Dissertations

Winter 12-18-2019

Exemplary Human Resources Administrators Leading Through Storytelling

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Recommended Citation

Exemplary Human Resources Administrators Leading Through Storytelling

A Dissertation by

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Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

December 2019

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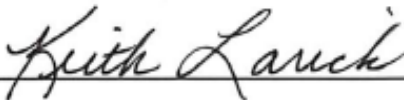
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December 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After nearly two and a half years of hard work, long weekends, and many homework filled vacations, it is exciting to see my educational journey come to a culmination. There have been many successes and learning opportunities along the way and I am honored to acknowledge those who have helped and supported me.

Now my everlasting gratitude to…

…my husband, Steve. You have been supportive and encouraging through this entire journey. Adding humor when I was still in my pajamas on a Saturday afternoon because I had been working on "homework" all day. Your love, support, and meals you prepared and brought to my "office" made all the difference in the world. I couldn't have done it without you honey! I love you.

…my boys, Jason and Brendan. Since both of you were born, you have been my light and a source of love, laughter, and joy. Jason, your quick wit saying, "You're not done yet?" always made me laugh. I loved when you would stand in the doorway of my office or plop down in the chair to talk. I cherished those much-needed study breaks for time with you. Brendan, I proudly watched you graduate from the Air Force Basic Training 3 days after I finished my first Immersion in the doctoral program. Since you have only been home for two quick visits during my studies, your encouragement from afar has been supportive love just the same. The texts of "Do I call you Dr. Momma yet?" made me smile and kept pushing me along as you served our country.

…my family and friends for their encouragement and support along the way. Having you inquire, ask details, and even read parts of my paper have been priceless. Your inquiries served as a source of strength for me to keep plugging away.

…Lastly, my thematic team, Nick Damico and Tricia Kassab. The webinars, almost daily group texts, and phone calls to support each other have been one of my greatest gains. Our thematic team rocked it and I couldn't imagine having gone through our journey on storytelling with anyone else. I love you both and we will forever be bonded.

ABSTRACT

Exemplary Human Resources Administrators Leading through Storytelling

by Colleen Slattery

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's (2011) model. In addition, it was the purpose to understand how they use storytelling to create transformational change. Denning's *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* highlights eight storytelling narrative patterns: to ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organizations' brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision.

Methodology: This phenomenological qualitative study described the lived experiences of exemplary human resources administrators in Northern California. The researcher was part of a thematic research team of 3 peer researchers and 2 faculty advisors. Through purposeful sampling, the researcher selected 10 exemplary human resources administrators who met at least 4 of 6 criteria identifying a leader as exemplary. The collection of data included face-to-face semistructured interviews. The researcher conducted observations and gathered artifacts for data triangulation. The data were coded, and emergent themes were identified.

Findings: Student stories are vital to spark action and build brand. Stories getting to know people helps build trust. Stories around relationships fosters collaboration. Stories during negotiations can share knowledge. Stories told with social media and union leadership can neutralize rumor. Sharing stories about the mission and students shares

the vision and assists with recruitment. Sharing stories getting to know people, student

stories, and those shared with union leadership helps create transformational change.

Conclusions: Human resources administrators who share student stories will evoke

emotion that engages stakeholders, build relationships, and be more successful in

communicating the organization's vision.   They will be more successful in building trust

with union leadership in the negotiations process.

Recommendations: It is recommended that a phenomenological study be done to

explore experiences of female human resources administrators and how they use stories,

a multiple-case study to identify storytelling strategies that county office human

resources administrators use to develop organizational culture, a mixed-methods study to

identify storytelling strategies that human resources administrators use to build trust in

labor relations, and a Delphi study to identify storytelling strategies used within social

media.

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PREFACE

Following discussions and considerations regarding the opportunity to study Denning's (2011) organizational storytelling in multiple types of organizations, two faculty advisors and three doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring the ways exemplary leaders practice organizational storytelling using eight narrative patterns of ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organizations' brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision identified by author Stephen Denning in *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* (2011). This resulted in a thematic study conducted by a peer research team of three doctoral students.

This phenomenological research was designed with a focus on how exemplary leaders use storytelling in leading and creating transformational change in their organizations. Exemplary leaders were selected by the team from various public, profit, and nonprofit organizations to examine the leadership use of storytelling across a number of professional fields. Each researcher interviewed ten exemplary leaders to describe how they lead their organization through storytelling using each of the eight narrative patterns outlined in *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling* (Denning, 2011). To ensure thematic consistency, the team cocreated the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, interview protocol, interview questions, and study procedures. It was agreed upon by the team that for the purpose of increased validity, data collection would involve method triangulation and would include interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researchers* is used to refer to the team of researchers who conducted this thematic study. The thematic team consisted of the

following doctoral students and peer researchers and their respective fields of study: Nick

Damico, elementary school principals; Tricia Kassab, chief nurse executives; and Colleen

Slattery, human resources administrators.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Long before the first formal business was established . . . the six most powerful

words in any language were "Let me tell you a story."

—Mathews and Wacker, *What's Your Story*

Denning (2011) stated that there are basic elements and patterns for storytelling in

organizations used by leaders to create transformational change. In organizations,

storytelling can assist the relationships among both internal and external stakeholders

(Boje, 1991). The simple act of a carefully crafted story can help one connect with the

audience and achieve results (Nossel, 2018). Stories that connect with stakeholders in an

organization can result in many different kinds of transformational change initiatives

moving teams in a unified direction and generating a sense of ownership and widespread

responsibility among stakeholders (Gherardi, Cozza, & Poggio, 2018).

Storytelling has existed for centuries and has been used by many different cultures

(Kupers, 2013). The history of storytelling, literacy, and orality involves moving oral

expression to writing through stories (Soukup, 2012). Historically, oratorical literacy was

waning in the late 1880s and early 1900s when there was a movement from oratorical to

silent reading. This evolution of oral literacy to writing was superseding the old form of

rhetorical public speaking (Ong, 1979). In communication theory and the early research

of rhetoric, Walter Ong's (1979) focus was on seeing diagrams, objects, and symbols in

print to arrive at knowledge. Orality and literacy happens when communication develops

from the oral stage into a stage of print and read orally by either listening or reading

(Soukup, 2012). Gaining the attention of the audience happens when an engaging story is

told and the performance occurs of storytelling in oral tradition.

Smith (2012) stated that "today, many of the most successful organizations on the planet intentionally use storytelling as a key leadership tool" (p. 3). These stories can help create a sense of urgency with the stakeholders of the organization. Research has been conducted on contemporary storytelling and the use of these narratives by leadership in organizations to understand and create sensemaking of the culture of the organization, including the armed forces (Näslund & Pemer, 2012). By using stories in organizations, leaders can help create, change, and sustain the desired culture.

Boje (1991) asserted that successful organizations function as storytelling systems. The cueing of a story serves as a method of interpretation of the values, vison, and culture of the organization. This also calls for a plan of action (Colville, Brown, & Pye, 2012). Stories of an organization are driven not only by the reflections of the company but also by organizational meaning and realities that define the culture. Storytelling can also help people understand the patterns of the culture within the organization (Näslund & Pemer, 2012). By understanding the cultural patterns, leaders can recognize issues and concerns that support informed decision-making and management of the change process. With these patterns, leaders can understand the concerns so that informed decisions can be made to manage change (O'Toole, Talbot, & Fidock, 2008). With a foundational understanding of these patterns, leaders can guide stakeholders through the change initiatives needed. A leader must recognize supports and barriers to change and use narrative to address the challenges to successfully lead the change process. According to Arnaud, Mills, and Legrand (2016), "A change initiator must take corrective narrative action to address the challenges posed to the change process" (p. 117). The genre of storytelling for change is a blend of telling a narrative of

the past and living stories of the present. Through the telling of stories, the leader takes the audience or listener through a transformation. This conversion of the future is blended with the preservation of the historical in narrative retrospect (Boje, 2012).

Identifying the history of storytelling, oral traditions, and storytelling in culture enabled the researcher to understand the use of narratives and how it has impacted people for thousands of years. With the universal attraction of stories, people and cultures are drawn in (Roche & Sadowsky, 2003). Developing a deeper understanding of storytelling can assist leaders in bringing more strategic value to the organization by taking employees and the communities they serve on a pathway to success. Through stories, the leaders provide direction and points of relevance to focus employees and various stakeholders on the matters that drive action and positive change in the organization (O'Toole et al., 2008). With a deeper understanding of the role of storytelling, leaders will be more effective in supporting the success of the entire organization.

Background

Storytelling and Leadership

Leaders set the tone of organizational cultures. Sturt and Nordstrom (2015) asserted that stories used by leaders can impact many areas of culture such as inclusion, purpose, engagement, the employee experience, and overall well-being. Organizational cultures can be positively or adversely affected by stories, so the leaders in these organizations need to choose their words carefully. These words represent the culture of the entire organization (Baldoni, 2003). When managers leverage the trust they have with their employees, they can serve as motivational storytellers in the organization (Auvinen, Lämsä, Sintonen, & Takala, 2013). Recently, the use of stories by leaders in

organizations has been an area of focus. While all leaders tell stories, both intentionally and nonintentionally, storytelling is now recognized as a way to communicate and implement change within the organization (Auvinen, Lämsä, et al., 2013).

History and Evolution of Storytelling

Kupers (2013) asserted that storytelling has been around for centuries and used by many different kinds of people and cultures. Historically, literacy and orality involves moving oral expression to writing (Soukup, 2012). The world evolved from oratorical expression in art and speaking to putting these expressions into writing. With this transition, writing was superseding the old form of rhetorical public speaking (Ong, 1979).

In communication theory and the early research of rhetoric, Walter Ong's (1979) focus was on seeing diagrams, objects, and symbols in print to arrive at knowledge. Orality and literacy happens when communication develops from the oral stage into a stage of print (Soukup, 2012). The art of entertainment occurs when the performer reads the script and orally performs the story to tell a message. Gaining the attention of the audience happens when an engaging story is told and the performance occurs of storytelling in oral tradition. In everyday life, these stories can be referred to as "supper table stories" (Lord, 2014, p. 121).

A story can be comic, tragic, epic, or romantic, and there is usually a protagonist, a villain, and a predicament in the story line (Collins & Rainwater, 2005). The story usually has a hook to elicit emotional responses from the audience (Bublitz et al., 2016). In the story, the character is described through narratives with aspirations, motivations, difficulties, and labors that the character faces over time (Hutchens, 2015).

The best stories demand action. Hutchens (2015) stated that the "more dramatic elements of the story will flood your body and elevate your heart rate with the flight-or-fight hormone cortisol, and that the satisfying or redemptive resolution to the story will flush your nervous system with pleasing oxytocin" (p. 5). By the telling of personal narratives, the storyteller can cause the audience to relate to him or her, and emotional energy is built (Ruebottom & Auster, 2018). The art of music is also a form of storytelling tying into emotions. Developing a story and songwriting experience integrated into music moves and motivates the audience or listener (Hutchens, 2015).

Theoretical Foundations

There are a number of theoretical foundations based on the topic of storytelling. While there are multiple theories, several focus on leadership and learning that connect through stories. These theories include great man, social learning, complexity, multiple intelligences, transformational leadership, and communication theories. While these theories involve varied assertions, the shared connection is with learning and leadership told via narratives.

Spector (2016) asserted that in early readings, the great man theory was discovered and discussed, but he revisited the theory in modern-day research. With the great man theory, the concept is that the leader, or CEO, is the crux of all of the movement (Spector, 2016). This theory has been challenged but is still referred to as the basis of all other leadership foundations (Bandura, 1971). It is important to consider the great man theory to help understand why leaders capture their followers' minds (Spector, 2016).

In social learning theory, the focus is that learning is a process (Bandura, 1971). Skinner (1953) studied verbal behavior, which became a foundation for the social learning theory. New learning occurs when new behaviors are learned by observing and imitating others, involving observation and direct instruction with positive and negative reinforcement. The learner is not passive but active in the learning process (Bandura, 1971). In current studies, Skinner's writings on verbal behavior and foundational learning continue to resurface (Catania, 2008).

