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Strengthening Organizational Performance through Integration of Systems Leadership, Participatory Communication, and Dynamic Capabilities

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STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH

INTEGRATION OF SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION,

AND DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

Graduate School of Leadership & Change

Antioch University

In partial fulfillment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

by

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June 2021

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CAPABILITIES

This dissertation, by Esther Ewurafuah Amoah Nkrumah Sackey, has
been approved by the committee members signed below
who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of
Graduate School of Leadership & Change
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in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE THROUGH INTEGRATION OF

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP, PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION, AND DYNAMIC

CAPABILITIES

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This dissertation seeks to include systems leadership and participatory communication as

facilitators of the elements that enhance dynamic organizational capabilities to improve

performance. The study employs the normative theory-building process to show how systems

leadership and participatory communication can facilitate and enhance dynamic capabilities.

Specifically, this dissertation offers an integrative model that combines systems leadership,

participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities. The proposed integrative model is

accompanied by a series of propositions that extend the dynamic capabilities theory through

integration of systems leadership and participatory communication. Potential relevance and

application of the proposed model are demonstrated through multiple case examples. The study

may also guide nonprofit and for-profit organizations on improving performance through

leadership skills, effective communication, and enhanced dynamic capabilities. This dissertation

is available in open access at AURA (https://aura.antioch.edu/) and OhioLINK ETD Center

(https://etd.ohiolink.edu).

Keywords: organizational performance, nonprofit organizations, participatory communication,
systems leadership, empowerment

Dedication

This dissertation is to the honor and memory of my mother, Mrs. Emma B. Aggrey-Nkrumah. She sacrificed everything to provide me with an education and supported me throughout the pursuit of this degree until her passing.

To my husband, Kofi Sackey, who has greatly supported my educational journey, including achieving this dream. To my children, Nana K. Sakyi and Emma B. Sackey, may this accomplishment of my goal guide you to achieve your objectives in life.

I also dedicate this final chapter of my educational achievement to Professor Eleanor Kostecki, who has supported me in many ways through the years.

My sincerest appreciation to my committee members for their immense support throughout the process.

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CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

This research is about my optimism and zeal to understand how integration of systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities can improve the performance of organizations. For about nine years, I covered local and international nonprofit and for-profit organizations while working as a reporter at a local newspaper in Ghana, and later, as a TV reporter with the state media, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. Often, these organizations unveiled new programs and projects aimed at improving the lives of the local people. In other cases, agencies would launch a news organization to perform the same functions that others were already doing in the communities. Yet, I continued covering new stories that portrayed the untold hardship of poverty experienced by the people in underprivileged communities. I wondered if these organizations, especially the nonprofit agencies, consult the people about programs that could change their situations and improve their lives.

I observed a disturbing trend involving nonprofit organizations that wasted precious resources on services that local people did not actually need. This happened often because most leaders of the charitable agencies did not understand the benefit of the holistic nature of communication, which involves an understanding of the interconnectedness of human interactions. Such a holistic view includes having the ability to involve relevant stakeholders when making decisions affecting the organization and its communities, with the aim of improving services and overall performance. The lack of understanding the positive ripple effect of inclusive communication in organizations created an exclusionary approach by leaders in most nonprofit organizations. This had a negative impact on designing, strategizing, and implementing programs. This also means that the exclusionary approach to decision-making eliminated employees who have developed years of experience and a wealth of knowledge in the operations

of the organization, external experts who could contribute technical knowledge to program

development and implementation, and the local community members who could provide

resourceful feedback on the relevance and benefits derived from the services offered to the

communities. Therefore, pertinent information and skills that could help enhance dynamic

capabilities in these organizations were missed. In later years, I conducted a study that found that

the leaders in these organizations lack the core leadership capabilities to engage their workers in

interactions to solicit their input when making decisions (Sackey, 2014; Sackey et al., 2017). The

study revealed that the organization's leadership did not communicate directly with its workers

about its problems. This includes the lack of understanding among the leadership about the

values of consulting with others to tackle challenges they faced in the business environment

(Sackey, 2014; Sackey et al., 2017).

I approach this dissertation with a curious mind to find practical ways through which

organizations can holistically and meaningfully engage with members, and whether such

interactions can contribute to the creation of dynamic capabilities and improved performance. To

achieve this, the study examines how systems leadership and participatory communication

facilitate the creation of dynamic capabilities and improved performance in organizations.

Statement of Problem

Dynamic capability refers to a "firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal

and external competencies to address rapidly changing environments" (Teece et al., 1997,

p.516). Dynamic capabilities are resources of added value accrued to an organization, but they

are different from the operational capabilities which involve the daily routine operations of the

organization (Teece et al., 1997). The difference is that dynamic capabilities enable an

organization to improve the resource base to deal more efficiently with uncertain environmental

changes. An example of dynamic capability is an exceptional ability of a leader of an organization who demonstrates competence by collaborating with relevant employees and external stakeholders to gather ideas and information to address a sudden challenge from a rival in the business environment. The information gathered can be integrated into the goals of the organization, used to build or develop strategies to transform or reconfigure the skills of employees, and to improve on the products and services to meet demand conditions within the environment. Therefore, dynamic capabilities relate to an organization's ability to deliver results using its resources, including combined skills and competencies of its employees and stakeholders (Smallwood & Ulrich, 2004; Teece et al., 1997).

Among the various capabilities identified in organizations are leadership, communication, accountability, collaboration, and innovation (Smallwood & Ulrich, 2004; Teece et al., 1997). However, the nature of processes and approaches that enhance dynamic capabilities is not fully clear. This study examines the effects of systems leadership core competencies and the process of employing the participatory communication approach in organization. Such critical examination is important because various studies have identified the need for the leadership of organizations to be inclusive in the decision-making processes to ensure that relevant voices and expert knowledge are included in the formulation of plans and strategies in organizations (Falcione et al., 1987; Helpap, 2016; Poole & McPhee, 1983; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Yet, I have not found any study that identifies the combined effect of systems leadership and participatory communication as strategies that create dynamic capabilities in organizations to improve performance.

Some organizational communication scholars have argued that to promote democratic decision-making in organizations, relevant stakeholders should be included in the process

(Falcione et al., 1987; Helpap, 2016; Poole & McPhee, 1983; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). They note that such practice is a basic form of leadership that improves performance. However, some of the critiques of participatory approaches are that it makes it difficult and sometimes impossible to manage a decision-making process with many stakeholders involved (Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). This is because members would have different theoretical, political, and conceptual meanings of the issues being discussed, and such differences could lead to delays and conflicts in resolving the problems (Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The researchers further note that the obstacles are sometimes unfairly ascribed to participation itself when this happens, rather than to its wrong application (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Other critiques of employing participatory approaches in decision-making are that employee participation in programs does not always reshape the structures of power in the workplace. Rather, the process becomes a management tool for the leadership to pretend to listen and implement the views and suggestions of the workers (Barker, 1993; Edwards, 1999; Manz & Angle, 1986). Some scholars who study communication also think that practicing inclusiveness and democracy at the workplace can become a structural routine that could enable certain practices, while enforcing leadership control which could be constraining (Giddens, 1984). Despite all the critiques, this study argues that when the leadership of the organization employs the competencies of systems leadership in an inclusive decision-making approach, it empowers the members to believe in the goals, vision, and mission of the organization. Such competencies also include the ability to explain complex issues confronting the organization to the members and engage relevant stakeholders in a dialogue to address such issues. Also, employing such competency in leadership creates a sense of trust in which members of the organization believe

in a shared interest and commit to working together in new ways to create systemic change (Drier et al., 2019; World Economic Forum, 2021). This notion is echoed by other scholars who have explained that the administration of an organization could achieve success if some internal structures or elements can help strengthen the dynamic capability of the firm (Harvey et al., 2010). This study intends to integrate systems leadership and participatory communication as facilitators of a dynamic capability in organizations. Such discovery could contribute to the existing body of knowledge concerning the role of systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities in improving an organization's performance.

Governance and Decision-Making in Organizations

Much of the understanding of the way leaders work, and their motivation, is based on studies that focus on a leader's role and character in the business and political sectors. Many of these studies are often conducted in Western countries, including the U.S. and Britain, are often based on the individualistic, low power distance cultures of North America or Europe, and do not include those differences in Africa and other developing nations (Adair, 2002; Bennis & Nanus, 2004; Kotter, 1996). Allison (2002) explained that most studies have focused on board and governance issues rather than on the harsh conditions about the social, cultural, and political environments in which organizational leaders must contend (Hailey & James, 2004). The problem faced by the leadership of both for-profit and nonprofit organizations includes dealing with a range of complex and diverse issues relating to internal management and strategic planning in uncertain environments. These also include budgeting, staffing, and operating under the organization's governing structure, and ensuring growth and change (Aksel & Baran, 2006). Organizations face problems managing external relationships, including relationships with government and rival organizations. It is noteworthy that a leader's effectiveness depends on how

the individual can successfully identify internal and external problems, and how they can successfully articulate these issues with their decision-making and policies.

Some scholars argue that legal constraints, revenue sources, personnel types, and governance in nonprofit organizations make them unique. Yet, they make the same critical decisions on these matters as for-profit organizations, with the aim of meeting the goals and mission of their organizations. Therefore, all these organizations need a level of structure and coordination to improve their performance (Kpinpuo & Sanyare (2015). Studies on this issue have revealed some common problems and dilemmas experienced by the leadership in nonprofit organizations. These include the decision-making processes, which often do not involve other stakeholders (Mukasa, 2006; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Also, researchers have explained that decisions are often made without including the staff, who see themselves as partners in the organizations. The situation of excluding the staff from the decision-making process often creates tensions between them and the senior managers (Mosley, 2016; Mukasa, 2006).

Additionally, there are problems with how organizations are governed and the relations with the board members who preside over the organization's affairs (Mosley, 2016). Mukasa (2006) explained that board members lack the expertise to carry out their responsibilities in most cases. Also, they devote little time to board duties since most of them have other careers besides being board members (Mukasa, 2006; Waisbord, 2008). Due to such problems, the decisions and policy matters aimed at tackling the organization's problems are made by the senior staff members with little input from the board (Chen, 1998; Waisbord, 2008). However, this creates a complex scenario of governance for most nonprofit organizations. The complexity is often compounded by the absence of an inclusive decision-making process (Chen, 2008; Mosley, 2016; Mukasa, 2006).

Kpinpuo and Sanyare (2015) studied nonprofit organizations in Ghana and explained that the

lack of inclusive decision-making in these organizations is worsens as most nonprofits are

governed mostly by self-appointing boards of directors. Aruna and Thanasundari (2015) also

mentioned such self-styled executives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as making

decisions without consulting anyone or community members. The authors noted that although

the trustees of the organization are not elected by the society, "their essential purpose is to hold

an organization in trust for the benefit of society, as specified in its papers of incorporation and

grants of tax exemption" (Aruna & Thanasundari, 2015, p. 59). Such freedom to act enables

them to make undemocratic decisions that are often not in the interest of the community

members or their staff.

Other studies discovered the difficulty in nonprofit management and leadership,

especially in Ghana and other countries like Malawi. These problems include NGO

management's inability to define proper autonomy lines on policy issues, including the board and

the funders. Kpinpuo and Sanyare (2015) note that decision-making is among the many

challenges facing nonprofit organizations in developing countries such as Ghana. Field staff are

often excluded from critical decisions that affect their work in the communities. Aksel and Baran

(2006) reported in their studies that field staff often felt isolated and unsupported because of the

lack of understanding of the issues they were dealing with in the communities. However, they

have difficulty being loyal to their headquarters, where policies are often drafted for

implementation by staff on the field. However, the team who proposes and develops these

policies at the headquarters feels that the organization's members who work in the field have too

much power to be controlled to address the organization's interests (Baran, 2006). Malena (1995)

explained that the most identified issue confronting leaders in nonprofit organizations is the

inability of the leadership to have sight into the broader issues confronting the organization. The author explained that such problems are the result of limited organizational capacity and the lack of strategies and plans to sustain these organizations. Other problems include isolation and the lack of inter-organizational communication and coordination among teams, departments, and external stakeholders who can provide essential information and expertise to improve operations and performance in these organizations (Akani, 2016; Melana, 1995; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Also, the poor organizational performance is compounded by the lack of understanding of the socio-economic issues confronting the communities being served. Malena (1995) explained these problems become worse because most organizations have uncoordinated and misdirected objectives that are not clear to their stakeholders. Moore and Stewart (1998) also noted that these problems culminate in the organizational operations and actions that lack accountability to the public and stakeholders. It can also draw hostility from the public and make it difficult for the organizations to improve their performance.

The Negative Impact of Problems on Contemporary Organizational Leadership and Management

Effective organizational leadership depends on many factors, including the environment and the organization's culture, which will direct the actions and decisions of the leader. On the other hand, a leader of an organization could also initiate and lead the members to develop the culture in the organization (Akani, 2016; Eade, 2000; Mosley, 2016). Most nonprofit organizations tend to practice the concept of participatory communication because they believe that such an approach is value-driven and inclusive. Also, the participatory approach creates an avenue for the leadership to share decision-making with relevant members of the organization (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). For a leader to facilitate and coordinate a conducive culture, the

individual must possess specific values and capabilities to lead such change. These include personal integrity, political skill, and the managerial ability to balance the competing pressures in uncertain environments and markets (Fowler & Malunga, 2010). However, leadership could become less effective and fail to achieve organizational performance when the operational context is not inclusive and somewhat restricted by stakeholders. For example, interference from donors in the nonprofit sector makes it difficult to improve. Such interference makes the leadership wary about their relationships with donors, usually based on the need to obtain funding to implement programs (Batti, 2014; Narayan, 1996). Such challenges of interference and inadequate resources in nonprofit organizations makes it essential to find other ways to improve organizational operations and performance (Batti, 2014).

Fowler et al. (2002) explained most organizations also experience political interference from governments, impacting how they can execute their programs and operations. The authors explained that most organizations' leadership functions as part of the broader political and social context. Therefore, the leaders have a daunting task of working with the existing political system in the countries they operate in while maintaining a neutral stand on issues relating to their mission and vision (Fowler, et al.,). Such situations cause some NGO leaders to decide what they think will benefit their organizations and themselves without considering the consequence. Additionally, nonprofit organizations are more likely to face unpredictable demands of an uncertain environment, such as a catastrophic spread of HIV/AIDS or endemic poverty, as experienced in most developing countries. An organization will likely not survive in such an environment unless it can tackle the competing pressures it faces and adopt effective strategies to manage its operations. These include a demonstration of a remarkable ability to adopt different management styles and pursue the values, vision, and aspirations as prescribed by the

organization (Fowler, 1997; Fowler & Malunga,2010; Hailey & James, 2004; Kelleher & McLaren, 1996; Smillie & Hailey, 2001). Organizations must incorporate and develop the skills and knowledge necessary to promote learning and improve their performance. These include cultivating the talent to effectively communicate with their members and developing attributes and traits in leadership to facilitate such development and growth. Some leadership of organizations, especially in developing countries, have become aware of the critical role their skills play in the development of their communities and the influence of individual leaders in shaping the destiny of their organizations (Fowler, 1997; Hailey & James, 2004; Kelleher & McLaren, 1996; Smillie & Hailey, 2001; Waisbord, 2008). However, the challenge is how to enhance organizational capability to ensure effective programing that would improve performance (Aruna & Thanasundari, 2015; Chen, 2008; Waisbord, 2008).

While the discussion above mainly focused on the NGO sector due to my positionality, the issues identified here also apply to the for-profit and public sector organizations, which mostly employ the traditional hierarchical approach to leadership. Hierarchical leadership is the type of structure where employees take directions from those who supervise them. In this type of management, the organization's senior leadership or executives identify the goals, plan the projects, and determine the tasks to be assigned to various employees. Such a decision-making process usually excludes other team members. The leadership then communicates the decision to the rest of the organization members (Disterheft et al., 2012; Grundke, 2010). However, this approach to leadership does not promote the growth and success of the organization due to the lack of holistic leadership and inclusive communication processes. Use of systems leadership and participatory communication may create dynamic capabilities that enhance the knowledge and skills of employees in the performance of various tasks (Disterheft et al., 2012).

The systems leadership may see the organization as a more extensive system comprising of teams and departments made up of individuals with diverse expertise, experience, and knowledge about the organization's various issues. The ability to have a broader insight into issues enables the systems leader to explain the complexity of the situations to the organization's members. Such interaction between the leader and the members promotes understanding of the organization's challenges and enables collaboration to develop strategies and action plans to solve the problems (Senge et al., 2015). Therefore, this study aims to provide alternative ways to lead and communicate in different contexts.

Purpose of Study and Research Question

This study highlights the relevance of systems leadership (SL) and participatory communication (PC) as crucial facilitators of dynamic capability (DC) in organizations. This study aims to examine connections between systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities and how they may improve performance of an organization. Such an examination helps bridge the gap between existing dynamic capabilities and how they enhance organizational performance. This leads to my main research question: How may systems leadership (SL) and participatory communication (PC) strengthen dynamic organizational capabilities (DOC) for improved performance?

The Rationale for Investigating the Question

This study seeks to examine how the competencies of systems leadership, combined with the processes and approaches of participatory communication, create dynamic capabilities in organizations. Senge (2015) explained that systems leaders often believe that there are solutions to problems. Some of the core competencies of systems leadership include the ability to see more of the extensive system that contributes to a problem, foster conversations that generate new

perspectives of situations, and move people toward collective problem-solving and co-creation (Senge et al., 2015). A systems leader's capabilities include using the systems thinking approach to solve problems in the organization. This normative will demonstrate how systems leadership and participatory communication will result in the improved performance of an organization.

Several works of literature have identified participatory communication to improve organizational performance. When integrated with the competencies of a systems leader, the effort may promote effective organizational approaches that will yield the satisfaction of stakeholders and result in improved performance. As such, I argue that a combined effort of systems leadership and participatory communication may allow organizations to meet their goals. Senge (2015) explained that systems leaders often believe that there are solutions to problems. Some of the core competencies of systems leadership include seeing more of the extensive system that contributes to a problem. These foster conversations, generate new perspectives of situations, and move people toward collective problem-solving and co-creation (Senge et al., 2015). A systems leader's capabilities include using the systems thinking approach to solve problems in the organization. This proposed normative theory seeks to integrate the competencies of systems leadership and participatory communication to enhance dynamic capabilities and improve performance.

Significance of this Study

The integration of these three elements—namely, systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities—underlies this study's significance because it will create and affirm the inclusion of participatory communication and systems leadership as part of the core competencies of dynamic capabilities in an organization. More specifically, the study will also unveil multiple related elements and factors that contribute to dynamic capabilities in

organizations. These include a form of leadership thinking and skills that are based on the systems philosophy. The Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO.org, 2018) defined systems thinking as "a way of understanding reality that emphasizes the relationships among a system's parts rather than the parts themselves" (p. 1). These include the integration of participatory approaches in the daily routine of operations and leadership skills to improve performance.

Finally, the contributions of this study will enhance the academic scholarship on leadership, management, communication, and dynamic capabilities. The findings may also be relevant for practice across multiple sectors and by international and multilateral agencies such as international nongovernment organizations, multinational private sector entities, and United Nations agencies.

Definitions and Concepts Introductions

I briefly introduce the main study concepts below.

Systems Leadership

Systems leaders are those who facilitate the conditions to encourage and foster progress and change. Systems leadership paves the way for holistic solutions that target the root causes of issues (Drier et al., 2019; Senge, 2006). Systems leaders possess three core capabilities, including seeing a more extensive system contributing to a problem, fostering conversations that generate new ways of examining a situation, and moving people toward collective problem-solving and co-creation through learning (Drier et al., 2019; Senge, 2006). I define systems leadership as a mechanism that enables the leaders to use integrative perspectives and create conditions that facilitate an atmosphere where all individuals can work productively to

their potential. Systems leadership uses sound principles about human behavior to create good leadership models, organizational strategy, systems design, and social process.

Participatory Communication

Participatory communication "is a key process of bringing stakeholders together to cooperate towards addressing the problems" such as uncertainties in the market conditions that an organization may be facing (Kheerajita & Florb, 2013, p.705). The processes of participatory communication serve as a tool that allows the leadership of an organization to work together with stakeholders towards a sustainable and effective change (Kheerajita & Florb, 2013,705). The process of interacting with others who have expertise and experience in identified areas empowers members of the organization to discuss and address how to change routine operations and structural problems to improve an organization's performance. Other scholars define the process as mobilizing people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution (Freire, 1970). However, participatory communication coordinates and shares knowledge, policies, and strategies for achieving the goals set by the leadership. Based on these various definitions and descriptions, this study identifies participatory communication as the inclusion of input by relevant groups to design and implement an organization's strategies and goals to maximize output and to enhance its dynamic capabilities.

Dynamic Capabilities

Organizational performance is typically measured by the attainment of relevant, specific goals and an increase in profits (Argot, 1989). It also includes acquiring resources (Rousseau, 1990) and the combination of other economic performance data (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Quick, 1992). The dynamic capabilities framework analyzes the sources and methods by which organizations create and capture wealth while operating in a competitive environment of rapid

technological change (Teece et al., 1997). The competitive advantage of organizations rests on distinctive processes, including methods to coordinate and combine assets, such as effective leadership and communication, expertise in management, and the paths or processes through which changes are made to meet these challenges (Teece et al., 1997). The framework places importance on the dependencies of resources to improve organizational performance and create wealth. It suggests that an organization's quest to create wealth depends extensively on coordinating internal technological, organizational, and managerial processes inside the institution (Teece et al., 1997). This includes identifying new opportunities such as installing systems leadership and embracing effective communication processes, and coordination these by working with relevant stakeholders to strategize and improve performance and wealth. However, most organizations, including those in the nonprofit sector, fail to take this approach, and fail to perform (Fowler, 2002; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

The three main elements of dynamic capabilities are sensing, seizing, and transforming. Sensing involves assessing the external opportunities and consumer needs of the organization. The seizing element involves taking opportunity of conditions within the business environment to increase the organization's performance and value. The transforming element of dynamic capabilities is the process at which an organization designs innovative business models and renews existing ones by streamlining and changing organizational practices to improve performance (Teece, 2018).

What is an Organization?

Many definitions have been coined to describe organizations in the context of the discipline or focus. For this dissertation, an organization will be defined in the context of communication, specifically of the interactions that take place in organizations. Organizations

are generally carved out of informal networks of continued interpersonal interactions. When

these interactions become stable and develop closure, an organization is constituted with identity

(Espejo et al., 1996). The identity formed from the interactions creates a set of relationships that

define the organization. The relationships formed depend on the position of an individual within

the organization, such as just seeing one as a supervisor or a supervisee (Maturana & Varela,

1980, 1987). However, the people's interactions lead to creating the policies, laws, and other

documentation that eventually governs the organization. This means that as people interact, they

define the structure and culture of the organization (Maturana & Varela, 1980, 1987).

Organizational Success: Effectiveness and Performance

There have been several definitions and descriptions of organizational effectiveness,

including outcome accountability, which involves achieving measurable progress toward specific

outcomes (Frankel, 2008). Organizational effectiveness is broadly defined as how successful an

organization is in achieving the intended results. The words "performance" and "effectiveness"

are often used interchangeably (March & Sutton, 1997). There are various ways to measure the

effectiveness of an organization. A Performance Management System (PMS) assesses the

"effectiveness" of an organization's human resources. Many organizations implement PMS with

the sole intent of achieving better organizational results. Nonprofit organizations define

effectiveness as overhead minimization, which means cost minimization, particularly

nonprogram costs (Michell, 2012).

The essential underlying factor is that organizational effectiveness leads to increased

productivity, profits, employee satisfaction, and improved performance (Mayo, 1949; Robins,

1990; Scott, 2003). Effectiveness has many metrics, including but not limited to, managing

ambiguity, flexibility, customer orientation, productivity, awareness about its primary area of

business, and empowering its employees to perform well (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Other researchers such as Fayol (1925) defined organizational effectiveness as a function of apparent authority and discipline within an organization. Quoting Cameron and Whetten (1993), Eng and Patrickson (2006) described organizational effectiveness as "a hypothetical abstraction existing in people's minds giving meanings to ideas or interpretations about effectiveness that have no objective reality" (p. 3). Other researchers have expressed similar views about organizational effectiveness to include a construct inferred from the results of observable phenomena (Andreadis, 2009; Frankel, 2008; Matthews, 2011). Also, scholars who study this issue explain that organizations can gauge effectiveness from a holistic measure of intelligence, motivation, and leadership from multiple sources (Andreadis, 2009; Frankel, 2008; Matthews, 2011). Organizational performance is measured by the ability to meet the critical demands and the results produced by an organization to satisfy identified goals (Andreadis, 2009; Angle & Perry, 1981; Frankel, 2008; Matthews, 2011; Pfeffer, 1994). However, combining individual activities within an organization and its overall performance cannot improve the organization's operations. Instead, the performance of an organization is enhanced through a collaborative strategy between leadership, employees, and stakeholders that involves participatory communication processes where various suggestions, expertise, and knowledge are coordinated in a collaborative effort. For example, interacting with an organization's customers will help collect information about finding a supply for satisfactory and unique products and services (Dikmen et al., 2005; Teece et al., 1997). However, being unique in the business environment will require various departments comprising various skills and knowledge coordinated by the leadership to produce the final products (Espejo et al., 1996).

In this study, I define organizational success as the result of the competence of a leader who can organize a team, coordinate their activities, and collaborate with other stakeholders to identify the organization's goals, and then plan and strategize to achieve those goals. In the role of decision-making, the systems leader "interacts with internal and external stakeholders to sense, seize and transform to achieve customer needs" (Brem & Viardot, 2017, p. 199). The systems leader can ensure the success of the organization if the leader can coordinate with internal and external experts to gather information problems and demands in the environment and collects ideas from the members on how to develop business models and strategies how to implement those innovations (Brem & Viardot, 2017).

The Importance of Treating the Organization as a System

An organization can be viewed as a system because it comprises several units that are highly integrated to accomplish an overall goal, including administrative and management departments (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). These departments are made up of groups of workers and individual experts who produce services and products. The organization's structure and nature will change if any part of the units or departments changes (Brem & Viardot, 2017; Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008;). Such complexity in the operations of an organization often warrants leadership with a complex mind. Therefore, it is important to utilize a system thinking approach to manage an organization's activities and outcomes (Easterby-Smith et al., 20080). The socio-cultural systems in an organization are created by the dynamic complexity of the interactions between the leadership and the organizational members, which is essential to effect change in organizations (Sterman, 2000).

Furthermore, the complex nature of many socio-economic factors requires new ways of interpreting the patterns and events in organizations. Therefore, managing an organization

effectively requires viewing the organization's whole success in the context of a system. Adopting the system thinking approach to manage the organization facilitates understanding the complexity involved and how to improve organizational performance (Sterman, 2000). Researchers have noted that the environment within organizations is becoming more complex (Haines, 1998; Ossmitz, 2000; Senge, 1990). They also note that many variables can cover the processes in organizations and other societies/communities. Multiple variables and components make it difficult for managers and leaders to anticipate their influence due to global systems' complexity. Socio-cultural systems comprising organizations and markets are often difficult to forecast due to inevitable interruptions in the market environment (Ossmitz, 2000). Senge (2007) explained that the systems thinking view is necessary for understanding the dynamic complexity of social systems. Sterman (2000) defined systems thinking as a discipline for seeing the structure that underlies complex situations and discerning high from low leverage change (Sterman, 2000).

The application and adaptation of the principles of systems thinking in the organization create an opportunity that provides information about what is going on in the environment to respond appropriately to complex and uncertain situations. Such an opportunity also helps establish the interrelationships of parts of the system (organization) and identify the multiple cause-and-effect cycles (Haines, 1998; Senge, 1990). Furthermore, identifying the connections creates strategies that facilitate problem-solving skills to manage the organization's issues and align its visions and goals (Warren, 2000). As Forester (1975) explained, systems' thinking in organizations is a way to manage complex systems by focusing on the whole, its components, and the components' interrelationships, rather than by focusing on supposedly isolated and

independent parts and problems. Such complexity requires a complex form of leadership to manage uncertain environments of organizations.

Study Methodology

This study employed the normative process of theory building to develop a model that integrates the core competencies of systems leadership with participatory communication. The approach drew on literature from various theorists and researchers based on the assumption that some actions are standard norms that are good and produce desirable outcomes. This dissertation focused on two theory-building levels, including the descriptive theory-building process and the normative theory-building process.

In the first step to developing the normative model, I employed a descriptive approach that describes the core competencies of systems leadership and the processes used to implement the participatory communication approach. This includes an explanation of the values of these two theories in the context of dynamic capabilities and the positive effect on organizational growth and performance. Specifically, the methodology will show how systems leadership and participatory communication serve as strategies that enhance dynamic capabilities in organizations.

Secondly, I explain how the normative part will explain the actions taken by a systems leader who employs participatory communication approaches will have good outcomes and success, which will lead to improved outcomes in the organization. The study will then use these guidelines to revise the dynamic capability framework and include systems leadership and participatory communication as capabilities and strategies that create the sense, seize, and transform capabilities.

