

WHAT'S MISSING? THE GAP BETWEEN NON-ACADEMIC AND ACADEMIC
LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION SOURCES

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family, especially my husband who has always supported and encouraged me in my dreams and goals; whether it's to travel the world, continue my education, or something as simple as reading for fun more often, you have always been my number one fan. Without your constant reassurance and encouragement to better myself, I would not have been successful in my graduate work. Second, to my parents who have supported me in every aspect during my entire life. Without your hard work and encouragement growing up I would not be where I am today. You are both a constant inspiration in my life. Last to my sisters, Amy and Katie, who are my best friends.

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This study compares what we know through academic research about organizational leadership communication and what non-academic sources say about leadership communication. Moreover, this study seeks to understand if academic leadership communication research is effectively being translated to non-academic leadership communication advice and to what degree the advice given in the self-help books or blogs many leaders count on to enhance their leadership communication skills align with the findings from academic studies on leadership.

Based on grounded theory, a qualitative thematic content analysis was conducted. Six academic articles, two blog sites, and two self-help books about leadership communication were analyzed individually in an attempt to explore what themes emerged about leadership communication and the qualities of a leader. The five non-academic themes found in the blogs and self-help books were take care of yourself, embrace uncertainty, know who you are, practice interdependence, and be approachable. The four academic themes were two-way communication, organizational culture, confident leadership, and transformational leadership. The final themes from non-academic and academic sources were compared to see how they were similar and how they differed among sources.

Elizabeth Goering, Ph.D., Chair

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Introduction

A variety of studies have been conducted on leadership communication, particularly in determining what works and what doesn't work in leadership communication practices. The study of organizational leadership and communication between leaders and employees also has a dense academic history. Management and communication researchers alike have recognized the importance of leadership communication in achieving business success and organizational growth (Jiang & Men, 2017). In fact, leadership communication has been proven critical in many establishments and is one of the determining factors on whether or not an organization will experience success at all. Moreover, past research has strongly linked leadership communication to employee satisfaction, employee organizational commitment, employee trust, positive employee attitudes, and employee job performance within an organization (Madlock, 2008; Men, 2014b; Mikkelsen, York, & Arritola, 2015).

Furthermore, quality relationships between an employer and their leader and positive employee communication are critical elements that affect an organization's assets even beyond productivity and job satisfaction, such as an organization's public reputation and stakeholder relations. For example, in the increasingly digital world employees can discuss thoughts and opinions about an organization in a public domain, which may influence stakeholders and the public on whether or not they should continue a relationship with the employee's organization. Consequently, the impact of employees as vital communication assets in the organization and the function of leadership communication in creating positive employee outcomes have received increasing attention from scholars and professionals. If an employee is satisfied with the leadership

communication within in their organization, they are more likely to speak positively about an organization and therefore also increase the organization's reputation in the public (Men, 2014a).

Leadership communication has also proven helpful during times of crisis or change within an organization. A study by Jamal and Bakar (2017) surveyed public organization officers that were affected by a crisis and determined that charismatic leadership communication was the most important precursor to organizational reputation. Furthermore, the study determined that "employees who perceived a stronger demonstration of charismatic leadership communication by their leaders exhibited a more favorable evaluation of their organization's reputation and felt more apt to handle the crisis or were confident in the organization to handle the crisis (Jamal & Baker, 2017).

Likewise, Argenti (2017) determined that communication was the most critical component during organizational transformation and crisis situations. A leader with a strong strategic communication approach was more likely to exhibit success compared to a leader that did not have a communication strategy. Additionally, leaders that used communication to effectively communicate with their employees also had a greater occurrence of positive communication between employees (Argenti, 2017). Similarly, according to a study by Madlock (2008), "supervisors' communication competence was found to be the greatest predictor of employee job and communication satisfaction" (p.72).

In addition, employees assess whether to trust their organization by making inferences from their interactions with their supervisors or leaders (Jiang and Luo, 2018). Therefore, it is essential that organizational leadership is comprised of communicators

that can effectively lead an organization. When leaders effectively communicate their ideas, they gain the confidence of their followers or employees, which aids in communication satisfaction between the two parties and ultimately determines the success of an organization (Argenti, 2017; Madlock, 2008).

These academic studies have been vital to organizational success and in understanding the importance of leadership communication within an organization. It's no doubt that academic literature has allowed communication practitioners to understand the importance of leadership communication and the qualities it takes to become an effective leader. The academic studies in leadership communication set the framework for organizations to follow and for leaders to reference for advice when they might be questioning the next step. If a leader lacks effective communication skills or does not value communication, it can be detrimental to the success of an organization. Therefore, if leadership communication plays such a large role in determining an organization's success, it is pertinent that leaders know how to communicate successfully and have resources to reference for advice.

However, are these best practices for leadership communication effectively shared with the public in an easy to access way? Can a leader sitting at their desk simply Google leadership communication advice and find what they actually need to improve their leadership skills? Are the sources that are easily accessible actually similar to what academic studies say about leadership communication? If a leader seeking advice went to Amazon to buy a self-help book, would they really find the academically supported advice to lead their organization? Would a leadership blog discuss how a leader should communicate with their followers during times of uncertainty or the qualities of an

effective communicator? Are leaders able to access the information they need? How do these popular and easy-to-access sources vary from sources that communication scholars have proven through academic studies and research? Is there something missing?

This study compares what we know through academic research about organizational leadership communication and what non-academic sources suggest about leadership communication advice. Moreover, this study seeks to understand if academic leadership communication research is effectively being translated to non-academic leadership communication advice and to what degree the advice given in the self-help books or blogs many leaders count on to enhance their leadership communication skills align with the findings from academic studies on leadership. Specifically, this study uses thematic content analysis to compare the advice given in popular sources with the findings from academic studies of leadership.

Literature review

So how can a leader become an effective communicator? Based on previous research, leadership is recognized through communication in a way that contains an interpersonal and task component (Madlock, 2008; Men, 2014a). The effectiveness of a leader is likely the result of his or her communication ability through a variety of leadership theory components such as task-oriented communication, enthusiasm, and empathy (Jamal and Bakar, 2017). A successful leader will practice a balance of authentic, relations-oriented, task-oriented, symmetrical, charismatic, and transparent communication, as well as encourage employee engagement. A balance of these leadership communication skills helps determine whether or not a leader will find achievement in leading their followers. These different leadership communication styles include a variety of factors that help establish leadership communication success (Argenti, 2017; Jiang & Luo, 2018; Men, 2014a).

Overtime, leadership theories have been developed, polished, and revamped. As new theories enter academia, the old theories become less celebrated; however, still relevant in understanding leadership communication and the makeup of a good leader. Trait theory, behavioral theory, contingency theory, transactional theory, transformational theory, and servant theory are the stepping stones to comprehending effective leadership communication and the evolution of understanding leadership roles within an organization.

Trait theory

The qualities and skills that make a good leader have been long studied by historians and researchers alike. One of the oldest theories, historically referred to as the

‘great man’ approach to leadership, is the assumption that there are traits that are inherited that distinguish leaders from non-leaders; suggesting that leaders are therefore natural or born, not made. If a person was born with leadership traits, then they would become strong and successful leaders; it couldn’t be learned (Hoffman, Woehr, Maldagen-Youngjohn, & Lyons, 2011). However, as academic research has advanced, the ‘great man’ approach has been largely dismissed due to the fact that some traits are possible to learn on an individual basis and is more likely based on the society where an individual is born, how an individual is raised, their education, their parents, and a variety of day-to-day contributing factors (Hoffman et al., 2011; Wart, 2013). Suggesting that there are traits to be noted that make a good leader, such as authenticity and charisma; however, an individual is not simply born with them and then becomes a leader. Rather these traits are learned, developed, and practiced regularly allowing an individual to eventually become a leader in the right opportunity (Wart, 2013).

Authentic leadership. Authentic leadership continues to show up in academic research as an influential trait of leadership communication success. Authentic leaders are self-aware in understanding their strengths, weaknesses, values, and motives. Authentic leaders are also aware of how others perceive their leadership skills and use their skills to influence. Authentic leaders openly share information and their feelings, while also encouraging others to do the same (Jiang & Luo, 2018). Authentic leaders are also present and accessible for information (Argenti, 2017). According to Jiang and Men (2017), “Authentic leaders often incorporate a positive moral perspective that guides decision making and behaviors, such as honesty, altruism, kindness, fairness, accountability, and optimism” (p. 228). Authentic leaders do not conform to expectations

that are not consistent with their own beliefs and values, instead they stay true to their identity (Men & Stacks, 2014).

Charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership focuses on how a leader should disseminate information within an organization. Traits of a charismatic leader include being a good speaker, persuasive, interesting, effecting, attractive, and entertaining. A charismatic leader is comfortable when speaking and addressing an audience, which helps influence their followers. Furthermore, a charismatic leader is skillful, enthusiastic, motivational and humorous, able to be effective while speaking to a group of people, appeal to a group of people, understand what people want and need, and present ideas with confidence. In addition, this type of person is known to smile, has a pleasant and positive vocal style, and displays good body language (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010).

Behavioral theory

The problem with trait theory is determining the traits which every single effective leader has in common. Therefore, overtime a new theory became more widely recognized. Leadership researchers and communication scholars began to focus on understanding the relationship between a leader's behaviors and the follower's satisfaction or an employee's productivity. Theorists began to consider behavioral concepts in their analysis of organizational leadership. With behavioral theory, theorist believe that anyone can be a leader by learning the most appropriate behavioral response to any situation. So rather than learning or possessing certain traits, theorists started to think it was more about learning how to react and behave in specific situations (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011).

Task-oriented leadership. Task-oriented leadership typically falls under behavioral theory. Task-oriented communication is business assignment related and is significant in determining whether or not an employee knows what is expected of him or her in certain situations. Task-oriented communication focuses on goal accomplishments, which encourages employees to reach goals related to their own job roles and the overall organization's goals. A leader will communicate role expectations, clarify work tasks, share strategic plans, and emphasize achievement based on these specific goals or situations that arise within an organization (Mikkelson, York, & Arritola, 2015). A clear understanding of the strategy for employees at all levels of the company improves organizational success by aligning values and goals (Argenti, 2017).