Chan (2001) stated that complexity theory is the study of adaptive complex systems that focus on self-organization and natural selection. As a foundation, Kauffman (1990) stated that complexity theory is based on complex systems with individual components being interrelated and self-adjusting along the way. The basis of the complexity theory is similar to that of Darwinism. Complexity theory explains the evolution and behavior of an entire system rather than that of individual parts. Studies have shown that there is an impact of communication and collaboration between individuals, teams, and divisions (Chandler, Rycroft-Malone, Hawkes, & Noyes, 2016).

Gardner (1993) studied intelligences and defined them through different ways in which humans have the capacity to process information with the multiple intelligences theory. Humans, unlike many types of animals, are able to use these intelligences to problem solve (Gardner, 1993). Humans are also able to differentiate stressors or changes in the environment better and more efficiently than animals (Bandura, 1971). According to Chen (2004), the multiple intelligences theory is based on a review of biological, psychological, and anthropological studies (Conti, 2019). It was not Gardner's intent to group people. He intended to disaggregate them, showing how they

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differ from each other (Conti, 2019). Gardner's research stated that there are fewer

variations between groups of people than within the groups themselves (Conti, 2019).

Another theoretical foundation that seems to apply most currently to the pressing

need for research on storytelling to implement transformational change in organizations

is transformational leadership. Burns (1978) claimed that transformational leaders

motivate and inspire a team of followers, which in turn motivate the leaders to push

higher. Transformational leaders build relationships and make change through example,

setting forth a vision and achievable yet inspiring goals (Burns, 1978). Building even

further on Burns's (1978) theory, Bass (1985) developed his own version, theorizing that

transformational leaders lead to the extent that the followers are loyal. The extent to

which followers are loyal to the leader determines the extent to which they are

transformational (Bass, 1985). Senge (1990) focused on the premise that in order to build

on a shared vision within the organization, this change should be centered on the

interaction with the employees in the organization to obtain buy-in. An organization that

is truly transformational continually evaluates and transforms itself (Senge, 2006).

The final theory researched in this study was communication theory.

Communication theory is a basic model of communication when a sender transfers

information to a receiver or learner (Halavais et al., 2006). Shannon and Weaver's

(1949) model prompted research on new models of communication from other angles,

primarily in the social sciences such as psychology and sociology. Communication

theory was primed because the field of communication was influenced by the increase of

the digital revolution. Since 1990, the field has changed drastically (Zelizer, 2015).

Theoretical Framework

The foundation of Denning's (2011) storytelling work is built on the premise that there is a fine line between the art of leadership and storytelling. Leaders can be strong leaders, and those who have refined the craft of storytelling can tell great stories to gain trust and spark action. It is when the two can be intersected that great things can occur within and outside of the organization (Denning, 2011). With the concept of persuasion to constitute more than a quarter of the U.S. gross national product, the concept of storytelling can be a huge benefit to businesses and organizations to increase productivity and profit (Denning, 2011). Denning's work is based on the following eight narrative patterns on storytelling, which he used as chapter titles in his book:

- Motivate Others to Action: Using Narrative to Ignite Action and Implement New Ideas

- Build Trust: Using Narrative to Communicate Who You Are

- Use Narrative to Build Your Brand: The World of Social Media

- Transmit Your Values: Using Narrative to Instill Organizational Values

- Get Others Working Together: Using Narrative to Get Things Done Collaboratively

- Share Knowledge: Using Narrative to Transmit Knowledge and Understanding

- Tame the Grapevine: Using Narrative to Neutralize Gossip and Rumor.

- Create and Share Your Vision: Using Narrative to Lead People Into the Future.

Another framework in storytelling by Boje (2001) is the use of stories as a sort of narrative analysis. By adopting narrative analysis that tells the different organizational stories, the organization can begin to best utilize the currency of the organizational

communication (Boje, 2001). The art of storytelling is truly a unique skill. While few leaders have the ability to excel in this arena, it is not just the message that is to be told but the execution of the performance and being able to tell the right story.

Storytelling in Organizations

Worldwide, organizations have used storytelling to deliver a message for decades. A great deal of research has been conducted on contemporary storytelling and the use of these narratives by leadership in organizations to understand and create sensemaking of the culture of the organization, including the armed forces (Näslund & Pemer, 2012). Researching the ways in which various organizations have intentionally utilized a story to help communicate a message or the meaning of the culture can deepen the understanding of the reason for and successful uses of story in these organizations. Successful organizations function as storytelling systems (Boje, 1991). In recent years, various companies have told a story to help initiate change within the organization. A study conducted with 40 companies undergoing major change showed that one of the key factors in success was storytelling (Denning, 2011).

Stories have many uses in organizations. The cueing of a story serves as a method of interpretation and also a plan for action (Colville et al., 2012). Stories of an organization are driven not only by the reflections of the company but also by the organizational meaning and realities that define the culture. These connections help build engagement of the stakeholders and an understanding of the company tenets (Rhodes, Pullen, & Clegg, 2010). Telling stories to get a message or theme across can help make a company competitive (Arnaud et al., 2016). Storytelling also acts as a bridge to link the past to the present and build on the foundation. When a story is told from the perspective

of the customer, a relationship is developed and establishes the beginning of customer loyalty (Pham, Pallares-Venegas, & Teich, 2012). Storytelling related to marketing and branding can be used to increase audiences (McClearen, 2017). Utilized in the right way, stories can help an organization increase its level of recognition among customers and the public (Pham et al., 2012). Using stories can build bridges between the cause, mission, and audience in a convincing and genuine way (Bublitz et al., 2016).

Storytelling can have a dramatic and emotional effect if structured and timed appropriately. These stories allow the audience to play a role in the story as it is unfolding (Sargeant, Merchant, & Ford, 2010). The use of stories takes the audience through different emotional stages such as the case of someone in need, the case for support, and the opportunity to take some action to fix the circumstances (Sargeant et al., 2010). A powerful story told by an organization can tug at the heartstrings of the audience and evoke emotion (Ruebottom & Auster, 2018). Recent studies suggest that the change in one's body with cortisol and oxytocin is more likely to move audience members to open their bank accounts (Hutchens, 2015). This can develop the movement of both hearts and minds, which can result in increased revenue. Research has found that 96% of nonprofits regard stories as central to their communication (Bublitz et al., 2016).

It is important for an organization to understand the target consumers' social identity, or there could be a negative result (Nguyen, 2015). The organizations need to make sure that the story being told and the desired outcome is compatible with the morals of the audience. If not, then the story can act as an anticlimax (Nguyen, 2015). Results from the majority of studies on this topic lead to the conclusion, with a fair degree of certainty, that the use of storytelling in organizations elicits emotional responses from

their audiences. These responses can have a positive or negative effect depending on the craft of the story and the beliefs of the audience (Dolan & Bao, 2012).

Storytelling in Organizations to Implement Change

Baldoni (2003) posited that organizations use stories of people who can identify with the message and that motivate others to take the same path or same action. Storytelling can help people understand the patterns of the culture within the organization. With these patterns, leaders can understand the concerns so that informed decisions can be made to manage change (O'Toole et al., 2008). With a foundational understanding of these patterns, leaders can guide stakeholders into the various change initiatives needed. Arnaud et al. (2016) stated that "a change initiator must take corrective narrative action to address the challenges posed to the change process" (p. 117). The genre of storytelling for change is a blend of telling a narrative of the past and living stories of the present. This includes the transformation of the future blended with the preservation in narrative retrospect (Boje, 2012).

Denning (2011) stated that there are basic elements and patterns for storytelling in organizations used by leaders to create transformational change. In regard to teams, storytelling can act like an amplifier. The story should be told with care and encompass the change idea (De Cagna, 2001). If care and planning go into working with the team in the organization, then the effect can be significant. In organizations where there is a preferred sense of the use of human relationships as currency, storytelling can assist these relationships among both internal and external stakeholders (Boje, 1991). The simple act of a carefully crafted story can help one connect with the audience and achieve results (Nossel, 2018). These outcomes in an organization can result in many different kinds of

transformational change initiatives moving teams in a unified direction, generating a sense of ownership and widespread responsibility among stakeholders (Gherardi et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

The converse can also occur if care is not taken when telling a story of change or learning. Some organizations may have a culture in which it would be risky to admit previous failure even if it can be seen as a learning experience. According to Hutchens (2015), "A key element of the change and learning story is the wisdom that is drawn out at the end" (p. 8). One example of this is the story of the failure of Coca Cola launching New Coke in the 1980s. While with the field-testing, New Coke was the favored taste, the loyal audience of Coca Cola drinkers did not want to change and wanted to keep their emotional connection to the brand. Coca Cola tells this story as a learning experience and how to better listen to its audience when deciding on implementing change (Hutchens, 2015).

Storytelling, Leadership, and Educational Organizations

Human resources departments in educational organizations are responsible for the development of the culture of the district (Association of California School Administrators [ACSA], 2002). Human resources administrators are tasked with the responsibility to ensure that their organization works efficiently while building teams and inspiring employee engagement and empowerment (Losey, Meisinger, & Ulrich, 2005). Although human resources administrators have a multitude of responsibilities both legally and culturally in the organization, they often set the tone and serve as a positive example operating as a steward for all employees regardless of the job title (Becker & Huselid, 2010). There are no landmark or seminal research studies found regarding the

research on human resources administrators' use of storytelling in educational organizations. Presenting research validates the importance of studying this population related to the study's purpose.

All organizations are faced with the need to change (D. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010). There is no exception in educational organizations. Given that schools are tasked with implementing a number of initiatives, some requiring a complete transformation to improve student achievement and services, storytelling could assist school districts with making these changes (Schlebusch, 2001). There is a recent interest in organizational storytelling to assist not only with change initiatives but also with corporate transformation such as what occurred with Sears, Roebuck and Company (Collins & Rainwater, 2005). Sears's corporate transformation worked only for a short period of time, and now Sears is experiencing a decline once again. A similar decline could occur in educational change initiatives, and thus there is a substantial need for storytelling to support school change efforts. Education has seen many fads and new ideas come and go over the years. Without a true transformation, driven by human resources administrators at the heart of the organization, these fads may wane as well (O'Neil & Cuban, 2000). By integrating storytelling in school systems and using Denning's (2011) narrative to get things done collaboratively, the culture of the teams could enhance a positive transformation. Similar to the original transformation with Sears, a parallel shift could occur in school districts utilizing the strategy of storytelling becoming a catalyst for change if done strategically, and it is transformational.

One study has been done in educational organizations in Hong Kong regarding knowledge management through storytelling. The basis for the narratives was to gain a

sense of personalization for knowledge sharing. This strategy can help educators work

resourcefully and deal with reform efforts (Cheng, Wu, & Hu, 2017). While the use of

this form of storytelling is beneficial, there is not a significant amount of research to

show whether it is effective in actually making transformational change in the school

systems of the study.

The impact of telling the story in organizations to send a message to and build a

bond with stakeholders is critical (Smith, 2012). Whether working through staffing,

downsizing, compensation, training and development, benefits, leaves, or

communication, human resources administrators are pivotal leaders in the organization

(Losey et al., 2005). Using stories to inform and engage stakeholders can have a strong

impact on the message conveyed (Smith, 2012). This proves to be especially true during

labor negotiations. While the use of social media during negotiations can be beneficial, it

can also raise some practical and legal issues. With the use of e-mail, social media, and

communications via websites, districts can improve or decrease the negativity at the

negotiations table (Bilbeisi, 2019).

Gaps in the Research

Gaps in the research show how exemplary human resource administrators in

educational organizations use stories to inspire action and implement new ideas, build

trust, build your organizations' brand, transmit organizational values, foster

collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision. In the

initial research of articles and books, the researcher found only one article on the use of

storytelling to implement change in an educational setting, and that study was conducted

in Hong Kong. With the initial scan, the researcher found a large gap in the research

regarding the use of storytelling in educational organizations in its entirety, let alone the focus on the use by human resources administrators.

