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How does communication between Administrators and caseworkers affect services to
consumers?

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By

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Abstract

How does communication between Administrators and caseworkers affect services to consumers?

By Lenin Espinoza

Master of Public Administration in Public Sector Management and Leadership

This paper investigates the impact of communication between Administrators and caseworkers on service delivery to consumers. The aim is to answer the questions “How does communication between administrators and caseworkers affect services to consumers?” and “How does this communication affect service delivery?” The organization investigated for this paper is a large not-for-profit health care provider. The caseworkers are the nurses in the organization and their administrators are the nurse managers or physicians. A literature review is conducted to determine the impact of communication in the organization, in leadership, in followership and in the service to consumers. The goal of this study is to investigate the issues and how they affect service delivery. The methodology sections discuss the research design, the participants of the study, the data collection method and the ethical considerations. Section 4 is a discussion of the background of the issue and section 5 is a recommendation on the proposed solution to the problem.

Section 1: Introduction

In both for-profit or non-for-profit organization, leadership is essential in achieving organizational goals. Leaders in for-profit organizations are known as managers while in not-for profit organizations leaders are known as administrators. Managers have employees while administrators have caseworkers to lead. Caseworkers are health care providers: General Practitioners (GP) Register Nurses (RN), other nurses and specialists. These leaders need to lead their subordinates to achieve organizational goals. Administrators must work-hand-in hand with caseworkers to better serve customers. Some conflict and misunderstanding may occur, but this should not impede everyone in achieving the goal. However, there are cases when caseworkers are busy providing care to patients and administrators/managers are looking for funding and the communication practices of the organization are ignored. In over time, everyone becomes too busy and interactions becomes rare. This leads to a lack of communication between leadership and caseworkers. Ineffective or insufficient communication among health care providers is known to increase the risk of adverse outcomes for patients and cause economic loss to health care facilities in the U.S. up to \$12.4 billion per year (Vermeir, et al., 2015).

The current study investigates the impact of communication between administrators and caseworkers and how it affects services to consumers. It specifically answers the questions “How does communication between administrators and caseworkers affect services to consumers?” and “How does this communication affect service delivery?” It will specifically examine these issues in a large not-for-profit health care provider in a city in Southern California. Researchers will ask administrators in the company if they allow caseworkers to make suggestions about their difficulties at work, and if action is taken to fix problems. Researchers will ask caseworkers about problems with communication between themselves and

the administrators, and whether or not the caseworkers feel they are being heard. The organization has more than 6000 staff and serves thousands of clients and patients each day. This organization receives positive comments from employee reviews because of its handsome benefits and compensation (Glassdoor.com,nd). However, there are also contraindications working for the company; one of these is the communication between administrators and caseworkers. The company is cited as having a large bureaucracy, which leads to problems with communication and this is experienced directly by employees as indicated by reviews. This paper postulates that this lack of communication between administrators and caseworker is detrimental to the organization as it may have negative impact not only to the organization but also in the way the caseworker serves their customers.

A host of literature and studies discuss the consequences of ineffective/insufficient communication between administrators and caseworkers notably in the hospital setting where quality of service is easily affected by communication issues. Dingly (2008), for example, claim that medical errors in nursing care delivery is primarily caused by communication issues between administrators (nurse managers or physicians) and caseworkers (nurses). Physicians are accused of bullying and looking down upon nurses because they see them as helpers and not professionals (Rose 2018). Nurses felt bullied and intimidated; hence even if they have questions or disagree with medication orders, they just keep quiet and do not to communicate their concerns. The quality of service is compromised which often leads to fatal consequences.

As one can see here, communication is essential to quality service delivery. Employees in the front line must understand the needs of customers and clients. It is through proper communication with customers and clients that employees connect with customers and send the message that needs to be sent. Nurses, for example, need to talk to patients about the

management of their illness, about proper medication, about foods that need to be avoided and about diet and nutrition. Without proper communication, the patient may fail to understand the elements of health management. This may lead to poorer health outcomes.

Since employees are the ones who deal with customers, the employees know what the customers want and what needs are their. All organizations are looking for ways to better serve customers and clients and how to keep them satisfied. Employees are the ones with access to information about customers' wants and needs. Employees need to discuss these things to their managers or administrators and create programs and practices that will better serve customers. It is challenging to bring constant improvement to a company where there is a problem with communication.

Communication also helps an administrator or manager perform his basic function as a manager -planning, organizing, motivating and controlling (David, 2011). Communication acts as a source of information which helps the manager in his decision-making process. It allows the manager to know about grievances of employees as well as helps the employees know about the policies of the organization. Communication is a key factor in building employees' attitude. Employees feel empowered when there is upward communication or when they can talk to managers about their work issues and give feedback (Lacob, 2017). If managers are able to listen to employees and respond to their request or suggestions, it leads to an increase employee job satisfaction, which allows them to perform better and serve the customers better.

