**EMPLOYEES PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE ORGANIZATION: QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY**

A dissertation submitted

by

**JENNIFER TAYLOR**

September, 2018

to

UNIVERSITY OF THE ROCKIES

Upon the recommendation of the Faculty and the approval of the Board of Trustees, this dissertation is at this moment accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Sherry Lowrance, PhD

Committee Chair

Committee Members:

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to understand employee perception of leadership through their lived experiences in a culturally diverse organization. In a diverse culture, the role of leadership is crucial, here the author will investigate the effectiveness of leadership in a diverse environment. In this study, the author will examine the leadership in a culturally diverse organization by conducting semi-structured interviews. The participants will be interviewed to investigate their experiences regarding effective and ineffective leadership in the workplace. The data will be collected from employees of the organization with a diverse culture we will examine their views and experiences regarding the leadership’s effectiveness. The employees’ interviews were documented, recorded and direct description of their experiences with leadership in a culturally diverse organization was documented in detail.

(from the Dissertation Checklist):

**Abstract**

\_\_🗸\_\_\_ Consists of one double-spaced page or less

\_\_\_\_\_ Includes a concise description of the study, a brief statement of the problem,

statement of purpose or importance, and a summary of methods and procedures

\_\_\_\_\_ Includes a summary of sample size, findings, and implications (dissertation only)

**Acknowledgments**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Chapter I: Introduction

 Background of Study

 Statement of Problem

 Purpose of Study

 Importance of Study

 Theoretical Framework

 Research Questions

 Overview of Research Design

 Definition of Terms

 Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

 Summary

Chapter II: Review of the Literature

 Introduction

 Search Strategy

 Review of Related Research and Literature

 Summary

Chapter III: Method

 Introduction

 Methodology/ Qualitative Case Study

 Study Participants

 Data Collection

 Procedures Followed

 Trustworthiness

 Ethical Concerns

 Data Analysis

Chapter IV: Results

 Introduction

 Pilot Study

 Sample

 Data Collection

 Data Analysis and Results

Chapter V: Discussion

 Introduction

 Interpretation of Findings

 Limitations of Study

 Implications for Theory and Research

 Implications for Practice

 Recommendations for Further Research

 Conclusions

 References

 Appendix

 Biographical Statement

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

**Background**

 This study will investigate the relationship of the organizational performance with the effectiveness of leadership, and the diversity of the employees.Research demonstrates a relationship between organizational leadership and diversity have an impact on performance by a limited understanding of the concerns of cultural diversity in an organization (Lambert, 2016). However, there is limited research on ineffective leadership in a culturally diverse organization relating to the functioning of the employees’ ability to communicate, interact and respect the cultural diversity among one another.

**Problem Statement**

Leadership in a culturally diverse organization facilitates differences in the employees’ ability to communicate, interact, and respect the culturally diverse employee. The general problem is that leaders in many culturally diverse organizations do not generate an effective leadership practice for their employees, resulting in a lack of communication. A culturally diverse organization requires leadership that substantiates the value of communication, performance, and an overall ability to demonstrate a competent system (Hekman et al., 2017). In some organizations, the minorities are treated unequally as they treat the majority, for instance, the woman and black are ignored or bullied by the majority group. The specific problem is that ineffective leadership in a culturally diverse organization such as; the gender, racial and regional diversification. Which results in employees' inability to effectively communicate, interact and share mutual respect necessary to avoid a hostile work environment.

Palthe (2014) suggests that the ability to effectively lead culturally diverse employees should focus on attaining an understanding of the interaction between the employee, organizational culture, that have an impact on the organizational performance. An employee’s perception of leadership in a culturally diverse organization relies on the strengths of the leaders’ influence on both employee’s performance and organizational components, such as communication, culture, involvement, and experience (Gilley, Thompson, & Gilley, 2012).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to identify the effectiveness of leaders in the diverse culture that leads the organization to achieve its effectiveness. Inappropriate interaction in the workplace can ultimately result in miscommunication, inappropriate interactive behavior, and violence in the workplace (Collinson, & Tourish, 2015). The focus of this study will be on the culturally diverse employee perception of ineffective leadership through the experience of those employees who are a diverse population that work for the same culturally diverse organization. The participants will include ten employees from a reputed organization who have organizational experience with ineffective leadership within a culturally diverse organization who will be interviewed and recruited for the study.