Human resources administrators lead with the heart and mind of the organization. These pivotal leaders accurately anticipate the future of the organization and manage the culture while engaging with stakeholders. They are problem solvers who strategically influence the priorities and goals (Losey et al., 2005). Human resources administrators are tasked with a huge feat of responsibilities. One foundational duty is that of recruiting and retaining high-quality employees. According to Shadovitz (2019), "Retaining key talent in today's recovered economy and ensuring employees remain engaged and productive" are the two biggest challenges human resources leaders face (p. 33). They are also given the responsibility of helping employees to be ready and prepared for the constantly changing needs.

Losey et al. (2005) stated that human resources administrators are leaders who accurately anticipate the future of the organization. Stories can help the human resources administrators and other supervisors in the organization share the message and bring the stakeholders along to buy in and hopefully lead the charge for the changes ahead (Losey et al., 2005). A crucial time for storytelling in an educational organization could be during budget shortfalls where staff is being asked to problem solve and do more with less resources while trying to maintain high morale (Smith, 2012). Another area of focus could be the use of storytelling in educational organizations during labor negotiations (Bilbeisi, 2019).

At the time of this study, there was no research to find the effects of storytelling in educational organizations to implement change to improve or shift the culture by

human resources administrators. There has also been no research done on the effectiveness of storytelling in regard to recruitment and retention of quality employees and employee satisfaction among all employees, including classified, certificated, and management staff.

Statement of the Research Problem

Leaders are tasked with a huge feat of being the heart of the organization, often setting the tone of the culture (Baldoni, 2003). When there is a negative culture, there is a consequence of negative attitudes of the stakeholders, weakness of values, poor relationships, low self-confidence, and lack of growth within the organization (Brodinsky, 1984). Poor culture and leadership can also lead to lack of employee engagement (Fisher, 2014). A company's productivity and success depends on a strong culture. The human resources leader plays a significant role in working with the organization's leader to establish values and norms that value people and set high goals for success (Fisher, 2014).

Human resources administrators play a key role in driving the culture of the company (Losey et al., 2005). When a human resources leader does not set or maintain positive employee productivity, employee engagement decreases, and the organization will not be successful (Becker & Huselid, 2010). For most employees, their job involves much more than just getting paid to complete tasks and responsibilities. The culture of their workplace is also an essential factor in job gratification and engagement (Ezenne, 2010). Human resources administrators can ensure that the organization hears and understands employee concerns. The human resources leader is a critical member of the leadership team who sets a positive culture. When the human resources leader fails at

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this task, the organization is likely to fail as well. Both Baldoni (2003) and Fisher (2014) concluded that if a human resources leader is not effective in establishing a culture in all aspects and responsibilities within the job, then the culture and morale decline, sometimes dramatically.

Losey et al. (2005) asserted that how the human resources leader interacts and conducts him or herself often funnels down through the rest of the stakeholders of the organization. Without a strong vision and leadership, it can be tough to impart and sustain these values to the rest of the staff and drive alignment around the shared cause or common vision. In order to improve culture, there needs to be a development of pride, free communication, and shared vision (Brodinsky, 1984). In studies in which employees are asked to complete satisfaction surveys, respondents with low commitment and poor job satisfaction are more likely to not respond at all or to give negative feedback (Borg, Braun, & Baumgärtner, 2008). Human resources administrators have the influence to guarantee that the organization understands employee interests and acts on them by conducting ongoing feedback via engagement to give employees a voice (Becker & Huselid, 2010).

Human resources administrators are responsible for supporting and fostering their organization's culture (Losey et al., 2005). With the changing needs of employees, especially with multiple generations in the workplace, the human resources leader must support a culture in which employees are valued and motivated to achieve the organization's goals and objectives (Clark, 2017). With these changing needs, it is imperative that human resources administrators help motivate the employees to achieve the goals and objectives (Ezenne, 2010).

The most powerful force in organizations is their culture (Baldoni, 2003). Strong

cultures promote strong success. If there is not a strong culture in an organization, there

can be negative consequences, which sometimes the organization cannot ever recover

from (Ezenne, 2010). Connecting workplace culture is the disposition and character of

the organization. It makes an organization stand out from the others and is the sum of its

morals, ethics, principals, actions, and attitudes (Brodinsky, 1984). One way to promote

a strong culture in an organization is through stories (Denning, 2011). Stories can help

establish the culture DNA that gives the organization and its stakeholders their identities.

Stories point to what people of the organization believe the culture is about (Wines &

Hamilton, 2009). These stories need to be carefully crafted by the human resources

administrators because the responses can have a positive or negative effect (Dolan &

Bao, 2012). If the human resources leader is not effective and strategic with the stories

that are told, there can be dire consequences that can sometimes have an irreparable

effect on the culture of the organization. When the story is planned and strategic, the

outcome can be positive and help minimize the rumor mill (Denning, 2011).

There is a gap in the research about the topic of storytelling by human resources

administrators in educational organizations. Storytelling is critical to the success of

organizations, including education. There is a lack of research regarding the theories of

organizational culture, organizational strategy, and human resources management

(Harrison & Bazzy, 2017). With the area of human resources being the heart of the

organization and the key influencer with the organization's culture in order to achieve the

goals and objectives, according to Losey et al. (2005), this gap in the research warrants

additional inquiry. As a result of this large gap, it is worthy of exploration into the

research of storytelling by human resources administrators in educational organizations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how

exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using

Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns (ignite action and implement new ideas, build

trust, build your organization's brand, transmit organizational values, foster

collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision). In

addition, it was the purpose to understand how exemplary human resources

administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in organizations.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How do exemplary human resources administrators lead their organizations

through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns?

Subquestions

1. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to ignite action and
   implement new ideas?

2. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build trust?

3. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build the
   organization's brand?

4. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to transmit
   organizational values?

5. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to foster collaboration?

6. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to share knowledge?

7. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to neutralize rumor?

8. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create and share vision?

9. How do exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in their organizations?

Significance of the Problem

Human resources administrators have a multitude of responsibilities serving as the heart within their organizations (Losey et al., 2005). They are tasked with employee orientation and induction; recruitment and selection; evaluation of staff; employee counseling; documentation and discipline; termination; layoffs; employee and employer relations; complaint management; compliance with state, federal, and local laws; employee programs; and labor relations (ACSA, 2002). While this list is not exhaustive, it summarizes the critical responsibilities that human resources administrators have and the importance of their leadership role in educational organizations.

Becker and Huselid (2010) wrote that it is imperative for human resources administrators to continually implement change and have a sense of the pulse of the culture and climate. A poor culture can lead to lack of employee engagement and negative attitudes prohibiting the movement toward the much needed positive change (Borg et al., 2008; Dunn, 2018; Fisher, 2014). The leader's role is to message the vision and manage the relationships both within the organization and with external stakeholders (Boje, 1991).

One strategy that has proven successful for organizational leaders is storytelling (Denning, 2011). Human resources administrators are armed with the task of telling stories about the organization for many reasons. One is to market a brand of culture for recruitment and retention, and another is to maintain the positive climate of the organization (Becker & Huselid, 2010). Another reason is the crafting of the message and story around labor negotiations. In the post-Janus era, labor negotiations have changed dramatically (Dunn, 2018). Now, more than ever, it is important for educational organizations to tell organizational stories that support the positive culture and relationships that lead to collaboration. According to Denning (2011), by "taming the grapevine" (p. 205), human resources administrators will be able to more accurately tell the story from the district's perspective.

Studies have shown that storytelling can help organizations implement change and engage audiences (Rhodes et al., 2010), yet no studies have examined how the specifics of storytelling can help human resources administrators engage employees and the public with no studies focused on educational systems or school districts. Therefore, this study can assist by contributing to the existing literature by examining how human resources administrators can effectively use storytelling to engage employees in the vision and required changes in the culture of the organization. Using Denning's (2011) foundational narrative patterns as a structure for human resources administrators can assist in moving the organization forward to motivate others into action.

The results of this study can also assist human resources administrators, superintendents, stakeholders, and various administrative organizations such as the Association of California School Administrators, Capitol Service Region Human

Resources Administrators, Personnel and Administrative Services Steering Committee, and California Association of School Business Officials. This can benefit by having a positive impact on relationships within and outside the organization rather than a negative culture that can disrupt student learning and employee morale. This study can also be of value to universities across the United States that provide advanced degrees and certifications to human resources administrators and educational leaders.

There are gaps in the research to show how exemplary human resources administrators in educational organizations use stories to inspire action, communicate values, foster collaboration, impart knowledge, and lead into the future. With the initial scan, the researcher found a large gap in the research regarding the use of storytelling in educational organizations in its entirety, let alone the focus on the use by human resources administrators serving as one of the chief storytellers. There has also been no research done on the effectiveness of storytelling in regard to recruitment and retention of quality employees and employee satisfaction among all employees. Using stories by human resources administrators can help preserve a positive culture in the school district.

Definitions

Build the brand. The authentic interactive exchange of stories to promote meaningful dialogue and distinguish an organization from competitors in the eyes of the customer. It is about communicating the core of organizational culture and values through visual means and interactive dialogue (Denning, 2011; Schultz, 2010).

Change. Using stories in a timely manner to engage people across the organization to contribute creative ideas, learn new skills, and explore possibilities in an

environment supportive of transformational change in the organization (Aidman & Long, 2017; Denning, 2011).

Collaboration. A collective intelligence that honors and respects the contribution of each person and contributes to group learning. It is also about working together to identify community values and create something new in support of a shared vision (Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011).

Human resources administrator. A leader who problem solves while anticipating the future in the organization by managing the culture, being actively engaged with stakeholders, and nurturing and developing the employees. The leader is responsible for staffing, compensation, training, benefits, labor relations, communications, employee development, legal compliance, strategic influence, and goals of the organization (Becker & Huselid, 2010; Losey et al., 2005).

Neutralize rumor. The commitment of leaders to reduce organizational uncertainty and proactively clarify the future through narratives. It is about proactive, frequent, transparent, and honest communication directed toward shedding light on the organizational vision (Brown, Denning, Groh, & Prusak, 2005; Denning, 2011).

New ideas. As used in this study, it means how vision and ideas are generated within an organization to inspire and focus on what is important to success. The broader view of the future that is created through stories produces meaning and motivates others to act (Baldoni, 2003; Denning, 2011).

Share knowledge. To tell personal stories of actual human experience and expertise in narrative exchange, which act as repositories of knowledge. It is about

informal networks of communities, which accelerate knowledge sharing (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Jabri & Pounder, 2001).

Share vision and direction. Purposefully combining and integrating stories to set a tone, clarify expectations, communicate important ideas, and provide hope. Through these positive stories, the organization can raise the quality and focus on innovative actions to drive change (Aidman & Long, 2017; Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan, & Switzler, 2008).

Storytelling. The ability of exemplary leaders to influence others, build culture, expedite the change process, lead, grow, and connect. Stories spur emotions to inspire, respect the audience, and unite people to promote transformational change. Positive stories establish common values, convey meaning, and describe an ideal future state (Aidman & Long, 2017; Denning, 2011; Hutchens, 2015; McCarthy, 2008; Smith, 2012).

Transmit values. How an organization makes outsiders feel like insiders by sharing culture, values, celebrations, and challenges. Transmit values also means shared meaning of the group norms, standards, customs, and traditions as shared through stories (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Denning, 2011).

Trust. The ability of an organization and its people to build reliability, truth, and strength through strong relationships, shared experiences that evoke emotion, vulnerability, and authenticity (Auvinen, Aaltio, & Blomqvist, 2013; Denning, 2011).

