1-866-499-0790
IRB@nova.edu

You may also visit the NSU IRB website at www.nova.edu/irb/information-for-research-participants for further information regarding your rights as a research participant.

Research Consent & Authorization Signature Section
Voluntary Participation - You are not required to participate in this study. In the event you do participate, you may leave this research study at any time. If you leave this research study before it is completed, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

If you agree to participate in this research study, sign this section. You will be given a signed copy of this form to keep. You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this form.

SIGN THIS FORM ONLY IF THE STATEMENTS LISTED BELOW ARE TRUE:
- You have read the above information.
- Your questions have been answered to your satisfaction about the research.

<u>Adult Signature Section</u>

I have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study.

Printed Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent and Authorization	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent & Authorization	Date

Appendix B

Recruitment Email

Appendix B

Hello [Participant Name],

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Dequies (De-key-es) Lanier and I am a doctoral candidate at Nova Southeastern University (NSU). I am reaching out to request if you would be interested in volunteering to participate in an upcoming study, Exploring Academic Leadership in Higher Education Through The Lens of Leader-to-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory. It is my hope that this study will contribute to the community of higher education and other educational leadership environments. You are being asked to volunteer in this study because of your experience as a [faculty member / department chair] at [X University] for a minimum of three years. I believe that you can contribute meaningful information in regard to the study.

More specifically, this study aims to understand the communication experiences of department chairs as leaders and department faculty as followers. The reason for this study is because higher education institutions are unlike traditional leadership structures. Postsecondary organizations require leaders who are prepared not only within their academic disciplines but also to lead a complex organizational unit. If you are interested in participating in this study, please review the attached informed consent, print, sign, and date, then return it to the e-mail address listed below one week from today, on [enter date]. Participants will not receive compensation. This study has been approved by the necessary Institutional Review Boards (see attached).

Upon completion of the informed consent document, please indicate by e-mail your availability for about 60 minutes for a virtual interview session. Please also complete and return by email the demographics survey. Interviews will take place the month of [July 2020].

Informed Consent Return Address:
Dequies A. Lanier
dl1422@mynsu.nova.edu

Interview Schedule Request:

Date_____
Time_____

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of interviewee:

Research Topic: Exploring academic leadership in higher education through the lens of leader-to-member exchange (LMX) theory

The investigator organized this study into three core parts based on the elements of the LMX theory. The three content areas include mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation. The final portion of the interview will capture the essence of the overall experience in a summative response. The LMX theory focuses on relationship/communication exchanges between leaders (managers) and followers (employees). In my study leaders are higher education department chairs and followers are faculty. A purposeful sample of department chairs and faculty will be asked the following questions. Each department employee will answer from his/her perspective regarding their role.

Central Research Question: What are the communication experiences of department chairs and department faculty? (explored by respect, trust, obligation)

Hello [participant], I am grateful for your willingness to participate in this study. As mentioned in the initial invitation, this study aims to consider the lived experiences of departmental faculty and chairs in the areas of leadership and communication. I have invited you to contribute in this study because of your background and experience within the university either as a faculty or chair member. I believe that your experiences are important and may shed light on the future of leadership and communication within the field of higher education. With that in mind, I plan to conduct an interview that should last no more than 60 minutes. Some of the questions may create a level of discomfort recalling difficult communication experiences. If at any time you need to stop the interview, only the information you are comfortable with will be used. As promised, in your informed consent, I will maintain your confidentiality, respect, and right to stop at your request. We will protect your privacy by not stating your true name, instead, we will use a pseudonym of your choosing. We will also avoid naming your institution. Do you have any questions as it relates to how this interview data will be used? May we begin? What name would you like to use as an identifier in the interview?

Interview I.

SECTION I. MUTUAL RESPECT

Research Question 1: How do department chairs and faculty describe their verbal and non-verbal communication experiences?

- Describe the verbal and nonverbal modes of communication between you and your chair or faculty? Explain how this form of communication makes you feel about the mutual respect between you.