Summary

I argue that systems leadership, which involves the management of an organization, could coordinate participatory communication effectively that will lead to the strengthening and creation of organizational (dynamic) capabilities. Improved performance and organization effectiveness are challenges that organizations deal with regularly in a changing market environment. Many organizations still adhere to the top-down approach to leadership and management. Employees only receive orders and instructions without having input in the organization's decision-making process. Most of these organizations continue to practice the traditional methods of passing on information to employees through e-mail, memos, and policy handouts without inquiring about and incorporating their suggestions in decisions. In this study, I intend to provide better ways to approach leadership and communication in organizations to improve performance and viability.

Chapter Outlines

In Chapter I, I introduce the dissertation topic and explain the main concepts of the theoretical framework of this study. Chapter II explains the approach to the methodology. Chapter III presents a literature review on participatory communication as a contributing factor to improved performance in organizations and as a facilitator of organizational capabilities. Chapter IV explains how systems leadership contributes to improved performance in organizations and organizational capabilities. Chapter V presents the methodology for establishing systems leadership and participatory communication as part of improving organizations. Chapter VI discusses the findings and the implications for leadership, while Chapter VII explains how the new model can be applied to both for-profit and nonprofit organizations.

CHAPTER II: THEORY BUILDING AND MODEL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will describe the process of normative theory building using

recommendations and guidelines from various researchers and theorists, including Carlile and

Christensen (2005), Kaplan (1964), and Jaccard and Jacobi (2019, 2020). Considering this is a

theoretical dissertation, understanding and explaining this process of theory building is

important. This dissertation will focus on two theory-building levels, including the descriptive

theory-building process and the normative theory-building process. The models, as described by

Carlile and Christensen (2005), have "normative and pedagogical implications for how to

conduct research and evaluate the work of other researchers, and for training doctoral students"

(p. 1). This two-stage process of building theory is normative and ultimately prescriptive. The

process will involve identifying the methodology at these stages and how discoveries of

anomalies play a role in building a better approach to verify the validity (Carlile & Christensen,

2005; Jaccard & Christensen, 2005; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020).

The Attributes of a Good Theory

Theories are based on conceptualizations that involve what is observed, imagined, or

stimulated after engaging in "mind games of our own, considering what others have said about

the issue at hand, or examining empirical observations" (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020, p. 28) or the

environment (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020). Jaccard and Jacobi (2020) explained that the process of

formulating conceptual systems and converting them into symbolic expressions is termed

"theorization or theory construction" (p. 28). The authors quoted many definitions of theory,

including Kaplan's (1964), which states that "a theory is a symbolic construction" (p. 28). In

addition, Jaccard and Jacobi (2020) quoted a definition by Hollander (1967), who defined theory

as "consisting of one or more functional statements or propositions that treat the relationship of

variables to account for a phenomenon or set of phenomena" (p. 28). On their part, Jaccard and

Jacobi (2020) defined theory as "a set of statements about the relationships between two or more

concepts or constructs" (p. 28).

Some researchers have argued that models and theories can be used interchangeably

(Carlile & Christensen, 2005; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020), while others who refer to a

conceptual realm use "model" only (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020). Also, other theorists view

models as portions of theories or those derived from theories (Coomes et al., 1970, Kaplan,

1964; Sheth, 1967). Jaccard and Jacobi (2020) explained that the type of construct used in

research is called a variable. The authors note that many types of studies in the social sciences

focus on variables composed of different levels or constructs that are assessed. For example, this

study aims to address this gap by proposing that systems leadership and participatory

communication serve as facilitators of dynamic capabilities to enhance an organization's

performance. Furthermore, Jaccard and Jacoby (2020) explained that variables are essential

depending on the level or construct in research. This is because people, objects, and societies

differ and contribute at different levels.

However, understanding the levels and constructs as explained above in any phenomenon

is linked to the cognitive ability of an individual to understand complex issues, which in turn

influences reasoning and behavior. Information about this helps to understand the issues at hand

(Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020). The authors explained that a core system derived from

producing insights or understanding a phenomenon is called "explanation" (p. 17). Explanation

helps to answer why two things, such as systems leadership and participatory communication,

are connected to the processes that facilitate the creation of dynamic capabilities in

organizations. Another aspect of understanding a phenomenon involves the ability to predict future events or situations.

Additionally, understanding a phenomenon includes differentiating one from the other (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020; Runkle & McGrath, 1972). Understanding provides the ability to control relationships in the environment. Maintaining the environment involves understanding the relevant features in the environment and being able to manipulate those features.

The Role of Theory in Basic Versus Applied Research

In this dissertation, the different types of research focus on both basic and applied research. There have been various arguments about whether these two approaches in research rely on theories (Carlile & Christensen, 2006; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020). Researchers argue that basic research studies use theories, while applied research does not (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2019, 2020). It is the consensus of researchers that data gathered for interpretation in most studies are mostly guided by theory (Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020). Literature on the differences between these two approaches shows that applied research focuses on narrow and specific concepts, while basic research is concerned with broader and less concrete concepts (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020). The overall difference is that basic research is often not focused on immediate problems and tends to rely on concepts that are relatively broad in scope, and produces findings intended to contribute to extending the understanding of a phenomenon in question (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985; Hirschman, 1986; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020).

In explaining the importance of theory to research, Jaccard and Jacoby (2019, 2020) explained that theories must have several characteristics to qualify as good and reliable. These include being viewed as conceptually valid, with a broad consensus among the academic community of theorists and researchers. They note that a bad theory eventually becomes obsolete

and loses its relevance over time (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2020; Popper, 1968). Other theorists have stated that a good theory must be logically consistent and must not be in contravention to predictions. Also, the theory must agree with known data and facts and be liable to testing (Shaw & Constanza, 1982).

Furthermore, a good theory must be adequately explained with a few concepts and principles, thereby making it parsimonious, a principle often referred to as "Ockham's razor" (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020, p. 32). Another attribute of a good theory is having a broader scope, which provides the opportunity to include many things that can better explain a phenomenon. Furthermore, a good theory should generate more interest in more research (Jaccard & Jacobi, 2020).

The Theory-Building Process

I will describe my dissertation as normative because it seeks to prescribe typical ways to engage other stakeholders in the decision-making process in an organization. In addition, it shows various ways the leadership of an organization can coordinate material and human resources to improve performance in an organization. This study aims to show how systems leadership and participatory communication can facilitate improved performance and organizational capabilities. As noted earlier, several research studies have explained that theory building occurs in two major stages, consisting of the descriptive and the normative stages (Baron, 2004; Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020). The authors explained the descriptive stage of theory building as the preliminary stage through which researchers must develop the normative theory (Baron, 2004; Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Jaccard & Jacobi, 2019, 2020).

Furthermore, Carlile and Christensen (2006) explained that studies aimed at building a normative theory proceed through three steps: observation, categorization, and association. This dissertation will use some of these key guidelines to prescribe processes for improving organizational performance and capability.

Figure 2.1

The Theory-Building Process
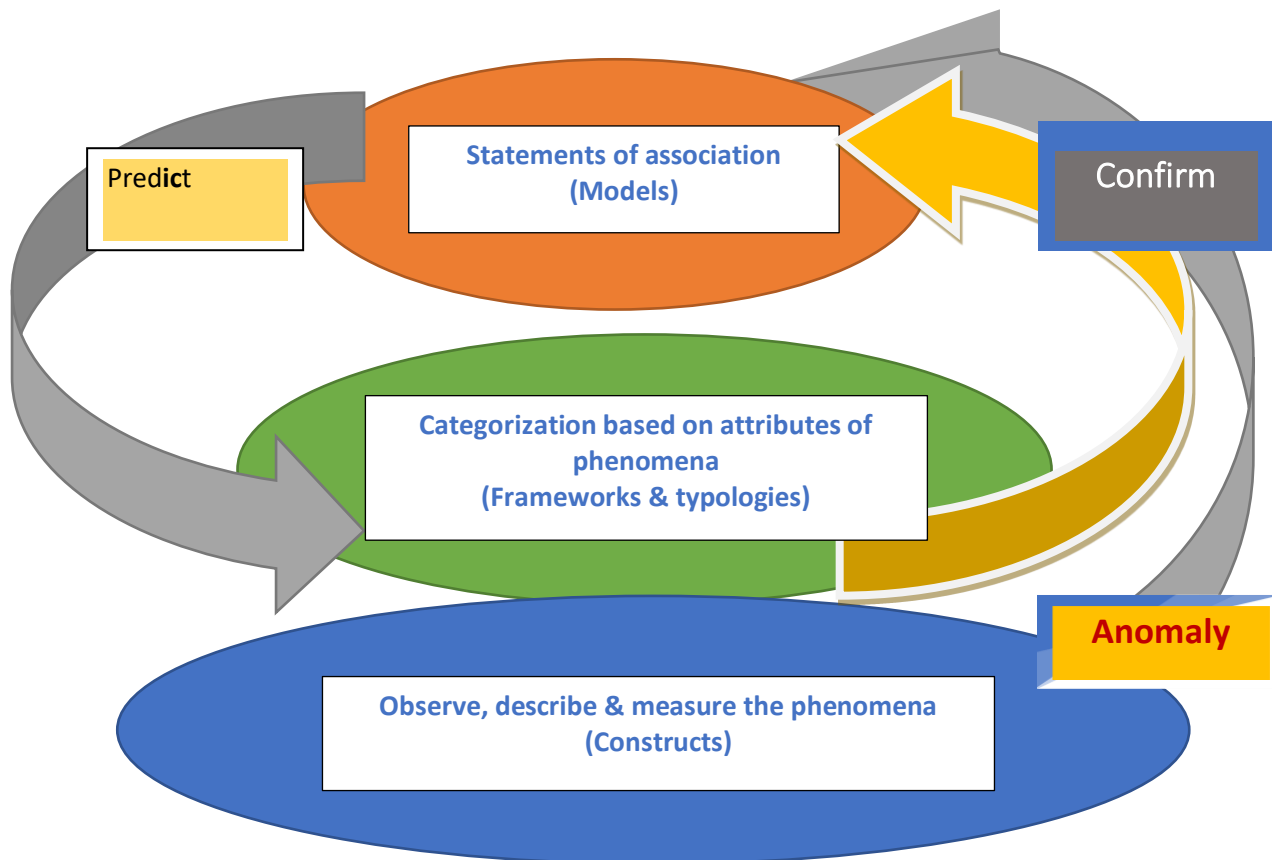
Step 1: Observation and Identification

Carlile and Christensen (2006) explained the observation stage as the first step in theory building. Here, researchers "observe phenomena and carefully describe and measure what they see" (p. 2). They noted that "careful observation, documentation, and measurement of the phenomena in words and numbers is important at this stage because if subsequent researchers

cannot agree upon the descriptions of phenomena, then improving the theory will prove difficult" (Carlile & Christensen, 2006, p. 2). Examples of work that falls into this category in management research include work by researchers such as Barnard (1939). He noted that a phenomenon being explored in this stage is not limited to people, organizations, and technologies, but also includes how things are done (Bernard, 1939; Carlie & Christensen, 2006). Such revelation underscores the importance of this dissertation which focuses on the underlying process for how systems leadership and participatory communication contribute to the creation of dynamic capabilities in organizations.

The approach also fits with the initial descriptive stage during which these processes are described and explained. Such an in-depth description of the process will help build upon the strategies for the existing dynamic capability framework. The early descriptive stage in research will help eliminate the misleading concepts discovered in a study by Narayanan and Raman (2004). The study was based on years of long-held assumptions that managers of organizations have the knowledge of inventory in the organization. However, the researchers discovered that these phenomena were not true and did not support the long-held assumptions in repeated research studies that focused on such assumptions on knowledge of inventory levels (Narayan & Raman, 2004). Narayanan and Raman (2004) showed that most computerized inventory records in organizations were broadly inaccurate. The authors have since been able to lay a foundation for such studies by describing how inventory replenishment systems work and what variables affect the accuracy of those processes. Through such a preliminary theory-building process, they have laid this foundation which supply chain scholars now use to build a body of theories and policies that reflect the natural and different situations that managers and companies face (Carlile & Christensen, 2006; Narrayanan & Raman, 2004).

My observation for this theoretical dissertation is derived from constructs that have been developed from the phenomena under study (Carlile & Christensen, 2020). The process includes the literature review on systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities to help explain and promote the understanding of the elements about organizational performance improvement. The aim is to visualize what these phenomena are and how they operate (Bower, 1970; Carlile & Christensen, 2006). For example, using this process, Bower (1970) studied resource allocation, in which he developed his constructs by explaining how "momentum builds behind certain investment proposals and fails to coalesce behind others" (as cited in Carlile & Christensen, 2006, p. 3). Such constructs have helped researchers who focus on policy and strategy understand how strategic investment decisions are made (Bowers, 1970). Carlie and Christensen (2006) further explained that the term that pertains to an economist's concepts of "utility" and "transaction cost" are abstractions developed to help understand a class of phenomena being observed. They noted that these terms are not theories in themselves but "part of theories or building blocks upon which bodies of understanding about consumer behavior and organizational interaction have been built" (Carlile & Christensen, 2006, p. 3). In this context, I propose that by creating the constructs for this theoretical framework, I would be producing building blocks that would lay the foundation for my proposed revised framework to develop dynamic capability in organizations.

Step 2: Classification

This second stage involves the classification of the phenomena into categories. Carlile and Christensen (2006) explained that the second stage in a description of theory-building consists of the classification of schemes proposed by the researcher, which are typically defined by the attributes of the phenomena. In the case of this theoretical dissertation, the attributes will

be derived from the core competencies of systems leadership, processes of participatory communication, and the characteristics of systems thinking in comparison to regular characteristics of these elements, which is also referred to as frameworks or typologies in the field of management research (Bower, 1970; Burgelman, 1986; Carlile & Christensen, 2006). Researchers later developed the construct of context, during which they identified two different types of contexts as organizational and strategic (Bower, 1970; Burgelman, 1986). This development will guide the process of this theoretical dissertation because it will simplify the categorization of the strategies used by systems leadership in organizational settings.

Step 3: Defining Relationships/Association

This third stage of theory building involves exploring the association between the category-defining attributes and the outcomes observed (Bower, 1970; Burgelman, 1986; Carlile & Christensen, 2004). In descriptive theory building, researchers recognize and explicitly make the differences in attributes and the magnitude.

The process is followed by correlating the patterns in the outcomes of interest (Bower, 1970; Carlie & Bower, 2006). When conducting an empirical study, techniques such as regression analysis help define these correlations (Burgelman, 1986; Carlile & Christensen, 2004). In the context of theory building, the output of studies at this step is referred to as models (Burgelman, 1986; Carlile & Christensen, 2006). For the purposes of this theoretical dissertation, an integrated model of systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities will articulate the relationship among these constructs and subsequently relating them to organizational performance.

Building and Improving the Theory

The three steps comprising observation, categorization, and association are classified as

the inductive portion of the theory-building process. The theory improves when researchers work

on the deductive portion by examining the observed elements at the top of the building structure

to the bottom of the pyramid. The deductive part of the cycle of building a theory seeks to test

the hypothesis that had been inductively formulated. This process involves exploring whether the

same correlations exist between attributes and outcomes in a different set of data than from

which the hypothesized relationships were induced. This theoretical dissertation will compare

my attributes of phenomena to existing studies on systems leadership, systems thinking, and

participatory communication in the organizational setting. The aim will be to demonstrate

potential application between the findings related to these elements and my inductive

constructs/research questions formulated at the beginning of the research. Carlie and Christensen

(2004) noted:

> When scholars test a theory on a new data set (whether the data are numbers in a
> computer, or are field observations taken in a new context), they might find that the
> attributes of the phenomena in the new data do indeed correlate with the outcomes as
> predicted. (p. 4)

Argyris (1993) also explained that such development confirms that the theory is used under the

conditions or circumstances observed.

The Normative Stage of Theory Building

The normative stage of theory development is the next step in the theory building

process. It provides an opportunity for the researcher to improve on the theory or framework

while clarifying any confusion (Kuhn, 1962). The confusion and contradiction of the descriptive

theory are resolved when the researcher moves beyond correlation statements to define what

causes the outcome of interest (Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Kuhn, 1962). With a clear

understanding of causality, the process starts at the top of the pyramid, using the same three steps as in the descriptive theory-building process, except that this time, a causal statement and corresponding expectation will be made (Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Kuhn, 1962). Carlile and Christensen (2004) explained that researchers "hypothesizing that their statement of causality is correct, cycle deductively to the bottom of the pyramid to test the causal statement" (p. 6). For this work, I am positing that systems leadership and participatory communication facilitate dynamic capabilities in organizations. The emerging theory will begin to clarify any anomaly using the methods described in this paragraph.

This process involves delving into the categorization stage by avoiding the development of schemes as used in the descriptive theory-building process (Argyris, 1993; Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Kuhn, 1962). Carlile and Christensen (2004) explained that rather than using schemes based on attributes of the phenomena, the next stage in clarifying an anomaly in theory building process involves developing categories of different situations or circumstances that may have resulted in a different or unexpected outcome. For example, in the context of this dissertation, I could come to design a set of situations that could not support my expectation that SL and PC play a role in creating dynamic capabilities in organizations. Carlile and Christensen (2006) noted that "this allows researchers to make contingent statements of causality to show how and why the casual mechanism results in a different outcome, in the different situations" (p. 6). By going through the process outlined in this section, my proposed theory would complete the process from descriptive to normative. Through this process, I can explain and provide the leaders of the organization guidance about actions that will lead to the desired result (Carlile & Christensen, 2004, p. 6). This process, in essence, is what psychometricians call convergent and

divergent validity, namely that correlations among elements should be positive and negative in ways predicted by the theory.

Establishing the Validity of the Theory

This section will use guidelines described by Carlile and Christensen (2004) to discuss how validity relates to their model of theory building and describe how researchers can make theories valid. Yin (1984) defined two types of validities for theory, including internal and external validity, "which are the dimensions of a body of understanding that help us gauge whether and when we can trust" the outcomes of research or theory (as cited by Carlile & Christensen, 2004, p. 14). Citing Yin (1984), Carlile and Christensen (2004) noted that:

> The best way to ensure a theory's internal validity is the extent to which: 1) its conclusions are logically drawn from its premises, and 2) the researchers have ruled out all plausible alternative explanations that might link the phenomena with the outcomes of interest. (p. 15). They explained that establishing the internal validity of a theory involves examining the phenomena through the lenses of as many disciplines and parts of the company as possible. (p. 15).

Through a review of existing studies, the authors found that those plausible alternative explanations for issues related to internal validity could be found in the workings of another part of the company (Carlile & Christensen, 2004). The external validity of a theory is related to the ability to generalize the outcome of a theory (Dekkers et al., 2010). This involves the extent to which an observed relationship between phenomena and results in one context can be trusted and applied in different contexts (Carlile & Christensen, 2004). Many researchers have come to believe that a theory's external validity is established by "testing" it on different data sets (Carlile & Christensen, 2004; Dekkers et al., 2010). Carlie and Christensen (2006) explained that "when researchers define what causes what and why and show how the result of that causal mechanism differs by circumstance, then the scope of the theory, or its external validity, is established" (p. 16). Based on this explanation, the authors defined the external validity of a theory as "when the

process of seeking and resolving anomaly after anomaly results in a set of categories that are collectively exhaustive and mutually exclusive" (p. 16).

Normative Theory

Normative theories aim to improve human judgment by addressing and improving the biases resulting from those judgments (Dekkers et al., 2010). Normative theories can also relate to the study of judgment and decision making, which is also known as "JDM." JDM involves comparing one's judgments about issues that are perceived as standards and allows evaluation of the judgments as better or worse (Baron, 2004; Chomski, 1957; Irwin, 1971; Rawls, 1971). In this dissertation, the term "judgments" include the process of decision-making which involves actions and strategies that could be taken to improve organizational performance. In the normative process, the significant standards for denoting better or worse come from probability theory, utility theory, and statistics (Baron, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004). These are mathematical theories or models that are used for the evaluation of judgment. They are called normative because they are norms.

In contrast, the term "normative" is used similarly in philosophy; it is used differently in sociology and anthropology, where it denotes something more related to cultural standards (Baron, 2004). Normative theories usually are not required to involve philosophical data about the tasks being judged, rather than data confirming and describing human nature are relevant to prove a theory (Baron, 2004; Chomski, 1957; Irwin, 1971; Rawls, 1971). In making such a distinction, Irwin (1971) explained that certain aspects of human nature distinguish them from other creatures, such as, for example, a tiger. Such distinctive differences include beliefs, desires, and the ability to make decisions (Baron, 2004). Therefore, such characteristics of humans are

unlikely to serve well for a tiger. Such philosophical and logical reasoning serves as the basis for the justification of normative theories and will be applied to this dissertation.

Contextually, normative theories describe the differences between better and worse (Baron, 2004, Chomski, 1957; Irwin, 1971; Rawls, 1971). Therefore, relative to established cultural standards or norms of decision-making and leadership approaches in most organizations, this study will compare judgments on decision making and leadership that comes in organizations and prescribe better ways to make decisions and lead organizations to improve performance.

Justification of Normative Models

Justifying the basis of a normative model could be relative to the issue being judged as there are different concrete and abstract items. Popper (1962) explained this using an arithmetic example. He proposed that the result of 1+1 as equal to 2 imposes an analytic frame on the world. However, the result does not translate to the same terms when two drops of water are placed in a container. Baron (2004) argued that the results of adding two drops would equal one significant drop. He noted that this result does not mean that arithmetic has not been confirmed. Other researchers have explained this and similar phenomena that show that this example does not fit a particular framework. In this instance, the arithmetic structure must be defined in the context of when and how it applies to the phenomena (Baron, 2004; Irwin, 1962; Popper, 1962). The result must explain the reasoning for its existence and the functional relationship to establish certainty and confidence in the framework (Baron, 2004; Chomski, 1957; Irwin, 1971; Rawls, 1971). Baron (2004) understood that logical reasoning itself is a framework that shapes a theory or model. The author argued that there is "no claim absolute truth is involved in this approach to normative models" (p. 6). Instead, it is truth relative to assumptions, which human beings are

compelled to make in situations confronted because of human nature, as decisions are made based on beliefs and desires (Baron, 2004).

One of the normative models often used by researchers is the expected utility theory (EUT), based on acts, states, and consequences. This dissertation employs this model to build a new normative theory around the constructs of interest to help explain the decision-making and leadership approach that could help improve organizational performance.

Acts, States, and Consequences-Drawing of the Theoretical Diagram

The expected-utility theory (EUT), one of the bases to construct a normative theory, is derived from an analysis of decisions into acts, state of uncertainty in the environment, and the consequences or outcomes of the decisions/acts (Baron, 2004). These are made up of beliefs about states and desires which also translate as values or utilities concerning the consequences. Decisions in this context often refer to identified routes or processes that function as alternative solutions to a situation. The states translate as the various possibilities of what a case could likely be. The outcome in a normative theory describes the experiences to be derived from the possibilities. Therefore, EUT, as a normative model, provides the conditions of probabilities for the situation, coupled with the expected utility/outcome of each option. It also explains that outcomes are determined from the probabilities of each state/situation in each row.

Figure 2.2 illustrates this point using participatory communication and systems leadership. This process, in essence, is what psychometricians call convergent and divergent validity, namely that correlations among elements should be positive and negative in ways predicted by the theory.

Figure 2.2

Diagram Illustrating the Connections of Expected-Utility Theory (EUT) as Acts, States, and

Consequences
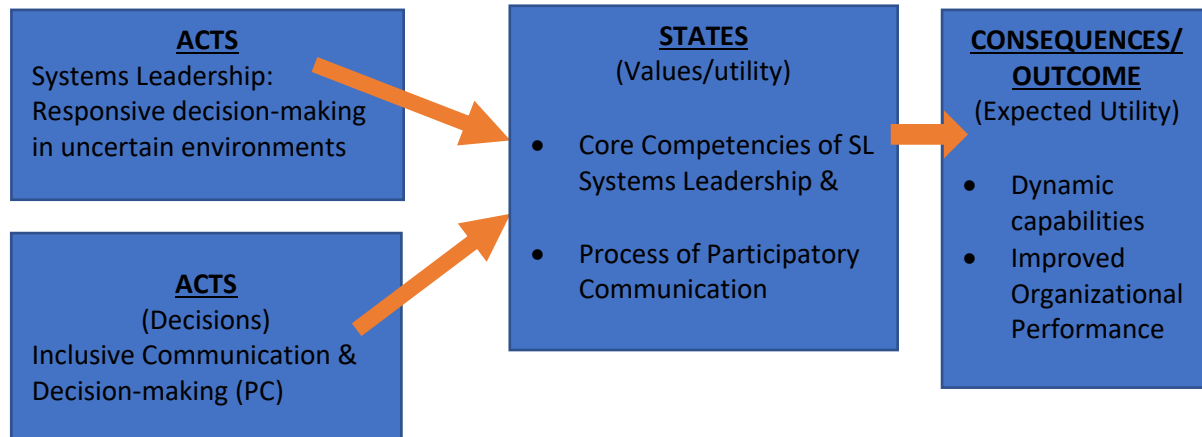
Overall, the distinction between options and states results from a particular world view, which in this dissertation would include enabling an inclusive decision-making environment through participatory communication to improve performance. It also means employing the core competencies of systems leadership to lead an organization in an uncertain environment to enhance its performance. This view makes a sharp distinction between events we control (options) and events that we do not control (states). An essential point in the normative approach is that the description of outcomes must include what is valued rather than aspects of the context regarding a gain or a loss (Baron, 2004; Irwin, 1967). The point of the normative model is to provide a standard rather than justifying a set of guidelines to make decisions on goals, plans, and strategies to improve performance in organizations (Baron, 2004). Therefore, this dissertation suggests selected approaches that could guide the leadership of organizations to integrate inclusive decision-making approaches to improve performance.

In the subsequent chapters, I explore the concepts of systems leadership and participatory communication, and demonstrate their relevance to dynamic capabilities. Senge (1990) defined systems thinking as a discipline of seeing wholes and a framework for understanding interrelationships rather than things and understanding patterns of change instead of static snapshots. The framework helps explain how parts, people, and events in an organization influence each other. This approach also provides insight into issues and tackling problems using alternative means. Sweeney and Sterman (2000) found that much of the skill involving systems thinking relates to representing and assessing dynamic complexity. Such complexity includes developing a new behavior because of the interactions between a system's agents and others. The authors specifically noted that observing interactions between these entities can help understand how actions develop (Sweeney & Sterman, 2000). The basis of systems thinking reflects in the core competencies of systems leadership, where an individual's ability to lead rests on the capability to influence others toward a shared goal. Among the many competencies of systems, leadership is communicating and transmitting information by interacting with team members of an organization, who receive such information and act on it based on the leader's influence and skill. Such skill also entails employing the processes involved in participatory communication. The ability to listen and influence people to listen and act is a common thread that binds leadership and communication, especially participatory communication.

In the next chapter, I introduce and explore the concept of participatory communication. The following chapter includes a review of systems leadership and I offer initial integration between the SL and PC towards the end of that chapter.

CHAPTER III: COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

> Communication between people thrives not on the ability to talk fast but on the ability to listen well…Participation, which causes listening and trust, will help reduce the social distance between communicators and receivers, between teachers and learners, between leaders and followers and facilitate a fairer exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences. (Servaes & Malikhao, 1995).

This chapter explains how communication functions in organizations. It explains the various types of interactions that constitute different levels of communication. It also includes descriptions of the kind of environment that facilitates participation in communication in organizations. Communication is one of the most dominant and essential activities in organizations (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Fundamentally, relationships grow from communicating, and the functioning and survival of organizations are dependent on effective relationships among individuals and groups. Also, organizational capabilities are developed and enacted through intensely social and communicative processes (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Communication helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals, and this is vital in socialization, decision-making, problem-solving, and change in the management processes (Berger, 2008).

On the other hand, organizational climate represents a set of attitudes and beliefs that portray the organization shared and collectively held by members of the organization. In a survey conducted by Paynton and Hahn (2019), the authors enumerated some benefits derived from organizational communication. These include studying the fact that it accomplishes tasks relating to specific roles and responsibilities of sales, services, and production in organizations. Payton and Hahn (2019) also noted that an organization could acclimate to changes through individual and organizational creativity and adaptation. The authors further add that such adaptation enables the organization to complete its tasks by maintaining policy, procedures, or regulations that support daily and continuous operations (Paynton & Hahn, 2019). The authors also noted that the

existence of help to develop relationships within the organization through attitudes, morale, satisfaction, and fulfillment to coordinate, plan, and control its operations (Paynton & Hahn, 2019). Ahsanul (2013) explained that "communication effects combine in different ways to evolve a belief and value system that as the climate of the organization such as participatory, supportive, hostile, defensive, invigorating, positive and negative climate" (p. 156).

Several studies show that a good communication climate significantly influences the organization's productivity because it facilitates members' efforts to improve their performance (Bartels, 2006; Guzley, 1992; Trombetta & Rogers, 1988). Additionally, studies suggest that the communication which takes place during the creation of organizational climate helps an organization in its efforts to restructure, reorganize, and revitalize its essential elements (Bartels, 2006; Guzley, 1992; Trombetta & Rogers, 1988). Bartels (2006) explained that a communication climate provides the space to make decisions and act on them. He explained that these decisions include working and committing themselves to the organization and pursuing its opportunities. He noted that such guidelines include the decision to support other members and perform tasks to the best of one's knowledge and expertise and offer innovative ideas for improving the organization and its operations (Bartels, 2006; Guzley, 1992). However, an adverse climate may undermine the decisions that organization members make about their approach to work and their contributions (Bartels, 2006; Guzley, 1992).