Delimitations

This study was delimited by the researcher to 10 exemplary human resources administrators in California public school districts meeting at least four of the following six criteria:

1. They show evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a California school district.

2. They have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the human resources profession.

3. They have had articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings in the area of human resources.

4. They have received recognition by their peers.

5. They have a membership in human resources professional associations.

6. They have received a recommendation from one or more recognized district superintendents.

Organization of the Study

This study on exemplary human resources administrators and their use of storytelling to lead and implement transformational change is organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I introduced the study along with the purpose statement, research questions, and significance of the study. Chapter II contains a review of the literature expanding on the concepts of storytelling. Chapter III reveals the research design and methodology of the study with a description of the population and sample, instrument used, and data collection procedures. Chapter IV represents an analysis of the data and a subsequent discussion of the findings. Chapter V offers a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Every great leader is a great storyteller.

—Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds*

Introduction

Chapter II provides a review of the research literature regarding the knowledge and strategies and how human resources administrators use storytelling to implement change in the organization. The literature review begins with a history and evolution of storytelling and of those theoretical foundations in leadership and storytelling that apply to this study. The review introduces the theoretical framework used in this study and compares Denning's (2011) eight narratives of storytelling: spark change, build trust, build brand, transmit values, work together, share knowledge, tame the grapevine, and create and share vision to the research of others on the multifaceted concept of storytelling. This literature review then investigates the concepts of storytelling in organizations, including the focus from the human resources leader's perspective, and discusses the varied responsibilities of these leaders. The review concludes with an examination of the literature on how human resources administrators use storytelling to enhance, strengthen the culture and vision, lead, and initiate and engage transformational change in the educational organization.

Human resources administrators tell stories worldwide to accomplish many things. As the heart of the organizations they serve in, there is no exception to educational human resources administrators (O'Neil & Cuban, 2000). How these human resources administrators share the stories of the organization's culture and vision can have a positive impact on the change initiatives and overall health of the school district.

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Through stories, the stakeholders can identify with the message and stories that motivate others to take the same path or same action (Baldoni, 2003).

The Association of California School Administrators (2002) found that human resources administrators who serve in school districts are responsible for the quality of the organization's people and development of their skills and contributions to the success of the organization. Among the many responsibilities that range from compensation, labor relations, employee assistance programs, planning, succession, and training, none is more important than the responsibility for organizational culture (Becker & Huselid, 2010). Human resources administrators cannot do it all on their own and rely heavily on senior leadership, but it is the human resources leader who leads the way in workplace activities, celebrations, ceremonies, and team building. Successful human resources administrators use stories of the organization's culture and vision to influence change initiatives and improve the overall health of school systems (Losey et al., 2005).

Organizational cultures can be positively or adversely affected by stories. Hence, the leaders need to choose their words carefully because these stories represent the culture of the entire organization (Baldoni, 2003). When leaders leverage the trust they have with their employees, they can serve as motivational storytellers in their organizations to effect that culture (Auvinen, Lämsä, et al., 2013). Even though storytelling has been around for centuries, it is only recently that stories have been used by leaders in organizations to implement change (Auvinen, Lämsä, et al., 2013). While all leaders tell stories, both intentionally and unintentionally, stories are now recognized as a powerful way to communicate and actually implement change within the

organization (Auvinen, Lämsä, et al., 2013). The words in the stories are powerful and represent the entire culture of the organization.

Storytelling and Leadership

Storytelling

Over time, authors have defined storytelling in many ways. Denning (2011) wrote that storytelling is described as the vibrant interaction of a tale or sequence of events. It has the power to shape the future, and the research shows that it needs to be an intentional commentary. Those commentaries reinforce and affirm individual and organizational dignity and can also drive change management (Boje, 2012). With the use of stories, leaders tie their content to the stories of the audience. By doing this, leaders can alter the audience's beliefs by reinforcing key values (Grove, 2015).

Biesenbach (2018) simply stated that in today's world, there is an overload of information. Storytelling can be used as an instructional method to better filter and process that information. According to Andrews, Hull, and Donahue (2009), "A story, then, facilitates instruction directly through verbal or linguistic means and indirectly by aiding in the mental construction of a sequence of events enacted for or by the learner" (p. 7). When performing a story, the content should be 7%, and the style of the story should be 93% (Mehrabian, 1971). Those narratives can also be used strategically to memorialize an event of change in the past (Dalpiaz & Stefano, 2018).

Smith (2012) asserted that style is an important aspect of storytelling. The act of signaling the intent and meaning of a message, or the information received, is commonly referred to as sensemaking. Sensemaking helps interpret the story and the details of the situation while also serving as a plan for action (Colville et al., 2012). In order for the

stories to be believable by the audience, the narratives need to be both trustworthy and thought-provoking. The power of stories and the connection with the audience help gain attention, elicit desire, and reinforce the need for change with reasons. Personal stories help make connections and "capture people on an emotional level" (Welman, 2014, p. 4). Narratives of conflict or injustice allow the audience to relate to the storyteller. There is interplay between the performer, or storyteller, and the audience (Ruebottom & Auster, 2018). Through this interplay an exhilarating emotional energy emerges. Emotional energy can ignite a spark. One strategy to ignite a spark is through the use of springboard stories. Springboard storytelling is "storytelling that can communicate a complex idea and spark action" (Denning, n.d., p. 59).

In recent years, there has been an increase in the study of storytelling. One reason for this increase is a result of the changes in communication and the ease of technology to tell a story. Research into learning continues to highlight the value of the effectiveness of storytelling (Andrews et al., 2009). The research has shown that the use of stories by leaders has continued to rise.

Leadership

Baldoni (2003) stated that leaders set the tone of organizational cultures. They tell stories to connect the life story and organizational vision. Kouzes and Posner (2011) posited that leaders model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. This is achieved through interactive leadership and making a connection with followers. Dialogue between leaders and followers helps collaboration through shared meanings and knowledge of the organization. Boal and Schultz (2007) stated that "storytelling gives life to the knowledge being generated and

shared among organizational members" (p. 419). The structure of organizational stories must be understood in order for strategic leaders to take full advantage of them (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

O'Neil and Cuban (2000) suggested that organizational leaders maintain the health of the organization as a community. Experienced leaders maintain that health by valuing choices. They also maintain the health by setting the tone with ethical dilemmas, goals, economic performance and profit, competition, competence, and reasonableness with stakeholders. Maintaining strong organizational health provides a level of stability and maintains levels of trust and respect among all stakeholders. C. Anderson (1997) stated that in a learning organization, "managers must also build the capacity to change current strategies, tactics, or performance" (p. 28). Strategic leadership, done properly, can achieve innovation and transformational change.

Storytelling is a powerful leadership tool (Smith, 2012). Personal power in organizational cultures can be used to benefit the organization. Middle-level leaders use personal power to accomplish goals. In organizations with a strong culture in which middle management are given flexibility, great results can occur (Rubin & Berlew, 1984). By using knowledge and sharing stories as a strategy, an organization and its leaders can get the work done.

Organizational Culture and Stories

The tone of organizational cultures is set by the leaders (Becker & Huselid, 2010). Organizational cultures can be positively or adversely affected by stories. Given the potential impact, leaders need to choose their words carefully. These words represent the culture of the entire organization (Baldoni, 2003). Organizations use stories of people

who can identify with the message and stories that motivate others to take the same path or same action (Baldoni, 2003). Story writing is a social practice of spatial problem-solving. Writing collective stories helps decipher the lived experiences into words. Doing this opens the possibility of change within an organization (Gherardi et al., 2018).

Senge (2006) declared that an organization's culture can create readiness for organizational change. The use of stories can assist with the change initiatives (Denning, 2011). There are a number of factors that can play into the effectiveness and impact of a strong story, including interpersonal and social dynamics; the organization's readiness effort; and stakeholders' changing beliefs, viewpoints, and objectives. In organizations, the use of oral persuasive communication as a straightforward and overt method of communication can cause an increase in volunteers and active participation. The communication through stories becomes the change agent helping drive the strategic planning, new vision, and speech (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993).

Stories in Organizations

Denning (2011) concluded that stories have both an individual and organizational impact. A story's impact on organizational culture can change the values and core of the organization. Telling a story can help to get the "organizational core or the middle" of an organization (Briody, Meerwarth Pester, & Trotter, 2012, p. 82). The better the story, the better the emotional impact and the higher the probability that it will become assimilated into the culture. Powerful people in a culture, society, or organization are the storytellers or myth makers. Dominant myths provide the blueprint of the values of the society or organization (Wines & Hamilton, 2009).

Organizational stories can vary in context, character development, complexity of themes, and length. Storytellers can use these variances and other strategies to enhance the experience (Brown et al., 2005). In organizations, field notes and anecdotes may be used so that all involved can understand. In this way, the story can be summarized and the organizational message conveyed. Stories can be told of change and organizational ethics. Change narratives and the circle of narrative can reveal a positive or negative message. These stories could have an impact on how change in an organization is perceived, especially when the organization may be downsizing (Rhodes et al., 2010).

Storytellers are the facilitators of change (Denning, 2011). How quickly that change can occur depends on the dynamics of the organization and the makeup of the stakeholders (O'Toole et al., 2008). When companies allow stakeholders to be a part of the company's story, the stakeholders can visualize the change effort and play a more active role (Simon, 2017). Utilizing middle management effectively can enhance the pattern of change, and transformation is more genuine and authentic (Briody et al., 2012). Using stories to generate organizational change can be beneficial, even if just anecdotally. It is not simply the fact of telling a story to get a message across; it is allowing the patterns of the stories to unfold, thus revealing the behaviors and cultures of the organization. This exposure is crucial for the buy-in of followers.

Storytelling and Leadership

Leaders carry a heavy mantle of responsibility to engage and motivate followers to change behavior in the organization (D. Anderson & Ackerman Anderson, 2010). They can use stories to engage the hearts and minds of those followers. Leaders who effectively tell stories motivate and inspire staff. Leadership storytelling and springboard

stories are crafted to inspire and delight clients. In order to be inspirational, leaders need to be strategic in crafting the script (Briody et al., 2012).

Although storytelling has been around for centuries, it has only been recently that researchers have studied stories that have been used by leaders in organizations (Brown et al., 2005). While all leaders tell stories, both intentionally and unintentionally, it is now recognized as a way to communicate and actually implement change within the organization. When leaders leverage the trust they have with their employees, they can serve as motivational storytellers in their organizations (Auvinen, Aaltio, & Blomqvist, 2013). The leader is the master storyteller who has a responsibility to build a narrative collection. These stories need to be an authentic communication. According to Bublitz et al. (2016), "Authentic and honest storytelling can be a powerful tool to engage audiences and move hearts and minds" (p. 239). Stories are a vital tool that provide an understanding, engage the audience and stakeholders, and allow the leader to take action. Bublitz et al. stated that "stories are character-centered narratives focused on the goals, motives, obstacles, and struggles a character faces over time" (p. 237).

Hansen (2007) claimed that stories are important and can be used as a powerful tool. This tool can serve as a change agent. A story depicts the issue that needs to be resolved and highlights the change needed. In companies, storytelling can also help brand the company and help with logo management. Customers can also derive their own stories from a logo, so it is imperative for the organization to be focused and deliberate in messaging (Pham et al., 2012). The storytelling effort by leaders should include knowing the audience's norms and values in order to create the largest impact (Nguyen, 2015). Nguyen (2015) stated that "not all stories result in positive outcomes"

(p. 337). A story told to the wrong audience or not according to the norms and values can have a negative effect and backfire on the leader and organization. It is a true craft to connect the life story to the organizational vision (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

According to Hall (n.d.), "Leadership communication is about sensemaking" (p. 12). Sensemaking helps organize things by labeling and categorizing events and situations so they can be easily communicated to others (Näslund & Pemer, 2012; Smith, 2012). Strong leaders have good communication skills that give the organization an identity and promote the vision. Leadership behaviors improve engagement of the stakeholders (Hall, n.d.). The relationships between employees and leaders are key. Conversations, seen through task assignments, need to be strategic and effective. Jian and Dalisay (2017) stated that "the quality conversation may not happen spontaneously and could require planning, dedicated time, and focus" (p. 193).