The ineffective/insufficient communication between administrators and caseworkers adversely affects customer service delivery. This is so because the lack of communication leads to a decrease motivation among caseworkers and this decreased in motivation is reflected in their job performance as well as in dealing with customers or clients. For example, Madalina (2016)

investigated the link between lack of communication in organization and low motivation of employees. Her study revealed that when employee's motivation decreases due to lack of communication, their performance decrease and their relationship with customers is also affected as indicated by customer's survey. Another reason why communication can impact service delivery to consumers is because it can lead to low levels of job satisfaction. Studies reveal that the link of low job satisfaction among employees and lack of communication between managers and employees is strong and that the negative consequence is poor performance and customer dissatisfaction (Alhassan, Zukipil,& Ahmad 2017; Madlina, 2016).

The above discussion suggests that the type of communication between administrators and caseworkers could influence health service delivery to customers. This paper investigates this issue further. This paper investigates whether this communication between administrators and caseworkers indeed affects service delivery.

The main objective of this study is to examine the issue and develop an overall framework for understanding the type of communication and its impact in the organization and explain to stakeholders how this understanding could help them find solutions.

This study is significant in the field of Public Administration as there is need for scientific evidence regarding the impact of communication between administrators and caseworkers to guide researchers in their investigation of public administration leadership and provide useful information to public administration professionals that they can use in their practice. The findings of this study will provide a framework for understanding the factors that lead to communication breakdown and its impact on organizational performance. This will allow professionals and administrators alike to develop practices that will prevent this phenomenon or minimize its effects and find ways on how to improve communication practices.

Section 2: Literature Review

The Role of Effective Communication

The role of effective communication in organizational process and behavior is thoroughly discussed and investigated in literature. Lacob (2017), for example, argued that it is impossible to put organizational processes together (operation, human resource and service delivery) and achieve good results without proper communication. He also describes the lack of proper communication between leadership and organizational members as unhealthy, which can serve as a barrier to any initiatives that could improve the service to consumers. Employees will not be able to serve the customers to the fullest. Lacob (2017) also stated that organizations with poor communication culture have members that are always fighting and arguing. Their negative attitudes may be reflected in the way they deal with customers. Thus, an organization without well-established communication practices is doomed to fail.

Similar studies have supported Lacob's (2017) argument. Cullen and Gordon (2014), for example, investigated how the communication practices of nurse managers affect the organizational citizenship behaviors of nurses and nursing assistants. According to the authors, a communication gap between administrators and nurses prevent the nurse department from properly evaluating the needs of patient, which is crucial to the provision of quality care.

Kourkouta (2014) also emphasize, the importance of good communication in service organization. He stated that good communication between patient and nurses is essential in achieving quality healthcare outcomes. The provision of quality care does not only require knowledge of scientific principles but also the ability to establish good relationship with patients. Establishing rapport, creating a conducive environment, and educating patients require excellent interpersonal skills. This is possible if there is proper communication. Through proper

communication, the nurse is able to understand the patients and the experience they express. The nurse must have a sincere intention to understand what the patient wants and needs. Both doctors and nurses write on patient records and they both should be able to communicate to administrators regularly, and not only for emergencies. To provide the best care, the nurse must discuss his or her concerns with administrators. The interpersonal relationship that provides quality service therefore extends beyond the patient-nurse relationship to include the administrator nurse relationship.

Poor Communication and Service Delivery

While the studies in the previous section paid more attention on the positive impact of proper communication in organizations and among organizational members and leaders, some studies on the other hand, examine the negative impact of poor communication on service delivery. One of these studies is that of Vermier's (2015) which reveals that poor communication in the hospital can lead to a variety of negative outcomes. These negative outcomes include discontinuity of care, compromise of patient safety, and patient dissatisfaction about service delivery. It also leads to inefficient use of valuable resources because of unnecessary investigations and to taking too much of physician work time. This negative outcome is more seriously felt in not-for-profit organizations as they are always facing budget constraints. Another study revealed that poor communication among health care professionals notably between administrators (nurse managers or physicians) and nurses is one of the leading causes of medical errors and patient harm (Dingley 2008). Similar findings were reported in Rose (2018) research study. Rose (2018) reported that seventy percent of medical error cases always involve in communication failures between professionals involved in patient care. The most cited cause of these errors is communication issues with physicians. More than 50 percent

of the respondents in the study reported that they feel pressured into giving a medication of which they question the safety but felt intimidated by the physician - who is often head of the professional team – which causes the medical error. This intimidation makes them unable to effectively communicate their concerns.