Relations-oriented leadership. Under behavioral theory, relations-oriented communication or leadership focuses on the employee's feelings toward the organization, what benefits them as a member, and how they are valued. Relations-oriented communication takes an interest in employees and gives special attention to their needs. Relations-oriented communication includes behaviors such as encouraging employees, increasing the level of trust, respect, and camaraderie between the leader and employees. This might mean consulting employees for input on organizational decisions or providing recognition for employees for personal achievements. Depending on the behavior of the employee, leadership responds with some sort of acknowledgement (Mikkelson, York, & Arritola, 2015).

Active employee engagement. Similar to relations-oriented leadership in behavioral theory, active employee engagement is also important in determining leadership communication success. Leaders who encourage active employee engagement

through communication both with their subordinates or their peers have a higher success rate than those who limit communication (Jiang & Luo, 2018). Employee engagement through leadership communication allows employees to feel empowered and more willing to participate in team goals, they feel they are actually involved in the goal making process, and that the goals benefit them as individuals. In fact, employee engagement has been strongly linked to increased creativity within the workplace due to employees being more open to contributing new ideas or suggestions for their organization (Omillion-Hodges & Ackerman, 2018; Men & Stacks, 2014). Additionally, if an employee feels they have control or ability to make decisions, the more likely they perceive their leader and the organization's reputation as a positive one, which in turn helps public perception as well because employees will discuss their workplace in a positive manner outside of work and in the community. This improves stakeholders and community views on the organization, in the long run increasing growth and productivity (Men & Stacks, 2013).

Contingency theory

However, the problem with behavioral theory is that all successful leaders do not practice the same behaviors with their employees, rather it depends more on the situation, the organization, and its followers. Thus, focus switched to contingency theory, which suggested that leadership style was situational. Contingency theory argues that leadership acts are a result of system disruptions, such as a natural event for example a hurricane or earthquake, man-made event such as conflict or war, or even human-based behavior such as technological, political, or economic change (Fielder, 1995; Stough, 2010). Contingency theory suggests that to lead a company or make decisions is dependent on

any external or internal situation. A leader should apply their own style of leadership to the right situation in order to effectively lead; there is not a single best way to lead, rather leadership calls for a different approach to overcome or solve an issue depending on the specific problem at hand and how their organization is prepared to deal with that situation (Fielder, 1995).

Transactional theory

Another theory that communication and leadership scholars started to recognize was transactional theory. Transactional leadership is the relationship between leader and followers where leaders use rewards and punishments to influence their followers. This leadership style focuses on supervision, organization, and performance to keep followers motivated. Transactional leaders focus on increasing efficiency and setting goals to increase productivity in their organization. According to theorists, transactional leadership has four categories: contingent reward, management-by-exception-active, management-by-exception-passive, and laissez-faire leadership (Bass, 1985; Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016).

In transactional theory, if a leader focuses on a reward for positive reinforcement it is referred to as a contingent reward. Typically, a leader in this category gives rewards when goals are accomplished on time or even ahead of time. This influences followers to keep working hard or behaving in the correct manner. Management-by-exception-active is the degree to which a leader monitors the followers' performance and takes corrective action when needed in order to prevent mistakes from happening. If everything is going right, the followers will not hear from their leader. However, when things are going wrong or will go wrong soon, a leader will confront their followers. On the other hand,

management-by-exception-passive is the degree to which a leader takes corrective action after a problem has already occurred. A follower may not hear from their leaders unless a mistake has already been made and they have to take corrective action. Lastly, laissez-faire leadership is when a leader avoids duties and responsibilities that come along with being a leader all together. This type of leader may leave everything in the follower's hands or in the manager's hands, but they do not involve themselves in any leadership duties (Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016).

Transformational theory

Transformational leadership is now widely recognized in leadership academia and is the ability of a leader to influence or change the norms and values of their followers and inspire them to look beyond self-interests and instead focus on a collective purpose of the organization. Rather than a follower going to work and getting a job done, a transformative leader will encourage followers to help each other and the organization for the greater good. Transformational leaders have an emotional relationship with their followers and encourage followers to be the best they can be for the good of the entire organization. Transformational leadership has four key categories: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized considerations (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Bedi, Alpaslan, & Green, 2016).

Idealized influence is the degree to which leaders act as charismatic role models, representing the values of the organization in order to inspire their followers to live the values as well. Rather than “talk the talk”, these type of leaders “walk the walk” and inspire their followers to do the same. Inspirational motivation is the degree to which leaders express captivating visions that are appealing to followers, so their followers are

influenced to work hard to those goals. They share dreams and inspirations and how it will help everyone grow collectively, which inspires followers that it's possible to make a change and be better. Intellectual stimulation is the degree to which leaders challenge the existing norms, appeal to followers' reason, and encourage forward-thinking and creative solutions from the followers. These types of leaders are not afraid to change organizational norms and even encourage new ideas from their followers and actually show interest in their followers, suggestions, wants, and needs. Individualized consideration is the degree to which leaders attend to the needs of their followers and act as mentors or coaches for future development and self-actualization for followers. They don't just listen, but they follow through in helping their followers become better both in their current role and in their future goals (Bass & Avolio, 1993).

Symmetrical leadership. Symmetrical communication falls under transformational leadership because it focuses on open communication between an employee and a member of leadership, but also promotes a sense of mutual power. Symmetrical communication benefits the leader and the receiver. It promotes trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, network symmetry, horizontal communication, feedback, adequacy of information, employee-centered style, tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation (Men, 2014b, Men & Stacks, 2014). Symmetrical communication results in high level of trust, satisfaction, commitment, and a feeling of mutual control within an organization (Men & Jiang, 2016).

Transparent leadership. Transparent communication also falls under transformational theory because it promotes leadership communication that is honest. With transparent communication, employees feel like they know everything leadership

knows. Transparent communication directly influences employee trust with an organization. Transparent communication involves providing truthful information without holding details or substantial information back. Transparent communication allows employees to feel that the information is useful and met their needs as the receiver (Jiang & Luo, 2018). With transparent communication, employees feel that they can ask questions, provide feedback and leaders will be held accountable and follow-through with the promised they make to their followers. Furthermore, transparency builds trust and employees feel they are part of the conversation, not just a receiver (Argenti, 2017).

Servant leadership theory

Most recently servant leadership theory has been studied by communication theorists and added to leadership communication studies. In servant leadership the main goal of the leader is to serve, which is different from other leadership theories as it doesn't focus on the company or organizational goals. Instead of the followers working to serve the leader or the organization, the leader focuses on serving their followers. Practicing servant theory means a leader encourages their followers to learn and grow, which motivates followers to be better, work harder, and become more committed to the organization. Furthermore, servant leadership theory recognizes that the role of organizations is to create people who can build a better future for the whole, rather than become a selfish leader (Greenleaf, 1977; Parris & Peachey, 2013).

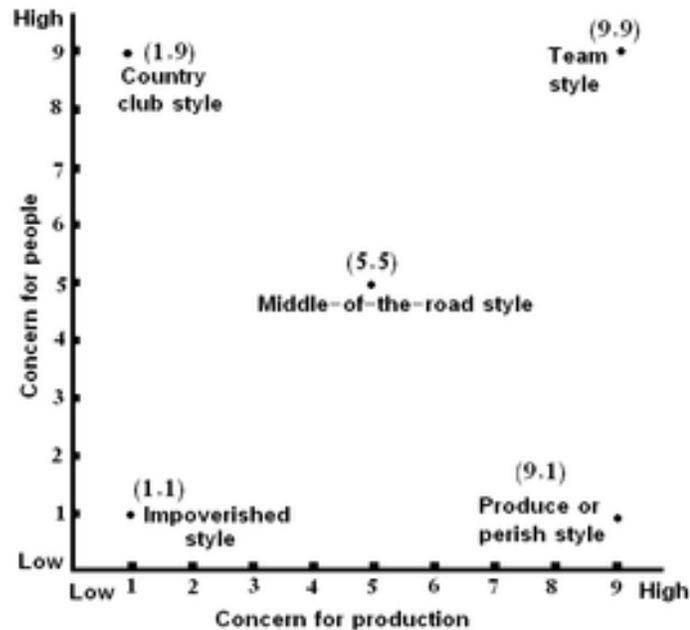
In 2002, Russell and Stone reviewed servant leadership and disclosed nine elements of servant leadership characteristics: vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment. Furthermore, they determined 11 interrelated aspects: communication, credibility, competence, stewardship,

visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation. In 2006, Barbuto and Wheeler conducted a literature review of servant leadership and developed a model which organized the features of servant leadership into five factors: altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship. Most recently in 2011, Van Dierendonck also presented a conceptual model, which identified six key characteristics of servant leadership: empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. These reviews highlight different components of servant leadership theory; however, they all focus on a leader's willingness to serve others and make others better rather than themselves or the organization, which therefore eventually helps the success of the organization as whole (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Understanding leadership as a role

Managers vs. leaders. Beyond theory, what else makes a leader? Blake and Mouton (1964) categorized managers and leaders based on how much concern they have for people verse how much concern they had for the task. A leader will have a greater concern for their followers, while a manager will have a greater concern for reaching goals and completing tasks. The managerial grid model, shown in Figure 1, originally identified five different leadership styles based on these concerns: indifferent, accommodating, dictatorial, status quo, and sound. Later paternalistic and opportunistic management was added (Blake & Mouton, 1994).

Figure 1: Blake Mouton managerial grid



Indifferent managers have low concern for people and production. Their main concern is protecting themselves. Accommodating managers have a high concern for people and low concern for production. Managers focus on their follower's comfort in hopes that it increases performance. Dictatorial managers have a high concern for production with a low concern for people. These managers usually enforce rules and punishments to reach goals. Status quo managers try to balance organization and follower's goals. Sound managers show high concern for people and production by encouraging teamwork and commitment. Paternalistic management will vary from accommodating to dictatorial, which means they are supportive and encouraging but all don't want followers questioning their decisions as a leader. Opportunistic managers place their own needs first and move around the grid depending on what style will benefit them in that situation. Based on the managerial grid, leaders and managers should use different leadership style, leaders are most effective when both concern for people and

production are high, but a manager may need to use a different style on the grid based on their own tasks (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Blake & Mouton, 1994).

Traditionally, managers are administrators who set budgets and monitor projects while leaders get organizations and people to change. Management is a function while leadership is a relationship between leaders and followers that can energize an organization (Maccoby, 2000). Both leaders and managers should be able to recognize what needs to be done, align people and resources, be active in their role, and focus on success. However, while a leader sets direction, a manager plans and budgets; when a leader is aligning people, a manager focuses on organizing and staffing; while a leader is motivating, a manager is problem solving; and lastly while a leader is focusing on the context of a situation, a manager focuses on controlling the environment. Both are important, but different roles (Young & Dulewicz, 2008).