Studies have shown that organizational communication can be contextual and culturally dependent (Adair et al., 2016; Bartels, 2006; Johns, 2006; Smircich, 1983). The members' beliefs and attitudes towards the organization reflect the organization's climate (Adair et al., 2016; Kickul & Liao-Troth, 2003; Smircich, 1983). The employees' perceptions of the information flow and the climate in which communication occurs create the organization's environment's

conceptual meaning (Adair et al., 2016). The abstract sense of the communication climate in an

organization emanates from the work conditions, relations with supervisors, how the

organization compensates its workers, opportunity for advancement, relationships among

employees, and the rules and regulations governing the workplace (Giffords, 2009; Goldhaber et

al., 1978; Perez, 2000). Other elements that create the conceptual meaning of organizational

climate include decision-making and the organization's resources. Factors include how members

are motivated (Adair et al., 2016; Kickul, & Liao-Troth, 2003; Smircich, 1983), whatever

perception that defines the organizational communication climate stems from interactions and

messages transmitted through various means or medium of communication.

Communication and Organizational Climate

Fink and Chen (1995) explained that an organization's climate concept is psychological

and appears in components. They explained that "psychological climate is the individual

member's cognitive representation of an organization" (p. 496), which represents a mutual

perspective of the organization with others (Fink & Chen, 1995). Citing previous studies on the

subject, Fink and Chen (1995) also explained that such perception creates "a constructivist view

of communication that emphasizes the sharing and creation of meanings among interactants in a

communication system" (Fink & Chen, 1995, p. 498; Delia, 1977). The authors explained that

the interaction among members of an organization enables them to transfer information or share

their thoughts about the organization and other issues. Fink and Chen (1995) explained that two

conditions must be present to facilitate effective communication. They include the potential

existence of differences in views and perceptions of the thinking structure of those involved in

the communication. The second condition is that those involved in the communication must have

a physical medium of connection (Fink & Chen, 1995). Quoting a study conducted by Woelfel

and Fink (1980), Fink and Chen (1995) explained that "the channel or link offers the opportunity for communication, while the difference in potential provides the motivation or force" (p. 498). The authors explained that when the two conditions happen in communication, it facilitates the convergence of beliefs and attitudes among individuals who constitute the organization's system (Fink & Chen, 1995; Woelfel & Fink, 1980). An organization's performance can be improved when members with different views communicate among themselves. They create a combination of varying thinking capacities based on expertise and knowledge, which can help solve problems and the organization (Fink & Chen, 1995; Woelfel & Fink, 1980). The flow of communication among the members in a system or organization enables them to create various conversations. These concepts constitute a sub-universe that the members of the units interpret to make sense of their environment (Fink & Chen, 1995).

Making Communication Participatory

Initial studies in participatory communication were aimed at development programs, mostly in developing countries. However, over the years, the concept and practice of participatory communication have been applied to other sectors and contexts, including organizations. The art of engagement from the participatory approach involves obtaining support from various stakeholders, including governments, donors, civil societies, and ordinary citizens. The concept emanated from development practitioners and academics in developing countries who raised fundamental questions about the Western domination of the aid projects geared towards development (Freire, 1970, 1985; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The concern that drove these actions was the vital need for integrating participation strategies in policy and decision-making in development programs targeted at underprivileged populations (Freire, 1970, 1998; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The questions and concerns raised in these areas have gained

prominence in current development programs and policies in many institutions and organizations (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Freire (1973) was an early advocate of the participatory communication approach. His definition of participation contains an elaboration of his interpretation of the dialogical communication model. The model emphasizes a close dialectic between collective action and reflection, which works to empower society's vulnerable. Other scholars and practitioners who initially believed in the dependency paradigm became critical of the international centers (Chambers, 1983; Escobar, 1995; Lerner, 1958). Today, participation and concerns for voice, empowerment, and poverty orientation are at the core of much development work, particularly in governance issues and management issues (Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). In the form of participatory communication, the new viewpoint of decision-making assumes that no organizations, communities, or economies function autonomously of each other (Freire, 1993; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). It also includes the notion that no state or city is entirely self-sufficient, nor are there any nations whose development is determined only by external factors (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). It explains that every society is dependent on the other to some extent. In this context, attention has focused more on the content of development, which implies a more normative approach. In this perspective, the communication media are the driving force and support behind development initiatives in organizations and communities by disseminating messages that encourage development-oriented projects.

In a study conducted for the World Bank, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) explained that there were no participatory elements in the early models of strategic communication. The authors explained a widely held assumption that communication had the power to enhance development through a model that viewed communication as a process by which a sender sends messages to a

receiver (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The process mostly adapted from Laswell's (1948) classic

formula summarizes this hierarchic view on communication. The formula explains, "Who says

What through Which channel to Whom with What effect?" (Laswell, 1948; Tufte &

Mefalopulos, 2009). In their study, Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) explained that interest in

incorporating communication flow and information sharing in development activities grew in the

1990s. As a result, development agencies included information flow in development programs

and activities related to information, education, and communication (Tufte & Mefalopulos,

2009). Table 3.1 illustrates Laswell's communication model as viewed in the early years.

Table 3.1

Laswell's Theory

Who?	Leadership and stakeholders communicating and making decisions.
says What?	Plan of action/strategies developed to present the information.
through Which channel?	The medium used to disseminate the strategies & plans (e.g., radio, TV, internal bulletins etc.
to Whom?	The target audience (e.g., community, organizational members, stakeholders.
with What effect?	Evaluation of the impact of message disseminated to the target audience.

Note: World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5940 License: CC BY 3.0) IGO.

It is noteworthy that in the evolution of participatory communication, two models of

communication emerged dominant. The first, which is the diffusion model of communication,

relies on the practice and theory of Everett Rogers (1962). The idea behind Rogers' (1962)

theory is that over time, a product or idea gains momentum and diffuses or spreads through

people or social systems. As the concept or product spreads, it diffuses among the people who

tend to adopt new idea, behavior, or product. The second is the participatory communication

approach advocated by Freire (1970) and sought to include stakeholders in the decision-making process. The emphasis of Freire's idea is to allow stakeholders to get involved in the processes of development programs and participate in working towards the solutions to their problems (Freire, 1970; Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Freire (1970) believed that such a participatory process eliminates imposing pre-established results on the people. Since then, the focus of participatory communication has been dialogical communication rather than direct communication. The emphasis has been on participatory and collective research, problem identification, decision-making, implementation, and change evaluation.

Another line of thinking associated with participatory communication includes developing skills that comprise the core competencies required to actively engage as a citizen in society (Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). This includes the ability to educate and communicate with them on areas such as health education, civic education, income generation, and human rights (Freire, 1973; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009)

Communication forms are didactic and face-to-face with life skills development initiatives performed in formal and informal educational contexts. Unlike the vertical or top-down orientation of decision-making, the participatory model incorporates multiplicity concepts in its framework. The framework stresses the importance of local communities' cultural identity and the democratization and inclusion of all stakeholders' decision-making levels. It points to a strategy in which Freire (1983) supported all people's right to speak their word individually and collectively.

Furthermore, the aim of empowering people to handle challenges and influence their lives is inherent in participation. A study conducted by Uddin (2015) found that women's performance and contribution towards society improved when empowered to participate in

decision-making related to their commercial activities. Uddin (2015) explained that "empowerment, in a generic sense, is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives" (p. 80). In other studies conducted by Narayan (2006), the perspective related to empowerment is of institutional nature. Participation for empowerment is about strengthening people's capabilities and facilitating their inclusion in governance and decision-making.

In general, participatory models share several assumptions carved out of various concepts, frameworks, and theories such as the systems theory, organizational learning, leadership, and management in organizations (Allen, 1997; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003; Taylor, 2004). These assumptions include the fact that leadership involves a team, group, or community rather than an individual. Participatory communication also means interdependence and connectedness within the organizational members as part of a more extensive system and provides empowerment rather than power and control. Other assumptions of participatory communication include collective leadership, with learning as its core function through a collaborative team-oriented approach (Allen, 1997; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003; Taylor, 2004). Participatory communication enhances leaders' and organizational members' skills and abilities to work in complex and uncertain environments. It helps develop leadership confidence to face challenges through strategic conversations (Allen, 1997; Bryson & Crosby, 1992; Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003; Taylor, 2004).

Two Major Approaches to Participatory Communication

The historical development of participatory communication traces its root to the work of Freire, who advocated throughout his entire career for the participation of underprivileged people in decisions affecting them (Freire, 1970, 1973, 1985, 1998). From these developments, two

approaches to participatory communication emerged. The first approach is the dialogical

pedagogy proposed by Freire (1970, 1973). The second approach to participatory communication

involves the ideas of "access, participation, and self-management" (Communication Research,

2019, p. 1), which was also supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO). Based on Freire's ideas (1973, 1998), projects intended to be

participatory in nature accept the principles of democratic communication. Researchers such as

Servaes and Malikhao (1995), and Servaes (2005, 1996) explained that the arguments posed by

Freire (1970, 1984) are based on these two approaches with the underlining reasoning that

people's insubordination should be treated as human subjects in any dialogical process of

communication (Communication Research, 2019; Servaes, 1996; Servaes & Malikhao, 1995).

This reasoning advocates for respect for individuals as equals in any dialogue that affects their

lives (Berrigan, 1979; Servaes, 2005; Servaes & Malikhao, 1995).

<div align="center">**Principles of Participatory Communication**</div>

Several principles emerge fundamentally to participatory communication. These

principles stem from globally influential thinkers (Berrigan, 1979; Marx, 1843, 1847; Redding,

1972; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009, 2015) and contribute to the framework under which

participatory communication has evolved. The following are some of the essential principles of

participatory communication.

Voice

The basic feature in participatory communication is the representation of the voices of

marginalized groups in decision-making. The dynamics of including all voices in deliberations

means shifting power to marginalized groups to articulate their concerns, define their problems,

formulate solutions, and act on them. When marginalized groups are supported and strengthened,

the process creates a platform where the members are able to engage in public debate and solve problems. A more traditional view concerning the representation of voice in deliberations was explained by Conte (1986) in a study that examined the performance of organizations, and how it related to employee attitudes. The study examined if an increase in employees' productivity is related to the profits gained from increasing their effort, or if it is influenced by the accompanying right to participate in decision-making processes (Conte, 1986; Employee, Stock Ownership Plans (ESOP), 1986). The researchers emphasized that although profits are incentives for workers to engage in deliberations and interactions, such systems would be ineffective if the employees do not feel their suggestions and contributions are included in decisions. Therefore, it is important to empower employees by engaging them in dialogues and deliberations, and incorporating their suggestions in the operations of the organization (Conte, 1986; Graham, Barbato & Perse, 1993).

However, there have been various efforts to limit workers' voices to restrict their participation in an organization's decision-making (Simons, 1996). Scholars such as Simons (1996) caution against surrendering too much control to workers and prefer a communication process that designates the limits and extent to which teams within an organization can act independently (Simons, 1995). Simons (1995) argued for the regular maintenance of the leaders' roles concerning the work team and noted several strategies to help leaders maintain control. These strategies include control systems that allow managers and employees to observe progress toward predefined performance goals. Simons (1996) detailed what he calls a belief system that empowers employees at all levels by informing them about its primary goals and encouraging them to look for new opportunities. The other means of control include the boundary systems that limit an employee's effort to try new ideas and take risks, including avoiding minimum

performance standards and other companies or ventures that need to be avoided. Finally, interactive control systems help leaders involve themselves regularly and personally in their subordinates' decisions.

In another development, Kornbluh (1984) found that problems may arise when firms try to implement quality circles and quality improvement programs without implementing a democratic form of management that allows workers to be involved in the organization's decision-making process. He noted that workers feel disappointed if they are introduced to such programs while the administration does not implement their suggestions. Therefore, he argues that it would not be beneficial for companies to allocate resources to implement quality improvements without allowing workers' participation in such projects' decision-making (Conte, 1986; Graham, 1993; Kornbluh, 1984; Mulgan, 1991).

Dialogue and Pedagogy

The core principle of participatory communication is to have a free and open dialogue with stakeholders. Freire (1973) defined dialogue as the encounter between men to name the world. The theorist believed that free and open dialogue involves the principle of action-reflection-action and horizontal communication. This mode of conversation is a process where people can voice their opinion and be heard. The exchange also means being transparent and that participants must help create a climate conducive to open communication and building dialogue. Beltran (1979) explained horizontal communication to outline the benefits of participatory communication in problem-solving. Individuals can register concerns, suggestions, and ideas that transcend the narrow scope of their job functions. Participation programs engage workers in various activities and grant them more access to knowledge about the organization. Such an atmosphere promotes trust, supportiveness, openness, and commitment to

high-performance goals (Beltran, 1979; Redding, 1972).

Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) stated that someone must articulate the process of communication to facilitate dialogic communication. They explained that such process usually involves an individual who is part of an organization, community, or entity. The authors describe a person in a dialogue as the catalyst. Freire (1970) noted that the catalyst's objective is to offer relevant solutions to predefined problems by sharing information from an informed source to the uninformed. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) explained that such a process of disseminating information could involve articulating a dialogue that identifies a collective problem and finds solutions to them.

Action-Reflection-Action

Although dialogue and reflection have been emphasized as crucial to communication, participatory communication is also intensely action oriented. The importance of participatory communication is realized by empowering a group of people to manage problems and integrating action to collaborate on the problem identified. The process involves enabling equal partnership by recognizing everyone who has the skill, ability, and initiative to have the corresponding right to solve the problems discussed. The method of acting on agreed solutions to problems also means sharing responsibilities. Snyder and Graves (1994) summarized the philosophy of empowering employees, both as individuals and team members. They argued that leaders cannot force employees to change, and it produces only a short-term change. Leaders must adapt their visions of the future to employee suggestions when appropriate. Empowerment involves much more than just delegating tasks to an employee. In participatory communication, all stakeholders have equal responsibility for decisions made, and each should have clear responsibilities within each process (Freire, 1973, 1979; Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Critical results of participatory communication are articulating the raising of awareness and commitment to action (Mefalopulos, 2008). Leadership issues depend on an individual's influence, often seen as the catalyst to facilitate a dialogue. Such influence includes facilitating communication that results in a collective effort among stakeholders to ensure change (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Senge et al., 2015). Authority and control must be balanced evenly between all stakeholders to avoid the domination of one party. Additionally, cooperation is vital in participatory communication as sharing reduces others' weaknesses and improves their strengths (Drier et al., 2019; Mefalopulos, 2008).

The Levels and Extent of Participatory Communication

The extent of participatory communication involves the inclusion of all stakeholders, including those in subordinate positions, to discuss issues that affect them. It improves the overall performance of a people and an organization. However, the approach used to ensure inclusivity in the decision-making process will determine participatory communication effectiveness. In recent years, there was a variety of participants to promote development. As explained by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) 1997; Xia, et al, 2016); Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2008; Turton, 2015). Below are some of the ways by which participatory communication and incorporating inclusive decision-making can occur.

Passive Participation and Consultation

For this process of participatory communication, the community participates by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is based on information provided, shared, and assessed by external experts. Therefore, the information shared belongs only to external experts (Arnstein, 1971; Jeffrey & Vitra, 2001; Pimbert & Pretty, 1994; UNDP, 1997).

Meanwhile, the process of consultation in communication is a two-way flow of information in which members of a group or organization participate because their views are being solicited by external agents who engage them in dialogue. Oftentimes, the external agents define problems and solutions that could be modified as the discussions take place. However, such consultation processes do guarantee the sharing of decision-making (Arnstein, 1971; Jeffrey & Bhaskar, 2001; 1994; UNDP, 1997).

Functional and Interactive Participation

Individuals and members of a community participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the initiative. However, local people's involvement occurs after significant decisions have been made rather than at an early stage in the project cycle. The established groups are dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but over time may become more self-sufficient (Arnstein, 1971; Pettigrew, 2014; Xia, Zhang &Zhao, 2016; Turton, 2015). For interactive participation, participants contribute to analyzing the problems identified which leads to action plans. Such plans also include the formation of local institutions and the strengthening of existing ones. The process involves interdisciplinary methods aimed at seeking multiple perspectives, and employs the use of systematic and structured learning processes. As local people take control of the decision-making process, they gain a more significant stake in maintaining the structures and practices they have established. A common drawback is that

vulnerable individuals and groups tend to remain silent or passively acquiesce (Pettigrew, 2014; Xia, Zhang & Zhao, 2016; Turton, 2015).

Partnership and Self-Mobilization/Active Participation

This participatory communication process involves negotiation through which power is redistributed between members of a group or organization and the leadership. In this instance, decision-making occurs through an exchange between equally respected participants working towards a common goal and seeks to optimize all members' concerns. The process also entails a level of risk-sharing and responsibilities and risk-sharing in the planning and decision-making process (Arnstein, 1971; Jeffrey & Bhaskar, 2001; UNDP, 1997). On the other hand, self-mobilization and active participation involve taking initiatives by individuals independent of the external institutions to change the systems (UNDP, 1997; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The process consists of developing contacts with external institutions to secure resources and technical advice needed but maintain control over how the resources are disbursed. However, critics argue that such self-initiated mobilization and collective action could challenge the existing inequitable distribution of wealth or power (Arnstein, 1971; UNDP, 1997; Jeffrey & Bhaskar, 2001).

Why is a Participatory Communication Approach Necessary?

Helfat and Winter (2011) noted that although dynamic and operational capabilities differ in their purposes and intended outcomes, it is impossible to differentiate between the two types of capabilities. They explained that capabilities are termed "dynamic" because of the unique aspects they possess. From the institutional perspective, participation can help achieve a pre-established goal defined by its internal and external stakeholders. Socially, participation itself can be a goal that facilitates the empowerment of stakeholders. Participatory strategies also

lead to improved competencies and capacities required to engage with the defined development problem. Furthermore, participatory communication strategies influence institutions that can affect an individual, an organization, or a community. Table 3.2 shows the phases and benefits of participatory communication approaches in organizations and communities.

Table 3.2

Phases of Participatory Communication Process in Program and Organizational Development

Participatory Communication Strategies	Participatory Communication Approaches
• **Participatory Assessment (PCA):** methods and tools used to investigate and assess situations • **(Participatory) Communication Strategy and Design:** defines the best way to apply communication to achieve change • **Implementation of Communication Activities:** determining where previous activities planned were carried out • **Monitoring and Evaluation:** monitors progress and evaluating the intervention's final impact	• **Setting the Foundation:** building trust, listening, understanding stakeholders' perceptions, and cultural norms • **Exploring** broader socio-economic issues, priorities, problems, needs, and opportunities • **Investigating** the issues, causes and effects, best options, and the communication environment • **Defining needed change**: developing the communication objectives

Note: Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009.

The table above illustrates the process of participatory communication. Participatory communication varies depending on the various development programs or organization development initiatives. The organizational level involves reviewing existing policies and other relevant contextual information related to socio-economic conditions and the target population's culture. When goals have been identified, it sets the stage for creating objectives from which projects are designed to solve them. Such activities also involve the stakeholders and provide them with a sense of ownership and commitment to the problem's solutions. Such solutions

warrant active participation by local citizens, employees, and other stakeholders to enhance the quality and relevance of suggested interventions and actions. The process also involves the consultation of experts and other relevant parties who can help solve the problem.

Tompkins and Cheney's (1982, 1985) use of the network metaphor effectively explains how individual interactions culminate in the building of an organization. The theory posits that identification is an integral part of an organization's decision-making process (Tompkins & Cheney, 1982). The theory also identifies key elements such as control, power and discipline, and identification (McPhee & Tompkins, 1985; Tompkins & Cheney, 1982, 1987). It is noteworthy that participatory communication allows individuals to contribute to the decision-making process. Such inclusivity gives power and control to the individual as they identify with the organization and its interests. The theory also explains that executive management and control are closely related and work together to achieve a goal. McPhee and Tompkins (1985) stated that "organizational power is the ability or capacity of a person to control the contributions of others toward a goal" (p. 180). These theorists explained that when a person identifies with an organization, they gain control in the organization through interactions with others. The theory states that such interactions create a shared understanding of rules and regulations. Such common knowledge establishes the meaning of existing rules and regulations that are replaced, highly motivating core values that serve all stakeholders' interests (McPhee & Tompkins, 1985, p. 184).

CHAPTER IV: SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

This chapter explains the basic definition of leadership and provides different leadership types in various contexts and theories. This includes leadership in the context of participative leadership and complexity leadership theory which helps explain the role systems leadership plays in facilitating organizations' dynamic capabilities. The chapter also explains systems thinking which is the crux of the skills as exhibited by systems leadership.

Leadership Defined

Northouse (2004) identified four common themes that run through much of leadership theory: leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs in a group context, and leadership consists of achieving goals. Based on these themes, leadership could be defined as a process by which an individual influences another person or group of people towards achieving a particular purpose (Cătălin- Apostu, 2013). Other researchers and theorists explain leadership as a superior's ability to influence subordinates' behavior and to think to follow a particular course of action (Allison, 2002; Barnard, 1938). It is noteworthy that effective leadership is relevant and critical in times of crisis. Such crises include periods of change and rapid growth in organizations that operate in an uncertain environment (Cătălin- Apostu, 2013).

Several definitions and theories have been coined and propounded about leadership that explain the various characteristics that form different leadership types. However, leadership is simply the art of motivating a group of people to achieve a common goal. Effective leadership does not materialize unless the ideas are communicated to others to engage them to act. Therefore, leadership also involves teaching, inspiring, and supervising to improve performance (Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). In the more dominant leadership theories, it is viewed as a process that involves influencing a group of people toward realizing goals (Charry, 2012; Wolinski,

2010). Scholarly interest in leadership increased significantly during the early part of the twentieth century and identified eight major leadership theories. These include the "Great Man Theory" (<u>Carlyle</u>, 1840), Trait Theory, Contingency Theory (Gupta, 2009; Mitchell, 1970; Utecht & Heier, 1976), Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1996), Behavioral Theory (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill & Coons 1957; Yukl, 1971), Participative Theory (Batten, 2001; Jacobs & Jaques, 1990), and Management Theory (Taylor, 1909).

While these early theories focused on the qualities that distinguish leaders from followers, later ideas looked at other variables, including situational factors and skill levels (Charry, 2012). This chapter will discuss leadership concepts, including participative leadership, which will help to shed light on the benefit of systems leadership in coordinating the process of participatory communication to improve organizational performance.

Participative Theory of Leadership

The Participative Theory of Leadership is the notion that outstanding leadership includes all stakeholders' input in decision-making (Lam et al., 2015) Participative leaders encourage all members to participate and contribute to group decisions and endeavors, making group members feel relevant and committed to the decision-making process (Lam et al., 2015). It is essentially a process that seeks to involve other people, thus improving commitment and increasing collaborations. This practice also leads to better quality decisions and more achievement of goals (Lamb et al., 2015). Raelin (2012) noted that the movement to a democratic lateral form of leadership started with Mary Parker Follett (1924), who argued that knowledge of a particular task is "an individual's knowledge of a task would be a better source for leadership than the designated authority in the unit" (Raelin, 2012, p. 11). The author revealed that various

leadership models had been proposed, including Shared Leadership, Collective leadership, and Leaderful Practice (Raelin, 2011). Other leadership traits have focused on the socio-economic approach that improves economic and social performance (Raelin, 2003, 2011, 2012). These various leadership concepts portray leaders as individuals in positions of authority who influence and create a cohesive group that agrees on particular policies and approaches to their operations (Raelin, 2012; Weik, 1989).

The participative democratic leadership practice processes emphasize connecting the four tenets that portray the democratic principles underlying leadership (Raelin, 2012). Raelin (2012) explained that these tenets are referred to as the "four Cs" and represent "Collectiveness, Concurrency, Collaboration, and Compassion." Raelin (2011, 2012) explained that Collectiveness refers to the extent to which everyone in an organization or unit can serve as a leader. Concurrency refers to how members of the unit or organization serve as leaders within the organization, and Collaboration is the extent to which members co-create their enterprise that forms the basis of the organization (Raelin, 2011). This also includes the nature of the interactions during which organizational members collectively determine what they need to do and the approach to achieving their aims and objectives (Raelin, 2011). Finally, Compassion focuses on the extent to which the members preserve each other's dignity in the unit regardless of their status and beliefs (Raelin, 2011). The crux of this type of leadership is that members depend on each other to form a strong team that is bound together through trust among the members, enabling them to participate in leadership. Such cohesion in the leadership approach allows the members to collectively identify their problems and collaborate to find an alternative approach to such issues (Atlee, 2009; Raelin, 2011; Woods, 2004).

Criticism of the participative theory of leadership has been varied, with some authors noting that it prevents quick decision-making in an organization as all stakeholders are required to participate. This is true since participative leaders want each team member to deliberate an issue at hand (Yukl, 1985). Also, participative leadership's approach increases the likelihood of conflict among team members due to competing suggestions and knowledge on issues confronting the unit. In addition, coordinating all the activities through participative leadership could diminish the quality of qualified individuals who contribute to completing the tasks because there would be too many people implementing the assignments.

Systems Thinking: The Catalyst to Systems Leadership

System thinking is based on the systems philosophy, which states that any human activity that occurs in open systems is affected by the environment (Vickers, 1970). As explained previously, systems thinking originated in biology, presented by biologist Von Bertalanffy (1951, 1969; Haines, 1998). Theorists sought to apply the common systems to all science-related disciplines, ranging from cells to the social sciences. By generalizing the basis of the theory in other fields, the theorists intended to create a standard of scientific principles that could be recognized universally and one that can be applied to all objects (Haines, 1998). For example, a systems thinking technique bases itself on a cybernetic concept of the feedback loop identified in systems theory's biological concept (Forrester, 1961; Vickers, 1970). Currently, general systems thinking applications and advancements have been developed for various disciplines, including medicine, engineering, psychology, and other art sciences (Forrester, 1961; Hanes, 1998; Senge, 1990; Vickers, 1970). All these theories point out that the systems thinking approach has a range of possibilities that explain complex factors, situations, and behaviors in real-time (Haines, 1998; Senge, 1990).

The concept of systems thinking is a way of understanding reality concerning the connections among the parts of a system rather than the parts themselves (Sterman, 2000). The classical viewpoint identifies a system as a combination of two or more elements where every element influences other elements' behavior, which influences the behavior as a whole (Bertalanffy, 1969; Rapoport, 1986). Sterman (2000) explained that a system behaves in a complex manner where everything is interrelated. Therefore, any effect on one element of the system will affect the others. In management, systems thinking methodology helps manage complex feedback systems in the business environment and other social systems (Ackoff, 1999). Building on the study of systems dynamics (Forrester, 1961), systems thinking has developed a practical value that rests on a solid theoretical foundation (Capra, 2002; Checkland, 1981; Churchmann, 1979; Laszlo, 2002; Warren, 2000). More proponents of utilizing systems thinking in organizations have continued to emerge (Gharajedaghi, 2006; Haines, 1998; Richmond, 2001; Sterman, 2000). These researchers have created a row of methods and means to implement the systems thinking principles in management and leadership (Ackoff, 1999; Forrester, 1975; Senge, 1990, 2003). The systems methodology creators treat organizations as open socio-cultural systems capable of self-organization (Gharajedaghi, 2006).

Systems Thinking and Its Relationship with Leadership and Learning

Literature linking leadership and systems thinking has been widely developed but has limited itself to a pragmatic or a model level (Midgley, 2000; Mintzberg, 2001; Senge, 1990, 2007). Many authors emphasize the importance of systems thinking in leadership. However, the theories have not been summarily agreed upon based on different thinking and leadership traits (Drucker, 2004; Finkelstein, 2004; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). These uncertainties include doubts on whether competencies make an effective leader and whether systems thinking impacts

leadership performance (Drucker, 2004; Finkelstein, 2004; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). Boyatzis and Goleman (2007) defined systems thinking as a cognitive intelligence competency, which includes thinking or analyzing information and situations that lead to effective or superior performance. Boyatzis (2007) explained that maximum performance occurs when an individual's capability or talent is consistent with the job's needs and demands within the organizational environment. In the context of systems leadership, competencies are those qualities that enable a person to manage an organization to improve its performance (Nickols, 2000; Sokol, 2001). Studies have identified at least three perspectives of competencies that can predict an outstanding leadership performance (Nickols, 2000; Sokol, 2001). These include cognitive competencies, such as systems thinking and pattern recognition, and emotional intelligence competencies comprised of self-awareness and self-management. The third is social intelligence competencies which include social awareness and relationship management.

A key capability of systems leadership is to exhibit a level of systems thinking, which helps individuals observe the organization in a holistic view and determine the systemic implications of organizational actions (Edmondson, 2004). The three competencies identified above promote a behavioral and cognitive characteristic that facilitates an individual's values, openness to learning about their environment, the ability to inquire about their environmental issues, and the ability to earn other members' trust in an organization. These capabilities have been essential in promoting organizational learning and problem-solving skills (Senge, 1990; Zulch, 2014). As the systems leader exhibits these capabilities in an organization, they develop a shared vision, motivating them to learn more to improve performance (Boyatzis, 2007; Senge, 1990). Such development creates a common identity among the members (Boyatzis, 2007). Organizational learning requires individuals to engage in dialogue and discussion about issues.