Leaders who can tell stories about their own ability to communicate, lead, and manage change have an advantage in the organization (Choy, 2017). Skills can be conveyed as narratives during changes in one's career path. The most effective leaders use stories to enhance and create their own stories to inspire, influence, and guide their departments and everyone else they come in contact with. According to Roche and Sadowsky (2003), these stories can have a ripple effect with employees, customers, investors, or the public.

History and Evolution of Storytelling

Orality and Literacy With Oral Traditions

For centuries, storytelling has been utilized by many different cultures to convey a message (Kupers, 2013). The history of storytelling, literacy, and orality involves

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moving oral expression to writing through stories (Soukup, 2012). Walter Ong's (1979), in his mass of research, argued that the common tools used by people influence how they process and interpret information. For example, biblical passages are written as stories. Ong pointed out several correlations between communication media and theology or written gospels. Soukup (2012) also pointed out that the study of scriptures, patterns, rhythm, and rhyme in religion are told through stories.

Historically, oratorical literacy was waning in the late 1880s and early 1900s when there was a movement from oratorical to silent reading. This evolution of oral literacy to writing superseded the old form of rhetorical public speaking (Ong, 1979). In communication theory and the early research of rhetoric, Walter Ong's (1979) focus was on seeing diagrams, objects, and symbols in print to arrive at knowledge. Orality and literacy transpire when communication develops from the oral stage into a stage of print and then is read orally (Soukup, 2012). Gaining the attention of the audience happens when an engaging story is told and the performance occurs of storytelling in oral tradition.

Denning (2011) asserted that storytelling can help individuals or groups learn and grow through sharing knowledge. In traditional learning theories, participants grow by directly experiencing events. With social learning and imitation, observers must be motivated to act and to be provided with an example in order to learn. Another form of learning can come from observation, modeling, and reinforcement (Bandura, 1971).

Story Forms

Storytelling requires coherence and salience (Brown et al., 2005). There is a beginning, middle, and end with an agreed plot. Without a plot, the storyteller is simply

telling a chronology. The sensemaking of a story occurs through shared lived

experiences (Boje, 2001; Brown et al., 2005; Smith, 2012). A story can be comic, tragic,

epic, or romantic, and there is usually a protagonist, villain, and a predicament in the

story line (Collins & Rainwater, 2005). These tales can be told through a movie,

historical novel, romance story, or genre novel (Palombini, 2017). Storytelling can also

be shared as a cartoon or short film to get a message across. Using the strategy of the

fairy-tale story spine, stories can be constructed to share information or persuade an

audience. Rotmann (2017) stated that "we can think about the functions of storytelling as

being able to learn, empathize, educate, reflect, and advocate and thereby affect change in

attitudes, behavior, culture, and policy" (p. 309).

The art of music is also a form of storytelling. Developing a story and integrating

the songwriting experience into music moves and motivates the audience or listener

(Hutchens, 2015). Storytelling is woven into all forms of the arts. Music and the arts are

ways to express creativity. Storytelling in the form of music is a huge part of mainstream

American culture (Radner, 2008). Similar to a story, music can connect with the

audience and evoke emotion (Salas, 1992). Iconic music, such as songs of the Beatles,

can serve as a form of historical storytelling (Tessler, 2010).

Power of Stories

Choy (2017) stated that stories have the power to build a sense of community.

Technological communication is not always the most effective means of communicating.

Sometimes an e-mail or virtual meeting is distinguished as cold or sterile. Stories are

universal. They help humans make sense of emotions and how to solve dilemmas.

Roche and Sadowsky (2003) stated that "children grow into adults by learning stories" (p.

382). Human beings are immersed in stories from the time they are born and throughout

their entire lives (Biesenbach, 2018).

Biesenbach (2018) also emphasized that there is a sense of power in leadership

storytelling. Narratives can manipulate and influence the audience. Adolf Hitler was a

master storyteller who used the power of narrative in a destructive manner (Takala &

Auvinen, 2016). Different forms of stories exist including myths, sagas, legends,

strategic projects, and humorous anecdotes (Coe, Aiken, & Palmer, 2006). These stories

are rich with information laden with organizational values and beliefs. As the years

passed and Hitler aged, he lost his oratorical strength. A story will usually have a hook to

elicit emotional responses from the audience (Bublitz et al., 2016). In a story, the

character is described through narratives with objectives, motivations, difficulties, and

obstacles that the character faces over time (Hutchens, 2015).

Storytelling Traditions

There are many different forms of stories and genres. Fairy tales are embedded in

oral traditions. According to Zipes (2012), "Tales that became relevant for families,

clans, tribes, villages, and cities were retained through memory and passed on as

traditional verbalizations of actions and behaviors" (p. 8). Through stories, a fostering of

human communication can occur (Gottschall, 2012). Homo sapiens have told stories for

thousands of years before they could read, write, and keep records. Human beings began

telling tales as soon as they could speak. They may have used sign language before

speech was originated to convey crucial information in order to survive (Jack, 2012). It

is innate to make stories relevant to the situation in many cultures. Human beings have

an interest in fairy tales because they are magical and transform the world and make it

more malleable to individual needs. Oral and literary traditions of fairy tales are shaped by cultural patterns (Zipes, 2012).

Griffiths (2006) and Zipes (2012) both suggested that folk tales have been passed on through generations by word of mouth. As time progresses, heroes become more heroic, and villains become more villainous. Oral tradition is that in which a skilled embellisher tells a story to an audience. Generationally, stories are ways of reconstructing the past, not just the political and historical events but the full spectrum of activity (Griffiths, 2006).

Stories of Ancient People

Human beings are born with the innate capacity to tell stories (Biesenbach, 2018). Stories are not just verbally spoken but can serve as a form of visual storytelling. Stories help preserve a group's culture by sharing the oral history (Lawrence & Paige, 2016). Ancient people told stories to teach how to become better human beings. In history, aboriginal cultures shared a communal connectedness through storytelling. Pictures on cave walls depicted predators, and these pictures instilled courage. The Lascaux cave paintings in the southwest region of France tell stories of early man. Through the paintings, the story is told that the first human beings believed in religion, magic, art, traditions, and rituals. The paintings depict early humans as hunters showing the tools and animals that were used for survival (Cavendish, 2015). Lugbara of Africa claimed that "the rules of social behavior are the words of our ancestors" (Coe et al., 2006, p. 22). Native American stories are often an abstract set of tales focused on survival. These tales focus on aspects of the environment such as fire, water, seasons, plants, and animals (Caduto & Bruchac, 1992). According to Lawrence and Paige (2016), "The art of

storytelling is traced from its roots in indigenous cultural societies. Storytelling in education is described as a participatory learning process that promotes community and understanding" (p. 63). Whether depicting predators on the wall of a cave to instill courage or gathering family and friends around the fire to share a story of connectedness, storytelling has covered lessons since the beginning of time (Lawrence & Paige, 2016).

Biesenbach (2018) discussed the fact that the structure of a story is cross-cultural. Stories of Greek mythology convey beliefs and cultural messages. In Greek mythology, the stories allowed the audience to see the influence of a person's behavior on others. Stories help people preserve culture. Stories help them understand themselves and others, teach and learn through the narratives, and explore alternative realities. Storytelling in families passes on its values to the next generation (Coe et al., 2006).

Draw of Story

Humans are naturally drawn to a good story. According to Gottschall (2012), they "yield helplessly to the suction of story" (p. 3). Stories are recounted to share a form of cultural transmission of information. Stories can help one envision a positive future and transform belief systems. There are many different ways that message can be shared. Powerful messages can be relayed through religious stories (Coe et al., 2006). Seventy-five percent of the Bible is written in a story format (Walsh, 2014). In early American history, there were town criers who told a story to get a message across as quickly as possible. Stories can also be utilized to share a message of news or gossip (Coe et al., 2006).

Furthermore, stories can be told through music to inspire and connect with the audience (Hutchens, 2015). Music allows its listeners to relate to and form a deep

connection with the artistic story. With the advent of the Internet and the ease of

attaining music, the process of storytelling through music is changing. Some believe that

the public has lost its appetite for life's struggles, but the story of a song is still desired

and prevalent today (Hutchens, 2015). According to Baldie (2018), "Timeless myths can

never be repeated too often because they touch on fundamental things about human

psychology" (p. xxi). Human beings cannot resist the pull of mysterious worlds through

music (Gottschall, 2012).

Shared Stories for Organizations

Sharing a message of a story can guide an entire organization. Storytelling is a

valuable way of developing trust, communicating organizational mission, and creating

shared stories and a sense of community (Denning, 2011). Sharing a message of a story

can guide an entire organization. There are many supervisory theories of leadership

involving storytelling. Culture probes and storytelling can help companies remain

relevant and create value for their audiences (Simon, 2017).

Theoretical Foundations

There are a number of theoretical foundations for storytelling. There is a wide

range of theories including great man, social learning, complexity, multiple intelligences,

transformational leadership, and communication theories. While these theories involve

different premises, the common link is learning and leadership told via narratives.

Great Man Theory

In early readings, the great man theory was discovered and discussed but is

mentioned more often in modern-day research. With the great man theory, the concept is

that the leader, or CEO, is the crux of all of the movement. This theory has been

challenged but is still referred to as the basis of all other leadership foundations (Bandura, 1971). It is important to consider the great man theory to help understand why leaders capture people's minds (Spector, 2016).

Spector (2016) also asserted that the great man theory is based on the premise that men are a gift from God and uplift the human existence as heroic leaders. These powerful orators share historical narratives, a sequence of events with a goal of revealing themes and interactions (Spector, 2016). The great man theory is the most intangible quality of leadership although the popularity has waned. These leaders are significantly influenced by external environmental forces. It implies that leaders are born and not made. Politicians and other great leaders in history were thought to have an innate force. There is brain chemistry between leaders and their followers (Cawthon, 1996). Cawthon (1996) pointed out that "great men tend to make great groups" (p. 759). Variables with the great man theory can include group composition, interpersonal relationships, and positive social emotional behavior within the group (Borgatta, Bales, & Couch, 1954). Thomas Carlyle moved away from the church and started public speaking to earn money as a lecturer (Spector, 2016). Not being in the church led him to the great man theory. In the business world, some failing companies still want a hero to save them by becoming somewhat of a corporate savior. When CEOs romanticize their role, they gain prestige, power, and control (Spector, 2016). It is with this prestige and power that the leader can use stories to inform and influence the followers.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1971) presented another foundational theory of social learning theory. This basis of social learning theory is one that learning is a process. Skinner (1953)

studied verbal behavior, which became a basis for the social learning theory. Even today, Skinner's writings on verbal behavior and foundational learning theories continue to surface and receive contemporary attention (Catania, 2008). Bandura (1971) stated that new learning occurs when new behaviors are learned by observing and imitating others. He also stated that learning is a cognitive process involving observation and direct instruction. In addition, learning includes the observation of positive and negative reinforcement. With the observation, the learner is not passive but active in the process and the learning can occur in many different ways.

Social learning theory states that the learner observes both positive and negative consequences as a guide to the learning process. As a reaction to the observations, the learner has emotional reactions and can overcome fears when a hurdle is already observed and there are possible solutions to the issue at hand (Catania, 2008). Social learning theory is based on the premise that behavior is understood and learned as an uninterrupted two-way process between the observed behavior and the learner's reactions. Through observations, the learner is able to see the process of others without many levels of gains and failures of his or her own. It is imperative to be detailed and direct when modeling desired expectations (Bandura, 1971). The power of storytelling is influential when considering how humans can gain knowledge.

Complexity Theory

There are several theories resulting from various natural sciences. Chan (2001) explored complexity theory. The premise of the theory is the study of complex adaptive systems with an interrelationship and interdependence (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003). Complexity theory is a collection of individual representatives. It states that there are

behaviors in manners that are not always predictable, but the actions are intersected. This concept is often applied in social systems (Long, McDermott, & Meadows, 2018).

Chan (2001) stated that complexity theory is the study of adaptive complex systems that focuses on self-organization and natural selection. As a foundation, Kauffman (1990) stated that complexity theory is based upon complex systems with individual components being interrelated and self-adjusting along the way. The basis of the complexity theory is similar to that of Darwinism.