Challenges leaders face

No matter the success of leadership communication styles or organizational communication strategies, leaders will inevitably still face challenges within their organizations. Much academic research has focused on organizational crisis and organizational change as the two biggest challenges leaders face. However, there are still a variety of challenges leaders face on a daily basis as well. These challenges have strongly linked leadership communication to be a determining factor on whether or not an organization will find success during these challenges (Argenti, 2017; Jamal and Bakar, 2017).

Organizational crisis. In a study by Jamal and Bakar (2017), results indicated that during a crisis a leader should engage in communication to effectively alleviate the

crisis impact and strengthen organizational response. Furthermore, the study showed that a leader who demonstrates communication behaviors such as being positive and empathetic during crisis influences perceptions of the organization. Mazzei and Ravazzani (2015) determined that communication from organizational leadership during times of crisis has an effect on the perceptions of individuals and can increase or diminish the effects of the crisis on the company itself. The authors also added that even if leaders and organizations “develop deep trust relationships with their employees before a crisis occurs it is always necessary that they implement factual communication and concrete actions to give credibility and consistency to explicit messages.” According to Brumfield (2012):

If proper leadership is essential to good business, it is crucial during organizational crises. More importantly, proper leadership must be in place before the crisis arrives. Although numerous meanings and understandings of leadership exist, the focus must be on leadership as a process of influence: over the organization as a whole, specific aspects of the organization aligned with a leader’s responsibilities and over other members within the organization. (p. 47)

Organizational change. In order to stay relevant, change is inevitable at some point for every organization due to a variety of factors such as globalization, advanced technology, or customer dissatisfaction. However, despite the need for change, organizations continue to fail in their efforts to undertake change, which results in negative employee attitudes, reduced productivity, and little to no revenue growth. Research has continuously pointed to employees’ lack of commitment to change being dependent on the involvement of leadership (Attaran, 2004; Seo et al., 2012). In a study by Seo et al., (2012) researchers sought to understand the relationship between leadership and their employees’ responses to change. Particularly, how committed employees are to

change and their behaviors toward change based on leadership interaction, such as communication. Their results indicated that leadership behavior was a critical predictor of successful organizational change and whether or not an employee would have a positive or negative response to the change.

Furthermore, a study by Sharif and Scandura (2014) surveyed 199 supervisor-subordinate pairs to understand the relationship between ethical leadership conduct during organizational change and employee trust in the change being made. Results showed that ethical leaders foster positive subordinate attitudes toward change with communication and behaviors. The behaviors of ethical leaders serve as social cues regarding the change context and positive job attitudes. Additionally, their study indicated that employees who perceived their leaders to be ethical were more likely to be satisfied with their job, were better performers, and also engaged in positive behaviors with others in the organization during times of change. Similarly, in a study by O’Kane and Cunningham (2012) leadership stability and humility was indicated as valuable during organizational change to improve levels of trust, honesty, and positive conversations between employees and leadership.

Other leadership challenges. Beyond organizational crisis and change, according to the Center for Creative Leadership (2016) the top six challenges leaders face include: developing effective managers, inspiring others, developing employees, leading a team, guiding change, and managing internal stakeholders, all of which have ties to effective leadership communication. More specifically, according to an article in Forbes the top leadership challenges are creating a shared purpose, measuring ROI of soft skill development (leadership development), identifying and communicating what success

looks like, building trust, and perspective management (Boss, 2016). The same article highlights the importance of effective leadership style and communication being a catalyst to combat these challenges and find organizational success and growth.

Where leaders seek communication help

With the abundance of academic leadership communication research discussed previously and the significance of leadership communication to an organization's success, it seems anyone looking for advice on leadership skills might be able to help themselves to a few tips and find success or improve their leadership communication skills by turning directly to this extensive body of research. However, with the ease of searching for advice online with a simple Google search or similar and the plethora of leadership self-help books being published, it's likely some leaders seeking advice turn to help from non-academic literature, such as top selling books or self-help leadership blogs, rather than academic sources.

In 2018 the Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness named the "Top 100 Socially Shared Leadership Blogs of 2018." The blogs are ranked by the total number of social media shares that each leadership blog site received during a period of time, this particular article highlighted March 11, 2017 to March 12, 2018. The shares were added up from social media sites including: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. In total, of the 100 blog sites highlighted within the article, there were 13,255 blog posts written about leadership. Of those posts, there were 1,204,293 different shares across social media platforms. Suggesting that at least 1,204,293 posts were being shared on social media from various people about leadership and what was being discussed on these leadership blogs. Additionally, if a leader visits Amazon's book listing and chooses

the business category, then chooses management and leadership, and finally narrows it down to just leadership, there are over 30,000 results for leadership related books. From that list, it can be narrowed down again to the best seller's list and looking at only the top 20 on the best seller's list, there are over 55,000 reviews from readers, suggesting that at least 55,000 people read or attempted to read those books on leadership for advice.

Therefore, it seems pretty clear that there is plenty of non-academic leadership advice easily available to anyone with access to the Internet and who wants to find advice on leadership. It begs the question, are leaders missing important information from academic sources about leadership communication if they are only looking at non-academic resources? Is there a gap between academic leadership communication skills advice and non-academic leadership communication skills advice? How are they similar? How are they different?

In summary, we know leadership communication is vital to an organization's success. Academic sources suggest that with a balance of communication styles and tactics, a leader can find a way to effectively communicate with their followers. In times of crisis or organizational change leadership communication is extremely important and may encourage leaders to seek help on communication advice. However, with the ease of searching online or buying a self-help book from a best-seller's list, leaders might turn to self-help blogs or books rather than academic sources for advice. Therefore, it's important to understand if academic leadership communication research is effectively being translated to non-academic leadership communication advice.

This study aimed to provide an understanding about the degree to which advice given in self-help books or blogs that many leaders count on to enhance their leadership

communication skills, align with the findings from academic studies on leadership communication and where there might be differences.

Consequently, the following research questions were posed:

RQ1: What themes emerge in academic and non-academic leadership communication sources?

RQ2: How well does advice about leadership communication found in non-academic sources align with findings supported by academic research on leadership communication?

RQ3: What are the key differences in advice about leadership communication presented in non-academic sources vs. academic research on leadership communication?

Method

Based on grounded theory, I conducted a qualitative thematic analysis to compare what academic research says about how to be an effective communicator as a leader to what non-academic leadership advice says about leadership communication. I analyzed six academic articles, two blog sites, and two self-help books about leadership communication individually in an attempt to explore what those sources were discussing about leadership communication and the qualities of a leader. Originally, I was going to use a “pattern matching” approach to create a “predicted pattern” from what academic research says about leadership communication and use that to analyze what non-academic sources should be saying about leadership communication. Then, my goal was to compare what non-academic sources actually discussed both inside and outside of the “predicted pattern”. However, I ultimately decided that analyzing each source separately, and including individual thematic analysis of academic sources as well, would allow a greater exploration and thematic content review on an individual basis and to see what each source uniquely offered about leadership communication. I was also able to explore whether or not academic sources, like I was exploring non-academic sources, were missing information about leadership communication that non-academic sources presented. I determined this was the best way to gather as much information about leadership communication advice and analyze on an individual basis before comparing non-academic and academic sources.

Sampling

Blogs. Blogs were chosen from a list of the “Top 100 Socially-Shared Leadership Blogs of 2018” by the Center for Management and Organization Effectiveness (2018). As

mentioned previously, the list ranks leadership blogs by the total number of social media shares that each leadership blog site received during a period time, this particular article highlighted March 11, 2017 to March 12, 2018. The two blogs chosen were based on their specific focus of leadership communication, number of leadership posts per year, and number of engagements with the blog from visitors (see Table 1). Although there were other blogs on the list that had higher engagements or posts per year, I found it important to make sure there was a specific leadership communication focus in each blog based on my study, rather than general leadership skills. To do this, I visited each blog on the top 100 list, I started with number one, and continued until I found two blogs with a leadership communication focus. In order to make sure they had a leadership communication focus, when I visited each blog I made sure there was a category within the blog that was specifically labeled ‘leadership communication’ or ‘communication’ and then I was able to click on it and see articles that included leadership communication topics.

The first blog I found that had a category of leadership communication within their blog was “ccl.org/blog”, this blog was ranked number 4 on the top 100 list. This blog was created by the Center for Creative Leadership, which provides leadership development training for organizations all over the world. According to the homepage of their website they believe leadership development drives results. According to ccl.org:

When it’s done right, leadership development transforms individuals, teams, organizations, and society. Leadership development is all we do – and we do it right. As our world-class rankings confirm, we also do it better than everyone else. Informed by decades of research and practical experience with tens of thousands of clients around the globe, our expertise drives measurable and enduring results.

Upon visiting their blog, a leader can choose topics or categories, one of the topics was communication which features blog posts about how to communicate and influence followers, how to coach and mentor others, or how to offer feedback or advice. Based on these topics, I decided to add the blog to my analysis.

As I continued surveying the top 100 list, the second blog I found that had a leadership communication category specifically labeled on their website was “leadchange.com”, which was number 15 on the top 100 list. This blog was created by Lead Change, which is owned and operated by Weaving Influence, Inc, a global media platform that shares ideas and encourages leaders to grow. According to Lead Change’s ‘about us’ section on their website Lead Change is:

A leadership media destination with a unique editorial focus on driving change within organizations, teams, and individuals. It seeks to inspire readers to boldly step up and serve wherever and whenever leadership is needed, providing real and concrete advice on how to grow. Lead Change is written for and by top leadership and business professionals around the world.

After navigating to their blog, a leader can choose a category. I chose leadership and then clicked on communication as the topic to analyze within the site.

Based on posts and number of engagements on each blog (Table 1) it can be suggested that many people were visiting these leadership blogs for advice and relate to this study. The number of blog posts or articles within each blog were examined based on saturation sampling. In total 20 blog posts were analyzed from “leadchange.com” and 23 blog posts were analyzed from “ccl.org/blog” to reach saturation about leadership communication.