However, effective dialogue requires that individual team members suspend their mental models to understand other views. A systems leader can facilitate this by listening to all team members' assumptions, discussing the issues, and deciding on the best possible method to solve them (Boyatzis, 2007; Goleman, 1998; Spencer & Spencer, 1993) and, as such, optimizing the problem-solving capacity of the organization through better access to knowledge and expertise. Team learning, as in organizational learning, is best achieved through the process of participatory communication.

The participatory communication approach involves interacting with stakeholders' internal and external spheres, maintaining employee relations, communicating during change and crises, managing media associations, and maintaining its image (Zulch, 2014). To be productive at work, systems leadership must possess persuasion, responsibility, and conscious association skills. The leader must create and manage a value system and provide support and motivation to the teams (Barrett, 2006; Frese et al., 2003). It is important to note that systems leadership shows the potential to accomplish organizational goals by producing sound planning and monitoring and by including all relevant parties in the communication and decision-making processes. Most researchers on communication agree that successful leadership consists of the ability to take charge, direct, encourage, or stimulate others (Narayan, 2006; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009; Zulch, 2014). Taylor and Hilliard (2014) explained that "the learning organization employs information systems that facilitate the rapid acquisition, processing, and partition of information to support deliberative learning" (p. 5).

Systems theory also emphasizes the importance of feedback, which is part of organizational learning in the business sector (Teece, 2018). Teece (2018) explained that in this context, a simple feedback loop involves the organization receiving information about changes

happening outside and being able to adjust its operating units to the environment while keeping the interdependent internal elements in balance and line with the existing plans. Teece (2018) also explained that feedback could also trigger double-loop learning, especially where the system's managers adjust their mental models and plans in response to external changes. The double-loop learning developed by Argyris and Schon (1974) is based on the theory of action. The perspective of this concept involves examining human beings as actors. This theory's underlying reasoning is that changes in values, behavior, leadership, and helping others are part of an informed action identified in the action theory (Argyris & Schon, 1974). An important aspect of the theory is the distinction between what an individual believes is the right thing to do and what they do in situations. Thus, the determination at this crossroads, which brings the two into congruence, focuses on double-loop learning (Argyris, 1982; Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris et al., 1985). In this instance, interaction with others is necessary to identify the conflict. The double loop-learning theory aims to solve complex and ill-structured problems (Argyris & Schon, 1974). Double loop-learning can facilitate creativity and innovation, helping an organization adapt to various uncertain environments while simultaneously improving its performance (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris et al., 1985).

The strength of systems theory is its multidisciplinary approach. Systems theory draws on the concepts of various disciplines to unify them (Teece, 2011). Organizational learning involves processes in which members of an organization use data to guide behavior to adapt to its environment (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1998). The concept of organizational learning became predominant in the late 1990s as a comprehensive response to the problems related to creating new competitive advantage sources (Ferguson-Amores et al., 2005). Organizational learning incorporates both exploitative and explorative learning. Exploratory learning incorporates

behaviors such as "explore, change, risk-taking, try, discovery and innovate" (Wang & Yang, 2014, p. 140). On the other hand, exploitative learning refers to those learning behaviors which can be described with terms such as "refine, screen, produce, select, implement, and enforcement" (p. 140). Zhu (2008) explained that exploratory learning involves testing new areas while exploitative learning focuses on improving and extending prior capability, technology, and paradigms (Zhu, 2008). These processes can be described as experience accumulation, knowledge articulation, and knowledge codification. Organizational learning facilitates change, leading to improvement in a firm's performance (Ferdinand, 2004; Zhu, 2008). Specific characteristics have been identified in institutions aspiring to be learning organizations. The characteristics include five interrelated categories comprising structure, information systems, human resource practices, organization culture, and leadership (Cummings & Worley, 1997).

Organizational learning in relation to the systems theory is in sync with the processes of participatory communication, which are also facilitated through the skills and capabilities of systems leadership (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Bertalanfi, 1963; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Practicing participatory communication begins with developing a communication policy and strategy that is based on the observations in the environment (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001; Mefalopulos, 2008). Such leadership communication practices lead to data collection from workers and stakeholders who contribute to policy formulation processes to tackle internal and external problems (Ali, 2017; Beltrán, 2004). A key element to achieve this input is supporting the workers and team members and facilitating management initiatives. This leads to the empowerment of the organizational members and provides a voice to marginalized groups (Freire, 2005). Successful communication strategies include writing precisely and then speaking effectively to control uncertain and stressful situations. However, the complexity of managing

such a communication process depends on the skills of a systems leadership to communicate responsively and frequently with adequately planned and dedicated communication policies (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Such collaboration in decision-making promotes organizational learning as the members learn from each other and find workable solutions to improve their performance (Freire, 2005; Melkote, 1991).

In his revised edition outlining the five disciplines, Senge (2006) explained that personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking would facilitate creating a learning organization. Some researchers who focus on organizations describe organizational learning as a process that unfolds over time and leads to knowledge acquisition and improved performance (Garwin, 1993; Nonaka, 1991). Marquadt (2002) noted that organizational learning explains the development capability of thought and productivity through commitment, for which continuous improvement in the organization is obtained. Senge (1990, 2006) demonstrated that progress in an organization is attenable through a shared goal of personal mastery, which commits the individual and the organization to learning and exploring to facilitate a vision. The shared vision motivates the staff to learn and creates a collective identity that provides focus and energy for all organization members. Other scholars argue that behavioral change is required for learning, while some believe that new ways of thinking are the driving force behind organizational learning and improved performance (Akhavan & Jafari, 2006; Senge, 2006, 1990; Sharma, 2003, 2006). Senge (1990, 2006) noted the connection of mental models to the commitment to change within an organization. He describes mental models as the assumptions held by individuals and the organization, including behaviors, norms, and values that drive the organization's commitment to improve performance (Senge, 1990, 2006). He also mentions openness, inquiry, and trust among organizational members as essential

elements of mental models in learning organizations. Such attributes have been documented as forming part of the capabilities of a systems leadership.

Others have advocated for recognizing information processing as a mechanism to facilitate organizational learning through shared insights and organizational routines (Garwin, 1993). Senge (2006) explained that team learning requires individuals to engage in both dialogue and discussion. Through dialogue, members engage in participatory communication, presenting team members' opportunity to suspend their mental models to understand others' views. Such collaborative dialogue helps members adapt to the best possible option to solve the organization's problems (Akhavan & Jafari, 2006; Senge, 2006; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Open and inclusive discussions also create the organization's ability to arrive at the best possible alternative and optimize problem-solving capability through better access to knowledge and expertise.

Complexity Leadership

Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) is a framework associated with leadership and its functions in complex adaptive systems (CAS). The theory enables learning, creativity, and adaptive capacity in organizations. The framework aims to integrate the dynamics of CAS while enabling control structures suitable for coordinating operations in organizations and creating outcomes in sync with the organizational system's vision and mission. (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). It seeks to integrate the dynamics associated with complexity and bureaucratic processes by enabling, coordinating, exploring, and exploiting opportunities for growth in leadership and management within organizations (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Complexity leadership illustrates a focus on recurring social interactions within a network, giving credence to the fact that anyone within the workplace can become a leader through their social capital (Hanson & Ford, 2010). Simply put, complexity is the foundation of life, and managing within a CAS is unpredictable

and requires new ways of thinking and doing things. Also, complexity leadership theory suggests that managers' roles should not solely focus on aligning organizational members' preferences with their goals (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

The complexity leadership theory's crux is that leaders are not the only driving force for organizational success. Instead, the theory emphasizes the whole system that constitutes an organization, including its social interactions and the critical role the leader plays in managing such complexity (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). The theory places importance on the dynamic interactions within organizations and the processes those interactions go through as they create innovations and evolve into complex relationships and a network of interactions, instead of the traditional controlling and autocratic leadership system in some organizations (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). In the complexity leadership theory, any agent involved in collective action can manifest and influence those dynamics that enable innovation. These dynamics are created through orchestrations of interdependence, tension, and eventual agreement on values created among various players in the interaction arena (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). These interactions connect to produce vital emergent phenomena that strengthen the organization and improve performance (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). Scholars note that complexity leadership theory could also be a form of shared leadership where the ultimate leadership and decision-making position does not belong to one person but shared among several team members (Carson et al., 2007; Ensley et al., 2006).

Contributions of Complexity Leadership

The benefits of adaptive leadership have been significant in how organizations respond to change and adapt to the environment. One of the considerable strengths of complexity leadership is how it facilitates an understanding of the complex environment and helps organizations

respond to change (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). Since the crux of the complexity leadership theory involves interactions among stakeholders in the organization, communication creates an avenue for organizational innovations to be borne. These include creating a network of complex relationships where contributions to suggestions are received in equal measure to the leader, rather than from an autocratic perspective of leadership (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Furthermore, the concept of complexity leadership encourages organizational change and innovation. Such progress is facilitated through social interactions among various stakeholders with diverse expertise and experiences about several problems an organization may be facing. The coordination of such expertise promotes innovative skills within the organization, which improves performance (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

Also, the performance and outcomes of teams or units that form the organization's resources benefit from the complexity of leadership. The reason is that incorporating the processes of social interactions among team members increases the members' ability and capability to learn and contribute their knowledge and skills towards production and solutions to problems encountered in the environment. Such a process affords an organization the capacity and ability to adapt to the environment through innovation, promoting quality outcomes (Shipton et al., 2008; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). Studies have found that organizational units or teams that incorporated the complexity leadership had better operational outcomes and improved performance (Losada, 1999).

Despite the many benefits to organizations that practice complex leadership models, scholars have identified some disadvantages to this leadership model. They explain that as organizations go through change, the environment could become turbulent, thus creating tension among organizational members as they interact within a complex environment by responding to

external and internal pressures. They explain that such a situation can cause conflicting restraints (Lichtenstein et al., 2006).

Criticism of Complexity Leadership Theory

Several criticisms have been leveled against the complex leadership theories, which explore strategies that leaders can use to advance and manage difficult situations. Critics note that the theory's focus on uncertain and complex problems makes it a myth as those situations do not readily exist in groups and larger organizational systems (Tourish, 2018). They argue that complexity leadership interacts to produce complexity (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Osborn & Hunt, 2007; Tourish, 2018), and whereas leadership develops over a period of time, the dynamics of the interactions that underlie the relationships among organizational members are difficult to explain (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009).

The scholars believe that leaders simply attempt to minimize chaos and bring order to complexity when it happens in their organizations (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009; Osborn & Hunt, 2007). They explain that the focus of the theory is on how leadership leads people to form social groups rather than control and dominate them (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hartnell & Walumbwa, 2011; Hazy, 2011). Based on the criticism, complexity leadership is viewed as encouraging experimentation, establishing routines, and creating chains of responsibility in an organization. The theory also promotes a culture that acknowledges accountability (Hazy & Uhl-Bien, 2013, 2014). Another element is "The System," which denotes an understanding of the complex systems shaping the challenge to be addressed (Dreier et al., 2019). This study has introduced CLT because it focuses on facilitating learning, creativity, and adaptation in complex systems or environments. CLT enables the systems leadership to coordinate and explore opportunities for growth in leadership and manage the organizational

structures and operations to improve performance (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). These functions combine with the CAS, which focuses on the ability of the organization to adapt to changes through sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities in a complex environment. Also, complexity leadership places emphasis on social interactions within a network or organization. Thus, confirming the relevance of inclusive communication involving all stakeholders in decision-making in organizations and promoting leadership capabilities among individuals in the organizations.

Emergent Thinking on Systems Leadership

Recent scholarly and applied attention has focused on systems leadership theory (Dreier et al., 2019; Senge et al., 2015). Dreier et al. (2019) defined systems leadership as a "set of skills and capacities that any individual or organization can use to catalyze, enable, and support the process of systems-level change" (p. 4). The concept of systems leadership is a relatively new way of thinking about leadership skills, tactics, and qualities that can effectively address complex systemic challenges. Systems leadership draws upon familiar skills such as subject expertise, strategy development, program management, coalition-building, and collaboration (Dreier et al., 2019).

Dreier et al. (2019) noted that leaders used many of the skills mentioned above for advocacy and community development for decades. It is noteworthy that systems leadership combines these skills to create change in complex and systemic issues. Combining knowledge, skills, and mindset is applied to develop a systemic transformation that defines a systems leadership. The systems thinking structure considers how problems evolve and presents a path to addressing the issue. The definitions of systems leadership include that of Senge's (1990), which describes it as a discipline of seeing wholes and a framework for understanding interrelationships

rather than things, and for understanding patterns of change instead of static snapshots. The framework helps explain how parts, people, and events in an organization influence each other. The approach also provides insight into issues and tackling problems using alternative means. Sweeney and Sterman (2000) found that much of the skill involving systems thinking relates to representing and assessing dynamic complexity. Such complexity includes the development of a new behavior due to the interactions between a system's agents and others. The authors specifically noted that interactions between these entities lead to the understanding of how actions develop. Sweeney and Sterman (2000) also identify other capabilities, including discovering and representing feedback processes. Such processes underlie the observed patterns of system behavior and the ability to identify the relationships created. Other skills developed from the interactions between an agent and a system includes recognizing delays and understanding their impact on the organization. This also implies being able to identify and challenge the boundaries of mental models.

Leadership skills developed as a result of the systems thinking approach include the ability to have a sincere commitment to authentic learning in the organization. This consists of the preparedness to make mistakes and the ability to challenge one's mental models or beliefs, ideas, images, and verbal descriptions (Senge, 1990; Sweeney & Sterman, 2000). Part of the core traits of a leader who incorporates systems thinking understands the importance of all representative voices in the decision-making process. Furthermore, a leadership approach to systems thinking includes creating a collaborative learning culture within the organization. Therefore, this theoretical dissertation will incorporate the characteristics of systems thinking to help explain how systems leadership facilitates dynamic capabilities in an organization.

Having the capability of systems leadership affords the benefit of foresight, meaning to predict

events in the environment based on previous precedents and observations. Such foresight helps

create, sustain, and improve productive social cohesion that fosters the conditions that allow

people to work together and give their best (Charry, 2012; Wolinski, 2010). A cohesive and

collaborative problem-solving under the guide of systems leadership addresses complex

problems with multiple dimensions and requires multifaceted solutions. A systems leadership

also possesses the capabilities to work with diverse stakeholders to develop an ambitious and

holistic vision for change. This enables the organization to leverage the power of networks to

mobilize action and commitment towards its goals. Like participatory communication, systems

leadership also uses a collaborative approach to engage and empower relevant stakeholders

rather than control or direct them.

The concept of systems leadership (SL) emanates from a coherent and integrated theory

of organizational behavior that spans over 50 years of research across many organizations and

cultures (Nathan et al., 2019). The uniqueness of systems leadership lies in the fact that it covers

all aspects of an organization. Such broad characteristic is synonymous with the concept of

systems theory which covers the whole organization rather than some parts of it (Senge et al.,

2015). Systems leadership is structured after the leadership model and is directly related to

structure and systems theory (Basu & López-Calva, 2011; Fukuda-Parr & Kumar, 2009). The

reasoning for developing systems leadership is based on the systems theory from studying

biology or living organisms (Bertalanffy, 1957). The systems theory illustrates how systems in

living organisms operate interconnectedly and in unison. Therefore, the organization has been

likened to biological organisms' parts by organizational theorists and researchers (Bertalanffy,

1957). The researchers compare an organization's structure to a set of skeletons that only

functions when operating through systems (muscles, blood flow). The designs are then integrated with the human elements of capability and values (vital organs; Basu & López-Calva, 2011; Benson et al., 1985; Fukuda-Parr & Kumar, 2009). The researchers note the importance of not changing parts of the organization (systems) without knowing how the change would impact others (Basu & López-Calva, 2011; Benson et al., 1985; Fukuda-Parr & Kumar, 2009).

From the systems leadership perspective, an organization is a social process with a purpose that requires strategies achieve its goals. Therefore, systems leadership emphasizes the principle where people interact, design, operate, and review the organization. Such cooperation and collaboration create productive social cohesion; making systems leadership a catalyst for creating, improving, and sustaining successful organizations (Benson et al., 1985). Leading other people does not necessarily depend on the position. Instead, it depends on traits and capabilities (Senge et al., 2015). Such capabilities begin with self-discipline, including following the rules and regulations and respecting others (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). Another principle of systems leadership is the ability to exercise a level of influence over members of a group. However, such capability depends on the skill with which a leader executes such effect collaboratively. This is especially important to gain followers' support for the organization's goals and objectives (Mulford, 2003).

Achieving such a feat can be possible through continuous communication with members. In this instance, leadership and communication coordinate through the leader's capabilities to establish credibility and authority. This also enables the leader to emphasize the organization's shared values with the members who could also demonstrate their intention for the organization (Hargreaves, 2009). Additionally, leaders should have the ability to listen and understand the concerns of their followers. It is noteworthy that people would like to be understood at certain

levels. These include the intellectual level and emotional level. At the mental level, leaders must have the ability to understand what the followers communicate to them. For the psychological level, the leaders must have the ability to demonstrate empathy with their followers and make them feel that they understand their feelings and concerns. Also, leaders must demonstrate the ability to learn. Such knowledge includes analyzing situations, taking corrective action, and tackling the next challenge. Overall, a leader must also seek self-improvement, continually strengthen their attributes through studies, reflect on issues, and interact with others (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Ololube et al., 2012).

Another principle of leadership involves maintaining stability and promoting change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012). A leader must have the competency to empower people, teams, and the organization to promote a more robust and more effective collaborative working environment. This is possible if the leader makes sound and timely decisions using problem-solving skills (Hargreaves & Fink, 2012; Senge et al., 2015).

Critical Elements of Systems Leadership

Three key attributes have been identified as elements contributing to systems leadership's capability (Dreier et al., 2019). They include the ability to understand the system that shapes the challenge they seek to address, the ability to catalyze and support collective action among relevant stakeholders, and the ability to listen, learn, and lead by coordinating and collaborating with others (Dreier et al., 2019; Senge et al., 2015). These capabilities serve as the resources or catalysts that create the atmosphere that enables the formation of the system's leadership. Dreier et al. (2019) identified three items that contribute to the creation of a systems leader. They include "The Individual," which involves the level of collaborative leadership skill that allows the building of trust, learning, and empowerment among stakeholders who share a common goal.

The next is "The Community," which involves coalition building and advocacy tactics to develop cohesion and coordinate the mobilization of action among stakeholders in the system, both within and among organizations (Dreier et al., 2019). The third element is "The System," which denotes an understanding of the complex systems shaping the challenge to be addressed (Dreier et al., 2019). Figure 4.1 illustrates how these three elements of systems leadership interact.

Figure 4.1

The Key Elements of Systems Leadership
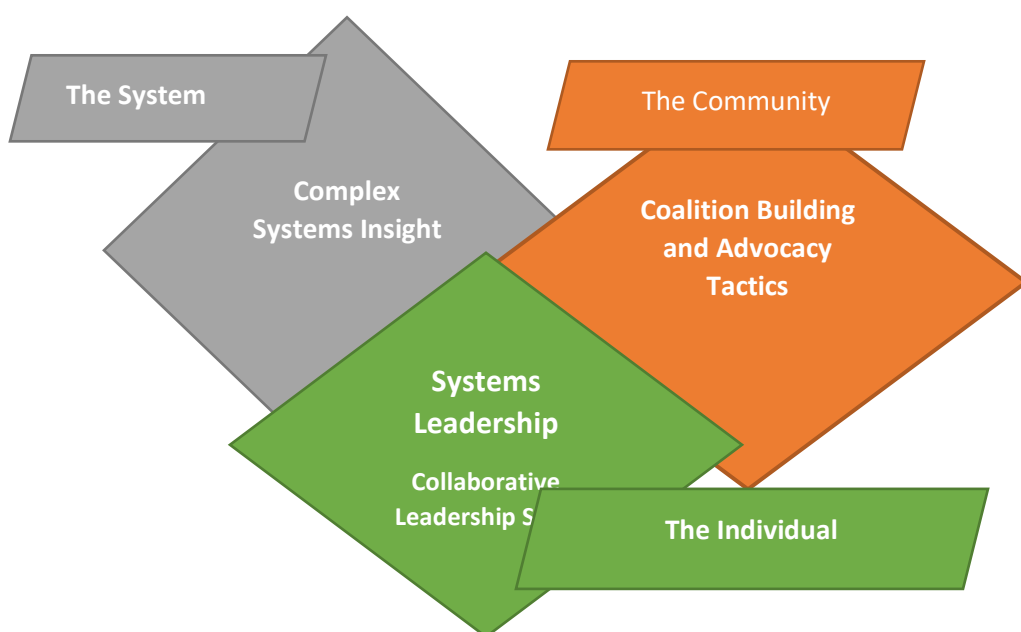
Note: Adapted from Drier, Nebarro, & Nelson (2019). The Corporate Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.

The Individual

"Leadership is the means of influencing employees towards the achievement of organizational goals and organizational excellence" (Daff, 2020, p. 3). One way to understand systems leadership is by comparing it to the concept of systems thinking. Senge (1990) explained that people handle intricate work in an intuitive domain through collaborative leadership. Systems leaders develop their capabilities and enable individuals to relate to each other and

connect to help them work differently. Initiatives facilitated under the management of systems leaders can be described as systems change initiatives, often driven by individuals' effort and commitment to systems leadership's mindset. Such individuals can shift the direction of an institution, catalyze a group's formation, or provide a solution to the crucial intervention to restore trust, focus, or commitment when needed. By connecting to a network, the individual can contribute and influence the system's evolution (Benson et al., 1985; Dreier et al., 2019). The abilities and capabilities expected of the individual system's leaders include being able to influence other people with integrity and having the intention to learn. A common theme in the discussion of systems change is the importance of the mindset that individual leaders bring to their mission. Scharmer (2003), who developed Theory U, encourages leaders to be

open-minded, challenge their assumptions, hear others' perspectives, and explore new approaches.

Leadership involves change management as the leader guides the followers to the future. It is noteworthy that there is a close relationship between leadership and change management. This relationship manifests in the development of personnel, the introduction of technology, reorganization of resources, commissioning of special events, and strategizing for market position, all of which involve change management (Dreier et al., 2019; Scharmar, 2003). Having the competence to observe in silence and listen empathically with an open mind would enable the leader to understand others' views and bring changes (Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003; Senge et al., 2015). Through generative listening, leaders can avoid imposing their existing knowledge and beliefs and any attachment to specific outcomes. Instead, they can allow new future changes to emerge (Gruidl & Hustedde, 2003). Thus, impediments such as passing judgment on other's views are diminished. Some researchers and institutions, including the Academy for Systemic

Change, define capabilities for the development of self, including being aware of one's environment, compassion, and understanding. It also touts the capability of possessing the wisdom to facilitate awareness-based systemic change (Dreier et al., 2019). Citing a report, "The Water of System Change," Dreier et al. (2019) explained that the mindset is the most influential determinant of systems behavior. A person with the ability of system leadership can develop these capabilities within themselves and encourage others. This way, systems leaders can engage and mobilize numerous individuals' capacity to benefit the system.

The Community

The elements that make up the community in a complex system comprise of diverse stakeholders, including individuals and institutions. These stakeholders engage in various activities, including interacting with and influencing others (Dreier et al., 2019). The relevant stakeholders are often part of a network and coordinate around shared interests and the common good. However, the levels of trust, connectivity, and coordination among stakeholders in a system vary (Dreier et al., 2019; Senge et al., 2015). An essential capability of a systems leader within the community is to make a group stronger by strengthening the trust, understanding, and recognition as part of the shared interest among the stakeholders (Dreier et al., 2019). It is noteworthy that an organization is a social construction brought into fruition when an individual or a group of people agree to bring an idea into realization (Dreier et al., 2019). The individual who possesses the skill can decide how work will be apportioned and categorized. This includes the disbursement and management of the resources under specific authorities to help achieve the purpose (Dreier et al., 2019). The social domain is concerned with how people work together to achieve the business's goal, including the structure. This includes recruitment, review, and appraisal of employees' work, promotion, and discipline (Dreier et al., 2019). The daily social

process consists of the quality of leadership and how the stakeholders communicate with each other.

While the technical and commercial domains are clear, the social field is not easy to define, and the crucial part of leadership is how to explain and integrate the three domains of social, technical, and commercial capabilities skills. An essential role of systems leadership in a community (and organizations) involves developing, supporting, and coordinating various skills and operations among diverse stakeholders (Dreier et al., 2019). The systems leadership builds alliances among the diverse groups by creating an explicit goal that focuses on broad and long-range goals to transform the system within an organization. These actions create alliances among the members and groups, who commit to improve the whole system for the benefit of the members and the organization as a whole. As such, the systems leader transforms the organization by coordinating activities that involve the whole community (Dreier et al., 2019; Senge et al., 2015).

The System

Dreier et al. (2019) noted that the system change initiatives must be grounded in knowledge and insight on how the system functions. The authors explained that complex systems are viewed, understood, or experienced differently by their various stakeholders, rather than individuals having complete knowledge of what constitutes the system. A broader overview of the system is obtained by gathering knowledge, insights, and data from various sources (Dreier et al., 2019; Senge et al., 2015). The processes make it essential to have diversity to help understand the issues confronting an organization, develop strategies for action, and adapt to change through evolving initiatives (Dreier et al., 2019; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Creating an effective system also includes exploring potential ways to work and the possible effect or change

it will have on the economic and social environment (Dreier et al., 2019). An essential component that would facilitate such change in an organization or community is the experience and expertise of the internal and external members, including the ability to develop effective strategies to mitigate threats and uncertainties that would help the organization to adapt to changes in the environment (Dreier et al., 2019; Tufte & Mefalopulospolus, 2009). Such experience also includes having a collective understanding of what the organization's system consists of and identifying the elements and boundaries that constitutes the resources, skills, and issues that could impede the implementation of the goals and strategies proposed (Dreier et al., 2019). Understanding the system allows the leaders, workers, and stakeholders to make choices and strengthen and reinforce strategies and plans to remain competitive and viable in the business environment.

As a member of the system, the systems leader plays an important role in facilitating reflective conversations that create an avenue of learning within the organization through knowledge sharing which helps to map out strategies to solve organizational problems that require robust design and facilitation (Hargreaves, 2009; Senge et al., 2015). While technical expertise is relevant, for systems leadership, the ability to enable collective learning, articulate, and share the resulting insights is essential (Dreier et al., 2019). Dreier et al. (2019) explained that systems leadership requires "shared integrity of vision, participation, and action based on engaging, and benefiting all stakeholders in the system" to achieve of a collective goal (p. 8). Therefore, the continuous interaction among the members in an organization will create a system that will benefit all elements within the various departments and units that will result in a whole that represents the collection of interrelated factors and skills (Dreier et al., 2019).

Core Competencies of System Leadership

System thinking involves acknowledging that the capacity to think comprises a set of components that work together for the overall objective of the whole (Frank, 2006). All systems are subsystems of larger systems in their environment, and the framework depends on the interrelationships and patterns of change (Senge, 1990). This concept provides the connection to an important skill of systems thinking which involves the ability to think retroactively from the desired outcome and developing the core strategies or actions that could yield desired outcomes in the future (Frank, 2000, 2006). In a systems process, there is a series of inputs or activities which result in outputs or outcome into the system's environment. A system also contains a feedback loop for monitoring and evaluating the system's input and output (Frank, 2000, 2006; Trist & Murray, 1990). Therefore, the systems leadership perspective refers to an individual capacity based on the mental processes that enable a person to think and identify strategies to resolve problems while preventing another from occurring. Such leadership skill also engages in communal leadership by engaging all stakeholders, workers, and team members or organizations in the decision-making process. Such an approach contrasts with the traditional notion that authority only flows downwards in an organization (Trist & Murray, 1990). Thus, in systems leadership theory, the team member can require the leader to explain the context and purpose of work (Trist & Murray, 1990). Such approach has resulted in good production outcomes that is widely acceptable as a quality organizational management and leadership skill (Drier et al., 2019; Trist & Murray, 1990; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Such cognitive abilities also help the systems leader to achieve a common goal among members, while promoting satisfaction among teams in a productive and effective way (Drier et al., 2019; Trist & Murray, 1990).

In comparison to other leadership traits, system thinking is hypothesized as a high-order thinking skill that enables individuals to successfully manage and lead an organization, group, or community (Frank, 2000, 2002). A study conducted by Frank (2000, 2002) showed that possessing such abilities portrays a consistent personality trait that distinguishes an individual from ordinary leaders (Frank, 2006). The primary mechanisms that enable systems thinking development include experiential learning and a supportive environment. In addition, a specific characteristic such as thinking broadly and having an open mind explores the probability of encountering potential problems and the solutions. Other skills include being curious about what others may know about issues and how they can help solve problems. Such skill also leads to the practice of communication approaches that lead to a coalition of thinkers and problem solvers in an organization. Other competencies include tolerance to withstand uncertainties in the environment (Frank, 2000, 2002).

Other studies, such as one conducted by Burk (2008) on engineering professionals, showed that an engineer who portrayed the ideal characteristics of system thinking had a systems outlook of the job functions and had a solid ability to educate and orient customers and consumers about a product. Also, the individual engineer had a strong interest in knowing what the organization's customers and stakeholders thought about the services and products offered, and cooperated with stakeholders to find a satisfactory resolution to matters that arose (Burk, 2008; Frank, 2002). Another competency of systems leadership that is linked to systems thinking is the ability to understand a whole system as one beyond its elements, subsystems, groups, teams, and sub-teams that constitute an entire organization. Senge (1994) explained that system thinking is a discipline for seeing wholes. Such skill includes recognizing how each component and subsystem functions as part of the entire system (Drier et al., 2019; Frank, 2002).