Communication issues that affect service delivery to clients do not only involve oral communication. It also involves written communication. Reports indicated that failure to make a proper report to administrators can lead to medical errors (Slawomirski, Auraaen, & Klazinga, 2017). Administrators who do not put importance in nursing reports are putting the patients at risk of medical errors as seen in Slawomirski, Auraaen, & Klazinga, (2017) research study. The authors found out that about 90 percent of medical negligence is considered preventable errors. They recommended that all errors must be reported, including those that were intercepted before they have caused harm, errors that did not cause harm, and near miss errors. They are as important as the ones that did harm patients so they must be reported. This report is about written communication and the lack of it may compromise patient safety and health care delivery. Patient safety can only be understood if hospital administrators have an idea how errors occurred. Through proper reporting of caseworkers, administrators will be able to implement improvement initiatives and preventative measures.

Research also shows proper communication is considered a key factor in the provision of quality practice and patient safety. Hughest (2009), for example, recommends effective nursing communication practices to prevent patient harm due to nursing fatigue and shortage of nurses. These two concepts are related as when there is nursing shortage; nurses will have to work for extended hours, which causes nursing fatigue. They may work 12 hours a day, or more, in order to accommodate the high number of patients. Nelson (2012) reported similar cases in emergency

rooms where majority of the nurses are forced to stay for 24 hours in the hospitals because they are needed in the emergency rooms. Nelson (2012) added that some nurses may work up to 48 hours just because their colleagues left the hospital. This is an indirect effect of lack of communication between administrators and nurses. Jennings (2018) stated that nursing shortage is a result of nurses leaving the workplace because lack of proper communication between administrators and nurses (Jennings, 2008). When they leave the results are nursing shortage and nursing fatigue. Patient safety is at stake as a tired nurse may administer the wrong dose of medication. Hughest (2009) recommends better communication as a solution to this problem, which, in turn, and improves patient safety. The nurse must communicate the need to provide the appropriate number of nurses to her administrators. The nurse must also work hand-in-hand with hospital management to develop policies and procedures to increase patient safety. Reporting errors should be conducted regularly. Nurse should not hesitate to report errors because this is the only way to improve patient safety (Smeltzer & Cantrell, 2015).

The above studies and literature indicated that lack of proper communication indirectly results to service delivery and adversely affect consumers. If there is inefficient or insufficient communication between administrators and nurses, the administrators will not be able to know what is good for nurses and what is not (Cullen & Gordon, 2014). The administrators may assign heavy case loads to nurses. Nurses, who are intimidated and have no proper communication practices, cannot complain about the case load. With too heavy a case load, the pressure is too high for nurses; often they may continue working to finish their report instead of going home and resting. Case overload makes them feel stressful, anxious and restless. This compromises their effectiveness in the nursing workplace and leads to sub-optimal patient care. Nurses with higher case load tend to spend less time with each patient (Cullen & Gordon, 2014). It affects the time

that a nurse can allot to a variety of tasks. Nurses cannot properly divide their time to perform tasks, which can have a direct impact on quality of care. Heavy workload also adversely affects the nurse's decision-making capabilities. They tend to stay in the room for a short period, even though the patient feels that the nurse needs to stay for reasons of questioning and other matters. This in turn, leads to patient dissatisfaction. Studies have shown that workload affects patient satisfaction (Stanton, 2004). The higher the workload, the less likely the patient will be satisfied. It also reduces the time that a nurse can spend in collaborating and communicating with physicians, which adversely impacts the physician-nurse collaboration.

The most serious effects of lack of communication between case workers and administrators is negligence and accident because they cause serious harm to consumers (Stanton, 2004). Accidents happen in the workplace not because people are reckless or lazy, but by flawed systems hibernating in the organization and waiting for the right time to explode (Stanton 2004; Stimpfel 2012). According to Stimpfel (2009), nursing negligence is not always the cause of wrong administration of medicine. It is also caused by dysfunctional communication system. Storing two similarly packed drugs close to each other can lead to the wrong administration of drugs to the patient after some time. This is a communication system flaw, not nursing negligence. Stimpfel (2009) recommends that healthcare administrator, to improve patient safety, must implement programs and changes to communication practices through the collaboration among clinical professionals. Negligence is primarily caused by controllable elements, such as fatigue due to long hours of work shift, or faulty prescription writing. Administrators should promote reporting, involve communication with patients and the public, learn and share safety lessons and implement solutions to prevent harm. General meetings as

part of an effective communication process should always be conducted, and these meetings should include all the people involved in the pursuit of patient safety.