Table 1: Blogs, posts, and engagements

Blog	Leadership posts per year	Number of engagements
CCl.org/blog	779	67,712
leadchangegroup.com	252	23,418

Self-help books. The two self-help leadership books that were analyzed were chosen based on Amazon’s best seller’s list about business management and leadership. When I visited Amazon books website and chose best seller’s, I was then able to pick a category. I chose business management and leadership, then I narrowed it down to management and leadership, and ultimately chose the subcategory leadership. Before choosing the self-help books, I also checked to see if the books mentioned communication skills within the main table of contents. The two books chosen from the lists were based on the highest number of copies sold, which suggests many people are buying these books for advice on leadership skills and communication advice and if they included communication within the main table of contents.

The first book I chose to analyze was the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen Covey (2013), which was ranked number one on Amazon’s best sellers for business leadership. Stephen R. Covey is a renowned leadership authority, family expert, teacher, organizational consultant, and co-founder of FranklinCovey Co. He is author of several international bestsellers, including the *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, which has sold over 20 million copies. He was

named one of TIME Magazine's 25 Most Influential Americans. Although there are many editions of the book, I chose the most recent one at that time. According to Amazon, the book can transform “the lives of presidents and CEOs, educators, parents, and students—in short, millions of people of all ages and occupations have benefited from Dr. Covey's 7 Habits book. And, it can transform you.” Upon looking at the book preview, I searched for “communication” within the book and saw that it was mentioned in the table of contents.

The second book I chose to analyze was *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.* by Brené Brown (2018). Dr. Brené Brown is a research professor at the University of Houston and has spent the past two decades studying courage, vulnerability, shame, and empathy and is the author of four #1 New York Times best sellers. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts* was ranked number two on Amazon's best sellers for business leadership right behind *7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*. According to Amazon:

Bestselling author Brené Brown has spent the past two decades studying the emotions and experiences that give meaning to our lives, and the past seven years working with transformative leaders and teams spanning the globe. She found that leaders in organizations ranging from small entrepreneurial startups and family-owned businesses to nonprofits, civic organizations, and Fortune 50 companies all ask the same question: How do you cultivate braver, more daring leaders, and how do you embed the value of courage in your culture?

After looking at the table of contents within the book, part one focuses on communication and I determined it would be relatable to this study. Each book was analyzed in its entirety to explore content about leadership communication and assess emerging themes.

Academic articles. The six academic articles I analyzed were chosen using EBSCO and ComAbstracts (CIOS) to create a list of articles that focused on leadership

communication skills within the study, were conducted in the United States, and were published in a communication, business, or leadership academic journal during 2008 through 2018. In both EBSCO and CIO I searched 'leadership communication', with a filter that only allowed articles published from 2008 to 2018 in scholarly journals. Then, I clicked on each article and removed studies that were not based in the United States or were not published in a communication, business, or leadership academic journal. If the article was based in the United States, published in a communication, business, or leadership academic journal, and included leadership communication as a main topic it was added to the list. Based on that criteria, a list of 13 articles was created. The articles were then sorted by date published and based on random sampling every 3rd article was picked for analysis until saturation was reached. Originally, I planned to analyze five articles, however during analysis I ended up with six based on saturation. The six articles analyzed include: "Strategic Communication in the C-Suite" (Argenti, 2017), "Crafting Employee Trust: From Authenticity, Transparency to Engagement" (Jiang and Luo, 2018), "Measuring Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: Why isn't Charisma Measured"? (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010), "The Impact of Leadership Style and Employee Empowerment on Perceived Organizational Reputation" (Men and Stacks, 2013), "The Effects of Authentic Leadership on Strategic Internal Communication and Employee-Organization Relationships" (Men and Stacks, 2014), and "Communication competence, leadership behaviors, and employee outcomes in supervisor-employee relationships" (Mikkelsen, York, and Arritola, 2015).

Analysis

According to Hay (2005) coding is a grounded theory method in which data is categorized for common themes or ideas. Since my study focused on leadership communication, I focused on themes that emerged related to leadership, communication, and leadership effectiveness while analyzing each source. I had decided to analyze each source separately for recurring themes and code them using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I chose to analyze the self-help books first as I knew they would be the most extensive to explore. I started with *7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen Covey. As I read through each chapter, I would note some themes or patterns that seemed to be emerging related to leadership, communication, and leadership effectiveness. Particularly if a lot of information was shared about leadership, communication, or leadership effectiveness I would highlight the information in the chapter. Additionally, if a topic was reiterated or the author shared a lot of examples about a topic related to leadership, communication, or leadership effectiveness, I noted it. Then, I would go back through those notes and code the common themes within the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet before moving on to the next chapter. This allowed me to get a bigger picture of the message within the chapter and then use that to code the themes that emerged related to leadership and communication. At first, it was overwhelming with the amount of different ideas and themes that were presented in each chapter; however, reading through the chapter first and then going back allowed me to get the overall message and see the connection within the content. If the topic was related to advice about leadership, communication, or leadership effectiveness I noted it. This allowed me to reflect on each chapter to code the information presented as a whole.

I ended up with 33 initial codes from this source. I analyzed *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.* by Brené Brown next using the same chapter-by-chapter method as previously stated and ended up with 17 initial codes (see Table 2 for example coding process).

Then, I continued by analyzing the two blogs. I started with “leadchangegroup.com” and began by analyzing the most recent blog post in the leadership communication topic and worked my way through to older posts. First, I read through each individual blog post in its entirety while mentally noting common themes related to leadership, communication, or leadership effectiveness. Then, I went back through the post and coded the overall themes that emerged related to leadership, communication, and leadership effectiveness. Similar to reading the self-help books and looking at the overall themes of each chapter, each blog post was also analyzed in this way. According to Holton (2010), saturation is reached through constant comparison of themes when no new ideas emerge during the analysis. After reading and analyzing 20 blogs posts I had reached saturation and had 15 initial codes. Next, I analyzed “ccl.org/blog” using the same method as the previous blog analysis. After reading 23 blog posts, I had reached saturation and had 14 initial codes.

Last I analyzed the academic articles for initial codes. Using my sampling method, I worked through the list of articles. Originally I proposed analyzing five articles or until I had reached saturation. I ended up analyzing six articles to make sure saturation was reached. Similar to analyzing the self-help books and blogs, I read through each article in its entirety before coding in the Microsoft Excel document. During my first read through of each article I made mental notes of each theme as it emerged related to

leadership, communication, and leadership effectiveness. The next read through I noted each theme with a highlighter. Last, I coded each article based on the themes that emerged about leadership communication. This allowed me to explore the overall message of each article. After analyzing the six articles, I had 15 initial codes.

After, I had coded all my sources, I was left with 79 initial codes from my non-academic sources and 15 initial codes from my academic sources. Although this number seemed drastically different, when comparing academic versus non-academic initial codes, I knew a lot of the themes were similar within the non-academic sources, but each source had a different way of presenting the information. Conversely, the academic themes were much broader in what they entailed. According to Hay (2005) coding for qualitative research is a two-step process beginning with basic coding to determine an overall theme, then diving deeper into the findings to interpret more specific patterns and themes. Using the lumping method, I started my second level coding process. I combed through the themes of the non-academic and academic sources separately and using copy and paste within Microsoft Excel, I started narrowing down initial codes into related categories. After going through the data and coding, recoding and reorganizing I was able to create general themes or categories. I ended up with five non-academic second level themes and four academic second level themes. The secondary codes or themes were built by the initial codes. The code chart is in Appendix A and B. Taking an overall look at the themes of each source allowed me to categorize the overarching ideas into smaller categories. If I had jumped to narrowing down my themes in the beginning and trying to put themes within the categories as I went, it could've caused me to miss some important information or details that the sources were presenting about leadership communication.

Table 2: Example coding process

Text example	Code	Initial code	Theme
<p>“If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other- while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity and insincerity, then in the long run, I cannot be successful.”</p> <p>"The more aware we are of our basic paradigms, maps, or assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience, the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a larger picture and a far more objective view."</p>	Self-awareness	Focus on your character first	Know who you are
<p>Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.</p> <p>Principles are deep, fundamental truths, classic truths, generic common denominators. They are tightly interwoven threads running with exactness, consistency, beauty and strength through the fabric of life.</p> <p>Develop and regularly review the values – individual and organizational – that need to be aligned so you can all achieve together.</p> <p>A value is a way of believing what we hold most important.</p> <p>Integrity is choosing courage over comfort; it's choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and it's practicing your values not just professing them.</p>	Values	Live by your values	Know who you are

<p>Develop a “personal why” that gives your work meaning or helps you put it into a larger context. A clear sense of purpose helps you to assess setbacks within the framework of a broader perspective.</p> <p>Have a personal mission statement you live by each day.</p>	<p>Purpose</p>	<p>Have a purpose</p>	<p>Know who you are</p>
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Findings

After analysis I was able to start by answering my first research question: What themes emerge in academic and non-academic leadership communication sources? The five non-academic themes were: take care of yourself, embrace uncertainty, know who you are, practice interdependence, and be approachable. The four academic themes were: two-way communication, organizational culture, confident leadership, and transformational leadership. Using my final themes from non-academic and academic sources I compared and contrasted how these final themes were similar and how they differed between sources to answer my second and third research questions.

Non-academic sources

In a Google search of “leadership communication advice” and a review of the first page search results, various web pages highlighted tips on how to communicate effectively as a leader. Advice included that a leader should be present, ask the right questions, speak less and listen more, do not criticize, avoid arguments, understand before speaking, work on emotional intelligence, and stay calm and be positive (Gleeson, 2016; Petch 2016). In another first page Google result, the Center for Creative Leadership (2017) highlighted that communication was a core leadership function, leadership authenticity counts towards employee approval, leadership visibility is a form of communication, and listening is a powerful leadership skill. In the same article the Center for Creative Leadership named “5 tips for leaders to communicate more effectively”, which included that as a leader one should work on communicating thoughts and ideas clearly, saying what they mean, encouraging others to offer ideas before theirs and actually listening to what they say, sharing visions, goals, or objectives, and backing up

what a leader says they will do with follow through. Other first page Google results highlighted that leaders should be mindful of using negative metaphors and clichés, follow through on promises they make, not be afraid to talk about the future, practice active listening skills, set mutual team agreements, respond instead of reacting, be fully present, know their audience, rehearse before speaking, and give feedback as important leadership communication skills (Martinelli, 2017; Schwantes, 2016; White, 2017).