This makes systems leadership a multifaceted skill that has the ability to consider issues from a wide range of perspectives and points of view from a general perspective. A study conducted among architects deemed to have system leadership skills showed that successful Information Technology (IT) architects have more in-depth knowledge about different interests, particularly regarding approaches, techniques, technologies, and products (Carroll, 2006). The study found that such professionals consider issues from a wide range of perspectives and points of view, understand the differences among such matters, and draw upon varied concepts and values to resolve them (Carroll, 2006). In other studies, the researchers found that those perceived to possess systems thinking skills approached their work in multifaceted ways and contained a generalist's perspective to issues they were confronted with (Davidz & Nightingale, 2008; Di-Carlo & Khoshnevis, 2006; Frank, 2000). It is noteworthy that all these studies refer to the ability and competence of seeing the whole in problem-solving. Thus, confirming Senge's (1994) assertion that "systems thinking is a discipline dealing with seeing the whole" (p. 68).

Understanding interconnections also includes mutual influences and interrelations among system elements. This includes understanding the importance of systems interactions, interrelationships, and interdependencies among various organization units (Davidz & Nightingale, 2008; Frank, 2002). Such skill enabled the systems leader having to tolerate the views of other members and provide appropriate responses to ambiguous questions about uncertainties facing the organization. This skill also enabled the professionals to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among the various units, and work to integrate the suggestions and skills from other subsystems or units and departments to solve the issues that have been identified. Creativity enabled them to understand their systems and feel comfortable with ambiguity while working in unclear conditions coupled with uncertain environments. This also

helped them to anticipate and solve situations (Davidz & Nightingale, 2008; Frampton et al., 2006).

Various studies conducted among engineers who have systems thinking capabilities showed that successful engineers are able to analyze the impact of proposed changes and are capable of anticipating and dealing with all implications of changes in the system. These include understanding and describing the operation, purposes, applications, advantages, and limitations of a new system/idea/concept immediately after receiving an initial explanation (Davidz & Nightingale, 2008; Frampton et al., 2006; Frank, 2000, 2002). The participants were also able to indicate possible ways for improving performance in their tasks and the organization (Frank, 2000, 2002).

Systems Thinking as an Intelligence Competence and the Relationship to Leadership Performance

Literature linking leadership and systems thinking has been widely developed but is limited to a pragmatic or a model level (Midgley, 2000; Mintzberg, 2001; Senge, 1990, 2007). Although many authors emphasize the importance of systems thinking in leadership, the theories are difficult to summarize since they are based on systems thinking and leadership attitudes (Drucker, 2004; Finkelstein, 2004). Several skills and competencies facilitate the performance of leaders. Boyatzis and Goleman (2007) defined systems thinking as a cognitive intelligence competency, which includes thinking or analyzing information and situations that lead to effective or superior performance. Boyatzis (2007) explained that maximum performance occurs when an individual's capability or talent is consistent with the job's needs and demands as needed in an organizational environment. In the context of systems leadership, competencies are those qualities that enable a person to manage an organization to improve its performance (Nickols,

2000; Sokol, 2001). Studies have identified at least three perspectives of competencies that can predict an outstanding leadership performance (Nickols, 2000; Sokol, 2001). These include cognitive competencies, such as systems thinking and pattern recognition, and emotional intelligence competencies comprised of self-awareness and self-management. The third is social intelligence competencies which include social awareness and relationship management.

A key capability of systems leadership is to lead an organization in a way that would cause other members to observe the organization with a holistic view and determine the systemic implications of organizational actions (Edmondson, 2004). The three dynamic capabilities elements of sensing, seizing, and transforming demand an openness to learning about their environment, the ability to inquire about their environmental issues, and the ability to earn other members' trust in an organization from the systems leader. These capabilities have been essential in promoting organizational learning and problem-solving skills (Senge, 1990; Zulch, 2014). As the systems leader exhibits these capabilities in an organization, they develop a shared vision that motivates them to learn more about improving performance (Boyatzis, 2007; Senge, 1990). Such development creates a common identity among the members (Boyatzis, 2007).

Organizational learning requires individuals to engage in dialogue and discussion about issues. However, effective dialogue requires that individual team members suspend their mental models to understand other views. A systems leader can facilitate this by listening to all team members' assumptions, discussing the issues, and deciding on the best possible alternative to solving the problem. (Boyatzis, 2007; Goleman, 1998, 2000; Jokinen, 2005; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Thus, optimizing the problem-solving capacity of the organization through better access to knowledge and expertise. Team learning, as in organizational learning, is best achieved through the process of participatory communication. "Leadership is the means of influencing

employees towards the achievement of organizational goals and organizational excellence"

(Daff, 2020, p. 3). Senge (1990) explained that people handle intricate work in an intuitive

domain through collaborative leadership. Systems leaders develop their capabilities and enable

individuals to relate to each other and connect and work together. Initiatives facilitated under the

management of systems leaders can lead to change initiatives, often driven by individuals' effort

and commitment to systems leadership's mindset. Such individuals can shift the direction of an

institution, catalyze a group's formation, or provide a solution to the crucial intervention to

restore trust, focus, or commitment when needed. By connecting to a network, the individual can

contribute and influence the system's evolution (Benson et al., 1985; Dreier et al., 2019).

Leadership Perspective Concerning Participatory Communication

In general, participatory leadership models share several assumptions (Sackey, 2014; Sackey

et al., 2017; Tufte & Mefalopulos; Servaes, 1996; Servaes & Malikhao, 1995):

1. Leadership involves a team, group, or community rather than an individual.

2. Interdependence and connectedness within the organization/people as part of a larger
   system.

3. Empowerment rather than power and control.

4. Non-positional as well as positional leadership.

5. Learning is center-most within these more collaborative, team-oriented approaches.

For decades, the norm for administrative leadership has been authoritarian, hierarchical,

control-oriented, and position-based with one-way notions of power (Bensimon & Neumann,

1993). Research illustrates that this process is usually not collaborative, either operating within

the norms of hierarchical leadership or collectivism management by majority or consensus

(Parker, 1998). The purpose of this study is to integrate systems leadership and participatory

communication as strategies in the dynamic capability framework to improve organizational

performance. Drawing on the systems leadership and participatory communication literature in

the last two chapters, Figure 4.2 illustrates how participatory communication and systems

leadership can work together to improve performance.

Figure 4.2

Processes of Participatory Communication Coordinated by the Core Competencies of Systems

Leadership

Systems Leadership

Competencies of Systems Leadership

- Sees and understands organization problems and its environment

- New ways to create strategies, problem solving, finding leverage points: better

- Approach for integrating new ideas within the system context

- Enables understanding of the structures and dynamics of complex systems ability to actively influence events from the environment

- New perspective and understanding of organizational management

Participatory Communication

Phases of Participatory Communication Program

- **Participatory Communication Assessment (PCA)** is where communication methods and tools are used to investigate and assess the situation

- **(Participatory) Communication Strategy Design-**based on the findings of the research and defines the best way to apply communication to achieve the intended change.

- **Implementation of Communication Activities-**determines where activities planned in the previous phase are carried out;

- **Monitoring and Evaluation-**runs through the communication program, monitoring progress and evaluating the final impact of the intervention.

Benefits of Combining Systems Leadership and Participatory Communication in

Organizations

The communication process used by members and stakeholders' participatory

communication is a dialogue or deliberation that involves those responsible for making decisions

without causing the members to use their privilege or authority to coerce anyone into agreeing

with decisions (Burke, 2004). Participatory communication involves three elements of

democratic leadership, dialogue, and deliberation, which Raelin (2012) noted should be included

among participatory organizational change principles (Burke, 2004; Raelin, 2012). The leader is the person in authority who mobilizes the change activity and directs the change. In discussing the leadership role, Burke (2004) acknowledged that they could be directional and involve every stakeholder when designating positions for a change. Given this focus of the top-down mobilization approach in leadership, it is only beneficial and effective to employ a communication approach that would provide a downward directive to the team members in charge of the organization's change (Burke, 2004). Such a process ensures all relevant stakeholders involved in the change activities of the organization are informed about the plans and strategies. The interaction becomes a multiple-party conversation captured in dialogue (McArdle & Reason, 2008). The process of participatory communication is primarily enabled through dialogue. The organization's leader coordinates a discussion among the experts, team members, and other internal and external stakeholders to find solutions to problems the organization may be facing by seeking shared meaning and understanding (McArdle & Reason, 2008).

One of the best reasons other people participate in dialogue is when they are interested in listening to other participating parties who may share different perspectives and the willingness to learn something new. Such participative dialogue often results in actions that are collaborated through communication. Dialogue and deliberation are closely related and are more evident during decision-making (Raelin, 2012). Such deliberation often involves a process where stakeholders collectively engage in a discussion where ideas and information are shared. This process facilitates trust and mutual understanding, which can serve as a basis for finding acceptable solutions to all affected involved in the decision-making (Realin, 2012).

Dialogue and deliberation, which are closely related to participatory communication, are particular processes in resolving critical national and international issues (Raelin, 2012). It is noteworthy that effective collaboration among particles in dialogue and deliberation is essential (Raelin, 2012). Accordingly, those involved in conversation possess different leadership forms than the traditional form of leadership, which tends to be authoritative and sends information from the top to those at the bottom. A top-down approach decimates dialogue and excludes other stakeholders from the decision-making process (Raelin, 2012; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2008). Such leadership approaches only acknowledge one viewpoint as the right course in finding solutions to problems (Raelin, 2012; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2008).

When leaders act as change agents, they serve the role of both the servant and the director. As such, a systems leader in the role of change agent facilitates and guides an organization towards change rather than imposing a line of thinking on an organization's members (Tsoukas, 2009). In a nutshell, the agent serves as a conduit for where the organization wants to reach (Tsoukas, 2009). Furthermore, the leader who also serves as the change agent must have the capability to acknowledge and accept their vulnerability and the challenges in the face of constructive change in an organization. Such leadership skill facilitates the creation of a safe environment for other organization members.

Additionally, such leadership skill creates a bond and cultural belief among members of belongingness and provides a clear choice for the members to work together while achieving individual potentials. Ultimately, leaders of this nature develop an interest to promote the dialogic practice, which involves interactions where each person involved plays the role of both speaker and listener (Jabri et al., 2008; Tsoukas, 2009). Communication scholars explain that the difference between dialogic and monologic practice lies in the fact that communication is

composed of and assimilates others' discourse (Bakhtin, 1981; Jabri et al., 2008; Tsoukas, 2009).

The movement to a democratic lateral form of leadership has a long history dating back to Mary

Parker Follett (1924), who submitted that an individual's knowledge of the task at hand would be

a better source for leadership than the designated authority in the unit. Many designations and

models have since been proposed, from shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003) to

stewardship (Block, 1993), to collective leadership (Bolden et al., 2008), to distributed

leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006), to empowering leadership (Vecchio et al., 2010), and

to leaderful practice (Raelin, 2003, 2011).

Empirical work in this domain found ties between this type of leadership and improved

performance in communities and organizations' socio-economic economic areas (Carson et al.,

2007; Ensley et al., 2006). These studies, however, continue to use familiar categories of

leadership that portray leaders as individuals in positions of authority who tend to overplay and

influence others to agree on issues rather than accepting divergent views and promoting

interpersonal relationships. Such a leadership trait tends to be bedeviled with unresolved

conflicts and ambiguities (Crevani et al., 2010).

An examination of leadership must capture the dialogical interaction as they take place in

a process (Weick, 1989). This approach will help provide the necessary tools to leaders in

organizations to become conscious of how they communicate with stakeholders and the benefit

of such an approach (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008). Scholars have affirmed the benefits of

social interactions that rely upon an atmosphere of inclusivity and the freedom to contribute to

organizations' decision-making (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008). A leader's ability to

employ effective interpersonal and communication and strategies could positively enhance the

organization's dynamic capabilities. It can improve employee morale, increase their effort

towards the organization's operations, and help drive organizational change (Tufte &

Mefalopulos, 2009; Servaes & Malikhao, 2005). Such positive change will enhance the dynamic

capabilities of the organization and improve its performance. The next chapter will explain the

three elements that constitute dynamic capabilities in organizations. This will help to show how

sensing, seizing, and transforming illustrates systems leadership competencies and how

participatory communication processes enhance dynamic organizational capabilities.

CHAPTER V: DYNAMIC CAPABILITIES

Teece et al. (1997) initially defined dynamic capabilities as "the firm's ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies" (p. 516). The authors further explained that "firms could do that by adapting, integrating, and reconfiguring internal and external organizational skills, resources, and functional competencies" (p. 515). Some researchers also defined dynamic capabilities as a firm's processes that use resources to integrate, reconfigure, gain, and release resources (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000). Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) further explained that these processes include the organizational and strategic routines by which firms achieve new resource configurations.

Helfat et al. (2007) provided a refined definition of dynamic capabilities as "the capacity of an organization to create, extend, or modify its resource base purposefully" (p. 4), which includes both the resources and capabilities, and is often referred to as the competences or skills of an organization. The word "capacity refers to the ability to perform a task in at least a minimally acceptable manner" (Helfat et al., 2007, p. 5). The authors explained that some of the functions performed through dynamic capability could be repeated and reliably executed to some extent (Helfat et al., 2007). Dynamic capability, therefore, tends to improve the implementation of an activity.

Teece (2017) explained that "dynamic capabilities are part of a system that includes resources and strategy. Together, they determine the degree of competitive advantage an individual enterprise can gain over its rivals (p. 359). In that sense, and as noted above, SL and PC can serve as a resource that contributes to the performance of an organization.

Origin of Dynamic Capabilities

The concept of dynamic capability is based on the systems theory (Teece, 2018; Teece et al., 1997). Teece (2018), who is one of the original theorists for dynamic capability, explained that the systems theory is an underexplored construct consistent with the dynamic capabilities' framework. The author noted that both the capabilities and systems frameworks adopt a holistic view which calls for all elements of an organization to be aligned. Dynamic capability includes recognizing the importance of some form of learning for adaptation. The complex nature of the environment to which organizations must adapt makes them more like biological organisms.

Achieving high performance means the organization will have to develop and apply sensing, seizing, and transformational/reconfiguring capabilities to build and maintain a competitive advantage. However, organizations must pursue these stages at different times through various decision-making channels and levels (David, 1992). For example, working to achieve sensing and seizing simultaneously and reconfiguring at the individual product level could lead to chaos and lack of effectiveness. This will result in a continuous state of flux in the organization's routines and rules, and would need constant fixing (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003). March (1996) explains that the fundamental capabilities of sensing and seizing are essential for adaptation in the business environment. However, dynamic capabilities go further by identifying the ability of organizations to adapt to their business environment and shape it. While systems theory emphasizes internal stability over time and homogeneity across similar systems, dynamic capabilities include a role for management or leadership that allows systemic change to start from within, a source of heterogeneity across firms. Such heterogeneity is more prominent in the interconnections between systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capabilities in organizations, especially, during complex, situations.

Dynamic Capabilities and Competitive Advantage

The literature on entrepreneurial capabilities emphasizes that opportunity discovery and creation can originate from individuals' cognitive and creative capacities. However, innovation can also be grounded in organizational processes, such as communication and development activities. The work of sensing and creating opportunities is most effective in an organization through a collective effort as all units will have to play a role in the organization. From a leadership perspective, the individual would have to have the ability to recognize, sense, and shape developments. However, identifying opportunities depends on the individual's capabilities and existing knowledge (Nonaka & Toyama, 2007). This requires specific experience, creative activity, and the ability to understand the decision-making process (Nonaka & Toyama, 2007). Such process includes interpreting available information in forms such as a chart, picture, conversation, or scientific and technological breakthroughs. Typical processes through which a systems leader can facilitate dynamic capability include the ability to accumulate information and filter the data from professional and social contacts to create an assessment about the origin of an issue or needs of stakeholders and their responses. Such responsibility involves scanning and monitoring internal and external developments and assessing the needs of stakeholders. This process involves learning, interpretation, and creative activity which can be obtained through the processes of participatory communication.

Elements of Dynamic Capabilities

This section describes the dynamic capabilities framework by focusing on the higher capability hierarchy made up of three elements, namely, sensing, seizing, and transforming capabilities. This dissertation argues that the three elements coordinate with systems leadership and participatory communication to facilitate the creation of enhanced dynamic capabilities in

organizations. The creators of the framework describe capabilities as an ability to determine what the firm can do in uncertain times and the process through which they can make changes to correct a situation (Teece et al., 1997). Teece (2017) explained that the higher-level dynamic capabilities are activities and assessments that work through coordination with other capabilities and resources to maintain external fitness. He noted that these could be summarized as three clusters of entrepreneurial activities concurrently throughout the organization. These are sensing, seizing, and transforming. They encompass organizational processes and unique managerial decisions (Augier & Teece, 2009; Teece, 2012, 2016).

The framework shows how various resources organize and prioritize the varieties of competing and conflicting information that managers receive as they attempt to build a competitive business advantage (Teece, 2007). The elements of the framework function in sync with and establish the relationship among the various resources in the organization to create capabilities (Teece, 2007). This dissertation argues that the dynamic capability related resources in organizations would be effectively coordinated through systems leadership and participatory communication.

Sensing Capability

The sensing capability involves activities related to environmental scanning, during which disorganized information and unstructured data are brought into the organizational system from the external environment and addressed (Augier & Teece, 2009; Teece, 1997; Teece et al., 1997). The ability to sense enables leaders and managers to generate and test hypotheses about latent consumer demand, technological possibilities, and other issues that affect the organization. Achieving improved performance in organizations involves allowing relevant information to reach appropriate quarters to be properly assessed and handled (Augier & Teece, 2009; Teece,

2012). An effective organizational network requires decentralizing authority, creating a collaborative organizational culture, and communicating with the members about a shared vision. The organization's leadership relies on information or data gathered from within and outside the organization's internal and external sources, continuously monitoring the firm's environment, prioritizing problems, and identifying new opportunities (Augier & Teece, 2009; Teece, 2012). However, these stages must be pursued at different times through various decision-making channels and levels (David, 1992).

As in the dynamic capability framework, the environment is often uncertain and can pose organizational routines. Crises can have a more debilitating impact on organizations. These include disrupting a wide range of existing policies, culture, routines, and communication that have been structured within the organization. Weick (2001) explained that high-impact events that threaten organizations' viability are characterized by uncertainty and confusion related to such events' cause and effect. Yet, when members can make sense of their environment using systems leadership skills and participatory communication processes in interactions, coordination, and directions, they can create a more stable environment in their way.

Sensemaking propels the process of understanding and drives the search for explanations and appropriate action courses (Pearson & Clair, 1998; Weick, 1997). Mills et al. (2010) explained that sensemaking focuses on the socio-psychological processes through which a sense of the situation is created out of various interactions. The authors explained that some individuals within an organization may have more influence on meaning than others. Individuals with more power in organizations may also exert more control over the sensemaking of organizational members. The cohesion of understanding of interactions and solutions is often derived from the process of participatory communication. As such, critical sensemaking sets out to provide a lens

to analyze the power relationships reflected in these inequalities within organizations and the consequences of those power effects on individuals' way of offering a way to reinsert agency in organizational studies (Nord & Fox, 1996). Sensemaking, therefore, creates a link between leadership's decision-making and the acceptance of solutions in line with what is perceived to be the dominant social values and cultural values of the organization and that of the individual members (Unger, 1987).

Seizing Capability

Once opportunities and threats have been identified, the seizing capabilities determine how quickly the system can respond to them. The activities related to seizing include investing in commercializing new technologies and designing and implementing business models for various products and services. The business model designed often includes how to interact with customers or stakeholders and the internal motivations or enticements to be used, among others (Teece, 2017). These activities encompass strategies used within the organization to ensure that all its elements are aligned (Teece, 2007). Once a new opportunity is sensed, it should be addressed through new products, processes, or services. Accordingly, there is the need to strategize the process of decision-making related to investment. Such strategies include building on positive outcomes and improved performance. Incorporating strategies such as inclusive decision-making processes that involve internal and external networks can improve an organization's performance. Addressing opportunities involves maintaining and enhancing technological competencies and complementary assets. When network externalities are present, early entry and commitment are necessary.

The presence of increasing returns means that if one network gets ahead, it tends to stay ahead. Getting ahead may require significant investments (Malerba & Orsenigo, 1996; Utterback

& Suarez, 1993). However, an organization must deal with more than when, where, and how much to invest. The process must also involve creating a business model with well-defined strategies and methods to engage in investment priorities. There is evidence that most successful business strategies include a level of inclusion of all stakeholders in the decision-making process (Harris & Nelson, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Such an inclusive decision-making process is participatory communication.

It is important to note the disadvantages of following the traditional hierarchical decision-making approach in organizations. This is because it involves bureaucratic features that restrict inclusivity in decision-making and could thwart the morale and promote employee motivation (Mefalopulos, 2015). Such bureaucracy in the hierarchical approach was explained by Tufte and Mefalopulospolus (2009) A standard process involving submissions and approvals can slow responses and solutions to the organization's threats. The decision-making on the subject matter is likely to have a committee structure, with top management requiring reports and written justifications for significant decisions. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) explainted that such approvals might include seeking approval or signatures from outside the organizational unit in which the expenditure is to take place. Such a lengthy process may also need managerial consensus to allow investment decisions (Harris & Nelson, 2008). However, with participatory communication, coordination and action are coordinated to implement the decentralized decision-making process. Instead of having various managers/leaders agree on a single decision, the systems leader can guide and facilitate the process, with the ability to expedite the results of decisions made by all involved.

Transforming Capability

The transforming capabilities enable the organization's management to keep the organizational system's elements aligned and in sync with the operational strategy (Teece et al., 1997). These capabilities are critical when changes are made to the organization's business model design or if a new and added model conflicts with an existing business model. In such an instance, occasional transformations are necessary to keep the organization aligned with its environment (Teece & Pisano, 1994). Part of the transforming capability includes fostering an organizational culture of flexibility and experiment with other ventures to provide a firm foundation for quicker and easier transformations for future advantage (Teece, 2007, 2015). Resource or asset alignment and coalignment issues are essential in the context of innovation. Still, they are quite different from portfolio balance issues as some organization leaders are likely to have different capabilities and approaches to solving problems (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; Teece et al., 2007). Profit maximization and improved performance depend on efficient strategy concerning investment decisions, getting the timing right, building on increasing return advantages, and leveraging products and services (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Salvato & Vassolo, 2018). The ability to make good and effective decision-making is a prerogative of individual managers.

A capability of systems leadership is to make unbiased judgments under uncertainty towards future demand and competitive responses to manage the organization's improved performance (Paul et al., 2018; Teece, 2018). The capability to predict conditions on the market involves understanding how the market system is interrelated and other subsystems and functions. As such, systems leadership possesses the capability to forge an inclusive

decision-making team with whom they can hold meetings, discussions, and forums, where they obtain strategic information from experts, and knowledgeable members coordinate with other departments or units of the organizations to respond to the market environment (Harris & Nelso, 2008; Teece, 2018; Teece et al., 2007; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

The transforming capability, which is synonymous with co-specialization, cross-functional activities, and associated investments, takes place concurrently rather than sequentially. Therefore, managerial judgments and decision-making skills are significant (Chandler, 1990). As such, investment capabilities and strategy are pertinent to achieving success and improving organizational performance. This is why this dissertation deems it important to include systems leadership and participatory communication as contributing strategies to an organization's improved performance. While the language and context of dynamic capability literature appears to be focused on the business sector, the key ideas of sensing, seizing, and transforming is relevant to the U.S. nonprofit and international NGO sectors as well. For instance, the emerging but well-established field of social entrepreneurship has convincingly demonstrated the importance of new business models (venture plans) to address some of the most entrenched social issues. Presence of appropriate dynamic capabilities plays a key role in developing and adapting these business models.

System Leadership, Participatory Communication, and the Dynamic Capability Framework

Teece and Pisano (1994) and Teece et al. (1997) proposed three organizational and managerial processes which include coordination/integrating, learning, and reconfiguring the assets that support the core elements of dynamic capabilities. These core elements are sensing, seizing, and transforming and provide a pathway to developing and processing dynamic

capabilities. The requirements of these core elements are also evident in the processes of systems leadership. For example, one of the core competencies of a systems leader involves finding new ways to enhance the value of the organization by identifying existing and new internal and external resources of the organization (Drier et al., 2019; Teece et al., 1997;). The ability to perform such function aligns with an individual's cognitive abilities, including knowledge of the assets owned by an organization (Teece et al., 1994). Managers (and leaders) seek new combinations by aligning co-specialized assets such as employing participatory communication approaches which involves other members who can contribute to the task of resource identification and alignment (Teece, 2007; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). The communication process helps to determine how to carry out planned strategies to transform or reconfigure the organization's existing resources to respond to demands in the environment. The capabilities of sensing, seizing, and reconfiguration are necessary to ensure changes in response to uncertainties, threats, or challenges in the business environment. The competency of the systems leader to interpret patterns of changes in the organization helps to create a communication of specialized language and set of tools to address problems by coordinating and collaborating with experienced and expert individuals to tackle uncertainties that result in competitive advantages over business rivals. These new strategies involve the use of participatory communication methods and tools to investigate and assess the situations, which result in the organization's capability to appropriately allocate resources, blend existing knowledge and skill, and combine managerial tasks to improve the assets.

These key strategic functions of the business executives are very well in sync with the competencies of systems leadership (Drier et al., 2019; Teece, 2017). The skills used to identify and exploit the processes by which the elements complement each other and manage the

specialized skills developed between the core elements are scarce. It only takes a systems leadership skill to determine how to increase value from using the organization's assets, which involves knowing the structure of the firm's asset base and filling identifying areas that need improvement to satisfy customer needs. The ability to fill in gaps in the operations of the organization may include building new assets or acquisitions and strategic partnerships (Ettlie & Pavlou, 2006).

The dynamic capabilities framework recognizes that past experiences shape the business enterprise. Yet, it can make changes based on current environmental conditions and not be trapped by its past. As such, an organization's management can make big differences through investment choice and other decisions that can enable the organizations to shape their environment (Chandler, 1990; Ettlie & Pavlou, 2006). With such conditions, a systems leader would set technological and market trajectories (David, 1992). The dynamic capabilities framework designed in this dissertation attempts to capture the key constructs and relationships in systems leadership and participatory communication to create, protect, and leverage intangible assets to achieve superior performance and avoid decline in an organization's profits. The building and assembling of tangible and intangible assets and effecting change are not easy and can only be achieved through skillful decision-making of systems leadership with participatory communication to help obtain and sustain high performance.

Critiques of this framework argue that concerning competition for resources, the sense capability does not involve significant resource commitments relative to seizing. They explain that certain aspects such as monitoring the environment can be a low-cost activity (Mansfield et al., 1971). Also, systems thinking concerning the different mindsets and routines, while there are undoubtedly tensions, can be relieved by having different organization units (or various parts of

an organizational unit) specializing to some degree on sense, compared to seizing. Gupta et al. (2006) noted that exploration or exploitation can co-exist with others in another domain. They explained that the process of exploring and exploiting is important for adaptive systems. Sensing activities need to be decentralized through processes, such as systems that include participatory communication where information moves up to top management.

To summarize, an organization's ability to manage competitor threats and reconfigure itself depends on how well it can monitor its environment. Such capabilities include aligning the internal and external resources, such as capable leadership and effective communication coordination among members and stakeholders. However, for an organization to achieve such milestones, elements such as systems leadership and a participatory communication structure would help coordinate the organization's operations and facilitate dynamic capabilities.

Existing Gap

This theoretical dissertation addresses the shortcomings of dynamic capabilities initially identified in Resource-Based-View (RBV) theory, from which the dynamic capabilities idea was developed. The RBV argues that firms possess resources, a subset that enables them to achieve a competitive advantage and a further subset, leading to superior long-term performance (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). Empirical studies that used the Dynamic Capability Theory have supported the resource-based view (McGrath et al., 1995; Miller & Shamsie, 1996; Zaheer & Zaheer, 1997). However, theorists have faced challenges in providing a clear definition of a resource (Hansen & Wernerfelt, 1989). Various studies that used the RBV found differences in the returns reported by organizations. To help explain these resources, they have used different terms to describe and identify the nature of these resources. Such descriptions include capabilities, often referred to as competencies (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990).

Some refer to capabilities as skills (Grant 1991), strategic assets (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993; Ross et al., 1996), and stocks (Capron & Hulland, 1999). Others have identified dynamic capabilities to include creativity, diverse thinking, and the ability to effectively communicate with employees to effect change (Schoemaker et al., 2018; Senge, 2005, 2015; Somsing & Belbaly, 2017; Tufte & Mefalopulospolus, 2009).

