The Social Construction of Organizational Learning: Examining The Epistemology of Master Degree Curricula

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November 05, 2018

Abstract

This is a phenomenological study of the communication processes around quality in a symphony chorus. Based upon intensive observations, interviews and participation in rehearsals and concerts over a five-month period, the study develops a narrative of the organization's endeavors to achieve quality musical performances. Data were analyzed via the theoretical construct of coordinated management of meaning theory using narrative, metaphor and episodic analysis. Individual and organizational understanding of the phenomena of communication about shared vision of quality were analyzed via organizational learning theory and complexity leadership theory, based upon phenomenological reduction analysis of participant interviews. Findings revealed relationships between level of academic degree of the study participants and their understandings of these phenomena. The findings indicated a bifurcation of ontological understanding between master degree holders and the understandings of either bachelor or doctoral degree holders, suggesting possible epistemological issues in master degree curricula

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Daniel K. Dayton
8564 High Trail Court
Mason, Ohio 45040
513-899-1326
April 30, 2010

Board of Directors
Cincinnati Choral Society
1987 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45208

Subject: Request For Permission to Conduct Study

I am a doctoral candidate at Capella University, in the process of developing my proposal for my dissertation, "Communicating Organizational Quality: A Phenomenological Study through the Lenses of Complexity Leadership and Organizational Learning Theories." I would like to ask permission to conduct my study with the Cincinnati Choral Society (CCS).

In order to conduct the study, I would need to contact individual members of the organization in order to ask for their willingness to participate, which must be completely voluntary. From those members who indicate a willingness to participate, I would collect information about them via a one-page questionnaire that asks about their tenure with CCS, their attendance at rehearsals and concerts, and their willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview that I will record and subsequently have transcribed. All information from the members would be collected in private, and all data collected from them would remain safeguarded for a minimum period of 7 years. I anticipate that the interviews should be completed no later than December 31, 2010.

After completion of the study, I will share the results of the study with the Board of Directors, and encourage its sharing with the members of the organization. It is my expectation that the results of the study should provide benefits to CCS in terms of understanding how to better create a shared vision of quality among its leaders and members.

Please let me know if you are willing to grant the permission I seek.

Sincerely,

Daniel K. Dayton

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Daniel K. Dayton
8564 High Trail Court
Mason, Ohio 45040
513-899-1326
April 30, 2010

Mrs. Cindy Ware
Manager, Mason United Methodist Church
6315 S. Mason-Montgomery Road
Mason, Ohio 45040

Subject: Request For Permission to Utilize Conference Room

I am a doctoral candidate at Capella University, in the process of developing my proposal for my dissertation, "Communicating Organizational Quality: A Phenomenological Study through the Lenses of Complexity Leadership and Organizational Learning Theories." I would like to ask permission to conduct my study with the Cincinnati Choral Society (CCS) using one of the conference rooms adjacent to where CCS rehearses.

In order to conduct the study, I would need to contact individual members of the organization in order to ask for their willingness to participate, which must be completely voluntary. From those members who indicate a willingness to participate, I would collect information about them via a one-page questionnaire that asks about their tenure with CCS, their attendance at rehearsals and concerts, and their willingness to participate in a one-on-one interview that I will record and subsequently have transcribed. All information from the members would be collected in private, and all data collected from them would remain safeguarded for a minimum period of 7 years. I anticipate that the interviews should be completed no later than December 31, 2010.

I am able to work with you in terms of scheduling so as to eliminate any conflicts with other groups who may have requested space. Please let me know if you are willing to grant the permission I seek.

Sincerely,

Daniel K. Dayton

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MASON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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August 16, 2010

Capella University Institutional Review Board
Capella Tower
225 South 6th Street, 9th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Please note that Mr. Daniel K. Dayton, Capella University Doctoral Candidate, has the permission of the Mason United Methodist Church to conduct research at our Mason, Ohio facility for his study, "COMMUNICATING ORGANIZATIONAL QUALITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION PROCESSES THROUGH THE LENSES OF COMPLEXITY LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THEORIES."

Mr. Dayton will contact members of the Cincinnati Choral Society to recruit them for the study, using a preliminary questionnaire. Members of the CCS who volunteer to be interviewed for the study will be interviewed by Mr. Dayton in a conference room that we have reserved for him. Mr. Dayton's on-site research activities will be finished by December 31, 2010. Mr. Dayton has also agreed to provide to my office a copy of the Capella University IRB-approved, stamped consent document before he recruits participants on site.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

Cindy Ware

Ms. Cindy Ware
Office Manager

PASTORS
Dr. George C. Phillips
Rev. Alice Kay Hoover
Rev. Edinson DeArco

YOUTH DIRECTOR
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Cincinnati Choral Society

1987 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208 Phone: 513-784-2379
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August 15, 2010

Capella University Institutional Review Board
Capella Tower
225 South 6th Street, 9th Floor
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Please note that Daniel K. Dayton, Capella University Doctoral Candidate, has the permission of the Cincinnati Choral Society to conduct research with the members of the Cincinnati Choral Society for his study, " COMMUNICATING ORGANIZATIONAL QUALITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY THROUGH THE LENSES OF COMPLEXITY LEADERSHIP AND ORGA NIZATIONAL LEARNING THEORIES. The Board of Directors voted, without dissent, to grant this permission at the open end-of-season meeting on June 1, 2010 with the assent of the entire membership of CCS.

Mr. Dayton will contact members of the Cincinnati Choral Society to recruit them for the study, using a preliminary questionnaire. Members of the CCS who volunteer to be interviewed for the study by Mr. Dayton will be interviewed in a conference room of the Mason United Methodist Church, from whom he has separately received permission. Mr. Dayton's interviews will be finished by December 31, 2010. Mr. Dayton has also agreed to provide me with a copy of the Capella University IRB-Approved, stamped consent document before he recruits CCS participants.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

Dorothy B. Russell

Dorothy Russell
Secretary
Board of Directors

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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING:

EXAMINING THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF MASTER DEGREE CURRRICULA

(Winner of the 2012 Management Education and Development Division Academy of Management Barry Armandi Award for Best Paper in Management Learning Research)

Daniel K. Dayton, PhD
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

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Abstract

This is a phenomenological study of the communication processes around quality in a symphony chorus. Based upon intensive observations, interviews and participation in rehearsals and concerts over a five-month period, the study develops a narrative of the organization's endeavors to achieve quality musical performances. Data were analyzed via the theoretical construct of coordinated management of meaning theory using narrative, metaphor and episodic analysis. Individual and organizational understanding of the phenomena of communication about shared vision of quality were analyzed via organizational learning theory and complexity leadership theory, based upon phenomenological reduction analysis of participant interviews. Findings revealed relationships between level of academic degree of the study participants and their understandings of these phenomena. The findings indicated a bifurcation of ontological understanding between master degree holders and the understandings of either bachelor or doctoral degree holders, suggesting possible epistemological issues in master degree curricula.

Keywords

Organizational Learning, Epistemology, Social Construction, Phenomenology, Quality, Complexity Leadership Theory, CMM Theory

Introduction

Behaviorist learning theories are deeply imbued with a positivistic ontological view of reality, in which the operative paradigm is that the learner (whether student or organizational member) must be externally motivated to learn (Pavlov, 1927; J. B. Watson, 1924) and that it is the responsibility of the master (whether teacher or organizational leader) to provide that motivation. Knowledge is presumed to be an object that can be passed on from master to learner via a structured set of lessons, and once properly motivated, the learner can attain and store such knowledge (Thorndike, 1923). Further, attainment of knowledge is presumed to be an objective goal that can be objectively measured, assessed, and refined (Skinner, 1957). The methodologies and terminologies of this philosophic stance reinforce the objective view of knowledge—methodologies are designed to modify behavior for the purposes of adaptation (Fiol and Lyles, 1985); terminology, such as retention and problem solving (Cyert and March, 1963), reflect the objectivist concept of cognition for the purposes of application alone. The etymology of the terminology of modern education systems reflects this objectivist philosophy in the names of the various levels of college degrees: bachelor, master, and doctor. *Bachelor* derives its etymology from the concept of young squire who has acquired sufficient retention of trivia and procedure to operate under the direction of a more seasoned master (American Heritage Dictionary, 2008). *Master* derives from the medieval concept of a master craftsman, who has achieved sufficient expertise in a field to operate independently, and to pass along the knowledge of process and procedure to apprentices (Kant, 1992). *Doctor* derives its etymology from the Greek term for teacher of philosophy, implying a level of instruction that surpasses the instruction in procedures of the master. Below the level of doctor, the instructional methodology is concerned with the *what* of learning, versus the *why* of learning.

Disaffected with the positivistic ontology, educational scholars (Duckworth, 1964, 1973; Piaget, 1955, 1961) began questioning the roles of both the teacher and the learner in the learning process, and thus developed a social-constructivist ontological view of learning. The social-constructivist ontology remains focused, however, on the individual actions of the actors participating in the learning process, giving rise to learner-centered methodologies. Taking a more social-constructionist ontological view, organizational scholars (Argyris, 2000, 2003, 2006; Argyris and Schön, 1974, 1996; Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Senge, 2006) began the examination of the learning process itself as a socially constructed phenomenon, giving rise to learning-centered methodologies. Both of these methodologies attempt to address learning beyond the *what* of learning to include the *how* and *why* of the learning process. Because this study adheres to a socially constructed ontology of organizational learning, a more in-depth review of the literature of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, and of Peter Senge is appropriate.

Argyris and Schön

In their analysis of the problems inherent to organizational learning, Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) developed a theoretical model of organizational learning that distinguishes between what they termed *single-loop learning* and *double-loop learning*, and the action models in which they are employed, which they term *model I theory-in-use* and *model II theory-in-use*. Single-loop learning is characterized by the absorption and recitation of purportedly factual knowledge and the taking of action based upon that knowledge within a theoretical framework that is taken for granted. They represent a thermostat as example of single-loop learning—the thermostat absorbs knowledge about the temperature of the environment, compares it against the desired temperature settings, and takes action (either heating or cooling) based upon that comparison. At

no point does the thermostat question the validity of the measured temperature or the desired temperature setting, or the decision-making rules. (One tragic example of single-loop learning in action is the actions that were taken by Nazi soldiers at internment camps during World War II, characterized by the admonishment, *I was just following orders.*) Double-loop learning is characterized by a process that examines the decision-making rules as well, so as to continually examine the underlying mental models by which it is constructed.

Model I theory-in-use employs single-loop learning based upon a strategy comprised of persuasion and rationality for the purpose of maximizing winning and minimizing controversy in communication. Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) characterized the resulting processes as defensive, in which individual actors are compelled to be manipulative so as to protect their turf, and in which espoused theories, that is, what the actors say, is incongruent with their actions (*Do as I say, not as I do*) This defensiveness and incongruity leads to decision making that they define as self-sealing, with little to no examination of the underlying assumptions that bolster the decision processes.

Model II theory-in-use employs double-loop learning, based upon a strategy comprised of commitment to choice based upon the validity of knowledge for the purpose of defining and developing the best possible actions for organizational survival. Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) characterized the resulting processes as authentic, in which individual actors are committed to the truth. The actions that are taken adhere to this commitment, resulting in more effective problem solving and decision making while minimizing the perceived need for individual protection of turf and defensive interpersonal interaction. Adherence to this commitment permits a continual examination of underlying assumptions forming the basis of decision making, with an understanding that such assumptions must be supported by evidence rather than tacit acceptance.

This study examined the communication processes that take place in the participant organization, and examined the underlying theory-in-use models that are employed. It included an examination of the nature of the communication and the extent to which strategic decision making employs double-loop versus single-loop learning.

Senge

Senge (2006) developed the concept of the learning organization, taking a systems perspective of the organization as a whole, rather than on the actions of the individuals within the organization. Much like the organizational learning theories developed by Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996), the systems theory of organizational learning is premised upon the concept of a continual reexamination of the assumptions regarding knowledge upon which decisions are based. Senge names this concept the fifth discipline, in which two significant mental shifts are required: “seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-and-effect chains; and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots” (Senge, 2006: 73). Inherent to this circular view of causality is the requirement to examine the manner in which decisions made today affect the parameters of reality in the future, and will affect the decision making that must take place in the future as a consequence. This circular view of causality necessarily implies that a continual reexamination of reality and its inter-relational constructs is required for organizations not only to adhere to goals and objectives but also to continually test goals and outcomes.

Adopting such a circular view of causality is critical for organizations to break away from a paradigm of blame and finger pointing in which defense of previous decisions becomes paramount, and thus limits the free exchange of ideas. Under a systems view of organizational

learning, the organization's vision is a superordinate guideline that directs organizational decision making rather than a mere goal that the organization sets out to achieve. Senge (2006: 143 stated, "It's not what the vision is, it's what the vision does." Exemplary of such a vision is the statement included in Procter & Gamble's (2009: 5) vision, values, and purpose statement: "We will provide branded products and services of superior quality and value that improve the lives of the world's consumers, now and for generations to come." Such a vision provides an overarching decisional and behavioral guideline rather than an achievable goal that can be objectively measured.

A vision that presents a seemingly unachievable goal might appear to be a certain recipe for failure. However, in Senge's (2006: 143) view of systems thinking, such failure takes on a different connotation: "Failure is, simply, a shortfall, evidence of a gap between vision and current reality. Failure is an opportunity for learning." Mastering this view of vision requires a significant shift from the traditional mental models of communication and interaction that tend to defend the status quo, to a mental model that is open to the exchange of new ideas and recognized opportunities for learning rather than occasions for blame.