Kauffman (1990) also stated that complexity theory is based on an influential model in organizations. The application to organizational science is a complex session of one portion of the organization's reaction to how other portions are connected. According to P. Anderson, Meyer, Eisenhardt, Carley, and Pettigrew (1999), complexity theory can encourage interaction "by forming cross-functional teams . . . this will encourage them to recombine partial solutions, bringing together elements that were previously known but distant from one another" (p. 234).

Kauffman (1990) stated that complexity theory developed originally in the disciplines of science and mathematics, focusing on how a system can be unpredictable and give way to unanticipated order. It can have both natural and social contexts. In business, this can apply to corporate strategy. Businesses can use this to better evolve to suit the environment (Kivak, 2017). When used as a business strategy, complexity theory can address complex behaviors that arise from interactions among large collections of simpler components.

There are five core concepts in complexity theory: self-organization, interaction, emergence, system history, and temporality (Kauffman, 1990). Self-organization seeks

to remain as efficient as possible, oftentimes the shortest route, which may or may not be the most efficient. Interaction allows for continual two-way feedback that flows between individuals or small groups. Emergence states the theory that grass roots changes occur from the bottom up and not the top down in order to implement change. System history retains some of the organizational history and evidence of the culture of the organization. Temporality in complex organizations is in a constant state of fluctuation. If the new idea or concept is not a priority of the organization, the idea can dissipate. Complexity theory explains the behavior of an entire system rather than that of individual parts. Studies have shown that there is an impact of communication and collaboration between individuals, teams, and divisions (Chandler et al., 2016). The nature of that communication could be successfully facilitated through stories and storytelling.

Multiple Intelligences Theory

More recently, Gardner (1993) studied intelligences and defined them in different ways in which humans have the capacity to process information. Humans, unlike many types of animals, are able to use these intelligences to problem solve (Gardner, 1993). Gardner's (2006) theory found that every human is capable of managing seven different forms of intelligence. These seven different forms include "logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal" (Gardner, 2006, p. 8).

According to Chen (2004), the multiple intelligences theory is based on a review of biological, psychological, and anthropological studies. It was not Gardner's intent to group people (Conti, 2019). He intended to disaggregate them, showing how they differ from each other (Conti, 2019). Gardner's research stated that there are fewer variations

between groups of people than within the groups themselves (Conti, 2019). Depending on a person's strengths, he or she will do better in various areas than others. Supporters of the multiple intelligences theory believe that every human being has all types of intelligences at some level. When in an appropriate environment, people can develop weaker areas and grow their strengths. Conti (2019) believed that tasks that require multiple intelligences at the same time can speed up this growth in the different intelligences.

Gardner's multiple intelligences theory is based on the belief that humans have additional abilities to learn and process information (Conti, 2019). Gardner's theory was developed as a way to explain how the mind works, not necessarily an educational model (Conti, 2019). While not intended that way, Gardner's theory has been accepted by educators in an effort to try to understand how students learn. This sparked an analysis in classrooms all over the United States to adjust instruction according to how the students may better gain knowledge (Conti, 2019). Integrating the use of stories into these multiple intelligences in education can improve instruction and help students learn and grow.

Transformational Leadership Theory

A final theoretical foundation that applies to the current pressing need for research about storytelling to implement transformational change in organizations is Senge's (1990) work. Senge focused on the premise that in order to build on a shared vision within the organization, this transformational change should be centered on the interaction with the employees in the organization to obtain buy-in. An organization that is truly transformational continually evaluates and transforms itself (Senge, 2006).

Burns (1978) stated that leadership is either transactional or transformational. He claimed and studied the need for further development in the theory of transformational leadership. This theory states that transformational leaders motivate and inspire a team of followers, which in turn motivates the leaders to push higher. Transformational leaders build relationships and make change through example, setting forth a vision and achievable yet inspiring goals (Burns, 1978). Building even further on Burns's (1978) theory, Bass (1985) developed his own version theorizing that transformational leaders obtain the belief and esteem and are held in high regard by the team of followers. The followers' level of loyalty to the leader determines the extent to which they are transformational (Bass, 1985).

D. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010) defined transformational leadership as a "conscious change leadership" (p. 104). In transformational leadership, there is an allegiance, faithfulness, and fulfillment of followers. Transformational leaders can serve as a role model for their team or employees (Bass & Riggio, 2006). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), "The leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Followers identify with the leaders and want to emulate them; leaders are endowed by their followers as having extraordinary capabilities, persistence, and determination" (p. 6).

Communication Theory

Communication theory is a basic model of communication when a sender transfers information to a receiver or learner (Halavais et al., 2006). Much of the field has not been developed beyond the United States. Outside of the United States, there is a lack of uniform development for the field. Communication theory was primed because

the field of communication was influenced by the increase of the digital revolution. Since 1990, the field has changed drastically (Zelizer, 2015).

Shannon and Weaver's (1949) model prompted research on new models of communication from other angles, primarily in the social sciences such as psychology and sociology. Craig (1999) claimed that communication theory as a field of study is too narrow. He stated that communication theorists do not agree or disagree on much. He also disputed that there are a multitude of theories to categorize within the field of communication as a field of study. Craig (1999) believed that communication theory has the potential to become a field. Communication is information processing. Craig (1999) defined "communication as expression, interaction, and influence" (p. 142). Communication theorists should address writing to the communication field in its entirety (Craig, 1999).

Communication theory is relatively new and is becoming increasingly relevant as a field (Craig, 1999). C. Anderson (1997) noted that communication theory was found in only 7% of textbooks. There has been an increased focus on communication in recent years, which provides relevance to field development. Communication is the sending and receiving of clear and concise messages (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). The key indicator of organizational success is the ability to share meaning through communication (Men, 2012). Communication theory is the dialogue and discourse in society and may be traced to diverse disciplines (Craig, 1999). Furthermore, storytelling is based on narrative patterns. Leaders who are effective communicators may paint visual pictures in people's minds and evoke powerful emotions (Denning, 2011). Through these visual pictures, a story is told by the effective leader to engage, inform, and make change.

Theoretical Framework

The foundation of Denning's (2011) storytelling work is built on the premise that there is a fine line between the art of leadership and storytelling. Leaders can be strong leaders, and those who have refined the craft of storytelling can tell great stories to gain trust and spark action. It is when the two can be intersected that great things can occur within and outside of the organization (Denning, 2011). Another framework in storytelling by Boje (2001) is the use of stories as a sort of narrative analysis. By adopting narrative analysis that will tell the different organizational stories, the organization can begin to best utilize the currency of the organizational communication (Boje, 2001). The art of storytelling is truly a unique skill. Although few leaders have the ability to excel in this arena, it is not just the message that is to be told but the execution of the performance and being able to tell the right story. By telling stories, the orator has to be creative and see it in his or her mind. All audience members have differing levels of imagination, so the storytelling needs to meet them where they are and bring them along (Walsh, 2014).

Spark Change

This narrative is about the premise of motivating others to action. Denning (2011) stated that there are three steps in motivating others into action with storytelling by way of a springboard story. This multilevel strategy of using stories to ignite action and employ new ideas is key in truly implementing transformational change in an organization. The first step is getting the attention of the audience. The next step, and most important, is stimulating the desire for change. The third step is for the leader to reinforce with reasons. If there is an absence of a desire to change, there will be no

motivation from the audience or team (Denning, 2011). A springboard story is authentic, is typically told with little detail, and is used to describe the concept of a new idea and the basic strategy or path to implement. Biesenbach (2018) stated that a powerful story can help one "win hearts . . . change minds . . . and get results" (p. 6).

The spark of a story "is the wisdom or the process that the character in your story receives in order to overcome the conflict" (Karia, 2015, p. 38). The change of a story is where the characters must modify their behavior as a result of the controversy. The lesson of each story must have a key point to take away. Stories can also help alter how a leader is perceived by followers. Using stories can help increase knowledge, build relationships throughout the organization, and spark action to implement change (Aidman & Long, 2017).

Build Trust

Smith (2012) suggested that effective leaders tell their own personal story to help build trust with their audience. Research indicates that using characteristics of ethical leadership assists leaders to develop relationships with employees based on trust (Chughtai, Byrne, & Flood, 2015). By being authentic, leaders can be vulnerable and share personal details, including a turning point in their lives. A positive message of hope engages the audience, and because it is real, the audience gains trust and can relate. Denning (2011) asserted that if a transformational leader truly knows the audience, a personal story that comes from inner conviction can be most effectively used when an employee comes in for coaching or counseling. It is important for the leader not to embellish the story but be open, honest, and oftentimes raw, exposing vulnerability. It is imperative for the leader to ensure that the audience hears the personal story being told.

If the listeners do not fully hear or understand the intent of the story, it could be perceived as arrogant, and the story could have the opposite intent of the way it was intended (Smith, 2012). When a transformational leader can authentically engage the audience and gain their trust, the perception becomes that the organization is linked to that leader and the values. Hence, increasing the trust between the followers and the organization can make transformational change one step closer (Denning, 2011).

Trust can happen between leaders and followers when the leader puts him or herself into a vulnerable situation by first trusting the follower. According to Auvinen, Aaltio, and Blomqvist (2013), "The manager may tell stories to either to build social and interpersonal trust or impersonal organizational trust" (p. 508). The basis of the trust in the relationship forms by interactions with these stories. From there, the trust is built on subsequent interactions and stories (Auvinen, Aaltio, & Blomqvist, 2013).

Build Brand

Denning (2011) discussed the fact that marketing in the 20th century was typically communication and operated as a one-way narrative to a mass audience by way of advertising. The concept of building a brand involves both a personal brand of the storyteller and the brand of the organization (Biesenbach, 2018). There are four reasons why the model of marketing has changed. The first reason is that the organizations used to control the power of the market. Now, the control has shifted to the buyer who has instant access to many different options by being able to research and purchase online very quickly. The second reason is the shift from basic advertisement to many more channels of television, the Internet, and the convenience of cell phones. The third reason is the shift in the use of technology. In the 20th century, most marketing was spread to

friends and family by word of mouth or even e-mail. With the explosion of social media, it has transformed not only how companies get the word out but also how customers can share feedback, both positive and negative (Lund, Cohen, & Scarles, 2018). The fourth reason for the change of marketing in the last century is the culture of the customer. Customers now are able to access information by using technology to research products, search the Internet for how to solve problems rather than calling for a service or repair, and tell their own stories to share their experiences (Denning, 2011).

Denning (2011) also implied that if the individuals can tell stories to build trust, then so can organizations to retain and gain customers. An organization can do this by telling a story of "turning points in the firm's history to communicate the character of the firm" (Denning, 2011, p. 113). It is important to communicate the brand both internally and externally. By communicating the brand within the organization, the vision, mission, and goals are clear with the internal stakeholders (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011). With this clarity, transformational change is more likely to occur. Communication with the customer as a two-way interaction is imperative in the 21st century (Denning, 2011). With the power resting in the hands of the consumer, companies need to constantly engage and adjust to keep up with the demands to continually build their brand through technology and social media (Lund et al., 2018). Schultz (2010) stated,

> Whether you are creating a brand, building one, or running a big one, you'd better understand social media, because there is a seismic shift in how people are gaining access to information and, as a result, how they are behaving. (p. 114)

As the number one brand on Facebook, Starbucks has become open and vulnerable and created an even playing field with two-way storytelling and continues fostering its brand

(Schultz, 2010). The power of social media is a force that all organizations must learn in order to craft their story effectively to avoid succumbing or falling victim to the negativity.