These different definitions and connotations of resources make it unclear and leave out other resources that may be very important to a firm but may be lost in the context and definitions intended. The lack of clarity of the resource's description has been problematic for research using the RBV as key terminology has been fussy (Priem & Butler 2001). These concerns have been expressed by other studies on RBV and have been critical of how previous studies have ignored additional factors that contribute to resources. For example, Hansen and Wernerfelt (1989) conducted a study in which they found differences between firms and within industries. Other researchers such as Cool and Schendel (1988) also identified narrower confines of groups within enterprises. These findings suggest the significant impact individuals and firms' resources can have on an organization's performance (Mahoney & Pandian, 1992). Such an impact helps to create an advantage over other firms in a competing environment while promoting its success. Based on the findings explained above, I argue that some of the factors that make up RBV, such as systems leadership and participatory communication, have not been included and or identified clearly in previous studies. These may just be stated as part of the inputs and outputs to the RBV (Senge, 2005, 2015; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009).

Researchers have defined resources as assets and capabilities that are helpful in detecting and responding to market opportunities or threats (Christensen & Overdorf, 2000; Sanchez et al., 1996; Wade, 2004). Capabilities can include skills, such as managerial ability or processes of

participatory communication, in an organization which leads to the development and integration of resources and structures in an organization (Amit & Schoemaker 1993; Capron & Hulland, 1999; Christensen & Overdorf, 2000; Schoemaker & Amit, 1994). Other studies explain capabilities in terms of how they facilitate an organization's performance (Amit & Schoemaker 1993; Capron & Hulland, 1999; Christensen & Overdorf, 2000; Schoemaker & Amit, 1994). However, such vague description and identification of resources excludes systems leadership and participatory communication which are capabilities and can also facilitate the creation of capabilities. Scholars in the leadership field, such as strategic management, have put considerable effort into identifying and testing various aspects of dynamic capabilities, including drawing attention to the need to keep the elements, such as sensing, seizing, and transforming, aligned internally. However, these resources and capabilities are lumped together as part of a complex set of capabilities and assets that may lead to sustained performance (Wade, 2004).

These inconsistencies in resource development and the eventual identification of a gap in the description and categorization of capabilities have contributed to an attempt in this dissertation to showcase and emphasize how systems leadership and participatory communication facilitate the creation of capabilities in organizations, which also leads to improved performance (Helfat et al., 2007; Teece et al., 1997). This dissertation aims to integrate systems leadership and participatory communication as critical strategies that facilitate dynamic capabilities for improved organizational performance. Achieving this will include an addition to the dynamic capabilities framework, systems leadership, and participatory communication as strategies that facilitate development to improve organizational performance. Such a process will include using the same set of resource attributes mentioned in the dynamic capabilities

framework and comparing them to the skills of systems leadership and the method of participatory communication.

Importance of Systems Leadership and Participatory Communication to the Creation of Organizational Dynamic Capabilities

A study on entrepreneurship emphasizes that individual managers' cognitive and creative capacities can facilitate the discovery of new ways to improve an organization's performance (Teece, 2012). The ability to create and sense opportunities is not uniformly distributed amongst individuals or enterprises (Ellonen et al., 2009; Eriksson, 2014). The processes of management functions include coordination/integrating, learning, and reconfiguring, which form the core elements of organizational capabilities. These key strategic functions are executed by an organization's management or leadership (Teece et al., 1997). The various capabilities and skills complement each other and develop resources needed to boost the organization's performance. It is noteworthy that leadership skills are integral to facilitating such value from the organization's internal resources. This includes knowing the firm's asset base structure and filling in the gaps necessary to provide superior customer solutions (Ettlie & Pavlou, 2006). Without such high cognitive capability, working to achieve sensing and seizing simultaneously, and reconfiguring at the individual product level, could lead to chaos and lack of effectiveness as the organization's routines and rules could be confused (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003; March, 1996).

Sensing activities need to be decentralized through processes and systems that include participatory communication where information moves up to top management (March, 1996). In a nutshell, an organization's ability to manage its competitor threats and reconfigure itself depends on its ability to involve all stakeholders in its decision-making process. Also, achieving financial success depends on aligning the internal resources to respond to uncertainties within the

environment. Such response depends on several factors, including the skills of systems

leadership and participatory communication processes (Gupta et al., 2006; Mefalopulospolus,

2008; Tufte & Mefalopulospolus, 2009). When an organization develops a strong mechanism for

managing the environment, it attains the ability to manage, improve, and sustain a strong

performance to mitigate a negative business environment (Gupta et al., 2006; Teece, 2015).

However, such a milestone can only be achieved for an organization when other elements such

as leadership and the communication structure and atmosphere align to help coordinate

operations and facilitate dynamic capabilities.

The concept of dynamic capabilities explains the extent to which an enterprise develops

and employs superior dynamic capabilities, which also determines the number of assets it will

create and the level of economic profits it can earn. Furthermore, the framework as illustrated

above emphasizes the positive outcomes of appropriate resources utilization. It is noteworthy

that there are various capabilities that systems leadership can contribute to develop the processes

and structures that support innovation in the organization. Such capabilities manifested through

the strategies will be implemented, including the mode of communication and the process

through which relevant internal and external members are included in the strategies that

addresses the organization's challenges.

Why SL and PC Should be Part of the Strategies for Creating Dynamic Capabilities

This section explains why is important to incorporate systems leadership and

participatory communication as part of the strategies for creating dynamic capabilities in

organizations. As part of managing an organization, leaders and individuals in management

positions must have certain strategies to implement organizational goals and objectives. Such

strategies often result from planning processes aimed at achieving an organization's goals. A

definition developed by the Management Study Guide (MSG, 2021) defines strategy as "a general direction set for the company and its various components to achieve a desired state in the future (p. 1.). A strategy involves integrating the organization's activities, utilizing and allocating the internal and external resources within the organization's environment to meet its goals and objectives. Strategy is an essential feature of an organization's management actions, including planning and making decisions that affect both the firm and its stakeholders (MSG, 2021). The question is, how are dynamic capabilities created, what constitutes dynamic capabilities, what are their attributes, and how can they be recognized? Scholars of different disciplines have viewed this differently. Eisenhardt and Martin (2000) take a different view of dynamic capability, asserting that they represent the best practices and exhibit equifinality. So, what are the best practices?

This study argues that an important way to create dynamic capability is by integrating systems leadership participatory communication processes to help make decisions that would promote the organization's performance (Drier et al., 2019; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Zollo and Winter (2002) also argued that dynamic capabilities are in pursuit of effectiveness. What kind of leadership can effectively run an organization to improve performance? And, through what process or means? Various authors have tried to clarify the challenge of what constitutes or creates dynamic capabilities in organizations. These include Helfat et al. (2007), who explained dynamic capability to involve an organization's capacity to create, extend, or modify its resource base purposefully. This definition allows this study to designate systems leadership and participatory communication to create dynamic capability in the organization. The assertion as provided by Helfat et al. (2007) enables thinking that dynamic capability may bring about differences in an organization's operations without any relations to environmental changes. In

another development, Zollo and Winter (2002) identified the importance of deliberation and decision-making in organizations as part of learning mechanisms that can create new processes and routines. This means that an organization's system leadership can facilitate learning among members and stakeholders through inclusive decision-making facilitated by participatory communication.

Dynamic capabilities framework recognizes the importance of bottom-up innovation to improve performance, involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process can only facilitate this strategy for change. As such, participatory communication is one of the most important vehicles to improve the organization's performance. Using participatory communication to create new knowledge can effectively be facilitated under systems leadership (Nonaka, 1994; O'Connor, 2008).

Using systems thinking capability, systems leadership helps individuals to observe the organization with a holistic view, and diagnose the systemic implications of various actions taken in the organization (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Edmondson, 2004; Zollo & Winter, 2002). This development is essential to enhance learning in organizations to create dynamic capabilities (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Zollo & Winter, 2002). The knowledge obtained and accumulated through experiences in an organization is closely linked to its dynamic capabilities and are viewed as path-dependent concepts. This means that knowledge acquired by an organization, and changes made as a result of learning, depends on previous knowledge and previous attempts to change (Teece et al., 1997). Based on the linkage between organizational learning and the creation of dynamic capabilities, some researchers argue that learning is an antecedent to dynamic capabilities (Easterby-Smith et al., 2009; Klingebiel & Lange, 2010; Zollo & Winter, 2002). Dynamic capabilities are intangible assets built in the organization over a

period (Zollo & Winter, 2002). These intangible assets comprise tacit knowledge, skills,

intellectual property, competence, or culture (Teece et al., 1997). They reflect the accumulation

of learning through both experience and more deliberate processes of knowledge articulation and

codification (Zollo & Winter, 2002).

The holistic concept of systems theory forms the basis of systems leadership, which

comprises a human element that coordinates the development and implementation of

organizational goals through knowledge obtained from various sources (Augier & Teece, 2008).

Such knowledge facilitates the design and creates dynamic capabilities (Augier & Teece, 2008).

The concept of systems leadership primarily seeks to align with changes in organizational

environments and opportunities by using cognitive abilities and competencies to improve

(Augier & Teece, 2008). However, the alignment can only be effective when the processes of

participatory communication are present among the various subunits which make up the whole

(Almaney, 1974). In this instance, participatory communication becomes part of the unit and

resources that facilitate the alignment of all units within the organization to function effectively.

Almaney (1974) explains that "communication acts as a system binder…. and serves to

integrate all the subsystems in such a way that the internal stability of the total system is

maintained" (p. 36). Such internal stability is especially important for creating organizational

capacity through high-level routines that are executed by teams of people who understand the

routines (Teece et al., 1997). The characteristics of such routines include communicating and

coordinating critical and essential procedures to the production operations of the organization

(Teece, 2015). When all these have been achieved, the capabilities created and enhanced

through the coordination and collaboration of systems leadership and participatory

communication may result in improved performance (Dreier et al., 2019; Tufte & Mefalopulos,

2009;). In Figure 5.1, I offer the linkages across SL, PC, and DC based on the review and observations in this and the last two chapters. Figure 5.1 shows the elements and the dynamic capability framework, and illustrates how the capabilities are linked to the strategies derived from the core competencies of systems leadership and the processes of participatory communication. I further integrate and explore the relationship noted here in the next chapter.

Figure 5.1

Dynamic Capabilities Framework-including Systems Leadership and Participatory Communication Process

Dynamic Capabilities

SENSE   SEIZE   TRANSFORM

Identity opportunities   Design and Refine Business Models   Realign Structure and Culture

Processes of Participatory Communication → Strategy ← Core Competencies of Systems Leadership

Participatory Communication

Phases
- **Participatory Communication Assessment (PCA)** use of communication methods and tools are to investigate and assess the situations;

  Participatory Communication Strategy Design-based on the findings of the research-defines ways to apply communication to achieve the intended change.

- **Implementation of Communication Activities-**determines to carry out planned activities.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation-**monitoring progress and evaluating the final impact of the intervention.

Systems Leadership
- Competencies Complex problem become easier to understand, as do the interrelationships of parts and multiple cause-and-effect cycles
- Identifies new ways to create strategies, problem solving, integrates new ideas
- A new way of management: understands and controls complex systems whole, interrelationships & components.
- Interpret patterns in organization
- Communication-creation of specialized language and set of tools to address problems.
- enables understanding of the structures and designs strategies for greater success
- Actively influences events and form the environment rather than react to environment changes
- New perspective-understandings organizational management

CHAPTER VI: NORMATIVE MODEL: INTEGRATION OF SL, PC, and DC

In this chapter, I present the integrated model of SL, PC, and DCs. The model draws upon the literature review and discussion I presented in Chapters III, IV, and V. In those chapters, I demonstrated the initial complementarity of SL and PC and their role in enhancing DCs and subsequent organizational performance. As discussed in Chapter II, the integrated model is built using the assumptions of normative theory building. As a reminder, here is my central research question that guided this dissertation research.

Research Question

RQ: How may systems leadership (SL) and participatory communication (PC) strengthen dynamic organizational capabilities (DOC) for improved performance?

In the sections below, I begin with a review and synthesis of literature that support the assumptions and arguments at the foundation of the integrated model. That is followed by the model presentation. The integrated model translates the main study question into a visual that integrates the flow and key concepts of interests, namely SL, PC, DC, and organizational performance. Following my model presentation, I offer a series of propositions to extend the existing theory of dynamic capabilities.

This study sought to identify the various ways by which systems leadership and participatory communication facilitate the enhancement of dynamic capabilities in organizations. As discussed in Chapter V, the concept of Dynamic Capabilities refers to an organization's capacity to create, modify, and extend its resource base in a reliable manner (Helfat et al., 2007). DC is said to involve sensing and shaping opportunities and threats, seizing opportunities,

managing threats, and reconfiguring the organization to maintain sustainable advantage (Teece, 2007). Chapter V of this study demonstrated the potential of strategies systems leadership and participatory communication in enhancing the dynamic capability framework. I did so because I believe the core competencies of systems leadership involve a series of strategies that facilitate dynamic capabilities. Likewise, the core processes of participatory communication are also engaged in various strategies that make it possible to improve existing capabilities and create new ones in organizations. Teece (2018) defined strategy as a "coherent set of analyses, concepts, policies, arguments, and actions that respond to a high-stakes challenge" (p. 4). Teece enumerated some values attributed to sound strategies and noted that a good strategy has "prescient diagnoses that identify obstacles; a guiding policy that specifies an approach to overcoming them; and a coherent plan of action that implements the policy" (p. 4). For this study, I argue that both systems leadership and participatory communication share characteristics and requirements outlined by Teece (2018) and will explain using the proposed model in Figure 6.1.

Various studies have identified the creation of organizational capabilities through several aspects of the organization's resources. However, little investigation has been undertaken about how systems leadership and participatory communication facilitate creation and enhancement of dynamic capabilities. This study has created a normative model to demonstrate that a systems leader's organizational skills and the leader's ability to coordinate communication among the team, using internal and external resources, can facilitate dynamic capabilities in organizations.

Pitelis and Wanger (2019) explained that human interaction among the team and organizational members can create dynamic capability in organizations. This study drew on the core competencies of systems leadership and how they can coordinate participatory

communication to create dynamic capability. In summary, the study proposes that systems leadership and participatory communication facilitate the creation and enhancement of dynamic capability, which leads to improved performance in organizations.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, the core competencies of systems leadership are inherent in the individual who possesses collaborative leadership skills. In these instances, the leadership demonstrates the tactical skills of managing and building a coalition of stakeholders who work to achieve a common aim. To accomplish these objectives, the individual must understand the complexity of the community/environments and the problems confronting the community or organization and work with all stakeholders to identify solutions to the problem. Resolving the organization's issues and improving performance also depends on how the systems leader effectively coordinates participatory communication processes, which provides a voice for the marginalized groups among organizational or community members. Such inclusion in decision-making also increases a sense of ownership and belongingness among the members of the organization or community. Integrating the participatory communication approach in the organization's leadership creates a general sense of support among the members, and also facilitates approval of the priorities and goals identified by the organization. When the systems leader can coordinate these, it will enhance overall results and sustain initiatives.

Let us revisit what dynamic capabilities are. Ordinary capabilities enable firms to create and capture value through extant good or best practices. On the contrary, dynamic capabilities involve sensing and shaping opportunities and threats, seizing opportunities, managing threats, and reconfiguring the organization to maintain sustainable advantage (Teece, 2007). The sensing, seizing, and reconfiguring aspects of DCs are directly related to the acquisition and maintenance of Sustainable Competitive Advantage (SCA), especially in

non-static environments (Eisenhardt et al., 2010; Teece, 2007). Pitelis and Wagner (2019)

explained that organizational routines create dynamic capabilities through repetition. However,

repeating the same routines as the operation process negates any real change in an organization

and prevents improved performance. Overcoming such problems will include replacing such

patterns with practical means that can adapt to current environmental uncertainties. Also, the

creation of dynamic capabilities has been attributed to "psychological concepts such as insight,

imagination, and intuition to explain how DCs can bring forth firm-level outcomes" (Pitelis &

Wagner, 2019, p. 235). However, the authors explained that although many leadership strategies

attempt to achieve the desired outcomes, it is hard to achieve the results without coordination

with other members of the organization to create dynamic capabilities.

Studies have shown that "leaders can also be powerful inhibitors of organizational

change. They can sometimes misuse their strong influence over followers to foster resistance to

organizational change in situations in which strategic change threatens their position of power"

(Pitelis & Wagner, 2019, p. 236). In the case of systems leadership, the solid cognitive ability to

offer insight into problems could cause them to create chaos and confusion when trying to do

away with the old ways/routine of operations in the organization. This can cause the systems'

leaders to deviate from rational decisions when confronted with uncertain conditions. Other

issues such as incurring losses due to strict observance of routines can prevent firms from seizing

opportunities. In such circumstances, leaders can employ the participatory communication

approach and methods and investigate and assess situations before making decisions. This means

that the systems leader will be using a collaborative leadership approach. As described by the PC

approach's value, the collaboration with other members ensures that priorities are agreed to and

approved by the broader base of the organizational members and the different stakeholders,

hence improving the organization's overall performance. When there is a lack of collaboration between SL and PC in organizations, unilateral decision-making by a systems leader can prevent organizations from adapting to changes in their environment due to persistent errors in gauging the right moves.

I present the overall model that integrates SL, PC, and DC in Figure 6.1. The model shows that both SL and PC directly contribute to the creation and enhancement of DC, which leads to improved performance in organizations. PC also serves as a moderating factor when it is coordinated by SL to enhance DC. In summary, Figure 6.1 demonstrates that the relationships and linkages among SL, PC, and DC result in improved performance.

Figure 6.1

Integrated Model of Systems Leadership, Participatory Communication, and Dynamic Capabilities
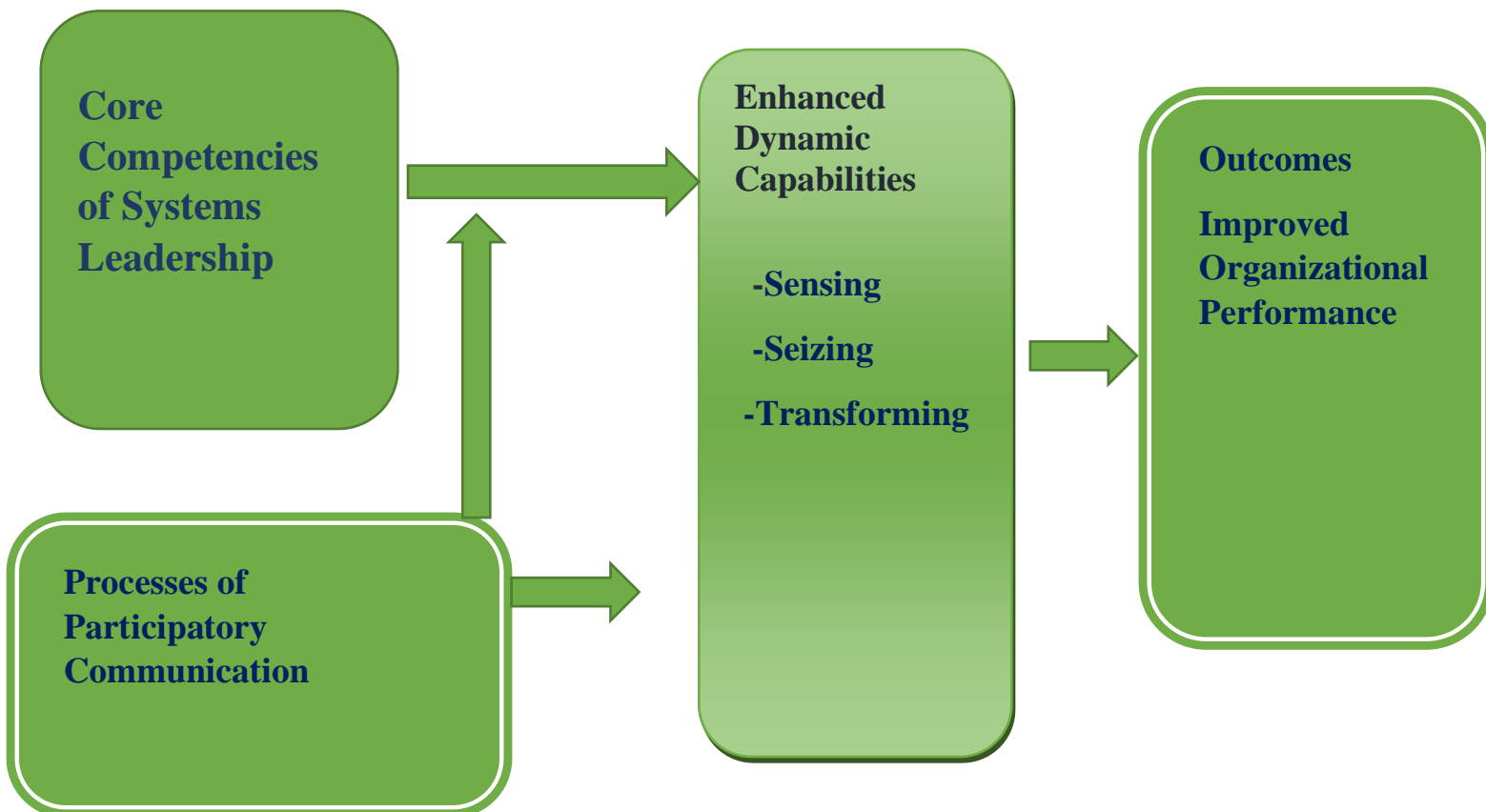
How SL and PC Facilitate the Creation and Strengthening of DC

This study focused on three elements of dynamic capabilities: sensing, seizing, and transforming. The following sections will discuss how the integration of systems leadership and participatory communication facilitates and enhances these dynamic capabilities in organizations, improving performance.

Systems Leadership and Dynamic Capabilities

The sensing capability is an element that enables an organization to discover and create opportunities amid threats from the environment. The ability to sense a threat in the environment has been linked to individual entrepreneurial capability in managing organizational activities (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019; Teece, 2008). This includes an organization's ability to identify opportunities of creating more wealth in the business or market environment and address and prevent the potential of lagging behind its competitors in the market (Alvarez & Barney, 2010; Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). An individual who approaches this problem with a systems leadership perspective can understand the complexity of the environment and the situation the organization may be facing and see the benefits of incorporating participatory communication. Including relevant stakeholders in the decision-making process, the system leaders collaborate with other members to find strategies that improve organizational operations and performance. Such an approach integrates new ideas from members and facilitates an understanding of the structure and the dynamics of the complex environment in which the organization functions as illustrated in Figure 6.1 above. To avoid falling behind, firms must be as effective as their competitors at sensing existing opportunities.

Part of the capability to sense the environment includes an organization's absorptive capacity, enabling the firm's ability to absorb new knowledge from internal and external relations

(Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). Systems leadership facilitates such a process by engaging with various ties to external knowledge sources, including research institutions, customers, suppliers, competitors, to seek information about existing opportunities. Engaging teams, organizations, and community stakeholders in meaningful conversations promote resilience, belongingness, innovation, and collective impact. It also helps organizations to collaborate with stakeholders and change projects that are important to learn about the new trend, demands, and expectations. Under the sensing element, a systems leadership can create new opportunities by structuring the organization's internal and external environments. Pitelis and Wagner (2019) explained that opportunity creation is the process through which opportunities are formed by the actions of entrepreneurs themselves. As noted in the systems leadership competencies explanation above, system leaders sense these opportunities through understanding patterns and complexity from a holistic perspective. Accordingly: **P1a: Systems leadership is positively related to enhanced dynamic capability of sensing**.

Teece (2017) explained that seizing capabilities allow an organization to find ways to respond to threats in the environment. Some of the seizing element's activities include investing in new technologies, and designing and implementing new business models for the organization's products and services. These new business strategies include interacting with internal and external stakeholders to determine the best way to motivate patrons of the organization's services (Teece, 2017). The best way for an organization to seize on activities and capture value in its environment is to innovate (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019). Such opportunity also means understanding the complexities of a problem, creating and integrating new ways, and developing ideas into strategies that will solve such problems. These actions strongly align with the systems leadership skills and strategies as discussed above. Specifically, a systems leader can

empower individuals to contribute their suggestions, expertise, knowledge, and experience and help them understand the importance of seizing opportunities using a holistic perspective. As part of the innovative process to tackle the organization's challenges, the systems leadership facilitates an understanding of the structures and the dynamics of the complex nature of the problems. This helps to collaborate with others to develop a strategy that seizes the opportunity to capture value to improve the organization's performance (Teece, 2018; Teece et al., 1997). Creating a business strategy that aligns with the internal and external resources and providing a structure that allows inclusive decision-making requires a high degree of cognition. Such capability is the central focus of the competence of a systems leadership. Accordingly: **P1b: Systems leadership is positively related to enhanced dynamic capability of seizing.**

It takes a level of systems thinking to predict conditions in the environment by understanding how the system interrelates with other subsystems and how they function together before transforming existing structures and operations to respond to uncertain conditions and emerging opportunities. Such transformative capability enables the system's leadership to identify the organization's various internal and external elements and those who manage them in the multiple units. A coalition of such individuals includes those with expert knowledge and experience about matters confronting the organization. Since part of transforming involves making effective decisions and designing strategies, the systems leader can build a community of problem solvers by including relevant stakeholders to plan and mitigate threats faced by the organization. The inclusive approach to developing plans and strategies also empowers marginalized groups or individuals who may feel that their contributions and suggestions to the growth of the organization is being recognized or heard.

As explained in Chapter V, the transforming capabilities facilitate the organization's internal and external alignment and keep them in sync with the strategies laid out by the organization (Teece et al., 1997). Such process includes promoting flexibility and ease with the implementation of a new approach that provides a firm foundation for the organization's future advantage (Teece, 2007, 2015). Also, part of transforming means making the right decisions about which strategies would promote the organization's mission and improve its performance amidst uncertainties. Transforming also consists of increasing return advantages and leveraging products and services (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009; Salvato & Vassolo, 2018). As noted above, the system's leader's ability to understand and address the complexities of the organization's problems in relation to the external uncertainties, enables them to create approaches that keep the internal and external elements/resources of the organization aligned to achieve maximum performance. Accordingly: **P1c: Systems leadership is positively related to enhanced dynamic capability of transforming.**

Participatory Communication, Systems Leadership, and Dynamic Capabilities

This study focused on three elements of dynamic capabilities which include sensing, seizing, and transforming. This section will discuss how the integration of systems leadership and participatory communication facilitates the creation of dynamic capabilities in organizations to improve performance.

Brem and Viardot (2019) explained that "good performance requires strong dynamic capabilities to sense, seize, and transform in conjunction with good strategy" (p. 198). This dissertation argues that strong dynamic capabilities are tied to strong and well-planned strategies, which are also provided through the core competencies of systems leadership and the process of participatory communication. Strategy has been described as a contingency factor which must be

aligned with both internal and external plans to obtain the maximum performance (Brem & Viardot, 2017; Donaldson, 2006). Rondinelli et al. (2001) explained that strategies that are developed for organizational operations must fit and be able to support competitive operations of the firm against competitors. Strong strategies can enhance an organization's acquisition and development of resources, which will facilitate the creation of capabilities that will fit into the firm's competitive position (Rondinelli et al., 2001).

The processes of improving performance include the ability of the organization's leadership to utilize the communication skills to collaborate with others to collect information which helps to sense the extent of opportunities in the business environment. Such information helps to develop strategies and expertise to invest in capabilities such as innovation, which transforms the organization's resources to improve performance, and maintain a competitive advantage over rivals (Brem & Viardot, 2017). Interactions among employees and other stakeholders also facilitate the creation of new processes and routines that improve the performance of the organization. As explained by Kumar et al. (2005), "participation is the process through which stakeholders' influence and share control over priority setting, policy-making, resource allocations and access to public goods and services" (p. 3).

Systems leadership seizes opportunities for open interactions and information sharing and coordinates developing new knowledge and solutions pertaining to challenges in the environment to transfer to the various units and departments within the organization. Such collection, development, and transfer of information helps in future strengthening of decision-making about similar issues in the organization (Easterly-Smith et al., 2009). Easterly-Smith et al. (2009) noted how several studies mentioned the importance of viewpoints and shared-mindsets as a contributory factor to successful leadership in the creation of dynamic capability.

As such, participatory communication helps systems leadership to use information gathered to create dynamic capabilities through knowledge sharing and interactions. Other studies have shown that market dynamic capabilities are created by seizing the opportunities in the environment through knowledge dispersion, social network building, and integration of expertise obtained from various stakeholders (Teece, 2018; Teece et al., 1997). All these dynamics form part of the crux of the process of participatory communication which serves as a strategy for creating dynamic capability (Bruni & Verona, 2009; Easterly-Smith et al., 2009).

As a strategy for creating dynamic capabilities, participatory communication plays a crucial role of affording the opportunity to expert knowledge and experience, including marginalized groups, to participate in finding solutions to matters that affect them. When facilitated by the systems leader, such opportunity brings together other managers, innovators, employees, and external stakeholders to interact, discuss problems identified, sense challenges in the environment, seize on the opportunities, and transform existing business operations to "achieve congruence with customer needs, and with technological and business opportunities for the firm's long-term market success" (Brem & Viardot, 2017, p. 198). Part of the core competency of systems leadership is having the skills to collaborate, coupled with the tactics of coalition building and advocacy. While these skills can be likened to the seizing capability, they may be greatly facilitated through the processes of participatory communication. A systems leadership approach includes presenting several alternatives and allowing employees to choose from them to ensure effective solutions and improved performance (James, 2005). This includes the use of a participatory communication approach to give power to the organization and the community to implement projects that benefit the various stakeholders. Therefore, participatory communication serves as an important vehicle that aids the systems leader to enhance all the

three elements of dynamic capabilities. Accordingly: **P2: Participatory communication moderates the relationship between systems leadership and dynamic capabilities.**

Participatory Communication and Dynamic Capabilities

The previous section demonstrated the potential moderating effects of participatory communication on systems leadership and dynamic capabilities. In this section, I focus on the direct role that participatory communication plays in facilitating and enhancing dynamic capabilities. In the business world, the crux of dynamic capability lies in a firm's ability to have a competitive advantage over rival firms in the business environment. An organization must overcome challenges of innovations and production and integrate into the market through sensing of information and activities that are taking place in its business environment by gathering information from sources related to the environment and the organization. Such a process can only be achieved through an inclusive form of communication or participatory communication.