In a similar search on Amazon for “leadership self-help communication books” a variety of authors wrote leadership books that focused on how to talk about mistakes, how to make people glad to do what a leader wants, and how to live values as a leader (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013; Carnegie, 2007). Furthermore, the same search resulted in books where authors shared communication skills advice such as seeking first to understand, how to be an empathetic leader, how to create trust with communication, why communication is about listening, and how to share goals that will stimulate results (Clear, 2018; Sinek 2013).

So, it was no surprise that during my own analysis of non-academic resources I found similar results. Nonetheless, it’s important to note that these themes are seemingly more connected to leadership effectiveness in general, rather than leadership communication. However, as discussed in the literature review, the effectiveness of a leader is likely the result of his or her communication ability through a variety of leadership theory components (Jamal and Bakar, 2017). Additionally, a variety of factors help establish leadership communication success (Argenti, 2017; Jiang & Luo, 2018; Men, 2014a). So, when searching for advice about leadership communication in non-academic sources, these are the themes that emerged, which were relevant and can be

related to communication on a broader level. Reoccurring themes that emerged in non-academic sources related to leadership communication were: Know who you are, take care of yourself, embrace uncertainty, practice interdependence, and be approachable.

Know who you are. Non-academic sources, blogs and self-help books alike, consistently reported that first and foremost, a leader should know who they are as a person in order to communicate and therefore lead more effectively. Covey (2013) shares the importance of focusing on yourself first:

If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other-while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity and insincerity, then in the long run, I cannot be successful. (p. 36)

By knowing oneself, a leader is more aware of their own perceptions of reality and how they may impact decisions and how others might react differently to their choices. If a leader is more aware of their own perceptions of reality, they will know how to communicate with others who might not have the same views (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). According to Covey (2013):

The more aware we are of our basic paradigms, maps, or assumptions, and the extent to which we have been influenced by our experience, the more we can take responsibility for those paradigms, examine them, test them against reality, listen to others and be open to their perceptions, thereby getting a larger picture and a far more objective view. (p. 43)

This includes a leader knowing their purpose in life, having a personal mission statement, and having strong values they live by (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.).

“Ccl.org/blog” recommends that a leader should, “Develop a ‘personal why’ that gives your work meaning or helps you put it into a larger context. A clear sense of purpose helps you to assess setbacks within the framework of a broader perspective.”

According to “leadchange.com” a leader should “develop and regularly review the values – individual and organizational – that need to be aligned so you can all achieve together.” A leader should also be authentic in living their values and personal mission by centering their lives around these principles in order to lead more effectively (“Lead Change,” n.d.). According to Brown (2018) a leader should also have integrity and hold themselves accountable when practicing their values, “integrity is choosing courage over comfort; it's choosing what's right over what's fun, fast, or easy; and it's practicing your values not just professing them” (p. 189). As a leader, being self-aware and knowing personal strengths and weaknesses helps a leader better communicate with their followers and make decisions based on their core values (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). Although knowing who you are as a person is not directly linked to effective leadership communication skills, non-academic sources suggest if a leader knows who they are as a person, they will find better success in communicating with their followers, understanding their followers, and therefore, leading their followers. Like leadership communication theories are built on a variety of components not directly linked to leadership communication but still serving as a foundation, know who you are also serves as a foundation to being an effective leader and therefore, communicator. When a leader knows who they are as a person, it allows them to be aware of their own paradigms and think outside the box when effectively communicating with someone with a different background or opinion (Covey, 2013).

Take care of yourself. Non-academic sources highlighted the importance of taking care of yourself and focusing on your own well-being as a person first, before trying to lead or connect with followers (Covey, 2013). This would include taking time to

rest and play in order to send a message that others should also rest and play (Brown, 2018). In fact, Brown (2018) says, “the opposite of play is not work, the opposite of play is depression” (p.107). According to “Ccl.org/blog” taking care of yourself first as a leader helps avoid personal and therefore professional problems:

Common signs of poor cognitive health include exhaustion, stress, anxiety, irritability, indecisiveness, inability to focus, and trouble remembering things. While it’s easy to think of these symptoms as merely the side effects of a successful career, poor cognitive health is detrimental to leading effectively, and can result in serious physical health conditions and career derailment.

Additionally, sources highlighted the importance of having a life and relationships outside of work as a message to others that they too should not focus solely on work or the organization, balance is also important (“Center for Creative,” n.d.). Furthermore, sources encouraged leaders to learn continuously and constantly self-improve with education, job related seminars, or personal self-improvement courses (“Lead Change,” n.d.). According to “leadchange.com” a leader should, “learn new skills, gain new understandings, and apply them during times of change. Don’t hold onto old behaviors and skills, especially when it’s obvious that they don’t work anymore.”

Taking care of yourself communicates with followers that a leader cares about their own well-being and therefore the organization and employees as well (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). This also means a leader should focus on self-management by saying no when necessary and asking for help when they need it. Covey (2013) says, “to say ‘yes’ to important priorities you have to learn to say ‘no’ to other activities, sometimes apparently urgent things” (p. 211). Self-management allows a leader to be more aware of how they feel in certain situations and the best way to approach a complication or change within an organization (Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.). Furthermore, it helps a

leader expand their own perspective and see a different point of view that may not align with their own past experiences in order to send a better message to their followers (Covey, 2013). Again, similar to ‘know who you are’, ‘take care of yourself’ is not directly connected to leadership communication in a general sense. However, non-academic sources suggest that taking care of yourself is a communication tool within itself as it sends a message to followers that they too should take care of themselves, work on self-improvement, and continuously learn how to be better. Additionally, non-academic sources suggest that taking care of yourself is one of the foundations to becoming an effective leader and therefore, an effective communicator as well (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013).

Embrace uncertainty. In order to lead effectively, a leader should also embrace uncertainty, whether it means accepting change or letting go of things they cannot control (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.). Embracing the uncertainty allows a leader to use change as a catalyst to learn and make things better (Covey, 2013). Embracing the uncertainty with a positive mental attitude encourages followers to do the same and feel confident in their leader (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). During times of uncertainty, a leader should value differences within the organization or employees by asking for new ideas and encouraging creative solutions to problems. This will allow a new idea to emerge that may offer the right solution that leadership may not have thought of themselves (“Lead Change,” n.d.). In fact, according to Brené Brown (2018):

When we are managing during a time of scarcity or deep uncertainty, it is imperative that we embrace the uncertainty. We need to tell our teams that we will share as much as we’re able when we’re able. We need to be available to fact-check the stories that our team members might be making up, because in scarcity we invent worse case scenarios. We need to open up the room for rumbling around vulnerability. (p. 105)

Positive and honest communication within an organization during times of uncertainty is also sign of embracing the unknown. A leader should be open and as honest as they can be rather than ignoring the crisis or change. Instead, a leader should communicate about the uncertainty and encourage their followers to ask questions as well (Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.). Again, although embracing uncertainty is not directly tied to leadership communication, it does suggest that embracing uncertainty is a communication tool because it sends a message to a leader’s followers that they too should embrace the uncertainty. Embracing uncertainty and discussing the uncertainty with followers, allows leaders to effectively communicate about new ideas or solutions to the change or crisis, and encourages followers to communicate with their leader about their thoughts and opinions. Again, embracing uncertainty is a foundation that can lead to effective leadership communication.

Practice interdependence. Non-academic sources also focused on the importance of a leader practicing interdependence by delegating tasks while at the same time stepping back and allowing others to make their own decisions to accomplish tasks (“Center for Creative,” n.d.; “Lead Change,” n.d.). According to “leadchange.com”:

Guidelines shouldn’t be cast in stone. Ensure regular dialogue to check things are working as they should and encourage team members to communicate openly with you. You facilitate by coaching and enabling the team member to grow in their ability to take appropriate action from their expert point of view.

Covey (2013) recommends not only letting others help when needed but also valuing the different opinions as a leader can actually help move an organization forward. If someone disagrees or has a different outlook it may be in a leader’s best interest to step back and take a look at the difference before moving forward with a decision. “The key to valuing

differences is to realize that all people see the world, not as it is, but as they are” (p. 400).

“Leadchangegroup.com” also recommended valuing differences:

Sure, not every idea will be a winner, but you’ll spark a culture of innovative solutions when you make space for this new era of leaders to think differently, bring fresh perspective, and offer up ‘Why have we never thought of this in this way?’

By practicing interdependence, a leader will also communicate clearly what needs to be done, share their expectations for the task, but also recognize what others are good at and allow them to make decisions (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). According to Lead Change (n.d.),

Guidelines shouldn’t be cast in stone. Ensure regular dialogue to check things are working as they should and encourage team members to communicate openly with you. You facilitate by coaching and enabling the team member to grow in their ability to take appropriate action from their expert point of view.

Practicing interdependence is a win-win for both leader and follower as it allows the leader more time to focus on other tasks and it allows the follower to feel powerful in their decision making and project management (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013). According to Covey (2013), “win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions” (p. 269). Practicing interdependence is about effectiveness, rather than efficiency; it’s about finding the best solution for both leader and follower, rather than getting a task done quickly (Covey, 2013). A leader should take charge or initiative when necessary but focus on being a source for information and support, and facilitate to make projects or tasks easier for their followers (Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.). By practicing interdependence, a leader builds trust with their followers and coaches or influences them without making a follower feel like they are not

in control of their own tasks (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.). According to “Ccl.org/blog” (n.d.):

Coaching culture enables radical transformation by fostering certain types of conversations on a daily basis. It creates a climate where people learn how to: give and receive feedback, support and stretch someone’s thinking, challenge people’s performance plateau, and engage in development conversations that are short in length but strong in impact.

However, it’s important to note that interdependence means the leader still takes responsibility if something goes wrong as they should still be the facilitator of the project (“Lead Change,” n.d.). Perhaps “practice interdependence” is most closely related to leadership communication, compared to other themes that emerged, as it discusses how a leader should communicate guidelines rather than telling a follower exactly what to do. It also suggests a leader should not only give feedback but also receive feedback and support from others. Practicing interdependence allows a two-way communication channel to open up between a leader and their followers, which allows for more productive communication between the two entities.