The impact of ineffective/inefficient communication can have on service delivery is also readily observable in the corporate setting. In a company, for example, the one who faces the customers is not the executives, but the employees. Schiff (2015) explains this by stating that the employees hear and see firsthand the needs and wants of customers. That is why the communication between the customers and employees is essential and must be done properly and effectively, for it will affect the whole organization. According to Schiff (2015), quality service involves making it easy for the customers to communicate with employees. This is great, especially when customers are essential for company growth, for the company needs an audience which is a critique for its work. An example of this is providing the customer access to customer service in which they can reach the employee immediately when they are going to provide feedback or ask for clarifications on the items they buy. Scott (2013) also reported the negative impact of lack of communication in business organization, and revealed that employees feel alienated and feel lost and without direction. They do not know their place in the organization. The lack of proper communication in the organization is reflected in the way employees deal with customers (Scott, 2013). Employees who are alienated do not know their vision and mission of the organization and when they talk to customers, they cannot provide excellent customer care as they do not know what the organization wants to do with customers. This leads to customer dissatisfaction and confusion.

Proper Communication and Employees

The literature presented previously highlighted that adverse effect of lack of communication between administrators and caseworkers. The following studies and literature

describe the benefits of communication to the organization notably to employees. Shields (2018) for example, posits that when leaders and administrators have proper communication, the level of employee engagement increased. Employee engagement refers to the passion employees have with their job (Annand, 2017). Hewitt (2016) defines employee engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by enthusiasm, dedication and absorption. It is expressed in a variety of manners, but its most common expression is love for the organization and commitment to it.

As indicated above, proper communication stimulates employee engagement. This is beneficial to both the organization and the consumers as engaged employees put discretionary effort to their work. Discretionary effort is the degree of effort employees could give if they wanted to, and it goes above the minimum effort they are required to do (Annand, 2017). For example, caseworkers need to entertain consumers until 5:00 pm. Engaged caseworkers will entertain consumers even after 5pm. Engaged employees will go the extra mile. Employees, even if they are highly satisfied with their jobs and have a high level of motivation, will not raise the level of their commitment and dedication to their work if they are not engaged employees. Annand (2017) also added that engaged employees are an asset to every organization. They give the company a long run advantage through their commitment. An engaged employee will entertain customers even if it is time to go home. An engaged caseworker will offer services to consumers just as enthusiastically on Friday afternoon as on a Monday morning. If non-profit organizations have engaged caseworkers, they will be able to serve the community well and will be able to achieve their objectives, missions, and visions. Similarly, Linjuan (2015) examines employee engagement as an outcome of the internal public relations. Specifically, it shows how employee engagement is associated with other outcome

variables of employee-organization relationships and the internal reputation that they have, and how it is driven by organizational contextual factors of authentic and determined leadership and transparent communication. This data was collected through her online quantitative survey of 400 employees who work for different companies and large corporations in the United States. The research finds that employee engagement and proper communication greatly affects the employee-organization relationship in a very positive way. It also results in high customer satisfaction as effective communication is also reflected in the way employees interact with customers.

When there is effective communication between administrators and case workers, it extends to the patients and client (PIF, nd). To ensure quality service, the organization needs to consider the characteristics of the consumers such as disability, language spoken, and health literacy. These factors are addressed when there is a well-established communication practices in the organization. The clients play the vital role for a company, which is why it is important to have better communication with them. The employees will be the ones to communicate to the clients, and it is be very important for them to have different techniques to cope up with the audiences' characteristics. These kinds of techniques should be taught by the leaders and must be implemented by the employees. For greater bonds between the employees and the clients which they will converse with, they must have a clear understanding of what they will talk about. While communication benefit the organization and the consumer, as it leads to quality service, it also determine the relationship between the clients and the company. The effectiveness of communication provides a great impact on the consumer relationship, especially when it comes to dealing and partnerships. There are a lot of things which affect the customer experience greatly -

the employee engagement, the online customer journey, the atmosphere on the company, and the way the employee talks to their executives and customers (Pieter, 2017).

These literature and studies show the positive impact of proper communication to service delivery and the negative impact of lack of communication between administrators and employees.