For this dissertation, participatory communication is viewed as organizational interactions which involve negotiations with internal and external stakeholders "to create strategic thinking in an ongoing communicative and collaborative process" (Brem & Viardot, 2017, pp. 195–196). It is essential because the stakeholders can make valuable contributions and suggestions to the organization's information bank through the collaborative inclusive suggestions from expertise and experience. Also, engaging with internal and external stakeholders gathers information from the various sources, which can be analyzed and interpreted to assess the importance of the organization's business activities, policies, and strategies. Gathering and analyzing such information from these sources streamline existing measures to make the organization more viable and competitive in a threatening environment

(Pandza & Thorpe, 2009) and participatory communication may play a crucial role in supporting these endeavours. Therefore: **P3a: Participatory Communication Facilitates Sensing Capability.**

Pitelis and Wagner (2019) further explained that "business models entail the benefit the enterprise will deliver to customers, how it will organize to do so, and how it will capture a proportion of the value it delivers" (p. 238). The proposed model in Figure 6.1 serves as one of the critical means by which a business can model innovative ways to seize opportunities in their environment to maintain growth and improve performance. Also, businesses can effectively seize on opportunities to capture value by maintaining an organizational structure that aligns the internal and external resources to support their proposed strategies (Pitelis & Wagner, 2019).

Decision-making and communication are interdependent and inseparable in practice. Dorsey (2001) explained that making decisions about an issue is a complicated process of combining communications from various sources and transmitting the feedback in further communicating (Dorsey, 2001; Johnson et al., 1963). The information gathered about the operations of the subsystems can serve as the control center of the maintenance system which ensures stability and improved performance in the organization (Dorsey, 2001). Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009) explained that communication acts as a stimulus for action and a controlling and coordinating mechanism that facilitates decision-making in a synchronized whole. In the context of seizing, it is understandable that relevant individuals, units, and departments within an organization are essential for the decision-making process. This means that each subsystem or individual in various units and departments form part of the whole apparatus consisting of a group of decision-makers who are knowledgeable and have the expertise to help ensure the stability of the organization's entire system (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). As an outcome of

participatory communication, seizing the opportunities through inclusive decision-making leads to organizational and community development in the for-profit and non-profit contexts respectively.

In addition, a strong communication atmosphere where members of the organization interact frequently is essential for ensuring the success of the organization (Johnson et al., 1963; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). This is because the success of any organization depends largely on the flow of internal communication which has a positive effect by influencing the relationships that exist in the organization. This development is essential because leaders have a tremendous influence at the workplace and on the organization's culture. As such, if the leadership wish to institute changes, their leadership abilities could play a role in strategically aligning with the organizational culture (Singh, 2013). However, a leader's ability to institute any form of effective positive interactions within the organization must include the willingness to allow and facilitate an open approach to communicate with the employees and external stakeholders of the organization (Singh, 2013). Fundamentally, relationships grow out of frequent interactions and relationships that develop among individuals and groups through such processes. On the one hand, having interactions with internal and external stakeholders who form part of the system of the organization could lead to varying degrees of tension (Singh, 2013). However, Almaney (1974) explained that maintaining frequent communication among the organizations units or subsystems makes it possible for the organization or system to activate its maintenance mechanism which consists of programs and strategies designed to restore equilibrium or stability to steer the organization towards success. Singh (2013) explained that "organizational capabilities are developed and enacted through social and communicative processes" (p. 2). This important work includes seizing opportunities to grow, change, and adapt using strategies

anchored in participatory communication. Therefore: **P3b: Participatory Communication Facilitates Seizing Capability.**

Part of transforming involves having an effective approach to make decisions about the kind of strategies that would result in improvement in the performance of the organization. Achieving this means the systems leader can build a community of problem solvers by involving relevant members to decide on strategies needed to respond to complex and uncertain environmental conditions. Such an inclusive approach to solving the organization's problems empowers marginalized groups and individuals to make their voices heard in the organization. This promotes a sense of belongingness to the organization, and improves effort at work and the overall performance of the organization.

However, the environment that exists within the organization dictates the type of communication that ensues among the members. An organization that practices participatory communication significantly influences the efforts of the members towards productivity (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). These include an open communication climate that provides a free environment for honest discussions about issues confronting the organization (Guseley, 1992). Some studies suggest that the interactive processes involved in the development of organization contribute to the potential effects on restructuring, reorganizing, and revitalizing the basic elements of organization (Drier et al., 2019). Other studies have shown that the communication climate serves as a guide to individual members to make decisions and define their behavior within the organization (Guseley, 1992). Such behaviors and decisions by employees enable them to commit themselves to work towards achieving the vision of the organization, pursue available opportunities, and support other colleagues of the organization through creative contributions to innovative ideas that improve the performance of the organization.

A negative communication climate would undermine the decisions and strategies proposed by the organizational members. Therefore, a strong positive communication climate will lead to supportive managerial practices and organizational strategies that would transform the existing capabilities to improve performance (Ahsanul, 2013). A positive and participatory communication climate sets the tone of the relationship that exists among employees and the leadership. Such relations have the potential to define and create the culture of the organization that could include trust among members listening and welcoming dissenting views from members. These characteristics are integral to planning and enhancing transforming capabilities in organization and community settings. Participatory communication transforms organizational capabilities because of the processes that generate dialogue and collaboration, which leads to empowerment and expression of voice (Pettit et al., 2009). This involves softening power relations and promoting social change from the bottom up. This transformative approach of participatory communication is explicitly achieved through communication tools. Also, the process of participatory communication is used to facilitate continual exchanges between different stakeholders to define development concerns and address common problems or goals (Pettit et al., 2009). Such inclusive communication facilitates individual and community ownership of the entire process, enabling members and stakeholders to commit fully to achieving the goals and enhancing dynamic capabilities.

The dialogue that ensues in participatory communication leads to developing strategies that transform the organization's existing capabilities to improve performance (Dragon, 2009). Participatory communication is directly linked to the transformative capacity because the processes create opportunities for the organization to address the issues voiced by the stakeholders and incorporate expert knowledge and ideas to change their operations and

activities to improve performance. Therefore: **P3c: Participatory Communication Facilitates Transforming Capability.**

Several studies conducted by scholars show that systems theory, which is the basis of the dynamic capability framework, shares similar characteristics and processes identified in the core competencies of systems leadership and the methods through which participatory communication is implemented (Drier et al., 2019, Frank, 2002; Teece et al., 1994, 1997; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2008, 2009). Therefore, it is safe to suggest that both SL and PC are strategies that facilitate and enhance the capabilities of sensing, seizing, and transforming on the framework. Similarly, previous research has already established the importance of the relationship between dynamic capabilities and organizational performance. Following that, it is logical to argue that enhanced dynamic capabilities lead to improved performance. Since the last model component in Figure 6.1 shows that the relationship and the final proposition are performance-focused, I briefly share two practice-based research studies demonstrating such linkages.

Cooper et al. (2010) conducted a review of a development program initiated by UNICEF to address the "recognized need to find culturally sensitive ways to address girls' empowerment in regions where ingrained gender inequalities deeply limit their life opportunities and rights" (p. 12). The program was launched in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Nepal to portray "the dangers of early marriage, and the advantages of allowing girls to finish school, and other positive insights from which families and communities can learn" (p. 12). The participatory communication strategy used was a diffusion-oriented approach that used a multimedia entertainment-education campaign "involving focus group discussions, interviews, workshops, and meetings with people involved in or affected by the initiative" (p. 13). Cooper et al. (2010) reported that the results of the program "reaffirmed the ability of the initiative to communicate

and influence perceptions about girls' rights" (p. 13). The program created extensive awareness

of problems in the communities and improved the skills and practices of local health

practitioners that "worked were reported across and within the four countries" (Cooper et al.,

2010, p. 13). The program's researchers concluded that "contextual factors, such as poverty or

local customs and beliefs, were found to play a major role in influencing the extent of

achievement" (Cooper et al., 2010, p. 13).

The example above shows that as part of a system, communication requires

interrelationships among various groups or departments to form a whole network to solve

common issues in a communities or organizations (Craig, 2006; Dorsey, 1957). The strategy of

interviewing community members and conducting focus groups about the culture of early

marriage enhanced organizational sensing of the problem they wanted to solve. After gathering

information about the issue, UNICEF enhanced the seizing capability by taking the attention they

brought to the matter among the local people. This enabled the organization to target the root

causes of the problem, such as the parents of the girls who offered them up for early marriages

and the community members who perpetrated the act. UNICEF was able to educate them about

the consequences or harm on the girls and explained the benefit they would achieve if they were

allowed to complete their education. As such, the organization enhanced the transforming

capability by changing the minds of the local community members towards early marriages for

young girls and reduced the practice in the local communities.

Williamson (2016) conducted a case study on Chinese companies in China and found that

innovation in most companies was growing at a rapid pace based on feedback received from

customers and other users of their products. Williamson (2016) cited an example of how

Mindray Medical International Ltd., which is one of the largest makers of medical equipment in

China, improved on its Beneheart R3 electrocardiograph machine in just 18 months by

addressing the requests, concerns, and feedback received from doctors and medical personnel at

the hospitals where the product was used. He explained that the:

> "Doctors asked for some additional functions, such as the capability to monitor oxygen levels in a patient's hemoglobin and log electrical activity in the brain. Hospitals, for their part, wanted to use the machine for constant monitoring in intensive care wards rather than just for ad hoc testing. Working with their marketing and sales colleagues, Mindray's R&D team started to design new models that incorporated these functions almost immediately" (Williamson, 2016, p. 201)

Williamson (2016) noted that such feedback created a culture of innovation in the company that

enabled it to "routinely launches new products every six months, in stark contrast to the typical

two-year launch cycle of competitors" (p. 201).

Findings of the case study on Mindray Medical International Ltd. clearly suggest that that

the organization was able to enhance its sensing, seizing, and transforming capacity through

timely and thorough feedback from external stakeholders using a holistic perspective. These

changes are linked to sensing the threats posed by rivals, seizing on the opportunities based on

loopholes or lapses in rivals' operational strategies, and transforming the knowledge gathered

through various communication channels to develop strategies and policies to boost the

organization's activities which leads to improved performance. Accordingly: **P4: Enhanced**

dynamic capabilities are positively related to organizational performance.

Summary

While a few research studies have credited the contributions and behaviors of individual

agents, stakeholders, and managers in creating dynamic capability, the role of important concepts

such as systems leadership and participatory communication have been minimal or nonexistent.

How can organizations navigate the transformations they need? Do these involve micro-level

approaches to creating dynamic capabilities rather than relying on physical resources? This normative model shows that organizations can navigate environmental uncertainties and threats when the leadership can establish connections among the employees through a relationship developed from dialogue and shared goals to empower the innovative potential in the organization. Adapting to change in the environment can be possible when employees can think creatively and perform assigned tasks without fear or intimidation. Such an opportunity to act on their discretion creates capabilities through increased effort and performance at work. It allows the employees to support the goals and strategies developed with the leadership to achieve higher performance.

The propositions developed in this study have established that systems leadership and participatory communication integration enhances dynamic capabilities. The study has provided several instances of theory and research where human interactions among agents have produced innovations, improved the wellbeing of employees, increased profits for the organization, and better performance. Therefore, my integrated model explains dynamic capabilities resulting from the capacity of systems leadership and coordination of relationships developed among employees and stakeholders through participatory communication to increase profit margins and improve performance. The proposed model provides a new approach to visualize, understand, and theorize how dynamic capabilities can be enhanced as resources that sustain organizations and enable a firm's competitive advantage over rivals.

CHAPTER VII: MODEL APPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study argues that the core competencies of systems leadership coupled with participatory communication processes to create and enhance dynamic capabilities improve organizational performance. The model proposed by this study is based on the integration of systems leadership and participatory communication as facilitators that create dynamic capabilities in organizations. This chapter will utilize previous case studies to demonstrate the relevance and application of the model developed by this study and its propositions. Given my positionality and professional interests, I also relate the findings of this work to developing country contexts. The chapter will also rediscuss the relevance of this model in addressing race relations and polarization in the U.S. and beyond and offer insights from this theoretical work that may be pertinent to resolving such issues. The chapter concludes by offering some brief comments on leadership development implications based on the findings of this research and provides some future research directions on the concepts explored in this study.

Cases Demonstrating Model Application

To demonstrate the applications of the framework, I sampled two organizations that failed to grow and improve performance because of the absence of these capabilities. I cite case studies from other research work that show the success of integrating systems leadership and participatory strategies to enhance the capabilities of the organizations. I conclude with suggestions on how this research can be applied to developing countries. I begin with two organizational cases that demonstrate model application in terms of missed opportunities to work with SL and PC to enhance DCs. That is followed by drawing on case examples where organizations drew upon the main theoretical arguments in this study and employed various elements of SL and PC to strengthen DCs and eventually organizational performance.

RadioShack

Wendenheimer (2018) wrote that RadioShack existed for almost a century before meeting its downfall in 2008, which led to the company filing for bankruptcy and closing its stores. Although many problems contributed to the company's demise, one factor that caused the company to lose profit and closeout involved its inability to seize the market. Wendenheimer (2018) noted that when electronic sales started happening online, RadioShack decided to stay with its old strategy of having in-person sales in their store rather than developing an online sales outlet or e-Commerce. This led to reduced profit margins because many customers preferred online purchases to going into stores. The loss of revenue caused RadioShack to default on loans contracted from creditors. The company eventually filed for bankruptcy and closed its stores. In creating dynamic capability, the company was not able to sense the threats posed by online sales in the business environment, so management was not able to transform existing strategies to match the demands on the market. In addition, the management or leadership of RadioShack missed out on the opportunity to use intelligent strategies to manage the threat. In a scenario where systems leadership competencies are used, the complexities of the problem amidst the booming online sales of electronic products could have been managed by a leadership with a system thinking orientation.

The systems leadership could have seized on the market opportunities for RadioShack and coordinated and collaborated with expert knowledge and experienced individuals to identify strategies that could stop the company from losing sales to online stores and make it more competitive against its rivals. For organizations such as RadioShack, part of the process involves forming a collaborative response by aligning the elements and resources in the company to match the threats posed by ecommerce to the old existing sales methods. Such an approach

would include a combination of participatory communication processes where the leader would

facilitate an inclusive decision-making process involving relevant stakeholders and employees to

develop strategies to meet the challenges. This approach may promote the understanding of the

structures and dynamics of the complex systems in the market environment to improve

sustainability. This means that competent leadership engages in participatory communication

activities to effectively diagnose problems and find solutions to resolve them using knowledge

gathered from all decision-making processes. Studies have shown that when leadership combines

a participatory approach to managing the organization, it leads to information processing and

problem-solving strategies (Brem & Viardot, 2017; Mefalopulos, 2008; Tufte & Mefalopulos,

2009). In this case example, it seemed RadioShack was unable to implement the relevant

dynamic capabilities because it did not practice systems leadership and participatory processes.

Clinton Foundation

One of the challenges facing the leadership of nonprofit organizations is how to develop

good strategies and implement them effectively to improve organizational performance. Hailey

(2006) noted that organizational leaders face extraordinary challenges in running daily

operations and ensuring improved performance. Typical problems faced by nonprofit

organizations include facilitating organizational growth, a steady flow of revenue to fund

activities, and maintaining a strong base of fundraising. Other issues include high turnover of

staff, recruiting volunteers, and retaining memberships of the organizations (WIPFLI, 2021).

Some of these problems were identified in a report concerning the activities of the Clinton

Foundation, a nonprofit organization based in the U.S. The report documents the failures of the

organization in its effort to coordinate with other agencies to help hurricane victims in Haiti in

2010. The proposed model developed by this normative study will be used to demonstrate how some of the concerns raised in the report could have been avoided.

In a report posted in the *Atlanta Black Star*, David Love (2018) stated that in January 2010, the country of Haiti was hit by an earthquake which killed an estimated 220,000 people and displaced many others. Love (2018) reported that the Clinton Foundation led an effort to collect donations of various logistics and funds to help the Caribbean nation. Several pledges of donations were made by various international organizations to the tune of about 13.3 billion dollars for the reconstruction of Haiti. The effort was led by Former President Bill Clinton, who was the UN Special Envoy to Haiti, and whose organization coordinated the operation for the recovery in Haiti. President Bill Clinton, along with the Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive, were chairman and co-chairman respectively and led the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC). Love (2018) reported that the Clinton Foundation led the effort and collected funds/donations from January 2010 through June 2012 from various sources. He explained that:

> $9.04 billion in international funding was raised including $3.04 billion from individuals and companies, and $6.04 billion from bilateral and multilateral donors. Of the $6.04 billion, 9.6 percent, or $580 million went to the Haitian government, while 0.6 percent or $36.2 million went to local Haitian organizations. The lion's share, 89.8 percent of $5.4 billion went to non-Haitian organizations, including private contractors, international NGOs, and military and civilian agencies of donor countries, including the Pentagon, which charged the State Department hundreds of millions of dollars. (Love, 2018, p. 1)

Several news organizations, including the *Huffington Post* and *The Nation*, reported certain failures in the organization's efforts to collect funds to assist the people of Haiti. Love (2018) reported that the failure of the nonprofit organization included the fact that "the hurricane created an opportunity for the Clinton Foundation and its allies to raise considerable resources, but with little accounting of these funds" (Love, 2018, p. 2). Others complained that "the Clinton

Foundation solicited massive sums to 'fight HIV/AIDS' but did not check carefully enough to

ensure that these drugs were supplied in intact form, and neither adulterated nor watered-down"

(Love, 2018, p. 1). The report also revealed that classroom trailers used by the foundation to

coordinate resources and operations in Haiti were not structurally safe.

It is noteworthy that there is no evidence gathered from the failures that President Clinton

and Haiti's president were able to fulfill the mission. Reasons for this could be that both men

lacked an understanding of the complex systems that would shape and direct the recovery efforts

in Haiti. Being an American, Bill Clinton did not understand the organizational problems and the

complex environment in Haiti, likewise the Haitian president did not have the skill of systems

leadership to have insight into how to effectively manage and direct the massive donations meant

for his people (Love, 2018). Furthermore, although there were many smaller nonprofit agencies

operating in Haiti at that time, the Clinton Foundation did not form strong working alliances with

them to help navigate the complex organizational and contextual terrain in Haiti. Therefore, my

proposed model which incorporates the core competency of a systems leadership in collaboration

with participatory communication would be a better way to manage such situations. The model

provides a guide to form a coalition of leadership with community members and experts to help

formulate strategies that would solve such problems and mitigate uncertainties in the

environment. Such skills and competencies include discerning thinking and strategizing, and

prioritizing tasks to maximize and improve performance. Other competencies also include

diversity inclusion in organizational decisions and the ability to create a sense of community

among stakeholders (Driere et al., 2019). Forming a coalition with various agencies and expertise

located in Haiti would involve engaging in participatory communication which would mean

having an inclusive decision-making process that would integrate new ideas borne by the

members of the Haitian organizations and other community members who know the system in which they live. This would have improved the foundation's efforts and performance, and the lives of the people affected by the hurricane.

Another problem that emerged from the Clinton Foundation's recovery effort was the anger created among the various communities in Haiti who became increasingly frustrated at the failure to assist them. Love (2018) reported that Haitian Americans in the U.S. demonstrated outside the Clinton Foundation "to show their anger and disapproval of how the organization handled the massive funds it collected and not using it to benefit the people" (p. 2). However, based on my proposed model, a systems leadership would use the tactics of coalition building to involve the various communities in the recovery effort and solicit their ideas and guidance on how to distribute the resources received from donors. Such a participatory decision-making effort would mitigate any form of exclusion by involving marginalized communities in the process of recovery effort. This would also facilitate a better understanding of the structural complexities in Haiti and promote a sense of ownership of the programs among the citizens. The foundation would influence the community's response by creating strategies to manage environmental uncertainties and changes. Such an approach would improve organizational and community development and increase individual capabilities. Consequently, other outcomes may include improved life skills and competencies among organizational leaders and employees. In addition, such leadership roles would increase participation in the recovery effort and enhance the overall results of the Clinton Foundation and sustain their development initiatives.

The problem continued with the Clinton Foundation when it had to refute the allegations of mishandling of funds and explain they did not have control over all the funds donated. The

foundation also said that it distributed funds to "aid groups on the ground, and that the organization had records of which groups received the funds" (Love, 2018, p. 2). Critics faulted the organization for pursuing a "badly flawed vision of prosperity for Haiti focused on a model of foreign investment rather than the stated goal of relieving Haitians from poverty and preventing future refugee crises" (Love, 2018, p. 2). It is clear the foundation did not align its resources and expertise with the resources in Haiti. As such, the transforming capability would be facilitated by my model when the systems leadership engages the various aid agencies operating in Haiti, using the participatory communication approach to solicit their knowledge and expertise on the various reconstruction projects that were pursued by the organization.

Case Studies Demonstrating Evidence of Success in Model Applications

While the two case studies discussed above appear to have failed in achieving their goals, other studies have shown how communication and leadership have enhanced dynamic capabilities in some organizations. The two cases below explain how the integration of systems leadership and participatory communication results in enhanced dynamic capabilities and improved performance for the organizations.

Case Study on Building Organizational and Scientific Platforms in the Pharmaceutical Industry

In a review of case studies conducted by Easterby-Smith et al. (2009), the authors sampled various cases relating to the effect of dynamic capabilities in organizations. They found that dynamic capabilities could take multiple forms including knowledge development and transfer and decision-making capabilities. In another study, Narayanan et al. (2009) examined the process of dynamic capability development in a large pharmaceutical firm by interviewing various managers at different organizational levels. The researchers focused on three areas

identified in different studies as critical to the early stages of implementing new strategic initiatives. These include "the cognitive orientations of key personnel, managerial action undertaken within the firm, and the firm's internal and external contexts" (Narayanan et al., 2009, p. 1). The study found that managers undertake specific initiatives based on those cognitive orientations. Senior managers play a significant role in developing capabilities by imprinting the organization with their mental direction. The managers then orchestrate the various routines in the organization to achieve the capability.

The traits and capabilities identified among the managers in the pharmaceutical industry are comparable to the competency of a systems leader's ability to see the larger scheme of issues with production in the firm. Such cognitive capability is essential to building a shared understanding of the problem facing the pharmaceutical industry. Also, such knowledge of the problem enabled collaboration among team departments to steer the project to success (Narayan et al., 2009; Senge et al., 2015). Narayan et al. (2009) reported that "these replicable actions by senior management during the early stages of capability development can lead to the development of a capability that is not initially in the cognitive frames of lower-level employees" (p. S5).

The firm discovered the need to embed new organizational routines to deal with problems related to production. This strategy required compliance by different levels of the organization, including senior management, middle management, and project team levels. The plan also included incorporating organization-wide communication where a senior manager disseminated information to the rest of the production team. This aspect of informing and getting everyone on board with the organization's production plan is a capability synonymous with participatory communication. The leader generates and leads the conversation among team members. Senge et

al., (2009) explained that this process is known as shared reflection, which is a capability and "critical step in enabling groups of organizations and individuals to hear a point of view different from their own" (p. 28). A systems leadership lens may be used to confirm that this dynamic capability involves fostering reflections and generative conversations about the production.

Referencing this study in their work, Easterly-Smith et al. (2009) summarized the findings and explained that "dynamic capabilities are developed because top management demonstrated their willingness to reallocate resources to create capabilities" (p. 4). They explained that there were underlying processes and mechanisms in developing dynamic capabilities identified in the study. These include "knowledge-sharing methods, marketing knowledge development, and absorptive capacity processes" (pp. 4–5). These capabilities align with the competencies of systems leadership and the process of participatory communication as identified in this study. This study argues that participatory communication enhances knowledge sharing among stakeholders when finding solutions to an organizational problem. The importance of such a process is also collaborated by the systems leader who competently uses this tool to support the social construction of knowledge among the stakeholders to develop strategies and goals to meet organizational challenges in the environment (Islam et al., 2014). Islam et al. (2014) explained that "the inclusion of knowledge management as an organization's best practice is meant to ensure that collaboration is institutionalized, and that knowledge sharing occurs" (p. 70). Also, the leader's ability to facilitate knowledge sharing develops and improves the organization's capacity to market its products and services, improving performance. In addition, the systems leader's competence to persuade employees to transfer their knowledge helps generate new and influence decision-making process that involves all those who can help improve the organization's performance (Islam et al., 2014).

Another case study conducted by Chong et al. (2018) confirms the benefits of employing participatory approaches to engage community members and stakeholders in decision-making by developing strategies to solve problems. The study focused on how the city could reconstruct itself into an innovative and sustainable city. The authors explained that studies with such focus often integrate three components, including economic, environmental, and social issues (Chong et al., 2018). They explained that the social component includes participatory democracy with citizen engagement involving participatory communication processes, during which divergent views and suggestions are solicited in decision-making. The purpose of their study was to demonstrate a unified approach in the creation of dynamic capabilities through a two-fold focus. These include Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) designed to collect citizen feedback through various information channels to discover answers for various urban problems and provide knowledge resources that can improve the quality of urban life. Using the theory of dynamic capabilities, the authors sought to "expand the definition of a smart city to include the notion of an urban organization with dynamic capabilities, which operates within cycles of 'sense,' 'seize,' 'align,' and 'transform' functions" (Chong et al., 2018, p. 1). Specifically, the case study focused on the dynamic capabilities of sensing and seizing.

Chong et al. (2018) identified two problems related to issues with parking, streets, roads, pedestrians, and communication within the city and proposed solutions that distinctively fell into two broad categories, namely (a) city infrastructure and (b) technology-based solutions. The citizens provided various suggestions to solve the problems. Based on technology-based solutions, recommendations from the citizen's municipal government should apply different communication technology, including a website that provides one-account service facilitated for all city-governed services. The website's function would include informing the citizens of

necessary public notices and hearings, educational workshops, and resource distribution, including food and volunteer-work information. Other citizens proposed a smartphone application to communicate and cooperate on addressing the city's problems as a community. Some citizens pointed out that the city government should inform them about city projects and resource management. The citizens explained to provide adequate support to them, the municipal government must develop communication channels and integrate them with local initiatives and other elements of the community. Such suggestions point to incorporating participatory communication approaches, which facilitate the creation of dynamic capability for the city and its residents in this case (Chong et al., 2018; Teece, 2018).

These collaborations and coordination point to the citizens requesting a new kind of leadership that sees the problem more holistically and creatively in the city and develops strategies to solve them. Chong et al. (2018) noted that "the most important policy implications of the study is that governments should hold steadfast leadership to create an innovative city where the government and its citizens collaborate as genuine partners to resolve the city's problems" (p. S6). This would also mean empowering the citizens to take control of the problems and contribute towards its solutions. This finding supports one of the functions of participatory communication as a means of "empowering people to mobilize their capacities, be social actors, rather than passive subjects, manage the resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives" (Kumar et al., 2005, p. 3). Chong et al. (2018) added that the citizens also suggested the "municipal government eliminates legal and authoritative obstacles in leadership to help promote a citizen-centric atmosphere to accomplish a long-term smart city agenda" (p. 6). Again, these findings show the relevance of the integrated model I proposed in the larger societal and public sector domains. It also brings to life one of the many descriptions

and processes of participatory communication as "organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control" (Kumar et al., 2005, p. 3).

Limitations of this Normative Model

Some researchers argue that it is impossible to trade off some parts of a system with another to arrive at a utility for the whole (Barron, 2002, 2004). It is difficult to answer specific questions such as, what is the basis of the comparison between participatory communication and system leadership? Comparing the process of interaction to the skill and intellect of leading and making effective decisions in uncertain times is not something that can easily be described or quantified. There appears to be a level of difficulty in classifying and evaluating these utilities descriptively. Barron (2004) explained that the question is whether it is reasonable to assume, normatively, that outcomes or goods can be assessed as wholes even when their parts provide conflicting information (Barron, 2004, p. 9). While the judgments are complex, it all depends on the degree or extent to which good is derived from a process (Barron, 2002, 2004; Broome, 1997). This is because normative models are an idealization. Barron (2004) further explained that psychophysical scaling is built on such judgments, determining which process or path of achieving something produces the most outcomes. It is noteworthy that these judgments can also be guesses based on the perception of those who are assessing the situation. Therefore, an underlying order is wrapped in random error layers (Baron, 2002; Broome, 1997). For example, this study's assertion that an organization's performance will improve by combining systems leadership with participatory communication is a guess based on perceived outcomes. There could be a conflict in combining these two concepts, which could limit the study.