Be approachable. A leader should always be viewed as approachable by their followers. This means showing positive emotion both verbally and non-verbally with body language (“Center for Creative,” n.d.). A leader is also viewed as approachable when they are empathetic in their communication and seek to recognize their followers’ emotions (Brown, 2018). According to Brown (2018) as a leader, “our job is to connect. It’s to take the perspective of someone else. Empathy is not connecting to an experience, it’s connecting to the emotions that underpin an experience” (p. 140). Furthermore, a leader should have a sense of humor, show confidence and commitment to their own tasks and followers’ tasks, listen, show appreciation for their followers, and give

feedback when necessary (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.). According to “leadchange.com” appreciation is a must for employees and therefore the productivity of a leader’s organization, “The basic fact is that the more employees feel appreciated, then the harder they will work and the less staff turnover your business will suffer.” A leader should also practice being calm during conflict, rather than angry, to allow others to feel less timid about approaching them; however, a leader should also show emotion and be vulnerable at the same time without expressing anger and focus on understanding instead (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013).

Being approachable as a leader also means building relationships with followers. According to “leadchange.com” building relationships helps a leader understand their followers and how to lead them accordingly, “you need to know what motivates your follower, so that – over and above their needs for connection, autonomy, and mastery – you craft the work they do to be interesting for them.” Furthermore, according to the Center for Creative Leadership (n.d.) building relationships helps avoid issues within the workplace, “Having problems with interpersonal relationships is one of the most common characteristics of leaders who derail. The ability to work well with others clearly separates the managers who succeed from those who don’t.” This doesn’t mean a leader needs to become best friends with the followers, rather it means they make and keep commitments to their followers and share their own vulnerabilities with their followers in a professional way (Brown, 2018; “Lead Change,” n.d.). According to Brown (2018), “something as simple as starting or ending meetings with a gratitude check, when everyone shares one thing they're grateful for, can build trust and

connection, serve as container-building, and give your group permission to lean into joy” (p. 83).

Being approachable allows for a leader to communicate more closely and effectively with their followers as it builds a relationship with them. With both verbal and non-verbal communication, a leader shows they are interested in their followers’ thoughts and opinions. Using empathy allows a leader to communicate that they care about their employees and their wellbeing. Additionally, non-academic sources suggest that being approachable means avoiding showing emotions such as anger and frustration, which communicates to a leader’s followers to leave them alone. Instead a leader should practice being calm and communicating on a vulnerable level to share emotions (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013).

Academic sources

During analysis of academic resources four reoccurring themes emerged related to leadership communication: Two-way communication, organizational culture, confident leadership, and transformational leadership.

Two-way communication. Academic sources pointed to the importance of a leader to practice two-way communication with their followers; both allowing the follower to approach the leader and the leader to also communicate regularly with their followers (Men and Stacks, 2014; Mikkelsen, York, and Arritola, 2015). According to Men and Stacks (2014), “symmetrical internal communication is a worldview that emphasizes two-way information flow, understanding, responsiveness to employees’ needs and concern, and tolerance to different voices.” Two-way communication also means a leader listens before concluding and reacting to follower, which encourages the

leader to better understand where their follower may be coming from rather than instantly reacting (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010).

Organizational culture. A leader should focus on organizational reputation and culture within their organization by using communication as a tool, which creates trust and employee empowerment. The more employees understand the strategies and values of their workplace, the more likely they are willing to work hard and be creative in their tasks. A leader should regularly communicate the strategies and values of the organization with their followers in order to positively affect organizational culture.

(Argenti, 2017). According to Argenti (2017):

The C-suite appears to have acknowledged that employees who are looped in and genuinely excited about their workplace—believing in what they do and the values underpinning their organizations—will be more productive and creative, willing to exert more physical and mental energy, and devote the best of themselves to the job.

Communicating with employees regularly also helps employees feel empowered, which boosts an organization's culture. Empowered employees also feel competent in having the ability or skill to perform for their organization, therefore they will work harder. Focusing on culture means encouraging active employee engagement by engaging employees in conversations and keeping employees involved with decision making processes or new projects (Jiang and Luo, 2018). According to Jiang and Luo (2018), "In other words, a satisfying mindset in the form of employee engagement can generate a heightened experience of trust in other parties, such as trust in organizations."

Furthermore, a positive culture within an organization will lead to a positive organizational reputation, which is important for employee satisfaction. Employees want to feel that they are proud of the place they work and are more likely to stay at their

workplace or work hard if they like their leader and their organization (Men and Stacks, 2013). According to Jiang and Luo (2018), “a satisfying mindset in the form of employee engagement can generate a heightened experience of trust in other parties, such as trust in organizations.” In a 2013 study by Men and Stacks they concluded:

The results suggest that the more employees feel competent or having the ability or skill to perform, the more favorably they perceive organizational reputation; the more employees feel having control ability or authority in decision making, the more favorably they perceive organizational reputation.

Therefore, a strong organizational culture is an effect of leadership communication. If a leader regularly communicates with their employees and allows their employees to communicate with them, it positively impacts the culture of an organization. In turn, it also impacts employee engagement and allows for new ideas and a sense of pride for where they work. Which ultimately effects public perception of an organization because employees will speak about their organization in a positive way to the public.

Confident leadership. According to academic sources a leader should be charismatic and a likeable person. According to Levine, Muenchen, and Brooks (2010),

The first factor of terms suggested that “charisma” was an ability and personality trait of a leader with an outgoing personality. This person is strong, charming, confident, humorous, understanding, is a quality individual, shows good sense, is influential, possesses a good attitude and is a good speaker.

A confident leader is authentic and has high moral standards and follows those standards to show concern about employees’ interests. A confident leader actually listens to what their follower is saying, shows emotion, and seeks to understand. Confident communication might mean a leader follows up with an employee’s situation or new idea

(Jiang and Luo, 2018). Furthermore, a confident leader is present and available to their followers for their followers to easily reach them. A confident leader communicates their thoughts, goals, and ideas with their followers and encourages their followers to communicate with them. Particularly in times of crisis, a confident leader makes them self present, easy to recognize, and regularly communicates with followers with updates on what might be happening within the organization (Argenti 2017). A confident leader also has non-verbal strengths and are aware of the signals their body may be giving off. Confident leaders can speak well, maintain eye contact, has a good attitude, and a genuine message when they speak to followers. A confident leader uses communication as a tool to connect with their followers and show their followers they care about them (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010).

Transformational leadership. A transformational leader is successful in communicating a shared vision and high-performance expectations with their followers to increase follower satisfaction with the organization and employee empowerment with their job roles (Men and Stacks, 2013). In a study by Men and Stacks (2013), “the results revealed that transformational leadership positively influences employees’ perception of organizational reputation, not only directly but also indirectly, through empowering employees.” Transformational leadership also includes communicating a clear strategy repeated consistently with employees, so employees are aware of what is expected of them to reach company and personal goals. “The starting point for executing strategy is for employees at all levels of the company to understand what the strategy is. To promote understanding, the strategy must be clear and must be consistent” (Argenti, 2017). A transformational leader also practices transparent communication where employees feel

like their leader is sharing information with them openly and honestly. “As a result of this transparent communication, employees are likely to feel more involved, perceive a stronger emotional bond with their organization, and feel empowered to fulfill organizational goals” (Jiang and Luo, 2018).

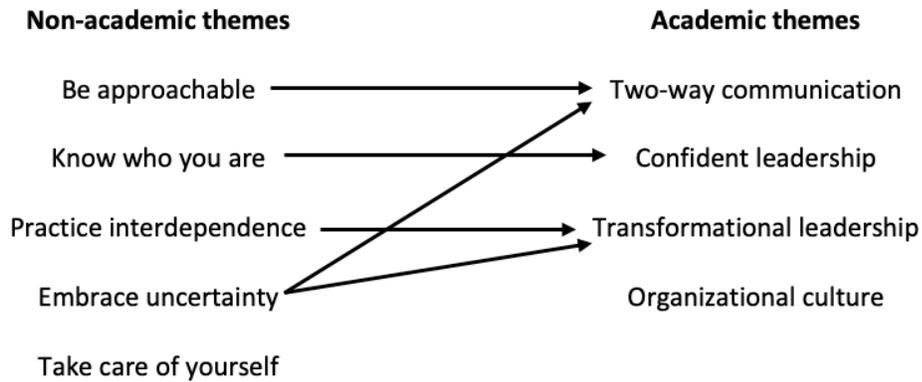
A transformational leader strives to be a role model for employees by encouraging collaboration among employees and leadership to reach organizational goals.

Transformational leadership also focuses on stimulating new perspectives or creative ideas from different perspectives. Furthermore, transformational leadership seeks to build relationships with employees and shows concerns for employees’ feelings and welfare. This allows employees to feel positive about the organization and leader they work for (Men and Stacks, 2013; Mikkelsen, York, and Arritola, 2015). According to Men and Stacks (2014) transformational leadership helps build a relationship, “the organization’s confidence, trust, and care about employees give employees a sense of ownership toward the organization. Thus, a good relationship can be developed over time.” Therefore, a transformational leader uses communication to build a transparent relationship with their followers where clear and concise messages are shared and employees feel involved in the decision-making process.

Comparing non-academic and academic sources

RQ2. The goal of the second research question was to understand if the advice about leadership communication found in non-academic sources align with findings supported by academic research on leadership communication. After performing my thematic content analysis, there were four similarities in both academic and non-academic sources (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Non-academic themes matched to academic themes



First, both academic and non-academic sources had a common topic emerge about the importance of symmetrical communication between leaders and their followers.

While the common theme in the academic source was coded as two-way communication, in non-academic themes it was coded as be approachable. In both sources it was strongly suggested that leaders should not only seek to understand their employees with two-way communication, but also be open and tolerant to different viewpoints and ideas from their subordinates (Argenti, 2017; Covey, 2013; Brown, 2018; Jiang and Luo, 2018).

Furthermore, both sources highlighted how leaders should also allow their followers to communicate with them directly and that a leader should be approachable, accessible, and open to discussion with followers. Additionally, leaders were encouraged to respond to employees needs and concerns in an authentic and positive way, so employees felt understood (“Lead Change,” n.d.; Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010; Men and Stacks, 2013). Therefore, it seemed that both non-academic and academic sources highlighted the importance of two-way communication in order to be an effective communicator as a leader.

Second, both academic and non-academic sources highlighted the importance of authentic and charismatic leadership. In non-academic sources it was coded as know who you are, while in academic sources it was coded as confident leadership. It was suggested that leaders should know who they are as a person and lead with their personal values and mission statement in order to communicate more effectively. A leader should use non-verbal signs to communicate positive emotion to their employees and be self-aware of what message they might be sending. Furthermore, both sources highlighted the importance of being confident, humorous, understanding, and a good speaker. A leader should show appreciation for their followers, be empathetic, and show their own personality during communication with followers in order to connect with their employees (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.; Covey, 2013; Jiang and Luo, 2018; Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010). Therefore, both academic and non-academic sources recognized the foundation of a good leader, and therefore effective communicator, started with knowing who you are and being confident.