- Describe the communication style of your department chair or faculty such as passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive, or assertive? Explain whether or not this is style is preferred for you or if it is uncomfortable and why.

SECTION II. RECIPROCAL TRUST

Research Question 2: How and in what ways do faculty or department chairs describe instances of communication issues if any?

- Describe your understanding of department chair and faculty roles?

- Explain whether or not expectations are clear and how roles and expectations are communicated.

- To what extent do you trust your department chair or faculty to support you in critical situations and/or decision-making on your part?

- Describe a critical situation that would warrant support from your department chair or faculty.

- What communication qualities do you value in your department chair or faculty? Please provide real-life examples.

- Can you explain what reciprocal trust concerning communication between you and your leader means to you? Provide examples.

- Describe a time when miscommunication may have occurred and what was important to you to resolve the issue?

SECTION III. OBLIGATION

Research Question 3: What do faculty and department chairs suggest to enhance communication and their commitment to building relationships?

- In terms of relationship building, describe what communication changes you feel

can enhance interactions between department chairs and faculty within the institution?

- Describe what job/role related functions motivate your commitment to building a relationship with your department chair or faculty?

SECTION IV. SUMMATIVE EXPERIENCE

Central Research Question: What are the lived communication experiences of department chairs and department faculty? (explored by respect, trust, obligation)

- Please summarize the overall communication experience between the department chair and faculty member from your perspective. Consider the following context: mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and obligation.

Appendix D

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Appendix D

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Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire

Job Title: _____

Age:

21-35 _____
36-45 _____
46-55 _____
56-65 _____
66-75 _____
75+   _____

Race, ethnicity, culture (mark all that apply):

American Indian/Alaska Native _____
Hispanic/Latino or Spanish origin _____
White _____
Asian _____
Middle Eastern or North African _____
Black or African American _____
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander _____
Another race or ethnicity not listed _____

Gender identity:

Male _____
Female _____
Other _____

Highest level of education:

Bachelors _____
Masters _____
Doctoral _____

Discipline/Degree: _____

Leadership Experience:

3 years _____
4-6 years _____
7-10 years _____
10+ years _____

Appendix F

Epoche´

Appendix F

Epoche´

Epoche´ is a method used by a researcher to bracket out his or her experiences to avoid bias to the topic of study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moerer-Urdahl, & Creswell, 2004; van Manen, 2014). The investigator has worked in higher education for over 8 years. She began her career in an administrative role where communication was essential to operating with six different offices within the region. Her communication experiences in that role required speaking with individuals in her local office and several individuals within the district. Her communication expanded from teleconferencing, emails, reports, staff meetings, and student engagement. Later, she transitioned to a role in admissions where she had high-level student engagement, engaged in hiring, conducted meetings, hosted webinars, trained district personnel, and designed strategic communication plans.

The researcher has a personal history in the field of communication through her educational background. She holds degrees in design technology innovation and strategic communication. Her concern with communication and higher education evolved from personal experiences with departmental leadership and extensive literature that identified a need for better-prepared postsecondary educational leaders. She has experienced connecting with faculty and department chairs to plan university wide events where some departments operated seamlessly in their communication and expectations for the project. In other experiences, she was confused on the direction of the project, the appropriate person to connect to receive assistance, and occasionally an inability to resolve the confusion. At times the confusion was a result of poor interpersonal communication

within the department. For this reason, the researcher seeks to study academic leadership through the lens of LMX.

It is unlikely that a researcher taking the phenomenological approach can remove personal philosophies. Therefore, epoche´ permits the researcher to identify personal bias and mechanics to manage predispositions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moerer-Urdahl, & Creswell, 2004; van Manen, 2014). The principal investigator will manage potential bias by first including her role in the informed consent, complete epoche´, allow participants to review transcriptions for modification, and engage in Moustakas' (1994) systematic analysis.