The participants will convey their experiences with both effective and ineffective leadership. Those participating from various culturally diverse backgrounds have worked with leaders, such as Supervisors, Managers, and Administrative Team Leaders who have displayed both effective and ineffective leadership practice. For instance, the employee’s experiences with ineffective leadership have led to a lack of communication, miscommunication, verbal altercations, and an inappropriate reprimand from subordinates.

**Importance of the Study**

The effectiveness of a leader is proved by the set of actions the leader takes which ensures the progression of positive outcomes such as the efficient management of diversity, and to achieve the organizational effectiveness. Leadership practice motivates teamwork that promotes interactive competence among employees’ in a culturally diverse organization. Onkham, Elattar, and Rabelo (2013) suggest that the attribute of leadership is a significant factor in the success of the functioning of an organization. Diverse culture often has a communication gap within the organization because of the different cultures, norms, language, religion, and gender, etc (Moreland, 2013). The significance of this study is to analyze the leadership qualities within the diversified organization, which provides information about organizational effectiveness.

The theoretical framework has foraged in psychology about culturally diverse employee’s interactive behavior under the direction of leadership. In this framework, the lack of effective leadership for employee’s interactive behavior can lead to problems for both the overall operation of an organization and the interactive behavior among those diverse cultural employees. Leadership influence in organizational behavior and employee interaction is key to the success of leadership can be effective regarding a positive employee interaction (Goncalves, 2013). The effectiveness of leadership enables the operation of an organization to be a success regarding leadership and employee followership. The role of a leader and its followers are complementary to the success of a culturally diverse organization.

**Methodology**

The methodology selected is a qualitative case study that will explore culturally diverse employees experience in a culturally diverse organization with both effective and ineffective leadership. Ten employees from the selected organization with culturally diverse backgrounds that have experienced effective and ineffective leadership in a culturally diverse organization will be the subjects of the study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with these ten employees who have participated in the study by sharing their experience with effective and ineffective leadership in a culturally diverse organization. Five of the culturally diverse employees have shared their experience with effective leadership, and five culturally diverse employees have shared their experience with ineffective leadership. The data collection will be through face to face interviews from the employees of selected organizations.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework is searched in psychology about culturally diverse employee's interactive behavior under the direction of effective and ineffective leadership. Goncalves (2012) imply organizational behavior involves a variety of techniques to gain and use leadership power in an organization when managing organizational behavior among culturally diverse employees. In this framework, the lack of effective leadership for employee’s interactive behavior can lead to some problems for both the overall operation of an organization and the interactive behavior among those culturally diverse employees.

The quality of effective leadership exchange with employees has significant influence for leadership effectiveness (Mahsud, Yukl & Prussia, 2010). As long as leadership influence in organizational behavior and employee interaction is understood, the success of leadership can be effective regarding a positive employee interaction (Goncalves, 2013). The effectiveness of leadership enables the operation of the organization to be a success regarding leadership and the employee’s followership. Though a good leader is significant to the success of an organization, being a good follower is correspondingly significant to the success of an organization (Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2012).

**Research Questions**

Employees’ perception of leadership in a culturally diverse organization will explore the relationship between effective and ineffective leadership in a culturally diverse organization. The lack of leadership creating a negative interaction, communication, and the ability to function effectively within an organization. Mosca, Puches, and Buzza (2015) suggest that if organizational leadership is going to create efficiencies to survive, they must use methods for operating a new diverse workforce. The following research questions will guide the proposed qualitative case study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of an employee regarding the leadership effectiveness within a culturally diverse organization?

RQ2: Why is leadership a significant factor for employees in a culturally diverse organization?

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms defined will provide an understanding of the concepts presented in this research study:

*Diversity*: Diversity is defined as "a wide range of people who are different regarding a range of variables such as ethnicity, gender, religion, socioeconomic background, race, political beliefs, ideologies, sexual orientation, and disabilities" (O'Neill, 2018, p. 9).

*Leadership*: "Leadership is the ability to influence and interact with others moving them towards the direction of a common goal" (Onkham et *al*., 2013, p. 885). Alvesson and Blom (2015) reported that "the message emerging from many influential leadership studies is that leadership is a good thing, and employees generally benefit from and desire it."

*Cultural Diversity*: “Cultural diversity does not just imply geographical diversities: it embraces employees from different economic backgrounds as well as diverse industry experiences” (Mukherjee, 2016, p. 79).