Communication and Leadership

Some authors stress the importance of proper communication in effective leadership (Nestorm, 2014). Administrators are healthcare leaders and their leadership is essential in quality healthcare delivery. A leader must have is excellent communication (Towler 2003). A leader needs to be an excellent communicator to be able to properly lead the organization. He is in the position to direct the organization down the path where it is heading. The leader also mentors' others who are experiencing hard times because they lack experience and skills set. The leader also inculcates skills by motivating team-members in order to help them in achieving their individual, their team, and their organizational targets. These things require the leader to become a good communicator. What is leadership communication anyway? Burnison (2012), describe it as not just about transmission of information, but it is the reason for their connection and aspiration. It is the most critical step for building alignment and executing strategies for the employees to follow. Yet it is often one of the most challenging leadership skills because it is easy to say, but hard to implement. Effective communication is far more than a one-way street which starts with the leader. It is the leader's highway of information which freely flows from every direction and in every circumstance, whether good or bad. Whether it is spoken or written, spanning words and actions, the messages must be conveyed both one's vision and the organization's purposes and values.

Kantz (2015) on the other hand describe communication as something in which leadership lives and breathes.

Effective communication with employees takes a lot effort, repetition, thoughtfulness, and - most importantly - needs to come from the hearts of every individual. It is something which business leaders seek to do whenever they can, rather than considering it a check box before getting back to the “real work” of running a business (Krantz, 2015). Conversing with someone is good but having an effective communication is better. It is not something that can be mastered and easily done; somehow it is harder than we will ever know. It does not only affect the speaker but mostly the listener. Creating a better relationship with others requires deep understanding about the effectiveness of communication and it is better if it is taken to the heart. Employees also have to power to voice their opinions; this shows that they are really into their work, which is for the betterment of the company.

As stated above, administrators are leaders and as Flavin (2015) has indicated, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively is among the most essential qualities of being a strong and successful leader. Good communication skills help the leaders understand others and enables them to build trust and respect among their followers and peers as they foster the environments where creative ideas and problem-solving skills flourish, strong and effective communication skills are also essential in inspiring others and motivating them, so others can achieve their full potential for themselves. Despite the important roles that communication plays in building and establishing successful organizations, many people in leadership positions overlook this critical ability. They may put less priority on establishing proper communication with employees and staff.

The importance of communication in leading and managing people is also pointed out by Vaccar (2017), in his article “Effective Leadership by Communication”. If there is no effective communication, then there is no effective leadership. This is what the author implies. Vaccar (2017) describes a leader as a person who knows how to influence others in order to reach objectives or achieve certain goals. Leaders do not force their followers to change; they help followers change. Leaders also do not force people to follow; instead they invite them on a journey. Vaccar (2017) argues that the role of communication in the process of influencing others is immense.

Newstorm (2014), provided a support on Vaccar (2017) position, he stated that leadership and effective communication are inseparable elements. Leadership is high on the list when it comes to organizational success. A strong leadership leads employees to achieve organizational success. A leader drives and directs employees and he can only do that if he knows how to communicate. Leaders to become effective must have excellent communication skills and must have a deep understanding of the mechanics of sending and receiving information. In his book, *Organizational Behavior*, Newstorm (2014) states that effective communication and effective leadership are closely connected or intertwined. All leaders, whether a corporate CEO, or an administrator of a non-profit organization, must be skilled communicators. They must know how to excellently communicate in countless relationships not only within the organizational level, but also in local groups and communities, and sometimes on a global scale. Leaders must think with clarity, must express ideas, and share information within a variety of audiences. Leaders must know how to manage rapid flow of information within the organization and among customers, business partners, and other stakeholders.

The importance of communication in leadership is also reported by Mayfield and Mayfield (2017) in their article “Leadership Communication: Reflecting, Engaging, and Innovating”, in which they articulated that leadership can never become leadership unless the element of effective communication is included. Management literature tend to promote and emphasize the psychological viewpoint of leadership, which is individually-centered communication, and always include a formal position of power. The goal of leadership is to add value to the organization, and this can only be done if the leader is able to communicate his plans to all members. Other disciplines, according to Mayfield and Mayfield (2017), underscore discursive leadership, where leaders arise through socially constructed reality. This viewpoint emphasizes shared, fluid leadership communication processes and stress their discovery and impact on followers, consumers, and shareholders. The authors argued that leadership creates and manages meaning, and that communication is essential to meaning creation and its management. The authors also added that leadership communication interprets reality, and forms its shared perception. Furthermore, the authors indicate, leadership is only exercised when thoughts expressed in talk or action is recognized by followers as capable of progressing performance tasks or problems which are vital to them in their accomplishment of their individual task. This suggests that when leaders do not communicate with subordinates, there will be no accomplishment of task and when there is task are not accomplished, the group or organization is lost and futile.