Research Method

The purpose of this study was to conduct a phenomenological analysis of the communication processes in the participant organization to address the research question, How do the communication processes in which organizational members engage support organizational learning that leads to a shared vision of quality? The epistemological reasons for conducting phenomenological research include a search for understanding specifically what the participants experienced, and how they felt during the phenomenon. Going beyond mere description of the shared experiences, the researcher brings an interpretation to the process by searching for discerning themes in the textual data so as to determine what the overarching commonalities are in that shared experience (van Manen, 1990). This is the critical element of the research, in that rather than merely describing the shared experiences of creating a quality staging of a symphonic choral composition, themes may arise central to the communication processes that lead to that creation.

In response axiological challenges associated with researcher bias, and in returning to the philosophical roots of phenomenological research, Moustakas (1994), and Stewart and Mickunas (1990) emphasize a bracketing of researcher experiences, which are then eliminated from the data analysis, so as to obtain a more purely participant collection of experiences. Their philosophical approach to phenomenological research rests on four pillars: "[a] A rejection of scientific empiricism, [b] a philosophy without presupposition, [c] the intentionality of consciousness, and [d] the refusal of subject-object dichotomy" (Creswell, 2007: 58-59).

The assumption central to phenomenological research arises from the operative paradigm that describing, coding, interpreting, and categorizing the shared experiences of the participants yield a deeper understanding of that phenomenon. Armed with this deeper understanding, it is presumed, those who work with participants of a particular phenomenon will be better prepared to render assistance, aid, recovery, or merely understanding of future participants. Alternatively, those who expect to experience a particular phenomenon may gain a deeper understanding of what they will face when confronted with or participating in that phenomenon. The nature of this study is phenomenological. The phenomenon of study is the communication process engaged by organization members when creating the construct of shared vision of quality, and how those communication processes are integral to the processes of organizational learning and leadership.

The participants in the study are a symphony chorus comprised of 30 singers and instrumentalists, both professional and amateur musicians.

The sources of data were multiple: open-ended interviews with the study participants; observation of the interactions of the participants, during rehearsals, during administrative meetings, and during and after concert performances; and researcher participation in the process of rehearsing for and presentation of concert performances. The interviews were open-ended, semi-structured discussions about the participants' experiences with the organization as they told stories about recollections and perceptions of quality and how they communicated those experiences. The majority of the interviews were about an hour in length, although one was shorter at 45 minutes, and two were longer at 90 minutes and 120 minutes respectively. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber into Word documents, which were then loaded into AtlasTi for coding. The transcripts were reviewed by each participant, all of whom attested to the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Because participants described their experiences using metaphors and metonyms, it was necessary to engage in metaphor analysis. For this portion of the analysis effort, the research drew from the work of Lakoff (1993, 2004), Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), and Lakoff and Turner (1989). In the analysis of the transcripts of the stories that the participants related, the research examined the cognitive and linguistic structure, situational effects of the metaphors used, and combining effects of metaphor on independent and complex phases and sentences. The metaphorical analysis gave rise to themes that literal analysis of the words and phrases that the participants use could not. Identification of conceptual cores and conceptual entities revealed the relational intricacies in the communication process between the conductor and the organizational members, as well as among the organizational members themselves. The grounding elements of the words and phrases used represented the anchors from which the concepts of quality and performance are shared among members.

Once the composite textural descriptions were developed, structural descriptions, and broader conceptual themes arising from the use of metaphor, the research then synthesized them into a model that provided both wide and deep understanding of the essence of the creation and communication of quality. That model provided a rich description of the experience of creating quality, as well as clues to understanding how those experiences may be effectively communicated in the social construction of a new reality grounded in a shared paradigm of quality and organizational learning.

Results

The means by which this section is organized is closely related to the tiers of Bloom's taxonomy as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The subsections on thick description of the data collection process are characteristic of the understanding tier of the revised Bloom's taxonomy. Phenomenological reduction is characteristic of the applying tier, as the data were analyzed to develop major themes. The composite textural descriptions section is characteristic of the analyzing level of the taxonomy, as the themes were developed into networks representative of the organizational experience. The major findings section of the paper is characteristic of the evaluating tier of the taxonomy, wherein the synthesized thematic networks were evaluated using the theories of organizational learning (Argyris, 2006; Senge, 2006). Throughout this development the application of the theory of coordinated management of meaning (Pearce, 2007) was critical to the understanding of the organizational narrative. Finally, the section on discussion is characteristic of the creating tier of the revised Bloom's taxonomy,

wherein the findings of this study become the foundations for suggesting new ways to scrutinize both management education and management practice, with proposals for research to engage that scrutiny.

Initial findings related to backgrounds of education and work. On the first review of the data collected via the interviews and observations, participant responses were analyzed vis-à-vis their demographic characteristics of education and work. The demographics of the participants by education level and the general industry in which they earn livings are presented in Table 1. Because it is a volunteer organization, there is no requirement for members to hold a college degree to be accepted into the group. However, all of the participants of this study held at least a bachelor degree, and more than half also hold a master degree and/or a doctoral degree. Of the members who declined to participate, all four also hold a minimum of a bachelor degree. Also because of the volunteer nature of the organization, there is no requirement to be a professional musician or singer to be a member. In fact, of the participants, only five are professional musicians, with the rest working as professionals in a wide variety of fields. The fields of work are grouped by general industry for the purposes of grouping and simplification

Table 1. Participant Demographics: Education Level and Industry

Demographic		*N*
Education level	Bachelor degree	10
	Master degree	6
	Doctoral degree	5
	Total	21
Industry	Business	6
	Engineering	2
	Health science	4
	Law	2
	Music	5
	Religion	2
	Total	21

The education levels of the participants became important because there arose from the data a significant bifurcation of interpretation of quality, communication, and leadership among the members divided between those who hold bachelor degrees and doctoral degrees versus those who hold master degrees. This bifurcation is discussed more fully in the section on Major Findings, and its implications are presented in the section on discussion. The relationships between industry and the areas of study (quality, communication, and leadership) did not appear to be quite so pronounced, with one notable exception. There was a significant bifurcation noted among the interpretations of those who are professional musicians and who hold a master of fine arts degree versus all the other participants.

Themes Relating to Organizational Learning

A crucial element of organizational learning in development of a shared vision among organizational members is creation of common understandings of the paths to achieve organizational goals. From the in-vivo codes that arose in the participant interviews, the data were analyzed again using thematic analysis to establish linkages among those in-vivo themes

relating to elements of organizational learning. This analysis gave rise to three major themes: Communication, Nonverbal communication, and Emotional connection. Each of these major themes is discussed in the sections that follow:

Communication. The major theme of *Communication* arose from the participant interviews both as an in-vivo theme and as related to the in-vivo themes of emotional connection and learning styles. The participants tended to describe the process of interaction between themselves and the conductor, as well as interaction with other chorus members, in particular as they engaged in the process of learning the music, the stylistic interpretation, and the aesthetics. They described situations in which they relied on the dialogic engagement and exchange of knowledge to develop their individual understanding in relation to their own productive output, and to build upon a common understanding and production among all chorus members, so as to create an ensemble performance rather than dozens of simultaneous individual performances. Table 2 depicts the relationship between the major theme *Communication* and the in-vivo themes of *Communication*, *Emotional connection*, and *Learning styles*, with selected extracts from the participant interviews. In all, there were 131 instances in the data where these relationships arose.

Table 2. Major Theme Interview Extracts: Communication

In-vivo theme	Interview extract
Communication	How he wants it would have to be communicated and then I'd have to make the notes and make the adjustments because I probably learned it the other way.
Emotional connection	It was taking the pauses to acknowledge that everyone is doing the emotional things and the personal things necessary to achieve the big outcomes.
Learning styles	See, I have a hard time—unless I'm hearing it, I have a hard time understanding it. Visual doesn't turn me on as much as hearing something.

In order for the chorus members to begin to develop their individual understandings of the meaning of the music and the intentions of the composer, the conductor needed to be cognizant of the varied learning styles of the chorus members so as to incorporate varied approaches to facilitating that understanding. Some of the chorus members tend to learn more visually, and for them the key elements are translating the musical notations and their own markings into the elements of their own performance, especially as it relates to the overall ensemble performance. Others tend to learn more aurally, relying upon what they hear both from the explanations of interpretation from the conductor and what they hear during the musical rehearsals. Others tend to learn more kinesthetically, and rely upon interpretation of the movements and signals from the conductor into their own physical feelings and movements.

Without connection to these learning styles, the process of developing emotional involvement among the chorus members would be problematic. Further, emotional connection among the chorus members seems to facilitate the communication process, especially with regards to the ensemble performance. Because choral music is more emotionally understandable to the audiences when the performance is as an ensemble rather than as a collection of individual

singers, the success of achieving an overall outcome of quality performance is dependent upon that emotional connection.

Emotional connection. The production of music is, in and of itself, an expression of human communication that is steeped in emotion. Instrumental musical compositions can express intense emotions, and evoke similarly intense emotional reactions among listeners. Choral musical compositions possess the added dimension of actual verbal expression of those emotions, and thus can evoke even stronger and more unified emotional reactions among the listeners. Achieving that emotional connection with the listener necessarily requires emotional connection from the performers. In a chorus, that connection is achieved when the emotional expression is organizational rather than merely individual, and thus is a crucial element of organizational learning. This theme arose among nearly all of the participants. Among the in-vivo themes that relate to the major theme of *Emotional connection* were *Emotional experience*, *Emotional engagement*, and *Emotional expressiveness*, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Major Theme Interview Extracts: Emotional Connection

In-vivo theme	Interview extract
Emotional experience	And behind that is often, you know, well, I don't want to say often, but emotion is . . . and I think you have to be in tune with that. You have to be experiencing it as you're trying to communicate that.
Emotional engagement	And I was familiar with that from a girl who sang in an opera workshop, I mean, you were in tears because she just, she felt—you could tell she was feeling it. Vocally, she was okay, but she was feeling it and you were moved by it. Well, when we went to see the professional thing and the whole thing was just like, yuck, I said, Finally, here's . . . and this woman, she could have been singing the phone book as emotionally attached as she was. It was horrible. It was like blah, blah, whatever. It was so un-engaging.
Emotional expressiveness	Yes, it has to be. It has to be well done in terms of expressiveness, in terms of accuracy, but then it reaches beyond the intellect and it goes into the emotions, which I think music is intended to do. And there was another performance and I think this one was at Anderson Hills; it was a religious number and it was probably the most emotional performance in which I participated. The music, what we were singing, just touched me so much.

Even when a live musical performance is technically perfect, if it lacks personal emotional experience and expressiveness by the performer, it is likely to fail to engage emotionally with the audience. For the chorus to develop and present a unified ensemble performance that effectively created this emotional connection, the process of organizational learning is requisite to ensuring a common shared vision among the members of the chorus.

Composite Textural Descriptions

Phenomena such as communication, learning, leadership, and quality may characterized as discrete events, or they may be characterized as constructs of social interaction among people

who experience them. This study takes the latter approach, in which these phenomena are analyzed from the perceptions of the organizational members who experience them as individuals, and then constructed into a composite that more fully represents the holistic organizational experience. The perceptions are drawn from the themes that were developed from the participant interviews and from observations of rehearsals and concerts over the 5-month period of the study related to organizational learning, and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Phenomenon of Learning Themes

Theme	Is related to the intra-organizational question
Verbal communication	What do we discuss and how do we incorporate that into our musical performance? How do we come to agree?
Nonverbal communication	What cues do we agree upon so that during performances we are expressing that to which we agreed?
Emotional connection	What does the music mean to us emotionally? How do we come to agree to express that emotion?

The phenomenon of learning (Table 4) is experienced among members of the participant organization as a construct of the themes of verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and emotional connection to the meaning of the music. Verbal communication takes place during the rehearsals, and the members of the chorus discuss and share knowledge and ideas about the music itself, and as they work out systems by which that verbal communication can be translated into the nonverbal communication that takes place during the concert performances. There is significant linkage between the verbal exchange and the nonverbal exchange, which ultimately become a complex set of visual and auditory cues to manage communication during the concert to effectively convey the emotional content and context of the music.

The learning process is multifaceted, comprised of intellectual and emotional understanding of the meaning of the music and the composers' intentions, and developing and managing visual and auditory signals that convey a wealth of meaning about which a common understanding has been developed during rehearsals. The phenomenon of learning is the fundamental shared experience by which the members of the organization not only come to agree upon what they know of their productive output but also share that knowledge with the audience.