Next, academic and non-academic sources made arguments about the importance of being a transformational leader. In academic sources this was named transformational leadership, while in non-academic sources it was referred to as practice interdependence. Sources suggested practicing interdependence to delegate work while also still being in charge and taking responsibility for project success; however, stepping back and allowing followers to feel in control of their own decisions is a quality sign of a good leader. A leader should communicate the basics and be available for questions or advice; however, they don't need to be overhearing. Employees should also feel like their leader is sharing a clear and consistent message and that they understand the goals and the project. Both

sources also suggested leaders should be influential, offer support, and build relationships and trust with their followers using communication as a tool to build these transparent relationships with their followers (Argenti, 2017; Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.; Covey, 2013; Jiang and Luo, 2018; “Lead Change,” n.d.; Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010; Men and Stacks, 2013; Men and Stacks, 2014). Therefore, non-academic and academic sources recognized practicing interdependence, offering support, building trust, and sharing clear messages were effective leadership communication components.

Last, non-academic and academic sources highlighted the importance of a leader to embrace change and uncertainty with transparent communication and focus on what they can control. In non-academic codes, this was named embrace uncertainty, however themes that emerged from academic sources including transformational leadership and two-way communication aligned with this category. Embracing change showed that a leader was positive about the situation and sent a message that a leader was open to new ideas. Both academic and non-academic sources also highlighted how to communicate with a transparent message during times of change to help employees feel that they were aware of what was going on. Additionally, sources suggested that leaders should use times of change or uncertainty to catalyst new ideas from employees and value different perspectives (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013; Jiang and Luo, 2018; “Lead Change,” n.d.; Men and Stacks, 2013; Men and Stacks, 2014.). Thus, both non-academic and academic sources emphasized the importance of embracing change with transparent communication and two-way communication as an important tool to practicing leadership communication effectiveness.

RQ3. The goal of the third research question was to find the key differences in components of leadership communication advice presented in non-academic sources versus academic research on leadership communication. After performing the thematic content analysis there were three key differences in comparing academic and non-academic themes.

First, non-academic sources heavily highlighted the importance of a leader taking care of themselves with ongoing education having a life outside of work, expanding their own perspective of reality, and focusing on self-management. Non-academic sources suggested this was the first step in becoming a great leader and would therefore help a leader to communicate more effectively (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.; Covey, 2013). When a leader takes care of themselves, it would suggest to their followers that they too should take care of themselves and use their vacation days or continued education to help the organization. Furthermore, a leader should say no if they can’t do something or ask for help when they need it. This would help a leader with self-management and also demonstrate to employees that they too can be open and honest with their tasks and needs (Brown, 2018; “Center for Creative,” n.d.; Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.). Academic sources did not highlight the importance of self-care as a leader and the message it sends to employees. Therefore, academic sources did not mention how taking care of yourself as a leader is a foundation to becoming an effective leader and therefore, an effective communicator.

Next, academic sources highlighted the importance of organizational culture, where non-academic sources rarely mentioned culture at all. Academic sources heavily suggested that a leader focus on active employee engagement and organizational

reputation with the use of communication so that employees felt good about the company they worked for, the leader they followed, and the job they did (Argenti, 2017; Jiang and Luo, 2018; Men and Stacks, 2013; Men and Stacks, 2014). While non-academic sources mentioned the importance of empowering employees (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013; “Lead Change,” n.d.), they did not mention the importance of culture within an organization and how a leader can influence organizational reputation and therefore the satisfaction of employees within the organization or their job roles.

Last and perhaps most importantly, when comparing the differences between non-academic and academic leadership communication advice, non-academic sources did not directly reference leadership communication very often. Most times communication could be connected to the themes that emerged related to leadership, leadership effectiveness, or communication but it was seldom straightforwardly noted within non-academic sources even though I directly used leadership communication advice as a search term within my sampling. On the other hand, academic sources regularly used the term leadership communication and communication effectiveness.

Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to provide an understanding about the degree to which advice given in self-help books or blogs that many leaders count on to enhance their leadership communication skills, align with the findings from academic studies on leadership communication and where there might be differences. Specifically, I wanted to review how well the advice about leadership communication found in non-academic sources aligned with findings supported by academic research on leadership communication and the key differences in components of leadership communication advice presented in non-academic sources verse academic research on leadership communication. The importance of this study is largely based on the ease of a leader seeking leadership communication advice through non-academic sources and making sure these non-academic sources reflect the advice given in academic sources. It is simple for a leader seeking communication advice to buy a book on sites like Amazon or perform a fast “Google” search for a quick read from a few blogs about leadership communication. Because of this, it’s important to see how well this non-academic communication advice was lining up with academic sources as well and determine how well they supported one another.

Was the information in these non-academic sources the same as academically researched and studied leadership communication? Were leaders seeking communication advice through non-academic sources actually getting the advice they needed? It's important for leaders seeking advice about communication to get the information they need to lead their organization because, as the literature review suggests, leadership communication is the backbone to leading during times of crisis or change, developing effective managers, inspiring others, developing employees, leading a team, and

managing stakeholders (Attaran, 2004; Center for Creative Leadership, 2016; Jamal and Bakar, 2017). Knowing these differences between non-academic and academic sources about leadership communication can help communication scholars and authors of non-academic leadership self-help books or blogs see what they might be missing in regard to solid leadership communication advice. It's extremely important to find out these differences since past research has strongly linked leadership communication to employee satisfaction, employee organizational commitment, employee trust, positive employee attitudes, and employee job performance within an organization (Madlock, 2008; Men, 2014b; Mikkelsen, York, & Arritola, 2015).

Recap of results

In order for a leader seeking advice about leadership communication to get the best all-inclusive information, they would need to read the advice in both academic and non-academic sources to get a clear understanding of leadership communication. However, although there were differences between academic and non-academic sources in terms of leadership communication advice, there were more similarities. Both sources have similar themes that demonstrated the importance of communication between a leader and their followers, authentic and confident leadership communication, transformational leadership, and embracing change as a leader with communication. Although terminology was different, the overall themes that emerged were apparent and parallel. If a leader was seeking advice in non-academic sources, they would be easily able to find information about communication with their followers, how to be confident, how to be a transformational leader, and why they should embrace change.

However, results indicated that if a leader sought advice from non-academic sources, they would not find information on the importance of organizational reputation and the impact communication can have on reputation. Such as, why a leader should focus on organizational reputation and culture within their organization to create trust and employee empowerment. A leader would miss related information related to employee engagement initiatives such as the importance of employees understanding the strategies and values of their workplace, the more likely they are willing to work hard and be creative in their tasks. The importance of organizational reputation was a recurring theme in academic sources, however, it was not mentioned in non-academic sources. Conversely, self-management was not a recurring theme in academic sources, where it was highly recurring in non-academic sources. This suggested that self-management and self-care as a leader was not highly researched or studied by leadership academics as a foundation for effective leadership communication.

Arguably most importantly, leadership communication as a general term was not widely used in non-academic sources. Although I was able to make inferences and connections to leadership communication from the themes that emerged it wasn't widely noted in a direct sense like it was in academic sources even though it was directly searched for within leadership blogs and leadership self-help books. This suggests that when a desperate leader who is actively searching for advice on leadership communication through blogs or in self-help leadership books during times of crisis, change, or another situation, it might be hard to find the advice they actually need in the most direct sense. Which suggests they aren't getting the direct leadership communication advice they truly need if they fail to recognize the inferences to

leadership communication. Therefore, suggesting that the leader seeking the advice, might fail the organization or their followers because they were unable to recognize the importance of leadership communication.

Implications

Based on past research, it has been noted that the effectiveness of a leader is likely the result of his or her communication ability through a variety of leadership theory components (Jamal and Bakar, 2017). A successful leader will practice a balance of authentic, relations-oriented, task-oriented, symmetrical, confident, and transparent communication, as well as encourage employee engagement. A balance of these leadership communication skills helps determine whether or not a leader will find accomplishments in leading their followers. These different leadership communication styles include a variety of factors that help establish leadership communication success (Argenti, 2017; Jiang & Luo, 2018; Men, 2014a). A variety of components were also apparent in this study, which could be connected to past research findings as well.

Based on the literature review, it was clear that overtime leadership theories have been developed, polished, and revamped. As new theories enter academia, the old theories become less celebrated; however, still relevant in understanding leadership communication and the makeup of a good leader. Although some of these theories do not directly tie to effective leadership communication (similar to the findings within this study), they are a core component in understanding effective leadership within organizations and therefore, the importance of a leader communicating with their followers. I believe this study offers insight into understanding leadership communication theory as well. Themes that emerged in non-academic sources could easily be categorized

under organizational communication theories. For example, “know who you are” a theme from non-academic sources and “confident leadership” a theme from academic sources, could be categorized under trait theory as it largely has to do with certain traits that make a good leader. Similarly, “practice interdependence” and “transformational leadership” can be categorized under transformational theory as they discuss how to influence followers, inspire followers, and to use transparency when communicating with followers. Likewise, “be approachable” and “two-way communication” could be categorized under behavioral theory as they focus on how a leader should behave and communicate with their followers. Although many ties to leadership communication were indirect within the reoccurring themes of non-academic sources, they are nonetheless still important to understanding effective leadership communication in its foundation, just like theory has its foundation as well. However, the non-academic theme “take care of yourself” as a leader could not be easily categorized under a theory from the literature review, which could suggest it may be something that should be explored in academia at the theoretical level as a core component for a leader to effectively lead and therefore, communicate with followers.

On the other hand, employee engagement and organizational reputation is largely discussed in theory as a core component in understanding and communicating with followers in order to effectively lead. However, it was not a reoccurring theme in non-academic sources like “organizational culture” was in academic sources. Although, non-academic sources did highlight the importance of communicating with employees (Brown, 2018; Covey, 2013), they didn’t stress the importance of organizational culture, reputation, and employee engagement initiatives and how communication plays a role in

positively influencing those situations. Based on results, it would be helpful for non-academic sources to highlight the importance of organizational culture and employee engagement within their content. This would allow leaders seeking advice to gain a better outlook on what motivates their employees and how to use communication to improve their own leadership skills within an organization and therefore, positively influence the organization's culture.