Another challenge to this normative model is the idea that judgment on utilities as part of a whole is not determinable because extraneous manipulations easily influence them. However, some researchers believe that manipulations do not challenge utility as a normative ideal (Baron, 2002). This means that classifying participatory communication and systems leadership as part of organizational operations and improved performance may not necessarily be valid. These assessments may be influenced by other disputable factors (Barron, 1997, 2002, 2004; Claeye & Jackson, 2011). As a result, this model can be viewed as a concept based on the perception formed about participatory communication processes and the core competencies shown by systems leadership (Baron, 2002). Finally, while I have offered multiple cases from different sectors to demonstrate the integrated model's relevance, it is essential to note that my assertions are based on a theoretical foundation.

The processes related to coordinating, communicating, leading, and guiding an organization's work enhances the organization's operations and improve performance (Servaes & Malikhao, 2005; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). Although these elements have been explored in previous research, they have not been included in the capabilities or strategies that create dynamic capabilities in organizations. This theory-building process will likely help establish the need to consider participatory communication and systems leadership as vital components of the dynamic capability framework and confirm the validity of these elements explored in future research. Therefore, despite some of the limitations noted here, this research would contribute to academic discipline, organizations' management, and other social systems such as community settings.

Discussion and Reflections: Implications for Leadership and Change

This study demonstrated that despite the extensive problems that organizations face, there is surprisingly little research about the benefits of combining systems leadership with participatory communication as means to improve performance in organizations. This study also found that the skills of employees, knowledge-sharing, organizational learning, and overall operations improve when the leadership uses systems thinking or superior thinking capacity to manage uncertainties in the environment. Also, organizations tend to enhance dynamic capabilities when employing a participatory communication approach to achieve the desired goal. The example of the enormous failure as chronicled on the activities of the Clinton Foundation shows the need to explore more effective ways to transform the mission and vision of organizations to improve performance. Although there is a general increase in literature on systems leadership, it is primarily abstract and seems impractical in organizations. Also, although the approaches to participatory communication have been tried in most development organizations and proven to be effective, there is only a slight improvement in how development activities are managed, initiated, and coordinated (Hailey & James, 2004). The lack of research to combine these two concepts is of concern mainly in massive development efforts such as the one undertaken by the Clinton Foundation in Haiti (Hailey & James, 2004). There is still the need for an intelligent and innovative leadership to facilitate the complex processes in organizations. In many ways, the building blocks of this theoretical dissertation and the eventual model articulation are anchored in for-profit and formal organizational settings. However, as shown in some of the arguments and case examples above, the main ideas of the proposed model and propositions are relevant to the social sector and more significant societal issues. In the

sections below, I have attempted to demonstrate the potential relevance of this research to some of the entrenched societal problems in the U.S. and developing country contexts.

General Implications Across Sectors

The absence of systems leadership to provide insight and facilitate understanding of the complexities and uncertainties faced by organizations has caused significant failures in a number of corporate and nonprofit organizations, resulting in abysmal performance. In some cases, the situation is made worse due to the lack of participatory approaches in the decision-making. These issues have led to the collapse of businesses and lack of impact of humanitarian relief, as evidenced in the failure of RadioShack and recovery effort in Haiti. While there is a growing body of research on leadership in the nonprofit sector, most of it is based on the experience of U.S. nonprofits, as was the case with the Clinton Foundation in Haiti (Allison, 2002; Love, 2018). These issues point to little or inadequate research that could change the leadership skills, roles, and strategies that could strengthen organizational practices. For example, in many developing countries in Africa, studies on effective leadership and communication research are not relevant to the different political and cultural contexts in which most organizations operate (Fowler et al., 2002; Smillie & Hailey, 2001). The future challenges include finding ways by which such organizations will develop a new generation of systems leadership that will have a broader understanding of tackling uncertainties in the environment. This includes forming a coalition of collaborative leadership with relevant stakeholders to mitigate the threats posed to the sustainability of organizations and improve performance.

Based on these reasons, there is a need to better understand the critical role leadership plays in societies and economies. It is also essential to identify individuals who have the competencies and capabilities of systems leadership to effectively manage and facilitate the

growth and performance of organizations. Such positive developments have promising

implications for the human resource strategies and help recruit and retain key staff for the next

generation of leadership—growth, and performance of organizations. Otherwise, organizations

will suffer from endemic strategic drift or be diminished by competing forces in the

environment, as happened to RadioShack (Smillie & Hailey, 2001). The reason is that insightful

leadership is vital to ensure stability and viability, especially when an organization is

experiencing rapid growth or operating in a volatile environment. The challenge for

organizational leaders, especially in places such as Africa, is to find different ways to combine

the competence of the leaders with practical communication approaches and processes that may

yield responsible growth and development.

Implications for Developing Countries and Social Sector

This study has gathered literature and case studies to show the importance of the

proposed framework to organizations that want to improve their output, maximize profit, and

maintain stability in the business environment. This section will apply the results and other

literature from this study to accountability, specifically in nonprofit organizations in countries

such as my native Ghana. As I explained, I observed very poor coordination and collaboration

between the leadership of nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve. It was

particularly puzzling to me how some NGOs operate and how they worked to satisfy the

expectations of their stakeholders. Perhaps I gained some insight into this issue through a

research study I conducted on the use of participatory communication approaches in NGOs in

Ghana. The study revealed that most nonprofit organizations' leadership does not understand the

potential benefits they can accrue if they involve the communities in planning their programs

(Sackey, 2014; Sackey et al., 2017).

Yet, anyone who attempts to speak against such practices is often victimized and ostracized from the organization, group, or community (Sackey, 2014; Sackey et al., 2015). Also, community members do not feel they have a stake in its operations and activities. The reason is that decisions in these organizations are made solely by the management and passed down to the subordinates and lower-level employees to implement them. However, the leadership did accept accountability for the failures of not meeting the communities' needs and abysmal performances. Such autocratic leadership practices fostered a culture of the lack of responsibility among the leadership of nonprofit organizations in Ghana (Sackey, 2014; Sackey et al., 2017). In the following sections, I explain accountability and how the leadership can practice this skill if they use my model to guide their organizations.

Accountability Problems in Charitable Organizations in Emerging Countries

Reports about corruption in aid agencies and unacceptable practices must lead to a demand for accountability in the operations of nonprofit organizations (Fowler & Malunga, 2010). Reports of mismanagement of resources in nonprofit organizations came to light when chief executive officers and directors of some nonprofits were found guilty of stealing funds for their personal use. Other reports detailed how workers used agency money to pay contractors fees for individual services (Eisenberg, 2002; Keating & Thrandardottir, 2016;). Large organizations such as the United Way were plagued by allegations of poor management and even criminal behavior (Ebrahim & Weisband, 2007; O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2008). Other organizations mentioned in the many scandals include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Foundation for New Era Philanthropy (Ebrahim & Weisband, 2007; O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2008). Such fraudulent activities uncovered in the nonprofit sector have led to increased scrutiny from the public, especially since these charitable

organizations proclaim visions that seem to amass support from the people. Their seeming

determination to mobilize resources to improve the lives of the disadvantaged in society

promotes a sense of reputation for NGOs in the various communities. It also appears to

legitimize their services and makes them stewards of the values they espouse. As such, NGOs

become accountable stewards to society (Fowler & Malunga, 2010). Therefore, if questions of

legitimacy and accountability of NGOs remain unanswered, they can damage the organization

and thwart the operational capacities of the organizations. How can the competencies of systems

leadership and the processes of participatory communication help manage such problems?

The concept of accountability refers to a responsibility to answer for performance

expectations. It refers to the process where individuals or institutions responsible for their actions

and the consequences or the impact of their actions (Fowler & Malunga, 2010). Edwards and

Hulme (1996) suggested that accountability is generally how individuals and organizations

report to a recognized authority/authority and are held responsible for their actions. Other studies

have explained accountability as to when actors have a right to control others through a set of

standards that determine whether they have fulfilled their responsibilities. Nonconformity to the

proposed standards then results in imposing sanctions (Grant & Keohane, 2005). The question is,

how do humanitarian NGOs define and institutionalize principles and standards for

accountability? Ebrahim (2010) identified four different types of accountabilities as related to

nongovernmental organizations. These include transparency, which collects information and

makes it available and accessible for public scrutiny. Accountability also means answerability or

justification that requires providing clear reasoning for actions and decisions. Accountability

means compliance with the rules and regulations by monitoring and evaluating procedures and

outcomes and transparent in reporting those findings. In addition, accountability means enforcing

sanctions for shortfalls in compliance, justification, or transparency (Ebrahim, 2010).

In countries such as Ghana, problematic behavior observed in some civil society

organizations raises issues of accountability even higher. For example, a report published on

June 20, 2013, explained how a section of the Ghanaian society sued two employees of a local

charitable organization called Millennium Movement Against Poverty in court for defrauding

needy unsuspecting members of the community which they are supposed to help (Ghana

Business News, 2013). In another development, an official of a local NGO called Sub Saharan

Aids Rescue, which caters to HIV/AIDS issues, was arraigned in court for fraud (Ghana News

Agency, 2004). Such incidents raise questions about the extent to which nonprofit agencies live

up to their professed values and whether mechanisms exist to enforce accountability in their

operations. There have been several innovative approaches to accountability over the past

decade, especially in combining participation with an evaluation that involves communities in

monitoring activities carried out by aid agencies. For example, the Grantee Perception Reports

developed by the Center for Effective Philanthropy in the United States seek anonymous

feedback from nonprofit grantees about their relationships with funders (Center for Effective

Philanthropy, 2004). However, one of the most critical challenges in management has been

implementing effective human development strategies to enhance organizational performance

and accountability. As explained earlier, one way to ensure accountability is to be transparent by

sharing information with the public for their scrutiny and feedback. In light of this, scholars have

noted that leadership practices that utilize participatory approaches ensure accountability

(Bryson, 2011; Pynes, 2008; Reiner, 2009). As noted above, Drier et al. (2019) found that one of

systems leadership competencies is acting with accountability. The authors explain that a "well-

managed multi-stakeholder governance structure is essential to ensure credibility and effectiveness. The governance structure should reflect the multi-stakeholder composition of the larger network" (p. 25). A systems leader can more significantly address mismanagement and lack of public trust by using participatory communication approaches to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure the judicious use of resources of the organization.

Another example to solve accountability problems in nonprofit organizations includes the Comparative Constituency Feedback tool, which was developed by Keystone Accountability in the United Kingdom. The program aims to give nonprofits or funders data on how the constituents view and evaluate their relationships and interventions (Bonbright et al., 2009). Such approaches may be implemented effectively by a systems leader who can initiate, coordinate, and collaborate with stakeholders to plan strategies and develop shared goals and strategies, which will guide the operations and initiatives of the organization and improve performance (Drier et al., 2019). Drier et al. (2019) explained that the system's leadership can ensure accountability through coordination and collaboration with stakeholders. They emphasized the essential role that a "Unified Accountability Framework" would play in the development of organizations. Such a role includes a "monitoring plan, peer review and annual report cards at global and country levels; as well as an Independent Accountability Panel that reviews progress annually" (p. 25).

Many studies have confirmed that when leaders incorporate participatory approaches in managing their organizations, it helps to improve organizational work outcomes, including job satisfaction which facilitates organizational performance (Bryson, 2011; Pynes, 2008; Reiner, 2009). The basic assumption of participatory communication in management is that sharing the responsibility of decision-making with other people will enhance the employees' work

performance and job satisfaction and increase dynamic capability in the organization (Bryson, 2011; Pynes, 2008). Having an inclusive work environment will eliminate corruption and promote accountability and boost confidence with the public. Combining participatory communication and system leadership capabilities will enable leaders with a myopic view of their functions to work within a complex, uncertain, and changing environment using prudent planning and strategies (Drier et al., 2019; Kim, 2002). In addition, a leader can build stronger teams and partnerships when the principles and processes of participatory communication are used. Collaborating helps to broaden the skills of individual members in a group and promotes practical work ethic while creating an environment where the members engage in free interactions where meaningful conversations promote resilience, belongingness, innovation, and collective impact. It also helps organizations collaborate with all employees to apply what they have learned to change projects that are important to the organization.

Another example, as revealed in a study in Brazil, shows that solutions to boost accountability in organizations also include innovations in participatory budgeting pioneered by the citizens. The processes and tools used in this effort include social audits and public hearings, including citizens' assessments of the work of NGOs and governments (Malena et al., 2004). Each of these approaches combines evaluation and performance assessment tools with processes of participation to enhance downward accountability. The primary role of participatory communication is to promote empowerment among stakeholders to achieve the mandates and priorities set for the development of importance, significantly, in developed countries such as Ghana (McPhail, 2009). Empowerment also means allying with other stakeholders to receive the relevant information to improve challenges and transaction costs in the organization while ensuring transparency. Drier et al. (2019) explained that relevant stakeholders "can define a

clear, transparent and trusted framework for addressing issues that are known and accessible to

all relevant stakeholders" (p. 24). They noted that such an alliance would help the needed

response to challenges that may arise. These include addressing human resources, finance

management, and "advisory support on effective governance and operational structures" (p.

5). These observations are in sync with the relevance of the model that this study has created.

When the leadership of an organization consults team members, individuals, or internal and

external stakeholders, it increases efforts on their role. It makes them focus on their tasks, which

improves outcomes. Such collaboration also increases engagement among the members to work

together. The process of discussing proposed goals and issues enables the organization's

stakeholders to learn about the projects' impact, including benefits and their role in achieving

such outcomes. When stakeholders have such clarity, it helps attract their undivided attention

and focus and reduces the risk of conflicts and waste, improving the organization's performance

and outcomes.

Potential Relevance of the Model to the Racial and Political Divide in America

The primary focus of this dissertation is on organizational performance. However, the

concept behind the newly developed model for this study may be applicable to efforts to find

solutions to address the recurring problems of race and political divisions in the U.S. Racial

divisions and political upheavals usually intensify whenever issues of race come up (McCoy,

1992, 1994). These problems stem from the emotional and psychological remnants of slavery in

American society. In addition, violence such as those associated with the 1992 Los Angeles

police beating of a Black man, Rodney King, and the acquittal of O.J. Simpson in the killing of

two Whites (McCoy, 1997), to the current rampant killing of black men and women such as

George Floyd and Breonna Taylor have worsened the perceived distrust between Black communities and the police.

McCoy (1997) explained that race also has a great impact on public life. "In the communities, racial and ethnic divisions prevent us from working together on pressing common concerns such as education, jobs, and crime" (McCoy, 1997, p. 3). As a result, there is a longstanding stalemate on those policy issues directly related to the country's history of race relations in the national public life, including racial and ethnic concerns and conflicts which underlie many other public issues (Bishop, 2009; Ochoa, 2017). The problems identified above show the need to have a deep engagement to examine race relations and the political divide. I argue that using the competencies associated with systems leadership and participatory communication approaches may allow seizing opportunities to transform our ways of engaging around racial and justice issues including policing of communities of color. These would also improve the relationship and the structures and institutions tasked with directly tackling such issues in society. The sections below explain some of the problems I have identified and how the concepts identified in this study can help manage such issues.

Political Divide

As explained in the previous section, America has become increasingly divided along political and ideological beliefs in recent years. Many authors argue that the issues that have divided the country since the 1980s are rooted in complex, structural, and longstanding problems in various communities (Bishop, 2008; Ochoa, 2017). These issues are contained in social systems where the inhabitants hold differences in views and values that are based on geographical segregation, educational structure, and the perception of belonging to the more extensive socio-economic advancement in the country (Bishop, 2008; Ochoa, 2017; Packer;

2013; Vance, 2018). The despair among the communities in the wake of these problems has resulted in diminished efforts "to find common ground and compromise, threatening the viability of our democracy" (Ochoa, 2017, p. 1).

Ochoa (2017) explained that:

> The 2016 presidential election campaign was a bellwether in the long-term deepening of partisan divides which tapped into a sense by many people, especially, the white working class, who have been made to understand that a there is a rigging system in place to deprive them of their fair share of the national cake. They believe that the political classes of both parties have turned their backs on them. (Ochoa, 2017, p. 1).

Ochoa (2017) noted that the emotional anguish of these communities is especially "evident in hollowed-out Rustbelt communities" that were affected by the opioid epidemic (p. 1), coupled with the disappearance of manufacturing/factory union jobs (Hochschild; 2016; Packer; 2013; Vance, 2018).

These problems became worse by the outcome of the 2016 elections, which resulted in justifiable fear on many Americans. Also, recent federal actions that affect communities, including executive orders on the issue of immigration and proposed changes to health care policies, are currently being challenged in the courts. Reports from the Congressional Budget Office (2017) show that the changes to the new health policies will reduce access to health care among minority communities. All of these divides have caused extreme polarization among some Americans whose basis of beliefs are based on ideology rather than evidence (Ochoa, 2017).

Build Interracial Understanding to Address Institutional Racism

The core principle of participatory communication is to have a free and open dialogue with stakeholders. Such exchanges involve the focus of action-reflection-action and horizontal

communication. This means that Blacks or people of color, Whites, and the police engage in dialogue and can have free and open conversations to voice their opinions about how these problems affect them and are heard by opposing parties. The systems leader's role in such contexts is to analyze deeply entrenched issues of race and polarization thoughtfully and holistically. As part of this approach, the systems-oriented leadership may create a conducive climate that is transparent and devoid of intimidation to allow members to commit to addressing the complex issues of race and political divide that is of mutual concern to them. Convenings and processes to work on difficult issues may also engineer a shared interest where members define and identify goals and commit to working together to solve them. The systems focused leadership should be committed to solving the deep issues and work to obtain the commitment of the stakeholders by facilitating an understanding of the underlying causes and grievances.

Using the core competencies of systems thinking, the leaders may look and learn about the problems using several lenses and perspectives. Such an approach helps to facilitate a racial understanding of the issues through horizontal communication and system mapping, where the stakeholders may jointly build a shared understanding of the components, actors, dynamics, and influences that create the racial and political tensions (Cooper et al., 2010; Drier et al., 2019; Tuft & Mefalopulos, 2009). The ability to meet, dialogue, and analyze the problems using holistic and participatory processes would result in acquiring knowledge and insight into the systemic problem of racism and polarization. While this work will be difficult and time consuming, it does have the potential to improve racial understanding, end prejudice, and build a dynamic capability of solid relationships among different races. Additionally, such processes and meetings may help facilitate open-mindedness among Black people and enable them to open up to Whites and other allies who reach out to them to make amends in the workplace or in the communities.

How Leaders May Improve Their Practice

Dreier et al. (2019) explained systems leadership as "comprising of skills and capacities that any individual or organization can use to catalyze, enable, and support the process of systems-level change" (p. 4). The authors identify the CLEAR Framework as one of the many ways to improve leadership and organizational performance. The CLEAR framework stands for convened and commit, look and learn, engage, and energize, act with accountability, and review and revise (Driere et al., 2019). Participatory communication involves engaging individuals, groups, and communities in a communicative environment that allows for diverse views, suggestions, and knowledge towards solutions to problems and issues (Cooper et al., 2010; Mefalopulos, 2008). Therefore, the systems leadership skills complement the principles of participatory communication, which enables the leadership to combine collaborative leadership approaches with coalition-building and insight into the system and mobilize innovative strategies and action across a diverse and decentralized network (Dreier et al., 2019). Thus, leaders may incorporate the systems leadership skills and participatory communication approach to improving their practice in various sectors.

Leaders can also improve their practice by convening and committing to engage critical stakeholders in a dialogue to address complex issues identified in the community or organizational settings (Drier et al., 2019). The leader may moderate the discussions and educate group members about the complexities of the problem confronting them. Through such learning, the leader can obtain the commitment of group members to identify and define shared interests and concerns that need to be solved, including ways to develop and strengthen their leadership practice.

Leaders can also improve their practice by looking and learning about where problems are prevalent through mapping processes (Dreier et al., 2019). Finally, through dialogue, the leader can build a shared understanding with the stakeholders about the components that form part of the whole system, the actors, dynamics, and the influencers that create the design and the consequent effects on the community or organization (Cooper et al., 2010; Dreier et al., 2019). These pathways help to generate new insights and ideas for how to tackle the wicked problems in the system.

Using the participatory communication approach, the systems leader can engage and energize stakeholders in an inclusive and continuous dialogue that would help build trust among the members and gain their commitment to solving the problems that have been identified. The approach would create innovative strategies and collaboration among the members and sustain their interest and commitment to tackling the issues. Also, the systems leader can inspire and empower members of the team to increase their effort towards progress while improving their performance. Empowering members means engaging diverse individuals and organizations and providing equal opportunities to contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise to the problem-solving process, which may positively influence the initiation and progress of a systems-change initiative. When leaders empower members of their group, it helps to improve their practice as it leads to the improvement of vision, shaping of strategy, and commitment of followers and stakeholders.

Improving the leadership practice also means acting with accountability on shared goals and principles that set the initiative's direction. This includes measuring and evaluating the progress of efforts being made to solve a problem (Dreier et al., 2019). Next, a leader develops a strategy or plan to coordinate the governance of the structures that oversee the initiatives for

change. This includes monitoring the progress through a "unified accountability framework, with oversight from a high-level steering group and coordination" (Dreier et al., p. 4) through a global management network.

Leadership practice can improve through a regular review of progress and adapting the strategies to address current challenges and goals. The leader can improve performance by adopting an agile, flexible, innovative, and learning-centered approach that allows evolution and experimentation. Although the CLEAR Framework appears quite structured, Dreier et al. (2019) explained that the systems change process is often ambiguous and "evolves, leading to moments of discovery or insight" (p. 4). Therefore, leaders would need constant practice and perseverance to be successful at solving the problems confronting their organizations and communities.

Leadership Development and Training in Line with Model Assertions

The competencies associated with systems leadership support the collective process of systems change. The skills facilitate innovation, insight, trust, and collaboration among relevant stakeholders which may result in transformation of individuals, organizations, communities, and larger social systems. The competencies of systems leadership combined with the processes of participatory communication, offer approaches and tools that may catalyze, enable, and accelerate multi-level, long-term transformation of social systems. As discussed above, these approaches enable leaders and various constituents to use the inclusive communication processes to tackle complex problems that have proved difficult to resolve through other means. When the skills of systems leadership and the processes of participatory communication are employed, they help to build an adaptive capacity and resilience in the systems, which may enable them to adequately respond to future challenges and improve outcomes in organization, communities, and the society. The training model (Figure 7.1) below illustrates how leaders can improve their

practice by using a combination of the competencies of systems leadership, and the approaches and principles of participatory communication to arrive at improved leadership practice model, which translates as dynamic capabilities to individuals, groups, communities and organizations (Cooper et al., 2010; Teece, 2017; Teece et al., 1997; Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009). However, development of these leadership competencies requires thoughtful and systematic leadership development investments. In the paragraphs below, I summarize emerging practices which robustly support such leadership development processes with a particular focus on systems leadership.

The best ways to develop systems leadership competencies include focusing on results, leading change, having interpersonal relations and communication skills, and possessing a personal capability to think beyond internal and external issues within an organization. Developing the competency to focus on results includes identifying critical issues addressed, establishing goals to solve the problem, and driving the results. This also means learning to lead to solving problems (Senge et al., 2015). Developing systems leadership competency includes learning how to lead change, which involves developing strategic perspectives relevant to the organization's needs and goals and supporting and leading the way for a change and, supporting and leading the way for a change to new methods of teaching and operating within an organization.

A solid ability to communicate effectively with employees and other stakeholders enhances an individual's skills and competency for systems leadership. Such interpersonal communication skills involve motivating others to contribute their knowledge and expertise to solving problems and encouraging team members to improve their skills and performance, while allowing them to develop their talents and abilities. Strong communication skills can enhance an

individual's competency to build relationships with relevant experts and other stakeholders and build a team by collaborating and incorporating other experts and stakeholders to find solutions to an organization's problems (Senge et al., 2015).

Furthermore, developing the competency of systems leadership includes having the personal capability such as technical knowledge or relevant education and professional expertise to identify and understand a problem or threat facing an organization and how it may be resolved. Such capacity includes developing at an individual level that "focuses on qualities such as self-awareness, emotional intelligence, learning to take the initiative, and creativity" (McGonagill & Reinelt, 2011, p. 62).

The competency of solving a problem includes learning how to analyze issues, innovate, or lead a team to solve them. Practicing self-development through professional training and learning from others could enhance the ability to achieve the competency of systems leadership (Senge et al., 2015). The competency to solid integrity and honesty could help to develop the competency of systems leadership. These include accepting responsibility for failures and the willingness to learn new ways of doing things while working with others to create change.

Future Research

The first step for future research is to take the study model and propositions from this theoretical dissertation and study them empirically. Using theoretical arguments and existing case studies, I have argued that the model and its anchoring concepts are relevant to multiple contexts. In that sense, future research should examine the relevance of the model to different sectors (public, private, nonprofit) and cross-cultural settings.

Also, some limitations were identified while reviewing literature for this study and offer promising areas for future research. Although the study argued that systems leadership combined

with participatory communication enhances dynamic capabilities in organizations, the link between the two concepts is nuanced. With all forms of leadership, there is an element of communication between the leader, team members, and other stakeholders. As noted in this study, the advantages of the integration are that the combination of SL and PC creates strategic plans for solutions to problems, opens avenues for diverse contributions to finding solutions to resolve issues, provides a positive and practical approach to leadership, and enhances dynamic capabilities. Despite these advantages, resolving a conflict between the systems leadership approach and participatory communication processes while improving organizational performance remains.

The very nature of systems leadership in practical terms is very challenging to determine. Can an individual learn the competencies and develop the superior thinking capacity of a systems leadership? Future research could study how long it would take for an individual to acquire the overly diverse cognition associated with systems leadership competencies. More investigation is needed to clarify what constitutes systems leadership instead of the various types of leadership traits, most of which share similar characteristics with systems leadership.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that organizational change and improved performance are more effective when coordinated by systems that use participatory communication processes. The study model argues that systems leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing dynamic capabilities through purposeful interaction with relevant stakeholders, for example, through regular meetings and consultations with the expertise and adopting collective decisions that members share to improve organizational performance.

Another attention worth pointing out is the level and scope at which the model developed by this study can be applied to an organization. While most leadership styles are top-down and some attempt to bottom-up, the model developed by this study tends to blend the two forms of leadership. This may be possible because the integration of SL and PC allows the systems leader to lead the organization by identifying the problems, initiating solutions, and delegating functions or roles to those with relevant expertise to tackle the issues. On the other hand, integrating participatory processes such as collaborating with relevant stakeholders to develop strategies, solve problems, and make decisions could also be described as a bottom-up approach to leadership as described in some case studies used in this work.

As explored in this study, the combination of SL and PC has created, extended, and modified how organizational resources and dynamic capabilities are enhanced. Integrating the concepts of SL and PC as a model gives rise to clear and significant implications for organizational practice, including how leaders can address complex issues in unstable environments. Organizations seeking to improve performance should ensure that systems leadership is put in place and combined with participatory communication processes to enhance their resources and dynamic capabilities. In addition, the study demonstrated the potential relevance of its assertions and ideas to the social sector, including some of the current issues that are polarizing societies in the U.S. and elsewhere.

In summary, the study has cross-fertilized systems leadership, participatory communication, and dynamic capability literature and suggested that SL and PC can serve as facilitators of dynamic capabilities leading to improved performance and outcomes.

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Appendix A: Letter for Permission to Use Copyright Material

Permission To Use Copyright Material

Inbox

Fri, Jun 25, 4:26 PM (9 days ago)

to

Corporate Responsibility Initiative

Harvard Kennedy School
79 John F. Kennedy Street Cambridge,
MA 02138 USA

June 25, 2021

To Whom It May Concern

Dear Program Coordinator,

I am a graduate student at Antioch University and currently completing my dissertation. I used some of the information from your published work from 2019 titled "Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change," authored by Lisa Dreier, David Nabarro, and Jane Nelson. I am asking for permission to use a slightly adapted version of your original figure on the *"key elements of systems leadership,"* with copyright belonging to Alison Beanland.

Let me know if I have contacted the copyright holder. If not, please provide me with the contact information of the person who owns the copyright to published work. The figure can be found on pages 4 and 13 of the attached versions of your published work.

I have attached my adapted version of the figure which will appear in my dissertation to this email. I have also included information on the links where my dissertation can be found when completed.

I look forward to hearing from you soon so I can complete my dissertation in time.

Sincerely,

Esther Sackey

Appendix B: Permission Received from Coauthor to Use Copyright Material

Nelson, Jane   Mon, Jun 28, 1:10 PM (6 days ago)

to
Hello Esther

Thanks for your email. I am one of the co-authors of this report and am also copying Lisa Dreier the lead author. We are pleased to know you found the report useful for your dissertation. The copyright belongs to: *The Corporate Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.* As such, please source the adapted diagram to the three co-authors, providing the title of the report and then the copyright details.

We would also be grateful if you could share a copy of the final publication. Good luck with this and all your studies – fantastic to see the growing interest in the topic of systems leadership.
Best wishes
Jane

Attachments area

Appendix C: Reply to Coauthor for Permitting Use of Copyright

Mon, Jun 28, 1:43 PM (6 days ago)

Esther Sackey

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your reply to my email. I am grateful that CIR and the authors of the published work have agreed to permit me to use the adapted figure. I will honor your request to cite the source as suggested and also share my work with your team when completed.

I want to clarify with you that there can be no time limit to using the adapted figure as it may be used in other academic and professional work. I have copied my school's Faculty Research Librarian, Stephen Shaw on this email. Just in case you have further questions and clarifications.

Sincerely,

Esther