*Effective Leadership*: Onkham, Elattar, and Rabelo (2013) reported that "effective leadership reflects the type of adaptive leadership which refers to leaders who can coordinate, self- manage, and adapt to changes in circumstances by engaging and interacting with other" (p. 891).

*Ineffective Leadership*: Ineffective leadership is defined as The traits, or characteristics, of an ineffective leader, are numerous and varied. (Meltzer and Liu, 2016, p. 198).

*Multicultural Organization*: Multicultural organization is defined as to “provide equal opportunities to people coming from different economic & cultural backgrounds, varied geographies, diverse genders, different generations, as well as those who are specially-abled” (Mukherjee, 2016, p. 79).

*Managing Diversity*: Managing diversity is defined as “a complete understanding of the benefits that come with diversity and the challenges it presents” (Mathur, 2017, p. 48).

*Cultural Competency*: "Cultural competency means that a person or organization has the knowledge, understanding, and skills to embrace diversity and to work with people from diverse backgrounds" (O'Neill, 2018, p. 9).

*Culture*: Culture is defined as “an ever-evolving phenomenon” shared by individuals with the same nationality, origin, language, or creed (Ozgen et *al*., 2015, p. 47).

**Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

A reasonable assumption of this study is that the participants might have a variety of perceptions of leadership in the workplace. They may feel like the organization's interest in their response to the interview could have a negative impact on their participation. The fact that the participants have nothing to gain from their active participation in this study might create a difficult time obtaining a reliable or valid response to the interviews. The significance of a case study design requires the researcher to base the research study questions on formative and meaningful experiences of the participants to gain their trust. An open mind is required for the researchers' intentions to be perceived as unbiased, trustworthy, and genuine to the participants being interviewed.

 The interview process has its limitations. Interviewing participants for a research study will have limitations that are based on time, analysis, and a collection of the participant's responses to the questions. An understanding of the research study questions regarding the participant's experience might cause resistance and interpret invalid responses. The participants might feel a tremendous amount of pressure understanding the questions and responding to the questions.

The perception of leadership in a culturally diverse organization has changed to a sound practice of awareness, adaptable methods of operation and a diverse workforce (Mosea et *al.,* 2015). However, the guidelines for effective or ineffective leadership are not profoundly explicit in various scenarios; such as managing employees in a culturally diverse organization. The demand for leadership in an organization has increased the pressure for effective leadership (Onkham et *al.,* 2013).

**CHAPTER II- LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Introduction**

 Employee perception of leadership in a culturally diverse organization has been studied by many researchers (Javidan et al., 2016). However, there is limited literature available on the variables selected for this study. (Mathur, 2017).Leadership in many culturally diverse organizations do not generate an effective awareness of the significance of having a competent workforce or strategies for a competent cultural and diverse organization is implemented in their policy (O'Neill, 2018). This chapter is dedicated to presenting a literature review conveying employee perception of leadership in a culturally diverse organization regarding employees' experience with effective leadership, ineffective leadership, cultural diversity, communication, interaction and an understanding of the importance of cultural competence. Grissom (2018) reports that diversity and inclusion in the workplace is a broad topic that covers leadership, bias, culture, and inclusiveness that can be helpful in creating a change in those culturally diverse organizations with these issues. The resources in this literature review will present the history of leadership in a culturally diverse organization that will answer the research questions for the chosen topic.

**Search Strategy**

The articles selected for the research of this literature review were from by various scholarly journals, peer-reviewed articles, books, and organizational resources. The databases used for researching this study were: ProQuest, Human Capital, BusiDate, PsyArticles, and Wiley Online Library. The use of keywords to identify the research in this literature review included leadership, effective leadership, ineffective leadership, cultural diversity, organizational leadership, and employee perception. The need to understand an employees’ perception of effective and ineffective leadership will determine how one employee’s experience of an effective leader may be another employee’s ineffective leader (Meltzer & Lui, 2016). The ability to lead is to influence those being led toward a common goal set through interactive balance.

Reference

Alvesson, M., & Blom, M. (2015). Less followership, less leadership? An inquiry into the

basic but seemingly forgotten downsides of leadership. *Management, 18*(3), 266-282.

It is retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1726796363?accountid=39364>.

Cohen, L., & Kassis-Henderson, J. (2012). Language use in establishing rapport and building

relations: Implications for international teams and management education. *Review*

*Management & Avenir,* (55), 185-207. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1690093231?accountid=39364>.