As discussed earlier, employee engagement through leadership communication allows employees to feel empowered and more willing to participate in team goals, it's not just about the leader, it's about engaging with employees to improve the culture within an organization. In fact, employee engagement has been strongly linked to increased creativity within the workplace (Omilion-Hodges & Ackerman, 2018; Men & Stacks, 2014). If an employee feels they have control or ability to make decisions, they are more likely to perceive an organization's reputation as a positive one. When an employee perceives the organization as a positive one, they will share that with their co-workers and the public. This increases the organization's reputation within the community or even around the world. With globalization and the ease of communication, such as with social media, word travels fast. When an employee is treated unfairly, they can easily share their struggles with the rest of the world, which can be detrimental to even the most successful organizations (Men & Stacks, 2013). An easily accessible blog or self-help book about organizational culture and how a leader should improve it would be helpful for a leader seeking advice.

Limitations

There were some limitations to my study. Although I did the best I could with sampling non-academic and academic sources, more sources could be analyzed for common themes if more time was available. A few more self-help books may have led to a different understanding of leadership communication based on the views of that author's particular job. Perhaps if the author had a leadership role in a different industry it would lead to a broader insight into leadership qualities. Furthermore, although I reached saturation with my blog analysis, analyzing a few more blogs that had different overall topics may have led to new themes as well. I narrowed my blog search to leadership communication topics, however a broader search about leadership may have led to different themes related to leadership communication in broader terms. Lastly, I narrowed my search to leadership communication for my academic articles and although I reached saturation, perhaps a broader search of leadership in general would have presented more themes to emerge from the academic sources that could be connected to leadership communication.

Secondly, it would be useful to have another analyst to discuss findings when categorizing themes and comparing and contrasting themes between non-academic and academic sources. Because qualitative coding and analyzing themes can be largely based on a researcher's own viewpoint, past experiences, or opinions, it can also be biased. Having a co-researcher may have allowed a broader understanding of the data. Additionally, it may have introduced new themes that I didn't see in the data. This would allow for a broader understanding of leadership communication in both academic and non-academic sources.

Future direction

Although the results of this study are revealing, further research would be beneficial in comparing and contrasting non-academic and academic leadership communication advice. An interesting study might include specifically looking for advice about employee engagement, organizational culture, or organizational reputation within non-academic leadership self-help books and blogs. This information might be available to the public but was not easily accessible in the popular search items I used. Moreover, non-academic sources may benefit from a book or blog focused on organizational culture and how a leader might benefit from focusing on employee engagement within their organization and how to use communication as a tool to enhance organizational culture. Perhaps, first-hand accounts from leaders who practice active employee engagement with communication and saw improvement within their organization might help stimulate a bigger focus on organizational culture. Furthermore, leaders should share how their organizational reputation impacts their employees and day-to-day operations.

Additionally, perhaps it would be helpful to research self-care and self-management as a leader within academic research or studies. There may be studies already conducted about this topic, which would provide useful insight into leadership communication as a whole. If not, academic studies should be conducted about how a leader can practice self-care to improve their leadership skills, and ultimately improve their communication skills as well. A look into how followers feel about their leaders' self-care and how it influences an employee's job roles or relationship with their leaders might be beneficial for leaders and organizations alike. A study about self-care might help organizations determine if a leader needs mandatory vacation days or continued

education days to send a message to followers that they too should practice self-care and wellness to be better employees.

Conclusion

It is without doubt that leadership communication within an organization is vital to success, not only in productivity but in employee satisfaction, organizational reputation, and public perception. A good leader is constantly looking for ways to improve him or herself, therefore, easy to access self-help books and blogs are important to leaders as they look for communication advice. Therefore, it's important for academic research and studies about leadership communication to be represented within these non-academic sources. In conclusion, this study helped determine how academic and non-academic sources about leadership communication are similar and where they might possibly differ to provide a greater understanding on what type of advice a leader might be receiving when they seek the use of self-help books or blogs. Overall, the similarities between academic and non-academic sources outweighed the differences. However, a leader seeking advice about communication in non-academic sources would not get all the advice they need to be successful in their role without also knowing the advice given in academic articles about leadership communication. The results can help provide future direction on what might need to be included in non-academic leadership sources or what might need to be studied more extensively and included in academic leadership sources.

Appendices

Appendix A: Non-academic themes

Examples	Initial codes	Themes
<p>“Common signs of poor cognitive health include exhaustion, stress, anxiety, irritability, indecisiveness, inability to focus, and trouble remembering things. While it’s easy to think of these symptoms as merely the side effects of a successful career, poor cognitive health is detrimental to leading effectively, and can result in serious physical health conditions and career derailment.” (Center for Creative, n.d.)</p>	<p>Rest and play to encourage others to do the same as followers, have a life outside of work, have relationships outside of work, learn continuously, ask for help when you need it, constantly self-improve, focus on your own character first before trying to change others, expand your perspective, focus on self-management, say no</p>	<p>Take care of yourself</p>
<p>“When we are managing during a time of scarcity or deep uncertainty, it is imperative that we embrace the uncertainty. We need to tell our teams that we will share as much as we’re able when we’re able. We need to be available to fact-check the stories that our team members might be making up, because in scarcity we invent worse case scenarios. We need to open up the room for rumbling around vulnerability.” (Brown, 2018)</p>	<p>Accept change, use change to learn and make things better, focus on things you can control and let other things happen as is, encourage creativity, value differences, focus on a positive mental attitude during change,</p>	<p>Embrace uncertainty</p>
<p>“Do not blame conditions for how you might react. Make conscious choices based on your values, rather than a product of your conditions based on reactive feelings.” (Covey, 2013)</p>	<p>Know your purpose in life, Live by your values, be authentic, be aware of your own perceptions of reality and how they may impact your decisions and how others might see things differently, be self-aware, center your life around principles, have a mission statement, have integrity</p>	<p>Know who you are</p>

<p>“We can, at least, affirm their basic nature and create an atmosphere where people can seize opportunities and solve problems in an increasingly self-reliant way. Guidelines shouldn’t be cast in stone. Ensure regular dialogue to check things are working as they should and encourage team members to communicate openly with you. You facilitate by coaching and enabling the team member to grow in their ability to take appropriate action from their expert point of view.” (Covey, 2013)</p>	<p>Facilitate, delegate while allowing others to make their own decisions, lead but allow others to feel powerful in how they do something, communicate clearly what needs to be done, share expectations, recognize what others are good at, practice interdependence, take charge, take responsibility, coach others, build trust, offer support, take initiative, influence others, effectiveness not efficiency,</p>	<p>Practice interdependence</p>
<p>“Having problems with interpersonal relationships is one of the most common characteristics of leaders who derail. The ability to work well with others clearly separates the managers who succeed from those who don’t.” (Center for Creative, n.d.)</p>	<p>Show positive emotion, practice both verbal and nonverbal positive cues, have a sense of humor, show confidence and commitment, listen, show appreciation, give feedback, be empathetic, practice being calm, listen and recognize emotion, make and keep commitments, be vulnerable,</p>	<p>Be approachable</p>

Appendix B: Academic themes

Examples	Initial codes	Themes
<p>“This study holds that symmetrical internal communication is a worldview that emphasizes two-way information flow, understanding, responsiveness to employees’ needs and concern, and tolerance to different voices.” (Men and Stacks, 2014)</p>	<p>Symmetrical communication, listen before concluding, allow others to ask questions</p>	<p>Two-way communication</p>
<p>The results suggest that the more employees feel competent or having the ability or skill to perform, the more favorably they perceive organizational reputation; the more employees feel having control ability or authority in decision making, the more favorably they perceive organizational reputation. (Men and Stacks, 2013)</p>	<p>Focus on culture, active employee engagement, create trust, organizational reputation, employee empowerment</p>	<p>Organizational culture</p>
<p>The first factor of terms suggested that “charisma” was an ability and personality trait of a leader with an outgoing personality. This person is strong, charming, confident, humorous, understanding, is a quality individual, shows good sense, is influential, possesses a good attitude and is a good speaker. (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010)</p>	<p>Authentic leadership, Be present as a leader, charismatic leadership, nonverbal strengths</p>	<p>Confident leadership</p>
<p>“Leadership behaviors, such as communicating shared vision and high performance expectations, providing an appropriate role model, fostering collaboration among employees to achieve collective goals, stimulating new perspectives and ideas, emphasizing the quality of relationships with employees, and showing concern about employees’ individual feelings and welfare directly cultivate employees’ favorable overall perception of the organization.” (Men and Stacks, 2013)</p>	<p>Transformational leadership, Clear strategy repeated consistently, Transparent communication, create relationships, communicate clear during uncertainty</p>	<p>Transformational leadership</p>

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Curriculum Vitae

Megan Mary Golden

Education

Master of Arts in Applied Communication
Indiana University, IUPUI
July 2019

Bachelor of Public Relations
Bachelor of Advertising
Ball State University, Muncie IN
May 2012

Work experience

OrthoIndy
Indianapolis IN
June 2012-Current

Marketing Team Lead
September 2018-present

- Manages corporate employee engagement development and employee communication
- Assists with department relations such as timekeeping, providing feedback for employee performance reviews, training new staff and interns, and ensuring completion deadlines for marketing projects
- Responsible for managing content for inbound marketing initiatives through Hubspot including content creation, SEO management and email marketing
- Manages and creates content for blog, publications and marketing collaterals
- Assists with strategic planning initiatives for all marketing campaigns and activities
- Assists with budget management

Marketing Specialist
January 2018-September 2018

- Utilizes Hubspot to manage content for inbound marketing initiatives
- Assists in strategic campaign planning with a focus on creative content development
- Analyzes data to understand trends and campaign effectiveness
- Oversees and edits all marketing communication for the company including campaign messages, corporate blog, email marketing, patient magazine and advertising collateral pieces

- Manages summer internship program
- Oversees internal corporate communications and leads employee engagement team

Public Relations Specialist

February 2015-January 2018

- Managed all corporate PR efforts
- Managed summer internship program
- Managed internal corporate communications
- Content creator for corporate social media pages and blog
- Editor of corporate magazine
- Assisted in strategic campaign development

Public Relations Coordinator

June 2012-February 2015

- Responsible for all media relations functions: press releases, media alerts, coordinating interviews, etc.
- Manage all social media sites
- Develop new social media strategies
- Developed new dashboard for measuring social media reach
- Responsible for development of blog and updating blog stories weekly
- Work with Google analytics to present PR report to hospital board monthly