Transmit Values

There are different types of values that an organization can have. Although values of an individual or a cultural group may be of ethical value, the values of an organization can be different (Smith, 2012). These values can be competitive, no matter the cost. There are strategic values, pragmatic values, and ethical values within an organization. How a company communicates its values can have an effect on its customer satisfaction and following. There are many instances in which a customer will not purchase something from a company based on the sole understanding or perception of the values (Denning, 2011). If a company does not properly transmit or share its values with the right message, it can be detrimental to the success of the organization. Boal and Schultz (2007) stated,

> What is needed for storytelling to serve a role in complex adaptive learning
> systems is a structure that integrates the past and present in a way that generates
> tags among organizational members that coordinates and guides future behaviors
> while generating exploitative learning in appropriate situations. (p. 420)

With this integration, the values of the organization are established and all stakeholders have bought in (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

Human beings can be offended by inconsistencies of what is said and what is done in an organization. When the company's values are told as a narrative, values even when absent can be reestablished and told through action (Biesenbach, 2018). By telling

a timeless but believable imaginative story, the understanding of the values can be solidified (Denning, 2011). Once these values are shared, they can build trust and allow the stakeholders to work together.

Collaboration

Harvey and Drolet (2006) declared that there are many different types of teams and groups of people in organizations. There can be work groups, teams, communities, and networks. These groups can occur simultaneously and even be interdependent (Denning, 2011). Intelligence work flourishes with effective collaboration. Collaboration is the nature of working and thinking together (Hackman, 2011). Collaboration through stories is shared narratives that are communal (Brown & Duguid, 1991). The premise of Denning's (2011) narrative pattern to have teams collaborate builds cohesion and fosters an environment for working together. High-performance teams are similar to communities that cannot be forced by the leader. These teams must be built over time and be authentic in order for true transformation to happen. Senge (2006) stated that "today, much of our work is on knowledge networks, which we also call networks of collaboration: how people work together to create value and to create new sources of value" (p. 270).

Effective collaboration is dependent on the individuals' and organizations' shared values (Smith, 2012). Leaders who are masters at narrative storytelling can motivate high-performing teams to collaborate successfully to achieve the desired goals. Using springboard stories can help teams become engaged and secure buy-in. Another strategy to motivate stakeholders and teams is to bring in others to share their stories, but they

must be from a trusted source and encourage the team to develop their own story and make it individualized to their community or tribe (Denning, 2011).

Share Knowledge

Bandura (1971) asserted that learning is a transfer of knowledge. In organizations, collaboration occurs, and a two-way sharing of knowledge happens. Downsizing or reorganization in organizations can create gaps. Brown and Duguid (1991) stated that "to foster working, learning, and innovation, an organization must close that gap" (p. 53). Stories are a way for human beings to gain and retain knowledge in an authentic way. All stories have some elements of sharing knowledge. Denning (2011) suggested that knowledge-sharing stories are not always riveting, so it is important to add interesting components such as a twist or a hero to keep the audience engaged.

Stories can also help the audience learn about the topic and make sense of certain events or misunderstandings (Choy, 2017). In an organization, this can be the leader telling an informative story to explain and expand the audience's experiences that they otherwise would not have had previously, adding context to an otherwise unknown area (Brown & Duguid, 1991). As with any area of learning, the learner has to be willing. By employing various storytelling techniques, the leader can engage the audience to better assure that will occur (Denning, 2011).

Often, knowledge-sharing stories in organizations are told about problems or issues. The key to informing the audience and moving forward positively is to create the trust and safety for the stakeholders to discuss what went wrong (Smith, 2012). There are three styles of knowledge-sharing stories: scapegoat stories, victim stories, and

helplessness stories. Knowledge-sharing stories are typically one of two types: official or

underground stories (Denning, 2011). It is imperative for an organization to control the

tempo of the stories and make the official stories the ones that the stakeholders listen to

and believe. Even so, human nature will typically foster some form of underground story

or gossip.

Tame the Grapevine

Denning (2011) theorized that "the torrent of gossip and criticism that pours from

the rumor mill is the normal organizational response to basic change" (p. 206). Stories

can create a sense of belonging and a bond between members of an organization. This

bond can be fueled by emotion (Biesenbach, 2018). Oftentimes, this can be the

connection through gossip or discussion near the office watercooler. Biesenbach (2018)

states gossip and the grapevine can be toxic in an organization, especially after a new

decision has been made to implement change. This grapevine story can be retold

endlessly further being exaggerated from the truth or facts. If gossip, or the grapevine, is

not regularly tamed by the organization telling intentional organized stories, it can

negatively affect the organization's health (Denning, 2011).

There are a number of strategies that leaders can use to tame the company's

grapevine. As mentioned previously, it is important to try and stay ahead of the gossip by

telling overt and deliberate stories to be shared throughout the organization (Grove,

2015). Brown et al. (2005) declared that if there is an area where parts of the story are

challenged, it is more beneficial to tell those stories in smaller groups or departments.

Defend the organization's rumor mill with truthful stories of its own (Smith, 2012).

Another strategy is for leaders and the organization's storytellers to use gentle satire or

humor to mock what is being said in the grapevine without being mean spirited. If there is some truth to the rumor, it is important to recognize it and not use humor, or it could backfire on the organization's mission and values further decreasing the chance for transformational change (Denning, 2011).

With the many types of employees, leaders need to know their audience and tell the story accordingly (Biesenbach, 2018; Brown et al., 2005; Choy, 2017). They should tell positive stories that assemble a rationale for change. A strong leader is one who can gather many supporters to help tell the story. The organization should also have structural measures to reinforce the story and its believability (Denning, 2011).

In organizations, people want to know what is going on, but they usually do not know all of the facts. According to Brown et al. (2005), "People love telling stories about their organization, and not from maliciousness. People tell stories to retain other people in the organization that they want to keep there" (p. 24). Often, when people tell stories about an organization, it is more of a bonding experience than the intent of spreading rumors (Brown et al., 2005). When the positive stories of the grapevine are embraced by all stakeholders, a positive culture and organizational vision can be created and sustained.

Create and Share Vision

Smith (2012) affirmed that stories can be told of the future with organizational stories as no exception. This is often the main task of leadership to connect the vision with the followers in the organization (Smith, 2012). A key for leaders is to link the future or visionary story to that of the current mindset of the audience. Working backward from the past to the future will help them identify and be engaged from where

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they are and where they could possibly go (Boal & Schultz, 2007). Keeping the story simple will not complicate the message. If possible, tell the story in a future tense, as if it had just happened but is within reach of the present. It is imperative to be clear about the future story being told. The future is unknown and can be scary to some followers (Denning, 2011). A leader's ability to tell a story connecting it to life experiences can formulate the organizational vision. According to Boal and Schultz (2007), "The enduring values, expectations, and responsibilities that maintaining coherence produces for the organization—and which are manifested in its vision—show the opportunity that strategic leadership has in defining an organization's approach to future circumstances" (p. 422). A leader should also include informal statements of intention or descriptions of risk with the future story (Denning, 2011). By doing this, the leader is not whitewashing the change and sharing that there could be setbacks that have been taken into consideration and that there are supports in a plan with the global vision (Smith, 2012).

Storytelling in Organizations From the Human Resources Perspective

Hewitt (2015) identified that "storytelling is the most powerful weapon in the leader's arsenal" (p. 27). Using stories for the development of human resources in an organization can be beneficial. According to D'Arrigo, Robini, Larentis, Camargo, and Schmiedgen (2017), through stories, "employees are open for change, new information and knowledge; in other words, they are more reflective, as stories are effective ways to build meanings" (p. 734).

Employee Recruitment and Retention

Human resources administrators are tasked with a huge feat of recruiting and retaining high-quality employees. They are also given the responsibility of helping

employees be ready and prepared for the constant changing needs (Losey et al., 2005).

Stories can help the human resources administrators and other supervisors in the

organization share the message and bring the stakeholders along to buy-in and hopefully

lead the charge for the changes ahead.

According to Edlinger (2015), employer brand managers or "EBMs are

responsible for making the company visible and attractive to potential employees" (p.

443). Employer branding is a fairly new strategy being introduced to human resources

administrators and communication specialists. Employees and potential employees who

can craft a narrative to share their experiences can enhance their career success and, in

turn, advance the organizations (Hansen, 2007). Hansen (2007) stated that "job-seekers

who can tell stories about their ability to lead, communicate, and handle organizational

change have an advantage over others in the workplace" (p. 389).

Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement

Dimitrios, Sakas, and Vlachos (2013) explained that employee engagement is

important with change initiatives. With the use of narratives by leaders, employees feel

engaged and are a part of the process (Losey et al., 2005). When this occurs, positive

progress can happen. Storytelling can be used to share the benefits of and to model an

employee assistance program. Narratives can be used to leverage talent and promote

learning in the organization (Paludi, 2013). Employee surveys can also be a highly

effective way to elicit feedback and help shape the culture and tell the story of the

organization.

Research using narrative synthesis as a means to increase employee engagement

has been studied. While there are both positives and negatives, the positive outweighs

the latter by simply eliciting employees' input (Madden, Bailey, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2018).

When employees are happy, they tend to be more engaged and productive in their work.

Digital Age and Social Media

While there is current research with the use of video marketing through social

media, there is a gap in the research in how the customer views and receives it in the area

of human resources (Lund et al., 2018). The current digital times are a different world.

The power of social media has a great influence in how organizations operate and react.

Forms of narrative advertising are used to have the viewer or customer empathize with

the line of the story and buy the product (Coker, Flight, & Baima, 2017). Organizations

use data that can be gathered from social media in a number of ways. This can be by the

number of website visits, clicks or interests on photos or images, and the number of

subscribers. The use of a hashtag to link like characteristics allows for search criteria

(AINoamany, Weigle, & Nelson, 2016). The analysis of these data can further assist the

organization with marketing and brand awareness.

Marketing and Brand Awareness

Denning (2011) affirmed that the concept of persuasion constitutes more than a

quarter of the U.S. gross national product, and the concept of storytelling can be a huge

benefit to businesses and organizations to increase productivity and profit. The same

application applies to human resources administrators to keep the organization

competitive for recruitment and retention of employees. By telling stories to get a

message or theme across, it can help make a company competitive (Arnaud et al., 2016).

Storytelling also acts as a bridge to link the past to the present and build on the

foundation. When a story is told from the perspective of the customer, a relationship is

developed and establishes the beginning of customer loyalty (Pham et al., 2012).

Storytelling related to marketing and branding can be used to increase audiences

(McClearen, 2017). Utilized in the right way, stories can help an organization increase

its level of recognition among customers and the public (Pham et al., 2012). Using

stories can build bridges between the cause, mission, and audience in a convincing and

genuine way (Bublitz et al., 2016).

Choy (2017) explained that it is important for a nonprofit organization to

understand the target consumers' social identity, or there could be a negative result. The

organizations need to make sure the story being told and desired outcome is compatible

with the morals of the audience. If they do not, the story can act as an anticlimax

(Nguyen, 2015). Results from the majority of studies on this topic lead to the conclusion,

with a fair degree of certainty, that the use of storytelling in charitable organizations

elicits emotional responses in their audiences. These responses can have a positive or

negative effect, depending on the craft of the story and the beliefs of the audience (Dolan

& Bao, 2012).

The contrary can also occur if care is not taken when telling a story of change or

learning. Some organizations may have a culture in which it would be risky to admit

previous failure even if it can be seen as a learning experience (Smith, 2012). According

to Hutchens (2015), "A key element of the change and learning story is the wisdom that

is drawn out at the end" (p. 8). One example of this is the story of the failure of Coca

Cola launching New Coke in the 1980s. While with the field testing, New Coke was the

favored taste, the loyal audience of Coca Cola drinkers did not want to change and

wanted to keep their emotional connection to the brand. Coca Cola tells this story as a

learning experience and how to better listen to their audience when deciding on implementing change (Hutchens, 2015).