Major Findings

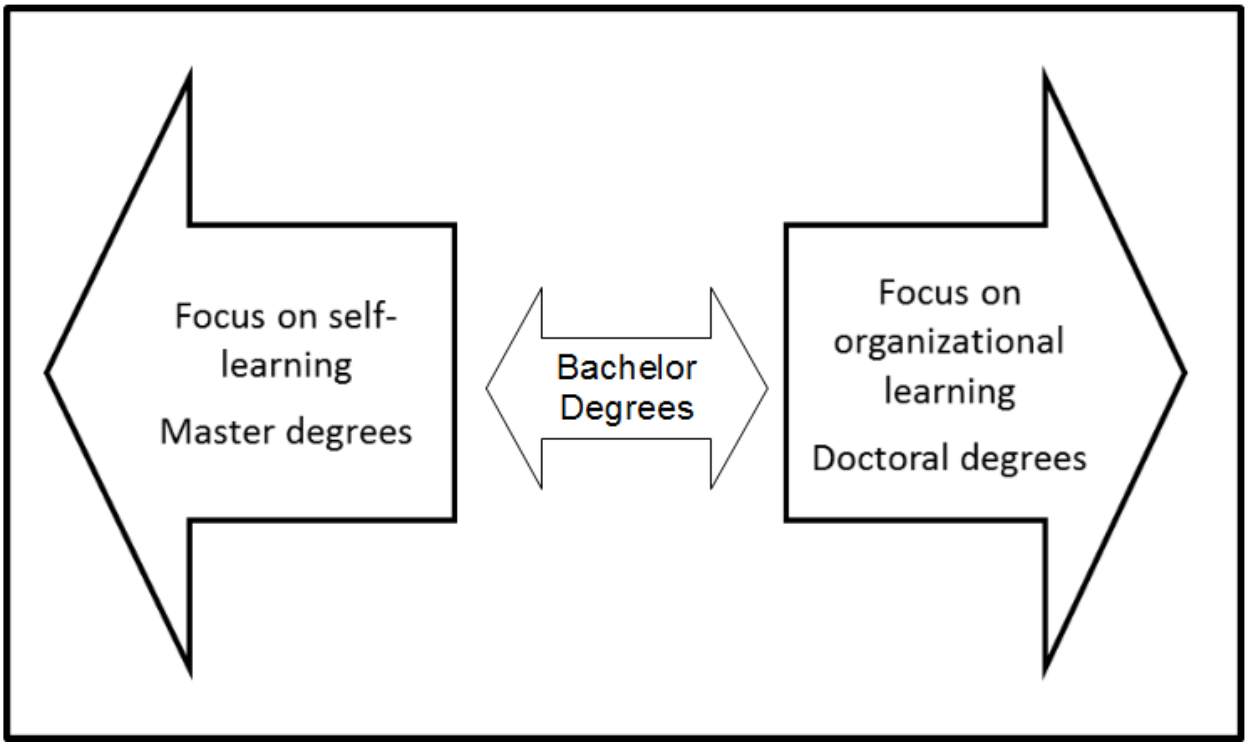
In order to develop the major findings of this study, the final step in the analysis was to build further upon the composite textural descriptions of the phenomena to develop the composite structural descriptions, which depict not only the essence of the participant experiences but also the relationships among a variety of factors to develop an overall organizational understanding of the phenomena. Because the organization consists of numerous individuals, all of whom personally experience phenomena through their own lenses of experience, education, and background, the essence of the organizational experience tends to

cover ranges of understanding and ontology. The structure of those ranges may be understood by synthesizing individual participant attributes with the textural descriptions of the phenomena, and then examining the relationships among those attributes and the ranges of experience. For this study, there were five major findings among the phenomena of communication, learning, and quality, for which the attributes of education level and tenure with the organization had effects upon individual experiences, creating ranges of organizational experience. The construction of this study was not of the nature to discern the strengths of these relationships or to explain why these relationships exist. It could be the topic of future studies to validate these relationships and once validated, to determine the nature of the correlation, and perhaps even to attribute causes to its existence. Those major findings are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Findings Related to Organizational Learning

There was one major finding related to organizational learning, and it was based upon the attributes of the participants with regard to education level. From the descriptions of the participants, there arose a significant bifurcation between the concept of learning as an individual process versus learning as an organizational process. That bifurcation tended to be most significantly related to the education level of the participant describing the phenomenon, and is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Bifurcation of focus on learning by degree level.



Participants with master degree tended to describe the phenomenon of learning only at the individual level, and with a heavy reliance upon their own personal knowledge by which to gauge both their understanding of the meaning of the music and to accommodate their individual

performance to the directions of the conductor. They tended to avoid open discussion with other members of the organization with regard to that learning, even though they devoted significant thought to the process. They tended to apply their own knowledge of musical performance and of organizational issues to their understanding, internalizing the learning process and reluctant to engage in dialogue about it.

Participants who held doctoral degrees tended to view the learning process as highly dynamic and fluid, with open interchange of ideas among members of the organization, often not only offering significant input but also willing to accept and incorporate alternative points of view. Their focus was not on their own learning, but rather on the learning of the organization as a whole.

Somewhat surprisingly, the participants holding bachelor degrees tended to fall in the middle of the bifurcation between individual learning and organizational learning. They tended, however, to view the individual learning process as one in which they were the recipient rather than the contributor to learning. Interestingly, they still described learning phenomena in organizational terms as well, as if their own understanding of the phenomenon of learning were bifurcated. The bifurcation was not between different individuals holding bachelor degrees, but rather was from within the individuals themselves.

The division between understanding the phenomenon of learning as either an individual process or as an organizational process was sharp, with master-degree holders falling on the side of individual learning and doctoral-degree holders falling on the side of organizational learning. Bachelor-degree holders had divided understanding, which although seemingly contradictory, demonstrates an openness to organizational communication that master-degree holders have somehow lost and that doctoral-degree holders have regained.

Discussion

One reason that this study was undertaken includes a growing dissatisfaction among management practitioners with the methodologies derived from these positivist-rationalist and social-constructivist theories. Methodologies arising from the theories of Taylor (1911, 1947/1967), Juran (1951, 1962), and Deming (1986) such as TQM and Six-Sigma have generally failed to achieve success in practical efforts to achieve quality output from organizational processes. Practices that have attempted to engage these methodologies in organizational learning, such as those of Schroeder et al. (2008), with a social-constructivist view of individual learning, have not achieved success in achieving an organizational shared vision. Popular leadership books have been of questionable effectiveness.

A second reason that this study was undertaken was to take a social-constructionist view of the processes of learning and the communication processes that are created as a phenomenon unto itself, rather than as an organizational output. Hence, the social-constructionist organizational learning theories of Argyris and Schön (1996) and Senge (2006) were the basis of analysis that viewed learning and leadership as processes rather than outcomes. The communication among organizational members in constructing the processes of learning and leadership were viewed also as processes, rather than outcomes, via the social-constructionist CMM theory of Pearce (2007) and Pearce and Cronen (1980). The purpose was to develop an analysis of these processes as socially constructed phenomena, so as to gain an understanding of their interrelationships in an organizational quest for a shared vision of quality.

Finally, this study was conducted with a nonprofit, performing arts organization so as to minimize the temptation to attempt to objectively identify exemplars of quality output or rationalistic measures of efficiency. By conducting the study with a performing arts organization, it was possible to focus on the phenomenon of communication about quality without the distractions of objective measures of quality or of decreasing costs and increasing profit margins. The results of the data collection provided a rich basis for examining the processes that support communication about quality as a phenomenon unto itself and the analysis of those data provide findings that lend insight into engendering its creation. The next section presents a summary of the findings of that analysis.

Summary of Findings

There were three significant findings that arose from the analysis of the data collected during this study: two findings related to the nature of the communication processes and one finding related to the nature of process of organizational learning. The findings were based upon in-vivo descriptions of participant experiences with the organization, and the relationships of the nature of those descriptions based upon participant attributes of education level and tenure with the organization. The demographic makeup of the participants, which represented more than 80% of the available population of the organization, was relatively homogeneous. All participants were well-educated, middle- and upper middle-class Americans who share similar demographics of age, religion, and employment status. Even so, there were remarkable differences in the participants' descriptions of the essences of communication, learning, and quality attributable to differences in education level and tenure with the organization.

Participants holding master degrees tended to describe either nonexistent or dialectic processes of communication; participants holding bachelor degrees tended to describe communication processes that were largely dialectic but bordering on dialogic; and participants holding doctoral degrees tended to describe communication processes that were largely dialogic and, to a degree, organizationally holistic.

Participants whose tenure with the organization was the shortest, from 1 to 3 years, had either a tendency to refrain from participation in communication or to describe communication as a dialectic process. Participants whose tenure with the organization was in the middle, from 4 to 10 years, were more likely to describe communication processes that were dialogic, but retained a certain degree of understanding that reflected a dialectic process. Participants whose tenure with the organization was the longest, over 10 years, were more likely to describe communication processes that were dialogic and even organizationally holistic, an understanding that was absent from all less-tenured members of the organization.

With regard to organizational learning, there was a stark contrast between the descriptions of participants holding a master degree versus those holding either a bachelor degree or a doctoral degree. Participants holding a master degree tended to describe learning that was a purely individual process, with intent focus on their own faculties and learning background. Participants holding a doctoral degree were most likely to describe learning in an organizational context, with a focus on how the organizational learning contributes to a shared vision among members of how to achieve quality performances. Participants holding bachelor degrees also tended to describe learning as an organizational process, however, their descriptions also tended to be less philosophical than the doctoral-degree holders. When the bachelor-degree holders described their own individual learning, it was most often in the context of contribution to the

organizational whole, whereas among the master-degree holders, the individual learning descriptions tended to be more self-focused.

Discussion of Findings

It is important to reemphasize that this was a phenomenological study, and that as such, it does not venture to hypothesis-test the correlations among the relationships in the findings. Nor does it attempt to discern the causality of those relationships. Those efforts may be the endeavors of future studies. However, the findings do indicate the existence of fascinating relationships in an organization among the demographics of its members and the communication processes they employ to develop their understandings of such organizational facets as leadership, learning, and the quest for quality production.

The findings of this study may present a basis for understanding why it is that so many organizational undertakings of TQM and Six-Sigma fail. It is clear from the data divulged by this study that among the most important aspects of human organizational endeavors to achieve quality production is emotional engagement of the members of that organization. Development of a shared vision, engagement in double-loop learning processes, and episodes of communication require, at the least, an awareness of the emotional aspects of human existence and organizational membership. Shared visions are not developed in the absence of emotional awareness; double-loop learning requires an intelligence of the defensive emotions of model I thinking in order to overcome them; and human communication is replete with emotional attachment as people engage in speech acts and construct their own narratives of communication episodes. TQM and Six-Sigma, as purely rationalistic frameworks, deny the existence of emotion. Denial of a vastly significant component of human existence in organizational endeavors dooms purely rationalistic engagements to failure, or worse, creation of soulless organizations. Understanding of this phenomenon is by no means uniquely revealed by this study, and has been the source material for innumerable tales from the arts. Creation of a purely rationalistic society was typified in the *Star Trek* episode "Return of the Archons," in which Commander Spock remarked, "This is a soulless society, Captain. It has no spirit, no spark. All is indeed peace and tranquility—the peace of the factory, the tranquility of the machine. All parts working in unison" (Roddenberry & Pevney, 1967). Still, business scholars continue to advocate quashing of emotional aspects of organizational engagement in pursuit of goal attainment and purely rationalistic motivation. Lindenberg and Foss (2011: 511) advocated the use of negative sanctions and relegation of emotional rewards as a means to accomplish organizational goals: "Negative sanctions (financial or symbolic) for not contributing are likely to be legitimate in a context of joint production and will strengthen a normative goal frame. . . . Hedonic [emotional] goals should be kept in the background." The results of this study raise significant doubt regarding that conclusion.

The findings also raise some intriguing questions regarding the nature of university education at the master-degree level and its potential impact upon the ability of organizations to engage in adaptive and emergent leadership processes, genuine organizational learning, and socially productive communication processes. Recent research has proposed that the current time is critical for the engagement of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence not only in business but also in MBA programs. McTiernan and Flynn (2011: 323) surmised that there is brewing a "perfect storm" for elevating more women, who possess heightened emotional awareness and intelligence than men, to positions of deans of business schools. Although this study does not focus specifically on the emotional content (or lack thereof) of master-level

education, it presents evidence of a dearth of emotional awareness among those who possess master degrees.

Further, whereas the impacts of tenure have been thoroughly studied vis-à-vis such topics as job performance (Ng, 2010; Simsek, 2007), job satisfaction (Galle and Lawrence, 2011; Lovett, Hardebeck, Coyle, and Torres-Solis, 2006), socialization (Juenke, 2005; Rollag, 2004), and reasoning (Hambrick, 1991; Pennino, 2002), no studies to date have examined the relationship of member tenure and organizational learning. The results of this study call for a deeper body of research into the effects of tenure among rank-and-file organization members, particularly in light of the spate of downsizing efforts among business organization over the last two decades. The following subsections discuss the findings in all of these areas through the lenses of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008) and organizational learning theory (Argyris, 2006; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Senge, 2006), and present those questions.

Organizational Learning Theory

Inherent to the development of a shared organizational vision (Senge, 2006) are communication processes in which organizational members engage to co-construct that vision. Argyris and Schön (1996) theorized that the nature of those communication processes, which they labeled single-loop learning (model I theory) and double-loop learning (model II theory), can either emasculate or facilitate that co-construction. In single-loop learning, organizational defensive routines prevent the questioning and examination of assumptions central to those routines and processes, and tend to be self-reinforcing in support of their closed systems of process. Argyris (2006) characterized this type of closed system as a *management trap*, one that reinforces existing routines and stifles learning, thereby being incapable of supporting emergent change.