The Relationship between Communication, Job Satisfaction and Service Delivery

Alhassan, Zukipil, and Ahmad (2017) studied the relationship of organizational communication and job satisfaction. They found a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational communication. If there is proper communication between leadership and

employees there is higher job satisfaction level, when there is a lack of proper communication job satisfaction level is very low. A similar study was conducted by Madalina (2016). She finds that by enhancing the organizational communication, job satisfaction is enhanced or improved. The author investigated the connection between the organizational communication and job satisfaction of employees and assumed that a presence of proper communication determines their motivation, increase of their productivity and improves their individual and organizational performances. The author finds that there is a positive link between the organizational communication and job satisfaction. She states that the participants of the study who are employees of various organizations saw the presence of proper communication in the workplace as a motivating factor, especially when it is open communication. When there is a lack of proper communication in the company, employees tend to be less satisfied with their job. When leadership establishes proper communication practices, the team members are likely to be satisfied with their job. This improves their performance. The lack of effective communication, on the other hand, adversely affects job satisfaction.

Another term for lack of proper communication is under-communication. There are many reasons why it brings problems into the company. The first reason is because it brings uncertainty and doubt. It causes the employees to question their job and their responsibilities, their standing in the company, and even their own value and self-perspective. It causes them to wonder whether the company's leaders know what is going on. A lack of proper communication undermines employee confidence and elevates stress. If employees never feel secure in their roles, then they will never have the confidence which they need in order to succeed. Eisenhower (2015) states that under-communication causes havoc on the productivity of each employee. And when productivity begins to run roughly, it will not take long before it affects the customers

themselves. That is because customers do not receive the product or promises which they request which causes them to be pushed from department to department.

Other studies have shown that job satisfaction can predict customer satisfaction (Pieters 2017; Landis 2015; Taylor, 2004). When there is high level of employee job satisfaction, there is also a high level of customer satisfaction (Landis, 2015). In a study by Zablah (2016) for example, he finds that there is a strong correlation between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. He claims that the construct (the relationship of employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction) has been investigated thoroughly in many management and business studies. Scott (2013) also discusses the link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction. She tackled the six elements of customer service and identified effective communication as one reason why employees and customers are satisfied. Thus, if the lack of proper communication leads to low employee job satisfaction levels, then customers are indeed adversely affected.

The relationship between job satisfaction and job performance is strong as indicated by the studies presented in this section. They show that employees who are satisfied with their job perform better than employees who are not satisfied. If employees perform better, then they serve customers better. Though most of these studies and literature are discussed in the context of business organizations, they are nevertheless applicable to the research questions of this paper as they generally discuss communication, leadership, human interaction, employee performance and customer satisfaction.

The findings of the literature and studies presented above imply that a leader must establish proper communication practices with his followers to avoid misguiding everyone and adversely affecting even the way in which the employees serve clients or customers. Lack of proper communication between leaders and employees adversely affect clients and customers

whether the organization is private or public, for-profit or not-for-profit. This concept is emphasized by Hamlin, Sawyer, and Sage (2011). According to the authors, there is a flaw in the idea that managers and leaders from the corporate for-profit world should adjust and modify their strategy when they started leading non-profit organizations. This idea is based on the concept that non-profit and for-profit organization are entirely different, so leaders must adjust. When the authors examine and compare the leadership elements and the followership elements of both non-profit and for-profit corporations, the authors find no difference. The leaders can apply the same leadership strategies they know and become effective in both non-profit and for-profit organizations.

A similar study was presented by Uzonwanne (2015) where he compares the leadership style of leaders in non-profit and for-profit corporations in North America. He finds that there are no differences in leadership styles and strategization among leaders of non-profit and for-profit corporations.

The lack of proper communication between leaders and followers in the corporate world is also likely to be experienced in the not-for-profit sectors. If the consumers are adversely affected by lack of communication between leaders and organizational members in the corporate world, consumers in the non-profit sectors are also likely to experience the same fate if there is a lack of communication between administrators and caseworkers.

Improving Communication

As indicated by the above literature, communication should be effective for leaders and administrators alike to achieve organizational objectives. The lack of communication between an administrator and his subordinates should not continue as this is detrimental not only to the organization's welfare but also to consumer's welfare.

There are multiple ways to improve communication, and one way is to pursue active listening. Listening is the most important element of communication (Sapator, 2018). Whenever people communicate, they spend 60 percent of the time listening (Sapator, 2018). This means that the success of communication depends primarily on the listening skills of both parties. Apparently poor communication can be attributed to poor listening. Sapator (2018) reported that the average listening comprehension of a great majority of people is only 25 percent. This means that only one in four words is comprehended by communicators and the other three disappear.