Collinson, D., & Tourish, D. (2015). Teaching leadership critically: New directions for leadership pedagogy. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *14*(4), 576-594.

Gilley, A., Thompson, J., & Gilley, J. W. (2012). Leaders and change: Attend to the

uniqueness individuals. *Journal of Applies Management and Entrepeneirship, 17*(1),

69-83. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/927942090?accountid=39364>.

Hurwitz, M., & Hurwitz, S. (2012). Firms also need good followers. *Bottom Line,*

*28*(12), 14-15. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1080789974?accountid=39364>.

Goncalves, M. (2013). The right power for the right organization. *Journal of Leadership,*

*Accountability and Ethics, 10*(3), 135-138. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1459143585?accountid-39364>.

Green, J. (2012). Be of consequence. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 81*(4), 13. Retrieved

from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1002660518?accountid-39364>.

Grissom, A. R. (2018). Workplace Diversity and Inclusion. *The Alert Collector, 57*(4), 242-

247.

Hekman, D. R., Johnson, S. K., Foo, M. D., & Yang, W. (2017). Does diversity-valuing behavior result in diminished performance ratings for non-white and female leaders?. *Academy of Management Journal*, *60*(2), 771-797.

Hurwitz, M., & Hurwitz, S. (2012). Firms also need good followers. *Bottom Line, 28,* (12),

14-15. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1080789974?accountid=39364>.

Javidan, M., Bullough, A., & Dibble, R. (2016). Mind the gap: Gender differences in global leadership self-efficacies. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *30*(1), 59-73.

Lambert, J. (2016). Cultural Diversity as a mechanism for Innovation: Workplace Diversity

and the Absorptive Capacity Framework. *Journal of Organizational Culture,*

*Communications and Conflict, 20(1),* 68-77.

Lourey, G. (2012). IT'S TIME TO BE ASKING DIFFERENT QUESTIONS: Leadership in

professional services. *InFinance, 126*(4), 42-43. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1266026913?accountid-39364>.

Mahsud, R., Yukl, G., & Prussia, G. (2010). Leader empathy, ethical leadership, and

relations-oriented behaviors as antecedents of leader-member exchange quality.

*Journal of Managerial Psychology, 25*(6), 561-577.

Matherly, L. L., & Al Nahyan, S. S. (2015). Workplace quotas. *International Journal of*

*Organizational Analysis, 23*(3), 456-471. Retrieved from

<http://search.proquest.com.docview/1690993653?account-39364>.

 Mathur, S. (2017). Emulating Change Through Self Awareness: Diversity. *Human Capital*

*of Oswal Printers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd,* 48- 49.

Meltzer, D. P., & Liu, C. (2016). Ineffective leadership and employees’ negative outcomes:

The mediating effect of anxiety and depression*. International Journal of Stress*

*Management,* 24, *(2*): 196-215.

Mosca, J. B., Puches, L., & Buzza, J. (2015). Human resource managers implement effective

organizational change through leadership & process management. *International*

*Journal of Management & Information Systems (Online), 19*(4), 115.

Mukherjee, R. (2016). Diversity management: A Business Imperative*.* *Human Capital of*

*Oswal Printers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd,* 79-81*.*

O’Neill, R. (2018). The importance of a diverse and culturally competent workforce.

*BusiDate is the Property of Warringal Publications,* 9- 13.

Onkham, W., Elattar, A., & Rabelo, L. (2013). Effective leadership using system dynamics

and the matrix of change. *IIE Annual Conference Proceedings,* 884-893. Retrieved

from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1471958428?account-39364>.

Ozgen, C., Nijkamp, P., & Poot, J. (2015). The elusive effects of workplace diversity on

innovation. *Papers in Regional Science, 96.*

Palthe, J. (2014). Cross-level cultural congruence: Implications for managing diversity in

multinational corporations. *Journal of Diversity Management (Online), 9*(1), 51-n/a.

It is retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1536123474?account=39364>.

Pollack, J., & Pollack, R. (2015). Using kotter's eight stage process to manage an

organizational change program: Presentation and practice. *Systematic Practice and*

*Action Research, 28,*(1), 51-66. doi:http://sx.doi.org/10.1007/s11213-014-9317-0.

Schafer, J. A. (2010). Effective leaders and leadership in policing: Traits, assessment,

development, and expansion. *Policing, 33*(4), 644-663.

doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13639511011085060.