In double-loop learning, the organizational defensive routines are brought into the light of examination and question, so that when organizations are met with crisis situations, they can avoid self-reinforcing patterns of action that wreak organizational havoc. This type of continual self-reexamination is the antithesis of traditional theories of organization, in which the overarching purpose is to establish and defend methods and routines of proven stability. Unfortunately, in a world rife with increasingly complex environmental, political, and competitive challenges, a quest for stability may be mythic. Double-loop learning, rather than seeking a static level of stability or equilibrium, engenders organizational flexibility to adapt to those challenges as they emerge. In a system of double-loop learning, management is not an oracle of organizational wisdom, but rather becomes the facilitator of organizational dialogue.

In the findings of this study, it is evident that members whose tenure with the organization is the shortest tended to offer descriptions of learning most characteristic of single-loop learning. This, perhaps, should not be a surprise, because as the newest members of the organization, they have no foreknowledge of the organizational routines that exist. They take the first few years to learn the organizational routines. The members whose tenure is in the middle offered descriptions of learning in which they begin to feel more comfortable with questioning and discussing those routines, and in engaging in dialogue about learning as an organizational entity rather than an individual endeavor. The longest-tenured members of the organization were most likely to offer descriptions of learning characterized by the tenets of double-loop learning, and were most comfortable engaging in organizational dialogue that challenged organizational routines.

This raises serious questions regarding the viability of double-loop learning in organizational environments in which the average tenure of workers is 4.4 years and the average tenure of managers is 6.1 years. What is it about our systems of employment that generate such short organizational tenures, and are those systems preventing organizations from engaging in emergent change in response to environmental, political, and competitive stresses? Can organizational members whose tenure has barely provided sufficient time to learn organizational routines be expected to engage in dialogue that challenges those routines? Is it reasonable to expect that CEOs can engage organizations in dialogic, double-loop learning processes with average tenures of only 6.1 years? These questions could form the basis for further studies. Such studies might show that these characteristics are particular to the participant organization alone, or they may divulge a general pattern among organizations at large. If those patterns emerge, then studies could be devised to examine the strength of correlation, and if sufficiently strong, to understand why these patterns exist, and further, to understand how they may be thwarted.

Similar questions arise from the finding that educational level has a relationship with the way in which the members view the learning process. Doctoral- and bachelor-degree holders were more likely to engage in dialogue about that process, whereas master-degree holders tended to hold to single-loop learning processes. What is it about master-degree programs that encourage their graduates to believe that they now possess unshakeable knowledge, and to refrain from engaging in organizational processes that examine and challenge that knowledge? Is this phenomenon a peculiar characteristic of members of the participant organization, or is it a phenomenon that exists more generally? If it exists more generally, is it desirable? Should educators reexamine the epistemology of master-degree programs to include engagement in the knowledge creation process, rather than as repositories of existing patterns of knowledge? Researchers may wish to engage these questions in future studies.

Conclusions

This phenomenological study, addressing the research question, *How do the communication processes in which organizational members engage support organizational learning that leads to a shared vision of quality?* is singular in its research construct, examining organizational communication processes through the lenses of the organizational learning theories of Argyris (2006) and Argyris and Schön (1996) and complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008). The findings of the study reflect seldom-explored connections among education level and tenure among organizational members in the construct of their communication processes about leadership and quality.

Although it would be irresponsible to draw generalized conclusions from this phenomenological study, the complexity of the processes by which organization members engage in learning and by which they develop shared visions of quality would appear to be influenced by factors that have not been previously addressed. It also revealed that single-loop and double-loop learning processes can exist in an organization simultaneously, reflecting added complexity in sustaining genuinely adaptive learning processes. Further, the study lends support for the construct of complexity leadership theory, which is still in its development stages. Finally, the study provides support for the use of coordinated management of meaning theory (Pearce, 2007; Pearce and Cronen, 1980) for examining the communication processes in which organization members engage as they develop common understandings of their joint efforts.

The findings of the study revealed surprising relationships among organizational tenure and member education level with their perceptions of communication processes taking place in

the organization, with their understanding of the learning processes in organizations, and with concepts of leadership within the organization. It also revealed the importance of emotional connection among organizational members to those processes in the organizational quest for quality. Heightened emotional connection appeared to be related to the genuine development of a shared vision of that quality, whereas emotional detachment appeared to be related to single-loop learning and defense of organizational routines.

Implications and Applications

The implications of this study branch in three directions. First, the traditional methods by which managers endeavor to engage organization members are called into question. Emotional engagement, which this study shows to have a marked relationship to learning, leadership, and communication processes, is rarely addressed in those traditional methods, with the exception of forestalling the emotions of fear and doubt. This is especially true in change management methods and efforts, and may be an indication of the general failure of implementations of quality efforts via purely rational methods such as TQM and Six-Sigma. This study reveals that a far wider range of emotional involvement is engaged via the socially constructed communication processes that support organizational learning and leadership, and that engagement of those emotions is a critical element of developing a shared vision among organization members.

Second, although length of service or tenure has been addressed many times, both with regards to such concepts as institutional knowledge and to organizational dynamics, this study may be among few that depict the range of development of the communication processes from new members to those who have been with the organization for decades. In an age when quests for organizational efficiency often translate into layoffs and early retirements, that which is decried is the loss of institutional knowledge. Is it possible that the very efforts to create organizational quality through downsizing actually lead to a self-destructive process in which the loss of institutional knowledge accelerates organizational demise? Are those efforts entrapped in cycles of single-loop learning that serve only to reinforce the organizational defensive routines that lead to the difficulties in the first place? If so, then there needs to be a reexamination of methodologies for engaging organizations in more constructive pursuits of quality, those that leverage the socially constructed knowledge of its longer-tenured members into efforts to engage the entire population of the organization.

Third, the relationship between level of education and epistemology bears closer examination. If future studies reveal similar relationships between a master-degree level of education and epistemologies that ignore the socially constructed nature of knowledge and the importance of emotional engagement, the implications of that relationship require further examination. If master-degree graduates are those who would lead organizations and yet are unable to acknowledge the socially constructed processes of adaptive and emergent leadership and of double-loop learning, then what is the hope that organizations at large can deal effectively with environmental, regulatory, and competitive stresses? There has been a hue and cry regarding the relevancy of MBA education among scholars and practitioners; is that hue and cry fueled by the very epistemology that forms the basis of that education?

This study does not purport to offer applications to deal with these questions. Rather, it serves to point the direction toward further research, specifically to validate the relationships that have been discovered here. The implications revealed in this study of the relationships of emotional engagement and epistemological understanding of socially constructed processes

could be far-reaching. The next and final section offers some suggestions for the possibilities of that future research.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings suggest that there are many more avenues of research needed to shed additional light on those processes. First, additional phenomenological or ethnographic studies of organizations employing social-constructionist theories could serve to discover similar findings among organizations other than the one involved in this study. The findings of this study may well be peculiar to the participant organization, and therefore, although interesting, completely inapplicable to any other organization. However, to make that determination, there should be further studies of other organizations in which the communication processes related to quality are closely examined and classified. Such future studies may reveal that the participant organization is unique, or they may discover similar relationships; such future studies may reveal relationships that this study did not address. However, the implications of additional studies revealing similar findings about communication processes, organizational learning, and leadership as a socially constructed process of interaction in a complex dynamic system could lead to a revolution of communication and leadership theories, and could lead, finally, to a socially constructed theory of organizational learning.

Should further phenomenological studies of the communication processes in organizations reveal similar relationships, then the statistical significance of those relationships and outcomes of organizational success (or failure) should be tested. Individual case studies could be developed from examination of those processes in other organizations, from which meta-analyses could reveal cross-functional and cross-industrial similarities (or differences). Such studies could serve as the basis for reexamining the epistemological nature of master-degree programs in the organizational fields, from which additional studies of management education could be developed.

The findings of this study are compelling; they raise many questions about existing quality improvement methodologies as well as theory and practice of organizational communication, leadership, and learning. Let this study be the basis for future research that provides a foundation for development of management methods that account for the socially constructed nature of quality.

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CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

My name is Daniel K. Dayton. I am a doctoral learner in the School of at Business and Technology at Capella University. I am also a member of the Cincinnati Choral Society. I am doing a research study called Organizational Quality: A Phenomenological Study of the Communication Processes. This research is being supervised by Dr. Linda Terry. I would like to invite you to participate in this research study. The main purpose of this form is to provide information about the research. This is so that you can make a decision about whether you want to participate. If you choose to participate, please sign in the space at the end of this form.

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

The purpose of the study is to understand your experiences with CCS. I am interested in the communication processes during rehearsal sessions. I am interested in how they led to the creation of a quality production. I am exploring the research question, "*How do the communication processes in which organizational members engage support organizational learning that leads to a shared vision of quality?"*

WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY INVOLVE?

If you decide to participate in this study, I will ask you to do a few things. First, you will participate in a one-hour to one and one-half hour recorded interview. In the interview you and I will explore your experiences of quality musical production. We will also talk about your experiences of communication in rehearsal. We will talk about quality musical production. The recorded interview will be transcribed. I will then provide a copy of the text to you for your review. We will check it for accuracy. Your participation will take about two total hours. I will listen to and transcribe the recordings. The recordings will be kept for seven years. I will use the data from the transcripts to develop themes. These essential themes are intended to represent the experience of the group. No individual identification will be indicated for individual participants. The transcripts will be coded and sanitized. I will use a code key to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions.

WHY ARE YOU BEING ASKED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are a member of the Cincinnati Choral Society. You stated you have experienced quality production.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS INVOLVED IN THIS STUDY?

The risks involved in this research project are minimal. The intent of the interviews is to bring out open and honest conversation about your experiences with CCS. It is possible that a troublemaker could obtain uncoded copies of the interview sessions. They could contain personally identifying information. That troublemaker could use that information to jeopardize your membership in CCS. To protect against that slim possibility, I will take several measures to protect your privacy. The interview recordings will be stored on flash drives. Those flash drives will be delivered via certified mail to the transcriptionist. She will transcribe the original recordings. She is sworn to return all materials to me. The transcripts will be coded to remove any personally identifying information. I will use a key that I will develop to code the transcripts. The key, the original recordings, and the original transcripts will be stored in a safe deposit box for seven years. After that they will be destroyed. Only the coded transcriptions will be used for analysis of the data and thematic coding. No personal information will be published. You can decide what experiences you will relay. You can stop the interview at any time. If you become uncomfortable, you may stop at any time.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO PARTICIPATION?

There are benefits you may gain for participating in the study. You will have the chance to reflect on your experiences. You may gain insight into this experience. You may develop a deeper understanding of the communication in rehearsal and after concerts. So, you may gain deeper insight as to your positive contribution to CCS. You may better be able to contribute to quality musical production. The CCS may also benefit from these deeper understandings. As a group, the organization is able to develop better musical understanding. You may gain a deeper appreciation for performance of the music. You may gain insight regarding its impact on audiences. You will also receive a summary of the findings of the research study.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE RESEARCHER GETS NEW INFORMATION DURING THE STUDY?

I will contact you if I learn new information that could change your decision about participating in this study.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER PROTECT PARTICIPANTS' CONFIDENTIALITY?

The results of the research study will be published. Your name or identity will not be revealed. The records of this study will be kept private. The records will be confidential. In any sort of report I publish, I will not include personal information. It will not be possible to identify you in any way. Research records and recordings will be kept in a bank safe deposit box. I am the only person who will have access to the records. The flash drives will be destroyed after seven years.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A PARTICIPANT DOESN'T WANT TO CONTINUE IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision will not affect your current or future relations with anyone associated with the study or Capella University. You may choose not to participate. You may choose to participate. You are free to withdraw at any time. There is no penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will be deleted. Any transcripts of the interview will be destroyed. There will be no consequence. It will not affect your membership in the Cincinnati Choral Society.

WILL IT COST ANYTHING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY? WILL I GET PAID TO PARTICIPATE?

There is no cost to you of participating in the study. There will be no compensation to the participant for participating in this research project.

WILL PARTICIPANTS BE COMPENSATED FOR ILLNESS OR INJURY?

You are not waiving any of your legal rights in this study. However, no funds have been set aside to compensate you in the event of harm. If you suffer harm because of this research project, you may contact me. I can be contacted at 513-234-4438, DDayton@capellauniversity.edu. You may contact the chairperson of my dissertation committee. Her name is Dr. Linda Terry at Linda.Terry@capella.edu. You may also contact the Capella Human Research Protections Office. Their number is 1-888-227-3552, extension 4716.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT

By signing this form, you are saying that you have read this form. (Or you have had it read to you). You are also saying that you understand the risks and benefits. You are saying that you know what you are being asked to do. The researcher will be happy to answer any questions you have about the research. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 513-234-4438, DDayton@capellauniversity.edu, or you may contact Dr. Linda Terry at Linda.Terry@capella.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, the Capella Human Research Protections Office is available to help. If you have any concerns about the research process or the researcher, please contact us at 1-888-227-3552, extension 4716. If there are any unexpected problems with the research please also be sure to contact us. Your identity, questions, and concerns will be kept confidential.

Note: By signing below, you are telling the researcher "Yes." You want to participate in this study. You may withdraw this consent at any time. Please keep one copy of this form for your records.

Your Name (please print): _____

Your Signature: _____

Date: _____

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I certify that this form includes all information concerning the study relevant to the protection of the rights of the participants. I certify that it includes the nature and purpose of this research. I certify that it includes the benefits. I certify that is includes the risks. I certify that it includes the costs and any experimental procedures.