Drollinger (2018) redefined active listening active, conscious, emphatic listening. This type of listening maximizes the capabilities of a person when talking with others, which in turn increases his communication skills. When communication skills are at a high level, the individual is more likely to succeed in everything he does. He will have an ideal workplace relationship, he will have positive minded friends and he will be likely to succeed in business. This is the importance of active, conscious and emphatic listening. One must also understand the barriers to listening in order to acquire this type of listening. Examples of these barriers are preoccupation, message overload, prejudgment, noise, and emotionally loaded language (Drollinger, 2018). If a leader is aware of these obstacles, he can maximize his active listening skills, hence improving his communication skills. This will help prevent the lack of communication among administrators and caseworkers.

This type of listening is a crucial skill that leaders and organizational members need in a diverse workplace. It is also an important skill to establish a working and functional relationship with everybody. In fact, Drollinger (2018) recommended active, emphatic listening to build relationships with major gift donors. Active listening is a crucial skill that administrators in the non-profit organizations should learn to acquire. Administrators need to develop mutual goals

with the donors, and this works best when the administrator has active and emphatic listening skills.

To conclude, the literature review presented in this paper suggests that the lack of communication between leaders and followers negatively affects the people they serve. Communication is vital to organizational success. The literature presented above suggests that in both non-profit and for-profit organization and in all types of organization-whether business or human service-communication is the primary key to success. It does not matter whether an organization is public or private, corporation or small business, a group or a community; if the leader and followers do not communicate well, anything they do will be doomed to failure.

Section 3: Methodology

In order to provide answers to the research question “How does communication between administrators and caseworkers affect services to consumers?”, the interpretative method will be utilized-notably the qualitative method of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. The interview is one of the primary methods of data collection in this study. The second method of data collection is documenting analysis through literature review. The organization is a large not-for-profit health care provider. It was chosen because, as a non-profit organization, it promises quality service to patients and is not immune to communication problem.

Two sets of interviews will be carried out: one for administrators and one for caseworkers. This method will allow the researcher to better measure the impact of communication problems with in the chosen organization and better understand how the communication problems affects service delivery. The administrators are either the nurse manager or the physician that heads the medical team and the caseworker are the nurses who work for nurse’s managers or members of a medical team headed by the physicians. The nurses are chosen for this study because they are the ones who carryout service delivery to patient. They are the ones who are directly in contact with patients and any communication issues with their administrators can impact their delivery of service as indicated by the literature review.

The interview with the administrators will provide insights regarding the communication practices in the organizations from the perspective of the manager. The interview with the manager allows the researcher to determine if there is upward communication, which is an indication that there are proper communication practices with in the organization in place. The interview with the managers will also allow the researcher to assess the communication practices of the managers when sending a message to caseworkers. The interview with the caseworkers

will reveal the type of communication practices in the organization. This second set of interviews will assess if there is a lack of communication and how the lack of communication impacts the caseworkers-notably in their service delivery to clients. The researcher will use purposive sampling. The caseworkers or nurses in the organization will be interviewed about the communication practices in the organization and those who reveal a lack of communication in their workplace will be chosen along with their administrators as participants for the study. This paper aims to interview 20 nurses and their corresponding administrators (nurse managers or physician).

The interview will be conducted in three ways depending on the availability and preference of the participants and the purpose of the interview. The first type of interview will be face-to-face. This will require the researcher to visit the organization and interview the participants. If this face-to-face interview is not possible, a video call interview will be conducted where the researcher will ask the participants if they are willing to be interviewed through video call. The third type is telephone interview which will be used if the first two types are not applicable.

The researcher will use structured questions for the interview designed to give clear answers to the research question of this paper. The questions will be direct, to the point, simple, and short. This will ensure the validity of the answers and the interview will measure what it intends to measure. The interview will involve electronic recording capturing all answers on video or voice recording. This will allow easy evaluation and assessment of the participants answers.

In this study, the impact of communication between administrators and caseworkers is only focused on a large not-for-profit health care provider. The lack of communication

specifically focuses on the lack of upward communication and the inability of administrators to listen to caseworkers and respond to their requests or suggestions.

Ethical Considerations

The study will probe into the problems in communication and their effects on the service delivery of caseworkers and administrators in a not-for-profit health care provider. Prior to the conduct of the study, pertinent permissions from agencies and the administrators of the organization will be sought. Participants of the study will be identified with the assistance of the administrators of the organization. Participation to the study in all its phases will be voluntary. The study will involve conducting in-depth interviews with caseworkers and administrators. These interviews will be done at the most convenient time for the participants. If the participants cannot participate in a face-to-face setup, they will be given an option to have the interview either through video call or through phone call. Similarly, the participants will be given the choice for the time in which the said interview will be conducted. In all the interviews, participants will be given an informed consent form declaring that they indeed voluntarily agree to participate in the study. The contents of the informed consent form will be explained by the researcher emphasizing that the participant can withdraw his or her participation at any point during the interview. The researcher will ensure that the entire protocol is clear with the participant before proceeding with the interview.