I have described the rights and protections afforded to human research participants. I have done nothing to pressure, coerce, or falsely entice this person to participate. I am available to answer the participant's questions. I have encouraged him or her to ask additional questions at any time during the course of the study.

Investigator's Signature: _____

Investigator's Name: Daniel K. Dayton

Date: January 14, 2011

Research Site(s) Approval

The following institution(s)/organization(s) has/have granted the researcher access to their participants and/or facilities:

Name: Cincinnati Choral Society, Approval Date: August 15, 2010, Approval Code/Number: Letter Dated August 15, 2010.

Name: Mason United Methodist Church, Approval Date: August 16, 2010, Approval Code/Number: Letter Dated August 16, 2010

Capella's IRB Approval

Capella University
IRB

Approved for 1 year after this date:
1/19/2011

CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board
225 S. Sixth Street, 9th Floor - Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

To:	Daniel Dayton, Ph.D.
From:	Capella University's IRB Committee
Date:	January 27, 2011
Study:	[206860-2] Communicating Organizational Quality: A Phenomenological Study of the Communication Processes Through the Lenses of Complexity Leadership and Organizational Development Theories
Submission Type:	Response/Follow-Up
RE:	Approval of Your IRB Application

Congratulations! Your application to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the study named above has been approved under the applicable federal regulation 45 CFR 46.110 [7]. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. **All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.**

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and assurance of the participants' understanding, followed by a signed consent form (unless this requirement has been waived). Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and the research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please take special note of the conditions of approval described below.

- You may not begin recruiting participants (including obtaining their informed consent) or collecting data until you have successfully completed your proposal conference call. Any changes made to the research procedures that may affect the experience of the participants must be approved by the IRB (by submitting an *IRB modification form*) before they may take place.

- Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review on an annual basis. Approval of this research will remain in effect until January 26, 2012. In order to continue the research after that date, you must submit an application for continuing review. (The *IRB Continuing Review Form* is available in the Forms Library within IRBNet.) Please note that there is no provision for a grace period on or after the expiration date.

  We recommend that you file the *Continuing Review Form* **at least six weeks in advance of the expiration date**. Failure to receive approval for a continuing review application before the expiration date will mean that **all work with the participants and/or their data must stop on the expiration date** of this approval.

- Include the following statement in **ALL** communications with the research participants (including all printed or electronic advertisements or research solicitations):

Generated on IRBNet

"This study has been approved by Capella University's IRB 206860-2, *effective from* January 26, 2011 *through* January 26, 2012."

Your informed consent document(s) has/have been altered to include the approval stamp and uploaded in the Board Document section of IRBNet, along with this approval letter. **You must use the revised inform consent document(s). You may not use any recruitment or data collection materials, including email, that have not been reviewed and approved by the IRB.**

- List **ALL** institutions and organizations that have approved your access to their participants and/or facilities for research purposes in **ALL** communications with the research participants as stipulated above.

- If any unanticipated problems or adverse events occur (e.g., incidents causing harm to participants or complaints about the study) you must notify the Capella Institutional Review Board **within five business days of the incident or complaint**. Please file the *Protocol Violation Reporting Form* or the *Unanticipated Problems Reporting Form,* available in the Forms Library of IRBNet.

- Monitoring of the consent process or data collection and analysis may occur. The IRB will notify you if your study will be audited.

- Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the *IRB Modification Form* for review and approval **before** initiating the modification. (The *IRB Modification Form* is also available in the Forms Library in IRBNet.)

Capella University's IRB is pleased to extend its congratulations to you on the achievement of this major milestone toward completing your doctoral program. If you have any questions about your IRB Approval, please contact your mentor.

Best regards,

IRB Office

Generated on IRBNet

Institutional Review Board
225 South 6th Street, 9th Floor ♦ Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

IRB Evaluation Form

Study Title:	Organizational Quality: A Phenomenological Study of the Communication Processes
Researcher's Name:	Daniel K. Dayton
Mentor's Name:	Dr. Linda Terry
School Affiliation:	School of Business and Technology
IRB Reviewer Name:	Dr. Cliff Butler
Review Date:	1-19-2011

Initial Assessment	
☒ Yes ☐ No	This study is ready for IRB Review. If **no** stop the review and select the reason(s) below: ☐ The application is complete, but lacks clarity and coherence such that it cannot be reviewed. ☐ There is serious lack of detail in the study procedures. ☐ The IRB application is seriously inconsistent with other documents (informed consent, proposal, supplemental forms, etc.) ☐ The research questions and/or hypotheses are not aligned with the research design, so that the proposed design is incapable of answering the proposed research questions. ☐ The research design is not aligned with the data collection and/or analysis procedures, so that the data collection and/or analysis is incapable of resulting in meaningful findings.
Reviewer's Rationale	

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Version Date: 07/01/2010

IRB Review

Researchers:
Read through all comments and directions recorded on this **evaluation** and the **decision letter**. You must upload your revisions into IRBNet and also provide a summary of your revisions in the **Researcher's Summary of Revisions** sections of this form and upload it into IRBNet.

IRB Review Decision	
This study is:	**Approved**
This study meets the criteria for expedited category:	**Category 7**
This study will require a continuing review cycle of:	**12 Months**
If the approval period is granted for less than a year, please provide rationale for this decision:	

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Consultations	
☐ Yes ☒ No	Did you consult with anyone on this review? **Name:** **Reason:**
Consultation Summary:	

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If you select no for any of the questions below, please provide feedback to the researcher.

Participant Perspective Assessment	
Informed Consent Form Document I believe the participants for this study will be able to:	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Read and understand the form.
☒ Yes ☐ No	2. Understand the language (terms) used within form.
☒ Yes ☐ No	3. Understand that this is a research study.
☒ Yes ☐ No	4. Understand the purpose of the research study.
☒ Yes ☐ No	5. Understand the procedures that will be followed.
☒ Yes ☐ No	6. Understand if any of the procedures are experimental.
☒ Yes ☐ No	7. Understand how much time is required to participate.
☒ Yes ☐ No	8. Understand what will happen to the data collected.
☒ Yes ☐ No	9. Identify who will have access to the data collected.
☒ Yes ☐ No	10. Understand how confidentiality of data collected will be maintained.
☒ Yes ☐ No	11. Identify and explain the risks involved.
☒ Yes ☐ No	12. Identify and explain the benefits of the research study.
☒ Yes ☐ No	13. Identify who to contact with questions about the research procedures.
☒ Yes ☐ No	14. Identify who to contact with concerns about the conduct of the research.
☒ Yes ☐ No	15. Identify who to contact when an injury or unanticipated problem occurs.
☒ Yes ☐ No	16. Understand that participation is voluntary and refusal to participate or discontinuing (withdrawing) will involve no penalties or loss of benefits to which a participant is entitled.

Reviewer Feedback

Researcher's Summary of Revisions

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Recruitment Materials and Process

Identify the recruitment materials that were reviewed for this research study.

- ☐ **Flyer**
- ☐ **Ad (Web, Newspaper, etc.)**
- ☐ **Phone Script**
- ☐ **Radio or Media Script**
- ☒ **Recruitment e-mail or letter**
- ☐ **Announcement Script (i.e. announcement read during a meeting, class, etc.)**
- ☐ **Other:**

☒ Yes	☐ No	1. The recruitment materials accurately represent the proposed study.
☒ Yes	☐ No	2. The recruitment materials are easy to understand.
☒ Yes	☐ No	3. The recruitment materials are free of coercion (language, design, images, etc.).

Reviewer Feedback

Researcher's Summary of Revisions

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Risk and Benefits Assessment	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Will the risks and benefits of this research study fulfill *The Belmont Report* principle Beneficence?
☒ Yes ☐ No	2. Are the risks to subjects minimized by using procedures, which are consistent with sound research design and which do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk? If **no**, provide feedback.
☒ Yes ☐ No	3. Are the risks to subjects reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result?

Reviewer Feedback

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Selection of Participants	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Does the selection of participants in this research study fulfill *The Belmont Report* principle of Selection of Subjects?
☒ Yes ☐ No	2. Is the selection of subjects equitable (Consider the purpose and setting of the research, involvement of vulnerable subjects, selection criteria, and recruitment, enrollment, and payment procedures.)?
☒ Yes ☐ No	3. Has the researcher obtained the required permission from the research site(s)?

Reviewer Feedback

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Informed Consent	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Does the informed consent form document and process fulfill *The Belmont Report* principle of Respect for Persons?
☒ Yes ☐ No	2. Does the informed consent form document and process meet the criteria set forth by 45 CFR 46.116[a](1-8) and if necessary 46.116[b](1-6)?
☐ Yes ☒ No	3. Is the researcher requesting a waiver to alter any elements required by 45 CFR 46.116? If **yes**, please select which regulation criteria the request meets. **Select Regulatory Criteria**
☒ Yes ☐ No	4. Will informed consent of participants be appropriately documented, in accordance with, and to the extent required by 45 CFR 46.117?
☐ Yes ☒ No	5. Is the researcher requesting a waiver of *documentation* of informed consent? If **yes**, please select which regulation criteria the request meets. **Select Regulatory Criteria**
☒ Yes ☐ No	6. Does the informed consent document provided embody all the required elements as required by Capella University?

Reviewer Feedback

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Data Monitoring	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Are the data collection procedures appropriate (Consider the collection, handling, and storage of data.)?

Reviewer Feedback

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Privacy and Confidentiality	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. Are there adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects?
☒ Yes ☐ No	2. Are there adequate provisions to maintain the confidentiality of data?

Reviewer Feedback

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Special Populations

☒ **Does Not Apply to this Study**

☐ Yes ☐ No	1. Are there adequate provisions to protect this population?

Reviewer Feedback

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Deception Assessment *If there is deception, the study must be referred to the full IRB Committee.* ☒ **Does Not Apply to this Study**	
☐ Yes ☐ No	1. If deception is utilized in this study, is it necessary for this research protocol?
☐ Yes ☐ No	2. If deception is necessary for this study, has the researcher developed appropriate debriefing measures?
☐ Yes ☐ No	3. If deception is necessary for this study, has the researcher developed appropriate post-informed consent procedures to allow participants (and their data) to opt-out of the research study?

Reviewer Feedback

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Conflict of Interest Assessment ☒ Does Not Apply to this Study	
☐Yes ☐No	1. Has the researcher managed the potential conflict of interest, ensuring that the rights and welfare of participants are protected (i.e. disclosure of the conflict to participants, an independent data and safety monitoring committee, modification of role(s) of particular research staff, changes in location of research activities, elimination of the conflict of interest, etc.)?
☐Yes ☐No	2. Are there other actions necessary to minimize the risks to participants?
☐Yes ☐No	3. Should the informed consent process be revised to include information regarding the potential conflict of interest?

Reviewer Feedback

Researcher's Summary of Revisions

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Research Proposal Assessment	
☒ Yes ☐ No	1. The research proposal reflects the same information provided in the IRB application and other forms. If **no**, the researcher must revise the documents.

Questions for the Researcher
What questions do you have for the researcher that could be answered prior to the next review?
Researcher's Answers

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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING:

EXAMINING THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF MASTER DEGREE CURRRICULA

(Winner of the 2012 Management Education and Development Division Academy of Management Barry Armandi Award for Best Paper in Management Learning Research)

Daniel K. Dayton, PhD The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and Colorado Technical University

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Abstract

This is a phenomenological study of the communication processes around quality in a symphony chorus. Based upon intensive observations, interviews and participation in rehearsals and concerts over a five-month period, the study develops a narrative of the organization's endeavors to achieve quality musical performances. Data were analyzed via the theoretical construct of coordinated management of meaning theory using narrative, metaphor and episodic analysis. Individual and organizational understanding of the phenomena of communication about shared vision of quality were analyzed via organizational learning theory and complexity leadership theory, based upon phenomenological reduction analysis of participant interviews. Findings revealed relationships between level of academic degree of the study participants and their understandings of these phenomena. The findings indicated a bifurcation of ontological understanding between master degree holders and the understandings of either bachelor or doctoral degree holders, suggesting possible epistemological issues in master degree curricula.

Keywords

Organizational Learning, Epistemology, Social Construction, Phenomenology, Quality, Complexity Leadership Theory, CMM Theory

Introduction

Behaviorist learning theories are deeply imbued with a positivistic ontological view of reality, in which the operative paradigm is that the learner (whether student or organizational member) must be externally motivated to learn (Pavlov, 1927; J. B. Watson, 1924) and that it is the responsibility of the master (whether teacher or organizational leader) to provide that motivation. Knowledge is presumed to be an object that can be passed on from master to learner via a structured set of lessons, and once properly motivated, the learner can attain and store such knowledge (Thorndike, 1923). Further, attainment of knowledge is presumed to be an objective goal that can be objectively measured, assessed, and refined (Skinner, 1957). The methodologies and terminologies of this philosophic stance reinforce the objective view of knowledge— methodologies are designed to modify behavior for the purposes of adaptation (Fiol and Lyles, 1985); terminology, such as retention and problem solving (Cyert and March, 1963), reflect the objectivist concept of cognition for the purposes of application alone. The etymology of the terminology of modern education systems reflects this objectivist philosophy in the names of the various levels of college degrees: bachelor, master, and doctor. *Bachelor* derives its etymology from the concept of young squire who has acquired sufficient retention of trivia and procedure to operate under the direction of a more seasoned master (American Heritage Dictionary, 2008). *Master* derives from the medieval concept of a master craftsman, who has achieved sufficient expertise in a field to operate independently, and to pass along the knowledge of process and procedure to apprentices (Kant, 1992). *Doctor* derives its etymology from the Greek term for teacher of philosophy, implying a level of instruction that surpasses the instruction in procedures of the master. Below the level of doctor, the instructional methodology is concerned with the what of learning, versus the *why* of learning.

Disaffected with the positivistic ontology, educational scholars (Duckworth, 1964, 1973; Piaget, 1955, 1961) began questioning the roles of both the teacher and the learner in the learning process, and thus developed a social-constructivist ontological view of learning. The social-constructivist ontology remains focused, however, on the individual actions of the actors participating in the learning process, giving rise to learner-centered methodologies. Taking a more social-constructionist ontological view, organizational scholars (Argyris, 2000, 2003, 2006; Argyris and Schön, 1974, 1996; Fiol and Lyles, 1985; Senge, 2006) began the examination of the learning process itself as a socially constructed phenomenon, giving rise to learning-centered methodologies. Both of these methodologies attempt to address learning beyond the what of learning to include the how and why of the learning process. Because this study adheres to a socially constructed ontology of organizational learning, a more in-depth review of the literature of Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, and of Peter Senge is appropriate.

Argyris and Schön

In their analysis of the problems inherent to organizational learning, Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) developed a theoretical model of organizational learning that distinguishes between what they termed *single-loop learning* and *double-loop learning*, and the action models in which they are employed, which they term *model I theory-in-use* and *model II theory-in-use*. Single-loop learning is characterized by the absorption and recitation of purportedly factual knowledge and the taking of action based upon that knowledge within a theoretical framework that is taken for granted. They represent a thermostat as example of single-loop learning—the thermostat absorbs knowledge about the temperature of the environment, compares it against the desired temperature settings, and takes action (either heating or cooling) based upon that comparison. At no point does the thermostat question the validity of the measured temperature or the desired temperature setting, or the decision-making rules. (One tragic example of single-loop learning in action is the actions that were taken by Nazi soldiers at internment camps during World War II, characterized by the admonishment, *I was just following orders*.) Double-loop learning is characterized by a process that examines the decision-making rules as well, so as to continually examine the underlying mental models by which it is constructed.

Model I theory-in-use employs single-loop learning based upon a strategy comprised of persuasion and rationality for the purpose of maximizing winning and minimizing controversy in communication. Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) characterized the resulting processes as defensive, in which individual actors are compelled to be manipulative so as to protect their turf, and in which espoused theories, that is, what the actors say, is incongruent with their actions (*Do as I say, not as I do)* This defensiveness and incongruity leads to decision making that they define as self-sealing, with little to no examination of the underlying assumptions that bolster the decision processes.

Model II theory-in-use employs double-loop learning, based upon a strategy comprised of commitment to choice based upon the validity of knowledge for the purpose of defining and developing the best possible actions for organizational survival. Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996) characterized the resulting processes as authentic, in which individual actors are committed to the truth. The actions that are taken adhere to this commitment, resulting in more effective problem solving and decision making while minimizing the perceived need for individual protection of turf and defensive interpersonal interaction. Adherence to this commitment permits a continual examination of underlying assumptions forming the basis of decision making, with an understanding that such assumptions must be supported by evidence rather than tacit acceptance.

This study examined the communication processes that take place in the participant organization, and examined the underlying theory-in-use models that are employed. It included an examination of the nature of the communication and the extent to which strategic decision making employs double-loop versus single-loop learning.

Senge

Senge (2006) developed the concept of the learning organization, taking a systems perspective of the organization as a whole, rather than on the actions of the individuals within the organization. Much like the organizational learning theories developed by Argyris and Schön (1974, 1996), the systems theory of organizational learning is premised upon the concept of a continual reexamination of the assumptions regarding knowledge upon which decisions are based. Senge names this concept the fifth discipline, in which two significant mental shifts are required: "seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-and-effect chains; and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots" (Senge, 2006: 73). Inherent to this circular view of causality is the requirement to examine the manner in which decisions made today affect the parameters of reality in the future, and will affect the decision making that must take place in the future as a consequence. This circular view of causality necessarily implies that a continual reexamination of reality and its inter-relational constructs is required for organizations not only to adhere to goals and objectives but also to continually test goals and outcomes.

Adopting such a circular view of causality is critical for organizations to break away from a paradigm of blame and finger pointing in which defense of previous decisions becomes paramount, and thus limits the free exchange of ideas. Under a systems view of organizational learning, the organization's vision is a superordinate guideline that directs organizational decision making rather than a mere goal that the organization sets out to achieve. Senge (2006: 143 stated, "It's not what the vision is, it's what the vision does." Exemplary of such a vision is the statement included in Procter & Gamble's (2009: 5) vision, values, and purpose statement: "We will provide branded products and services of superior quality and value that improve the lives of the world's consumers, now and for generations to come." Such a vision provides an overarching decisional and behavioral guideline rather than an achievable goal that can be objectively measured.

A vision that presents a seemingly unachievable goal might appear to be a certain recipe for failure. However, in Senge's (2006: 143) view of systems thinking, such failure takes on a different connotation: "Failure is, simply, a shortfall, evidence of a gap between vision and current reality. Failure is an opportunity for learning." Mastering this view of vision requires a significant shift from the traditional mental models of communication and interaction that tend to defend the status quo, to a mental model that is open to the exchange of new ideas and recognized opportunities for learning rather than occasions for blame.

Research Method

The purpose of this study was to conduct a phenomenological analysis of the communication processes in the participant organization to address the research question, How do the communication processes in which organizational members engage support organizational learning that leads to a shared vision of quality? The epistemological reasons for conducting phenomenological research include a search for understanding specifically what the participants experienced, and how they felt during the phenomenon.

Going beyond mere description of the shared experiences, the researcher brings an interpretation to the process by searching for discerning themes in the textual data so as to determine what the overarching commonalities are in that shared experience (van Manen, 1990). This is the critical element of the research, in that rather than merely describing the shared experiences of creating a quality staging of a symphonic choral composition, themes may arise central to the communication processes that lead to that creation.

In response axiological challenges associated with researcher bias, and in returning to the philosophical roots of phenomenological research, Moustakas (1994), and Stewart and Mickunas (1990) emphasize a bracketing of researcher experiences, which are then eliminated from the data analysis, so as to obtain a more purely participant collection of experiences. Their philosophical approach to phenomenological research rests on four pillars: "[a] A rejection of scientific empiricism, [b] a philosophy without presupposition, [c] the intentionality of consciousness, and [d] the refusal of subject-object dichotomy" (Creswell, 2007: 58-59).

The assumption central to phenomenological research arises from the operative paradigm that describing, coding, interpreting, and categorizing the shared experiences of the participants yield a deeper understanding of that phenomenon. Armed with this deeper understanding, it is presumed, those who work with participants of a particular phenomenon will be better prepared to render assistance, aid, recovery, or merely understanding of future participants. Alternatively, those who expect to experience a particular phenomenon may gain a deeper understanding of what they will face when confronted with or participating in that phenomenon. The nature of this study is phenomenological. The phenomenon of study is the communication process engaged by organization members when creating the construct of shared vision of quality, and how those communication processes are integral to the processes of organizational learning and leadership.

The participants in the study are a symphony chorus comprised of 30 singers and instrumentalists, both professional and amateur musicians. Prior to any contact with the participants, the participant organizations both provided written approval for conducting the research on their sites; the full proposal and methodology by the Capella University IRB (IRB 20680-2, dated January 27, 2011), including review for informed consent and protection of human subjects; and all participants reviewed and signed IRB-approved Informed Consent Forms.

The sources of data were multiple: open-ended interviews with the study participants; observation of the interactions of the participants, during rehearsals, during administrative meetings, and during and after concert performances; and researcher participation in the process of rehearsing for and presentation of concert performances. The interviews were open-ended, semi-structured discussions about the participants' experiences with the organization as they told stories about recollections and perceptions of quality and how they communicated those experiences. The majority of the interviews were

about an hour in length, although one was shorter at 45 minutes, and two were longer at 90 minutes and 120 minutes respectively. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcriber into Word documents, which were then loaded into AtlasTi for coding. The transcripts were reviewed by each participant, all of whom attested to the accuracy of the transcriptions.

Because participants described their experiences using metaphors and metonyms, it was necessary to engage in metaphor analysis. For this portion of the analysis effort, the research drew from the work of Lakoff (1993, 2004), Lakoff and Johnson (1980/2003), and Lakoff and Turner (1989). In the analysis of the transcripts of the stories that the participants related, the research examined the cognitive and linguistic structure, situational effects of the metaphors used, and combining effects of metaphor on independent and complex phases and sentences. The metaphorical analysis gave rise to themes that literal analysis of the words and phrases that the participants use could not. Identification of conceptual cores and conceptual entities revealed the relational intricacies in the communication process between the conductor and the organizational members, as well as among the organizational members themselves. The grounding elements of the words and phrases used represented the anchors from which the concepts of quality and performance are shared among members. Once the composite textural descriptions were developed, structural descriptions, and broader conceptual themes arising from the use of metaphor, the research then synthesized them into a model that provided both wide and deep understanding of the essence of the creation and communication of quality. That model provided a rich description of the experience of creating quality, as well as clues to understanding how those experiences may be effectively communicated in the social construction of a new reality grounded in a shared paradigm of quality and organizational learning.

Results

The means by which this section is organized is closely related to the tiers of Bloom's taxonomy as revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001). The subsections on thick description of the data collection process are characteristic of the understanding tier of the revised Bloom's taxonomy. Phenomenological reduction is characteristic of the applying tier, as the data were analyzed to develop major themes. The composite textural descriptions section is characteristic of the analyzing level of the taxonomy, as the themes were developed into networks representative of the organizational experience. The major findings section of the paper is characteristic of the evaluating tier of the taxonomy, wherein the synthesized thematic networks were evaluated using the theories of organizational learning (Argyris, 2006; Senge, 2006). Throughout this development the application of the theory of coordinated management of meaning (Pearce, 2007) was critical to the understanding of the organizational narrative. Finally, the section on discussion is characteristic of the creating tier of the revised Bloom's taxonomy, wherein the findings of this study become the foundations for suggesting new ways to scrutinize

both management education and management practice, with proposals for research to engage that scrutiny.

Initial findings related to backgrounds of education and work. On the first review of the data collected via the interviews and observations, participant responses were analyzed vis-àvis their demographic characteristics of education and work. The demographics of the participants by education level and the general industry in which they earn livings are presented in Table 1. Because it is a volunteer organization, there is no requirement for members to hold a college degree to be accepted into the group. However, all of the participants of this study held at least a bachelor degree, and more than half also hold a master degree and/or a doctoral degree. Of the members who declined to participate, all four also hold a minimum of a bachelor degree. Also because of the volunteer nature of the organization, there is no requirement to be a professional musician or singer to be a member. In fact, of the participants, only five are professional musicians, with the rest working as professionals in a wide variety of fields. The fields of work are grouped by general industry for the purposes of grouping and simplification.

Table 1. Participant Demographics: Education Level and Industry

DEMOGRAPHIC	CATEGORY	N
EDUCATION LEVEL	Bachelor degree	10
	Master degree	6
	Doctoral degree	5
	Total	21
INDUSTRY	Business	6
	Engineering	2
	Health science	4
	Law	2
	Music	5
	Religion	2
	Total	21

The education levels of the participants became important because there arose from the data a significant bifurcation of interpretation of quality, communication, and leadership among the members divided between those who hold bachelor degrees and doctoral degrees versus those who hold master degrees. This bifurcation is discussed more fully in the section on Major Findings, and its implications are presented in the section on discussion. The relationships between industry and the areas of study (quality, communication, and leadership) did not appear to be quite so pronounced, with one notable exception. There was a significant bifurcation noted among the interpretations of those who are professional musicians and who hold a master of fine arts degree versus all the other participants.

Themes Relating to Organizational Learning

A crucial element of organizational learning in development of a shared vision among organizational members is creation of common understandings of the paths to achieve organizational goals. From the in-vivo codes that arose in the participant interviews, the data were analyzed again using thematic analysis to establish linkages among those in-vivo themes relating to elements of organizational learning. This analysis gave rise to three major themes: Communication, Nonverbal communication, and Emotional connection. Each of these major themes is discussed in the sections that follow:

Communication. The major theme of *Communication* arose from the participant interviews both as an in-vivo theme and as related to the in-vivo themes of emotional connection and learning styles. The participants tended to describe the process of interaction between themselves and the conductor, as well as interaction with other chorus members, in particular as they engaged in the process of learning the music, the stylistic interpretation, and the aesthetics. They described situations in which they relied on the dialogic engagement and exchange of knowledge to develop their individual understanding in relation to their own productive output, and to build upon a common understanding and production among all chorus members, so as to create an ensemble performance rather than dozens of simultaneous individual performances. Table 2 depicts the relationship between the major theme *Communication* and the in-vivo themes of *Communication*, *Emotional connection*, and *Learning styles*, with selected extracts from the participant interviews. In all, there were 131 instances in the data where these relationships arose.