There is very minimal risk involved in the study. Participants may feel emotional discomfort regarding some questions. If participants will feel such, they will be informed that they have an option to not answer the question or totally withdraw from participating. The researcher will take responsibility on the appropriateness and legality of all the procedures in the conduct of the study. Should there be any deviations or potential violations of protocols and of

local or state policies, the researcher is obliged to report them and make due corrections whenever possible. The researcher will also uphold the confidentiality of the results and will exhaust all means to protect the identity and individual responses of the participants. Recorded interviews will be saved in a password-protected hard drive and will only be accessible to the researcher. Access to this information will also be given to regulating authorities for verification purposes. Individual identifiers such as gender, position, assignment, and similar information will not be given directly to the organization. Should the administration ask for these data, these will be coded and will not directly link the participant with the individual responses. Data will be stored and kept by the researcher until the results of the study have been either presented or published.

The respondents will not directly benefit in the conduct of the study. The societal benefit of the study lies solely and wholly on the potential of the study to propose changes and innovations in the way communications are carried out in the organization. Further, the study can contribute to the existing literature about the topic.

Section 4: Background of the Issue

Workplace communication is very important to many organizations because it allows them to be productive, efficient and operate effectively. If the workplace communication is ideal, employees can experience an increase in morale, motivation, productivity and commitment. This is especially true if they are able to communicate up and down the communication chain in an organization. Effective communication is a core function of leadership and leadership is essential to organizational success. When leaders are good communicators, the organizations have directions (Lee, 2018). However, there are cases when leaders and followers are too distant, and communication is not given priority. This happens in all types of organizations.

The subject is an example of a non-profit organization that can be impacted by the lack of communication between administrators and caseworkers. While the company maintains positive comments from review sites regarding compensation and benefits, there are also cons when working in the company. One of the most frequently cited cons in working for the company is bad communication. Past and current employees who posts reviews revealed that there is lack of communication (Glassdoor.com, nd). The company is cited as a large bureaucracy which leads to problems of lack of communication and this is experienced directly by caseworkers as indicated by reviews (Glassdoor.com nd).

The reviews were provided by employees who have worked for the organization and have a clear idea about the communication practices in the organization. Studies on the impact of lack of communication within this organization are rare or non-existent. It is likely the current study is the first of its kind in the organization.

Section 5: Recommendation

Proper communication should be set in place in all levels of the organization. This mission will be hard to accomplish if caseworkers cannot deliver quality services to clients due to the lack of communication. Proper communication is necessary to provide positive experiences to caseworkers and enable them to achieve high levels of job satisfaction and motivation which is then reflected in the way they serve their clients. If this happens without proper communication clients will become dissatisfied with the service and will feel that the provision of healthcare services does not meet the standards as promised by the organization. It is therefore important for administrators to pursue proper communication practices in the workplace. These include practices such as listening, paying attention, using understandable language, conducting meetings, one-on-one, emails, maintaining a receptive atmosphere, displaying confidence and seriousness, use of simple words, listening to one's team members, body language, acting out message and the use of appropriate voice, tone, and appropriate communication channels. If the administrator lacks any of these, the organization will suffer from lack of proper communication (Bosco, 2016). Also, communication is proper if the information shared among the company employees contributes towards the organization's commercial success, which means the connection of their thoughts turned the fruit of their meetings into reality. The proper communication involves not just the way a word is used but also covers other several skills such as non-verbal communication, the ability to understand one's own emotion, as well as the emotions of one which you are speaking to or communicating with, engaged listening, the ability to speak assertively in which one is able to get and keep the attention of the listeners so they to comprehend the desired thoughts (Guffey, 2008).

If the assumption of this study is supported by findings that the lack of communication adversely affects the service delivery of the organization, then it will be highly recommended to pursue programs that focus on improving communication within the organization. These include training the people involved to learn strategies to foster proper communication.

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Appendix

Sample Questions for the Research Proposition

Administrator:

1. Do you allow caseworkers to make suggestions regarding their difficulties at work?
2. How do you feel about employees making requests or suggestions about their work?
3. Do you call for a meeting when caseworkers want to talk about their concerns?
4. When suggestions are received from your employees, are they acted upon?

Caseworkers

1. Is there a lack of communication between you and the administrators? Why?
2. How does this lack of communication affect you personally?
3. How does it affect your work?
4. Do you believe that the lack of communication affects your service delivery with clients?
In what way?
5. Are you afraid of backlash from your superiors if you say bad things about the company?
6. When you report a problem, are you heard? Is there action taken to fix the problem?