Table 2. Major Theme Interview Extracts: Communication

In-vivo theme	Interview extract
Communication	How he wants it would have to be communicated and then I'd have to make the notes and make the adjustments because I probably learned it the other way.
Emotional connection	It was taking the pauses to acknowledge that everyone is doing the emotional things and the personal things necessary to achieve the big outcomes.
Learning styles	See, I have a hard time—unless I'm hearing it, I have a hard time understanding it. Visual doesn't turn me on as much as hearing something.

In order for the chorus members to begin to develop their individual understandings of the meaning of the music and the intentions of the composer, the conductor needed to be cognizant of the varied learning styles of the chorus members so as to incorporate varied approaches to facilitating that understanding. Some of the chorus members tend to learn more visually, and for them the key elements are translating the musical notations and their own markings into the elements of their own performance, especially as it relates to the overall ensemble performance. Others tend to learn more aurally, relying upon what they hear both from the explanations of interpretation from the conductor and what they hear during the musical rehearsals. Others tend to learn more kinesthetically, and rely upon interpretation of the movements and signals from the conductor into their own physical feelings and movements.

Without connection to these learning styles, the process of developing emotional involvement among the chorus members would be problematic. Further, emotional connection among the chorus members seems to facilitate the communication process, especially with regards to the ensemble performance. Because choral music is more emotionally understandable to the audiences when the performance is as an ensemble rather than as a collection of individual singers, the success of achieving an overall outcome of quality performance is dependent upon that emotional connection.

Emotional connection. The production of music is, in and of itself, an expression of human communication that is steeped in emotion. Instrumental musical compositions can express intense emotions, and evoke similarly intense emotional reactions among listeners. Choral musical compositions possess the added dimension of actual verbal expression of those emotions, and thus can evoke even stronger and more unified emotional reactions among the listeners. Achieving that emotional connection with the listener necessarily requires emotional connection from the performers. In a chorus, that connection is achieved when the emotional expression is organizational rather than merely individual, and thus is a crucial element of organizational learning. This theme arose among nearly all of the participants. Among the in-vivo themes that relate to the major theme of *Emotional connection* were *Emotional experience*, *Emotional engagement*, and *Emotional expressiveness*, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Major Theme Interview Extracts: Emotional Connection

In-vivo theme	Interview extract
Emotional experience	And behind that is often, you know, well, I don't want to say often, but emotion is . . . and I think you have to be in tune with that. You have to be experiencing it as you're trying to communicate that.
Emotional engagement	And I was familiar with that from a girl who sang in an opera workshop, I mean, you were in tears because she just, she felt—you could tell she was feeling it. Vocally, she was okay, but she was feeling it and you were moved by it. Well, when we went to see the professional thing and the whole thing was just like, yuck, I said, Finally, here's . . . and this woman, she could have been singing the phone book as emotionally attached as she was. It was horrible. It was like blah, blah, whatever. It was so un-engaging.
Emotional expressiveness	Yes, it has to be. It has to be well done in terms of expressiveness, in terms of accuracy, but then it reaches beyond the intellect and it goes into the emotions, which I think music is intended to do. And there was another performance and I think this one was at Anderson Hills; it was a religious number and it was probably the most emotional performance in which I participated. The music, what we were singing, just touched me so much.

Even when a live musical performance is technically perfect, if it lacks personal emotional experience and expressiveness by the performer, it is likely to fail to engage emotionally with the audience. For the chorus to develop and present a unified ensemble performance that effectively created this emotional connection, the process of

organizational learning is requisite to ensuring a common shared vision among the members of the chorus.

Composite Textural Descriptions

Phenomena such as communication, learning, leadership, and quality may characterized as discrete events, or they may be characterized as constructs of social interaction among people who experience them. This study takes the latter approach, in which these phenomena are analyzed from the perceptions of the organizational members who experience them as individuals, and then constructed into a composite that more fully represents the holistic organizational experience. The perceptions are drawn from the themes that were developed from the participant interviews and from observations of rehearsals and concerts over the 5-month period of the study related to organizational learning, and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Phenomenon of Learning Themes

Theme	Is related to the intra-organizational question
Verbal communication	What do we discuss and how do we incorporate that into our musical performance? How do we come to agree?
Nonverbal communication	What cues do we agree upon so that during performances we are expressing that to which we agreed?
Emotional connection	What does the music mean to us emotionally? How do we come to agree to express that emotion?

The phenomenon of learning (Table 4) is experienced among members of the participant organization as a construct of the themes of verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and emotional connection to the meaning of the music. Verbal communication takes place during the rehearsals, and the members of the chorus discuss and share knowledge and ideas about the music itself, and as they work out systems by which that verbal communication can be translated into the nonverbal communication that takes place during the concert performances. There is significant linkage between the verbal exchange and the nonverbal exchange, which ultimately become a complex set of visual and auditory cues to manage communication during the concert to effectively convey the emotional content and context of the music.

The learning process is multifaceted, comprised of intellectual and emotional understanding of the meaning of the music and the composers' intentions, and developing and managing visual and auditory signals that convey a wealth of meaning about which a common understanding has been developed during rehearsals. The phenomenon of learning is the fundamental shared experience by which the members of the organization not only come to agree upon what they know of their productive output but also share that knowledge with the audience.

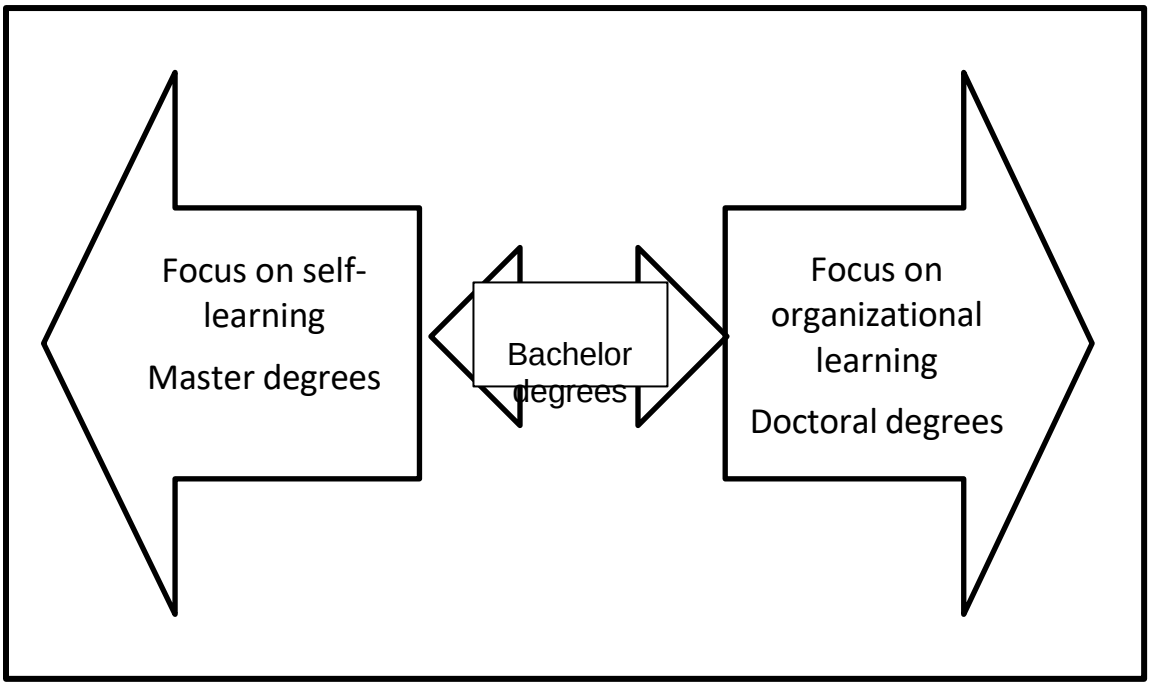
Major Findings

In order to develop the major findings of this study, the final step in the analysis was to build further upon the composite textural descriptions of the phenomena to develop the composite structural descriptions, which depict not only the essence of the participant experiences but also the relationships among a variety of factors to develop an overall organizational understanding of the phenomena. Because the organization consists of numerous individuals, all of whom personally experience phenomena through their own lenses of experience, education, and background, the essence of the organizational experience tends to cover ranges of understanding and ontology. The structure of those ranges may be understood by synthesizing individual participant attributes with the textural descriptions of the phenomena, and then examining the relationships among those attributes and the ranges of experience. For this study, there were five major findings among the phenomena of communication, learning, and quality, for which the attributes of education level and tenure with the organization had effects upon individual experiences, creating ranges of organizational experience. The construction of this study was not of the nature to discern the strengths of these relationships or to explain why these relationships exist. It could be the topic of future studies to validate these relationships and once validated, to determine the nature of the correlation, and perhaps even to attribute causes to its existence. Those major findings are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Findings Related to Organizational Learning

There was one major finding related to organizational learning, and it was based upon the attributes of the participants with regard to education level. From the descriptions of the participants, there arose a significant bifurcation between the concept of learning as an individual process versus learning as an organizational process. That bifurcation tended to be most significantly related to the education level of the participant describing the phenomenon, and is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Bifurcation of focus on learning by degree level.



Participants with master degree tended to describe the phenomenon of learning only at the individual level, and with a heavy reliance upon their own personal knowledge by which to gauge both their understanding of the meaning of the music and to accommodate their individual performance to the directions of the conductor. They tended to avoid open discussion with other members of the organization with regard to that learning, even though they devoted significant thought to the process. They tended to apply their own knowledge of musical performance and of organizational issues to their understanding, internalizing the learning process and reluctant to engage in dialogue about it.

Participants who held doctoral degrees tended to view the learning process as highly dynamic and fluid, with open interchange of ideas among members of the organization, often not only offering significant input but also willing to accept and incorporate alternative points of view. Their focus was not on their own learning, but rather on the learning of the organization as a whole.

Somewhat surprisingly, the participants holding bachelor degrees tended to fall in the middle of the bifurcation between individual learning and organizational learning. They tended, however, to view the individual learning process as one in which they were the recipient rather than the contributor to learning. Interestingly, they still described learning phenomena in organizational terms as well, as if their own understanding of the phenomenon of learning were bifurcated. The bifurcation was not between different individuals holding bachelor degrees, but rather was from within the individuals themselves.

The division between understanding the phenomenon of learning as either an individual process or as an organizational process was sharp, with master-degree holders falling on the side of individual learning and doctoral-degree holders falling on the side of organizational learning. Bachelor-degree holders had divided understanding, which although seemingly contradictory, demonstrates an openness to organizational communication that master-degree holders have somehow lost and that doctoral-degree holders have regained.

Discussion

One reason that this study was undertaken includes a growing dissatisfaction among management practitioners with the methodologies derived from these positivist-rationalist and social-constructivist theories. Methodologies arising from the theories of Taylor (1911, 1947/1967), Juran (1951, 1962), and Deming (1986) such as TQM and Six-Sigma have generally failed to achieve success in practical efforts to achieve quality output from organizational processes. Practices that have attempted to engage these methodologies in organizational learning, such as those of Schroeder et al. (2008), with a social-constructivist view of individual learning, have not achieved success in achieving an organizational shared vision. Popular leadership books have been of questionable effectiveness.

A second reason that this study was undertaken was to take a social-constructionist view of the processes of learning and the communication processes that are created as a phenomenon unto itself, rather than as an organizational output. Hence, the social-constructionist organizational learning theories of Argyris and Schön (1996) and Senge (2006) were the basis of

analysis that viewed learning and leadership as processes rather than outcomes. The communication among organizational members in constructing the processes of learning and leadership were viewed also as processes, rather than outcomes, via the social-constructionist CMM theory of Pearce (2007) and Pearce and Cronen (1980). The purpose was to develop an analysis of these processes as socially constructed phenomena, so as to gain an understanding of their interrelationships in an organizational quest for a shared vision of quality.

Finally, this study was conducted with a nonprofit, performing arts organization so as to minimize the temptation to attempt to objectively identify exemplars of quality output or rationalistic measures of efficiency. By conducting the study with a performing arts organization, it was possible to focus on the phenomenon of communication about quality without the distractions of objective measures of quality or of decreasing costs and increasing profit margins. The results of the data collection provided a rich basis for examining the processes that support communication about quality as a phenomenon unto itself and the analysis of those data provide findings that lend insight into engendering its creation. The next section presents a summary of the findings of that analysis.

Summary of Findings

There were three significant findings that arose from the analysis of the data collected during this study: two findings related to the nature of the communication processes and one finding related to the nature of process of organizational learning. The findings were based upon in-vivo descriptions of participant experiences with the organization, and the relationships of the nature of those descriptions based upon participant attributes of education level and tenure with the organization. The demographic makeup of the participants, which represented more than 80% of the available population of the organization, was relatively homogeneous. All participants were well-educated, middle- and upper middle-class Americans who share similar demographics of age, religion, and employment status. Even so, there were remarkable differences in the participants' descriptions of the essences of communication, learning, and quality attributable to differences in education level and tenure with the organization.

Participants holding master degrees tended to describe either nonexistent or dialectic processes of communication; participants holding bachelor degrees tended to describe communication processes that were largely dialectic but bordering on dialogic; and participants holding doctoral degrees tended to describe communication processes that were largely dialogic and, to a degree, organizationally holistic.

Participants whose tenure with the organization was the shortest, from 1 to 3 years, had either a tendency to refrain from participation in communication or to describe communication as a dialectic process. Participants whose tenure with the organization was in the middle, from 4 to 10 years, were more likely to describe communication processes that were dialogic, but retained a certain degree of understanding that reflected a dialectic process. Participants whose tenure with the organization was the longest, over 10 years, were more likely to describe communication processes that were dialogic and even organizationally holistic, an understanding that was absent from all less-tenured members of the organization.

With regard to organizational learning, there was a stark contrast between the descriptions of participants holding a master degree versus those holding either a bachelor degree or a doctoral degree. Participants holding a master degree tended to describe learning that was a purely individual process, with intent focus on their own faculties and learning background. Participants holding a doctoral degree were most likely to describe learning in an organizational context, with a focus on how the organizational learning contributes to a shared vision among members of how to achieve quality performances. Participants holding bachelor degrees also tended to describe learning as an organizational process, however, their descriptions also tended to be less philosophical than the doctoral-degree holders. When the bachelor-degree holders described their own individual learning, it was most often in the context of contribution to the organizational whole, whereas among the master-degree holders, the individual learning descriptions tended to be more self-focused.

Discussion of Findings

It is important to reemphasize that this was a phenomenological study, and that as such, it does not venture to hypothesis-test the correlations among the relationships in the findings. Nor does it attempt to discern the causality of those relationships. Those efforts may be the endeavors of future studies. However, the findings do indicate the existence of fascinating relationships in an organization among the demographics of its members and the communication processes they employ to develop their understandings of such organizational facets as leadership, learning, and the quest for quality production.

The findings of this study may present a basis for understanding why it is that so many organizational undertakings of TQM and Six-Sigma fail. It is clear from the data divulged by this study that among the most important aspects of human organizational endeavors to achieve quality production is emotional engagement of the members of that organization. Development of a shared vision, engagement in double-loop learning processes, and episodes of communication require, at the least, an awareness of the emotional aspects of human existence and organizational membership. Shared visions are not developed in the absence of emotional awareness; double-loop learning requires an intelligence of the defensive emotions of model I thinking in order to overcome them; and human communication is replete with emotional attachment as people engage in speech acts and construct their own narratives of communication episodes. TQM and Six-Sigma, as purely rationalistic frameworks, deny the existence of emotion. Denial of a vastly significant component of human existence in organizational endeavors dooms purely rationalistic engagements to failure, or worse, creation of soulless organizations. Understanding of this phenomenon is by no means uniquely revealed by this study, and has been the source material for innumerable tales from the arts. Creation of a purely rationalistic society was typified in the *Star Trek* episode “Return of the Archons,” in which Commander Spock remarked, “This is a soulless society, Captain. It has no spirit, no spark. All is indeed peace and tranquility—the peace of the factory, the tranquility of the machine. All parts working in unison” (Roddenberry & Pevney, 1967). Still, business scholars continue to advocate quashing of emotional aspects of organizational engagement in pursuit of goal attainment and purely rationalistic motivation. Lindenberg and Foss (2011: 511) advocated the use of negative

sanctions and relegation of emotional rewards as a means to accomplish organizational goals: "Negative sanctions (financial or symbolic) for not contributing are likely to be legitimate in a context of joint production and will strengthen a normative goal frame. . . . Hedonic [emotional] goals should be kept in the background." The results of this study raise significant doubt regarding that conclusion.

The findings also raise some intriguing questions regarding the nature of university education at the master-degree level and its potential impact upon the ability of organizations to engage in adaptive and emergent leadership processes, genuine organizational learning, and socially productive communication processes. Recent research has proposed that the current time is critical for the engagement of emotional awareness and emotional intelligence not only in business but also in MBA programs. McTiernan and Flynn (2011: 323) surmised that there is brewing a "perfect storm" for elevating more women, who possess heightened emotional awareness and intelligence than men, to positions of deans of business schools. Although this study does not focus specifically on the emotional content (or lack thereof) of master-level education, it presents evidence of a dearth of emotional awareness among those who possess master degrees.

Further, whereas the impacts of tenure have been thoroughly studied vis-à-vis such topics as job performance (Ng, 2010; Simsek, 2007), job satisfaction (Galle and Lawrence, 2011; Lovett, Hardebeck, Coyle, and Torres-Solis, 2006), socialization (Juenke, 2005; Rollag, 2004), and reasoning (Hambrick, 1991; Pennino, 2002), no studies to date have examined the relationship of member tenure and organizational learning. The results of this study call for a deeper body of research into the effects of tenure among rank-and-file organization members, particularly in light of the spate of downsizing efforts among business organization over the last two decades. The following subsections discuss the findings in all of these areas through the lenses of complexity leadership theory (Uhl-Bien et al., 2008) and organizational learning theory (Argyris, 2006; Argyris and Schön, 1996; Senge, 2006), and present those questions.

Organizational Learning Theory

Inherent to the development of a shared organizational vision (Senge, 2006) are communication processes in which organizational members engage to co-construct that vision. Argyris and Schön (1996) theorized that the nature of those communication processes, which they labeled single-loop learning (model I theory) and double-loop learning (model II theory), can either emasculate or facilitate that co-construction. In single-loop learning, organizational defensive routines prevent the questioning and examination of assumptions central to those routines and processes, and tend to be self-reinforcing in support of their closed systems of process. Argyris (2006) characterized this type of closed system as a *management trap*, one that reinforces existing routines and stifles learning, thereby being incapable of supporting emergent change.

In double-loop learning, the organizational defensive routines are brought into the light of examination and question, so that when organizations are met with crisis situations, they can avoid self-reinforcing patterns of action that wreak organizational havoc. This type of continual

self-reexamination is the antithesis of traditional theories of organization, in which the overarching purpose is to establish and defend methods and routines of proven stability. Unfortunately, in a world rife with increasingly complex environmental, political, and competitive challenges, a quest for stability may be mythic. Double-loop learning, rather than seeking a static level of stability or equilibrium, engenders organizational flexibility to adapt to those challenges as they emerge. In a system of double-loop learning, management is not an oracle of organizational wisdom, but rather becomes the facilitator of organizational dialogue.

In the findings of this study, it is evident that members whose tenure with the organization is the shortest tended to offer descriptions of learning most characteristic of single-loop learning. This, perhaps, should not be a surprise, because as the newest members of the organization, they have no foreknowledge of the organizational routines that exist. They take the first few years to learn the organizational routines. The members whose tenure is in the middle offered descriptions of learning in which they begin to feel more comfortable with questioning and discussing those routines, and in engaging in dialogue about learning as an organizational entity rather than an individual endeavor. The longest-tenured members of the organization were most likely to offer descriptions of learning characterized by the tenets of double-loop learning, and were most comfortable engaging in organizational dialogue that challenged organizational routines.

This raises serious questions regarding the viability of double-loop learning in organizational environments in which the average tenure of workers is 4.4 years and the average tenure of managers is 6.1 years. What is it about our systems of employment that generate such short organizational tenures, and are those systems preventing organizations from engaging in emergent change in response to environmental, political, and competitive stresses? Can organizational members whose tenure has barely provided sufficient time to learn organizational routines be expected to engage in dialogue that challenges those routines? Is it reasonable to expect that CEOs can engage organizations in dialogic, double-loop learning processes with average tenures of only 6.1 years? These questions could form the basis for further studies. Such studies might show that these characteristics are particular to the participant organization alone, or they may divulge a general pattern among organizations at large. If those patterns emerge, then studies could be devised to examine the strength of correlation, and if sufficiently strong, to understand why these patterns exist, and further, to understand how they may be thwarted.

Similar questions arise from the finding that educational level has a relationship with the way in which the members view the learning process. Doctoral- and bachelor-degree holders were more likely to engage in dialogue about that process, whereas master-degree holders tended to hold to single-loop learning processes. What is it about master-degree programs that encourage their graduates to believe that they now possess unshakeable knowledge, and to refrain from engaging in organizational processes that examine and challenge that knowledge? Is this phenomenon a peculiar characteristic of members of the participant organization, or is it a phenomenon that exists more generally? If it exists more generally, is it desirable? Should educators reexamine the epistemology of master-degree programs to include engagement in the

knowledge creation process, rather than as repositories of existing patterns of knowledge? Researchers may wish to engage these questions in future studies.

Conclusions

This phenomenological study, addressing the research question, *How do the communication processes in which organizational members engage support organizational learning that leads to a shared vision of quality?* is singular in its research construct, examining organizational communication processes through the lenses of the organizational learning theories of Argyris (2006) and Argyris and Schön (1996) and complexity leadership theory (UhlBien et al., 2008). The findings of the study reflect seldom-explored connections among education level and tenure among organizational members in the construct of their communication processes about leadership and quality.

Although it would be irresponsible to draw generalized conclusions from this phenomenological study, the complexity of the processes by which organization members engage in learning and by which they develop shared visions of quality would appear to be influenced by factors that have not been previously addressed. It also revealed that single-loop and double-loop learning processes can exist in an organization simultaneously, reflecting added complexity in sustaining genuinely adaptive learning processes. Further, the study lends support for the construct of complexity leadership theory, which is still in its development stages. Finally, the study provides support for the use of coordinated management of meaning theory (Pearce, 2007; Pearce and Cronen, 1980) for examining the communication processes in which organization members engage as they develop common understandings of their joint efforts.

The findings of the study revealed surprising relationships among organizational tenure and member education level with their perceptions of communication processes taking place in the organization, with their understanding of the learning processes in organizations, and with concepts of leadership within the organization. It also revealed the importance of emotional connection among organizational members to those processes in the organizational quest for quality. Heightened emotional connection appeared to be related to the genuine development of a shared vision of that quality, whereas emotional detachment appeared to be related to single-loop learning and defense of organizational routines.

Implications and Applications

The implications of this study branch in three directions. First, the traditional methods by which managers endeavor to engage organization members are called into question. Emotional engagement, which this study shows to have a marked relationship to learning, leadership, and communication processes, is rarely addressed in those traditional methods, with the exception of forestalling the emotions of fear and doubt. This is especially true in change management methods and efforts, and may be an indication of the general failure of implementations of quality efforts via purely rational methods such as TQM and Six-Sigma. This study reveals that a far wider range of emotional involvement is engaged via the socially constructed communication processes that support organizational learning and leadership, and that engagement of those emotions is a critical element of developing a shared vision among organization members.

Second, although length of service or tenure has been addressed many times, both with regards to such concepts as institutional knowledge and to organizational dynamics, this study may be among few that depict the range of development of the communication processes from new members to those who have been with the organization for decades. In an age when quests for organizational efficiency often translate into layoffs and early retirements, that which is decried is the loss of institutional knowledge. Is it possible that the very efforts to create organizational quality through downsizing actually lead to a self-destructive process in which the loss of institutional knowledge accelerates organizational demise? Are those efforts entrapped in cycles of single-loop learning that serve only to reinforce the organizational defensive routines that lead to the difficulties in the first place? If so, then there needs to be a reexamination of methodologies for engaging organizations in more constructive pursuits of quality, those that leverage the socially constructed knowledge of its longer-tenured members into efforts to engage the entire population of the organization.

Third, the relationship between level of education and epistemology bears closer examination. If future studies reveal similar relationships between a master-degree level of education and epistemologies that ignore the socially constructed nature of knowledge and the importance of emotional engagement, the implications of that relationship require further examination. If master-degree graduates are those who would lead organizations and yet are unable to acknowledge the socially constructed processes of adaptive and emergent leadership and of double-loop learning, then what is the hope that organizations at large can deal effectively with environmental, regulatory, and competitive stresses? There has been a hue and cry regarding the relevancy of MBA education among scholars and practitioners; is that hue and cry fueled by the very epistemology that forms the basis of that education?

This study does not purport to offer applications to deal with these questions. Rather, it serves to point the direction toward further research, specifically to validate the relationships that have been discovered here. The implications revealed in this study of the relationships of emotional engagement and epistemological understanding of socially constructed processes could be far-reaching. The next and final section offers some suggestions for the possibilities of that future research.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings suggest that there are many more avenues of research needed to shed additional light on those processes. First, additional phenomenological or ethnographic studies of organizations employing social-constructionist theories could serve to discover similar findings among organizations other than the one involved in this study. The findings of this study may well be peculiar to the participant organization, and therefore, although interesting, completely inapplicable to any other organization. However, to make that determination, there should be further studies of other organizations in which the communication processes related to quality are closely examined and classified. Such future studies may reveal that the participant organization is unique, or they may discover similar relationships; such future studies may reveal relationships that this study did not address. However, the implications of additional studies revealing similar findings about communication processes, organizational learning, and

leadership as a socially constructed process of interaction in a complex dynamic system could lead to a revolution of communication and leadership theories, and could lead, finally, to a socially constructed theory of organizational learning.

Should further phenomenological studies of the communication processes in organizations reveal similar relationships, then the statistical significance of those relationships and outcomes of organizational success (or failure) should be tested. Individual case studies could be developed from examination of those processes in other organizations, from which meta-analyses could reveal cross-functional and cross-industrial similarities (or differences). Such studies could serve as the basis for reexamining the epistemological nature of masterdegree programs in the organizational fields, from which additional studies of management education could be developed.

The findings of this study are compelling; they raise many questions about existing quality improvement methodologies as well as theory and practice of organizational communication, leadership, and learning. Let this study be the basis for future research that provides a foundation for development of management methods that account for the socially constructed nature of quality.

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