Storytelling can have a dramatic and emotional effect if structured and timed appropriately (Biesenbach, 2018; Brown et al., 2005; Gottschall, 2012; Smith, 2012). These stories allow the audience to play a role in the story as it is unfolding (Sargeant et al., 2010). Storytelling in charitable organizations uses stories in context to appeal for charity and has been found to have positive results. Recent studies suggest that the change in one's body with cortisol and oxytocin is more likely to move audience members to open their bank accounts (Hutchens, 2015). The use of stories takes the audience through different emotional stages such as the case of someone in need, the case for support, and the opportunity to take some action to fix the circumstances (Sargeant et al., 2010). A powerful story told by a nonprofit organization can tug at the heartstrings of the audience and evoke emotion (Ruebottom & Auster, 2018). This can develop the movement of both hearts and minds, which can result in increased donations. Research has found that 96% of nonprofits regard stories as central to their communication (Bublitz et al., 2016).

Training and Development

Senge (2006) posited that personal experiences are the DNA of the organization. Beigi (2014) asserted that there are advantages with storytelling in organizations about training and professional development. Audience members relate to an oral performance through storytelling (Walsh, 2014). Oral performance removes negative attitudes toward stories. Using narratives in training can increase access to varied stories. Story lines can help engage the audience to share information that might otherwise be difficult to convey

(Beigi, 2014). Training and presentations are typically focused on data and a large amount of information. By sharing the information through a story, the brain is able to mix its own lived experiences with the information being presented. This way, the transfer of knowledge is more easily understood and remembered (Bird, 2019).

Employee Performance

When trust is built and established, it can have a positive effect on employee performance. Stories can prevent or diffuse conflict in the organization (Baldie, 2018). Auvinen, Aaltio, and Blomquist (2013) stated that "stories inspire, motivate and help provide focus, prevent conflict and build trust. They benefit both leaders and subordinates in fulfilling their tasks in the organization" (p. 511). It is important to know the audience and how they might respond in regard to employee performance and feedback, depending on what generation they are in. Human resources administrators need to set the tone and be willing to craft a message to the various generations in the workplace (Clark, 2017).

Personnel and Crisis Management

Storytelling by human resources administrators can help with the taming of rumors and providing a sense of comfort during stressful times in an organization (Becker & Huselid, 2010). When human resources administrators use stories as an anecdote, it can help set minds at ease or at least better inform the stakeholders during difficulties such as downsizing or restructuring (Kopp, Nikolovska, Desiderio, & Guterman, 2011). The use of narratives can also assist during crisis management or turning points in an organization. According to Kopp et al. (2011), "We propose that

storytelling can be used as HRD's learning toolkit in leveraging human capital pre-, during, and postcrises" (p. 381).

Working stories can be used by leaders as authority mentors in an organization (Grove, 2015). Human resources administrators function as mentors to many of the other leaders in the organization to maintain a consistent tone throughout the company (Becker & Huselid, 2010). By using working stories, human resources administrators can exemplify important points to relay throughout the system (Holmes, 2005).

Goals and Strategic Plan of the Organization

Baker (2014) suggested using simple language in the stories for all to understand. Baker also suggested to invite all employees to contribute to the stories being crafted. This open invitation will allow an avenue for employees to share their own stories (Smith, 2012). By doing this, the company can develop "story champions" (Baker, 2014, p. 27) in the organization. The use of stories can bond people to a deeper grasp of the vision of the organization that they want to come to fruition. Baker (2014) stated that "storytelling, when used strategically, can focus, align and inspire the human energy needed to realize the strategic vision you have identified for your company and the positioning you are looking to build for your brand" (p. 26).

 Storytelling in Educational Organizations From the Human Resources Perspective

Aidman and Long (2017) stated that leaders in educational organizations are responsible for the development of the culture of the district. These administrators are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that their organization works efficiently while building teams and inspiring employee engagement and empowerment (Grove, 2015). While human resources administrators have a multitude of responsibilities both legally

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and culturally in the organization, they often set the tone and serve as a good example of a good steward for all employees regardless of the job title (ACSA, 2002). At the time of this study, there were no landmark or seminal research studies found regarding the research on human resources administrators use of storytelling in educational organizations.

Storytelling and School Culture

Deal and Peterson (2016) stated that there are many ways educational organizations can respond to school reform. In recent years, there have been a variety of responses to the reform of curriculum standards and testing. Different ways of shaping school culture can be used to influence, apply pressure, and address the politics that come with these reforms. Symbolic leadership shapes the culture of schools and educational organizations to serve their student populations. Schools should be similar to businesses where a culture is developed based on the common vision and values (Deal & Peterson, 2016). One way to respond to these reform issues and get all stakeholders to understand and join the initiative is through storytelling (Grove, 2015).

It is imperative that educational leaders understand the dynamic development of creating and controlling the organization's culture. Aidman and Long (2017) declared that "stories can change how leaders are viewed and make them more accessible" (p. 120). Educational leaders can set the tone during meetings, staff development, and conferences to elucidate expectations and relay any important information (Aidman & Long, 2017).

Storytelling and Social Media in Education

Denning (2011) affirmed that social media as a form of storytelling can enhance many different aspects in organizations. This strategy can share the brand awareness in educational organizations in which there is more choice with charter and private schools. The use of social media is also living proof of the organization's culture (Lund et al., 2018). The use of social media through Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Snapchat can help share the story of the organization's culture. Another avenue for telling a story is the use of TED Talks to promote a message or story of an organization (Karia, 2015).

Human resources administrators can share this culture through the use of photos and videos to tell the organization's story for recruitment. These photos and videos can engage viewers to see that the organization is a fun and challenging place to work (Zielinski, 2018). When an organization, including schools, encourages employees to use social media, it not only engages the employees but also engages all stakeholders by showcasing employees' work lives. This can have many benefits including that used to engage recruits for potential employment. Social Media can also be used to evaluate the data and metrics available through social media platforms to measure the recruitment efforts (Zielinski, 2018). By analyzing the number of followers, likes, retweets, impressions, and views, it can guide human resources administrators to see whether the efforts meet the human resources department goals.

Labor Negotiations in Education

The impact of telling stories in organizations and sending a message to stakeholders is critical (Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). This proves to be especially true

during labor negotiations in educational organizations. Although the use of social media during negotiations can be beneficial, it can also raise some practical and legal issues. With the use of e-mail, social media, and communications via websites, educational organizations can improve or decrease the tone at the negotiations table (Bilbeisi, 2019). A recent challenge faced by human resources administrators is the crafting of the message and story about labor negotiations. In 2018, the Janus decision was a landmark Supreme Court case concerning the power of labor unions to collect fees from non-union members. In the post-Janus era, labor negotiations have changed dramatically (Dunn, 2018). With labor unions posturing to feel like they have earned the dollars received from their members, it is putting more pressure on districts in regard to labor relationships. Now, more than ever, it is important for educational organizations to tell organizational stories that support the positive culture and relationships that lead to collaboration. Denning (2011) stated that storytelling can be used to tell a narrative to neutralize gossip and rumor. By "taming the grapevine" (Denning, 2011, p. 205), human resources administrators will be able to more accurately tell the story from the organization's perspective and chill the tone at the table and in the public eye.

Gaps in the Research

There are gaps in the research to show how exemplary human resource administrators in educational organizations use stories to inspire action, communicate values, foster collaboration, impart knowledge, and lead into the future as Denning (2011) and Smith (2012) asserted with worldwide organizations. With the initial scan, the researcher found a large gap in the research regarding the use of storytelling in

educational organizations in its entirety, let alone the focus on the use by human resources administrators serving as one of the chief storytellers.

At the time of this study, there was no research to find the effects of storytelling in educational organizations to implement change to improve or shift the culture by human resources administrators. There had also been no research done on the effectiveness of storytelling in regard to recruitment and retention of quality employees and employee satisfaction among all employees, including classified, certificated, and management staff. There is a gap in the research with the use of social media and storytelling by human resources administrators, specifically in educational organizations. While there are many similarities in how corporate organizations utilize social media, there is a gap in the research specifically targeting human resources administrators using social media avenues in school districts. There is also a gap in the research showing the use of storytelling by human resources administrators in educational organizations to celebrate wins and success of the district. By sharing the positive messages through stories, many benefits can result.

Employee attitudes can have a huge impact on the culture of an organization (Borg et al., 2008). Using stories by human resources administrators can help preserve a positive culture in the school district. With further research based on the human resources arena, additional strategies and lessons can be learned to improve the culture and promote change within the educational organization.

Summary

Stories unite cultures and bring people together (Denning, 2008, 2011; Smith, 2012). When stories are used as a strategy to socialize members of a team, it can

encourage them to follow and abide by the cultural norms and values of the organization (Moua, 2010). Stories of an organization are driven not only by the reflections of the company but also by organizational meaning and realities that define the culture. These connections help build engagement of the stakeholders and an understanding of the company tenets (Rhodes et al., 2010). Storytelling can also help people understand the patterns of the culture within the organization. With these patterns, leaders can understand the concerns so that informed decisions can be made to manage change (O'Toole et al., 2008). With a foundational understanding of these patterns, leaders can guide stakeholders into the various change initiatives needed. The genre of storytelling for change is a blend of telling a narrative of the past and living stories of the present. This includes the transformation of the future blended with the preservation in narrative retrospect (Boje, 2012).

In organizations in which there is a preferred sense of the use of human relationships as currency, storytelling can assist those relationships among both internal and external stakeholders (Boje, 1991). The simple act of a carefully crafted story can help one connect with the audience and achieve results (Nossel, 2018). These outcomes in an organization can result in many different kinds of transformational change initiatives, moving teams in a unified direction and generating a sense of ownership and widespread responsibility among stakeholders (Gherardi et al., 2018).

D. Anderson and Ackerman Anderson (2010) asserted that all organizations are faced with the need to change. There is no exception in educational organizations. Given that schools are tasked with implementing a number of initiatives, some requiring a complete transformation to improve student achievement and services, storytelling

could assist educational organizations with making these changes. Without a true

transformation driven by human resources administrators at the heart of the organization,

these trends could wane as well (O'Neil & Cuban, 2000). By integrating storytelling into

school systems and using Denning's (2011) narrative to get things done collaboratively,

the culture of the teams could enhance that positive transformation. Human resources

administrators in school districts could utilize the strategy of storytelling, becoming a

catalyst for change.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The best way to communicate with people you are trying to lead is often through a story.

—Stephen Denning, *The Leaders Guide to Storytelling*

The study used a descriptive phenomenological research design to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead school districts using Denning's (2011) narrative patterns. This qualitative research method was used because it attempts to set aside preconceived assumptions and biases to describe the essence of lived experiences of participants. The goal of the study was to understand common narratives used when telling stories in educational organizations.

The methodology section of the dissertation describes the design of the study, role of the researcher, process of data collection, participants in the study and the selection process, and the analysis of the data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This chapter provides insight into this phenomenological study. It includes a review of the purpose statement and research questions, research design, population, sample, and instrumentation in separate sections. An overview of the data collection process and an overview of the analysis are provided. The interview process is described along with the steps taken to increase validity and reliability. Chapter III concludes with a summary of the study limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using

Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns (ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organization's brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision). In addition, it was the purpose to understand how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in organizations.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How do exemplary human resources administrators lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns?

Subquestions

1. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to ignite action and implement new ideas?

2. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build trust?

3. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build the organization's brand?

4. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to transmit organizational values?

5. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to foster collaboration?

6. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to share knowledge?

7. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to neutralize rumor?

8. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create and share vision?

9. How do exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in their organizations?

Research Design

This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary human resources administrators use to lead their organizations through storytelling. This study was part of a larger thematic study on the use of storytelling by exemplary leaders. A group of three peer researchers along with two faculty advisors met, explored, and arrived at the decision to conduct a qualitative phenomenological study designed to gather the lived experiences of each peer researchers' identified exemplary leaders.

Dissertation studies are done in a quantitative, qualitative, or a mixed-methods manner. Quantitative and qualitative methods are used to distinguish various modes of inquiry or methods of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative and mixed methods were analyzed with this study.

Quantitative studies and measurements require some type of tool to gather numerical values that correspond to essential qualities of the subject of the study. This evidence and data are tested for validity and correlated to the relations with the other variables (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The nature of this study and data gathered did not fit a quantitative research method. The nature of this study needed to develop and support a deeper understanding of the lived experiences and practices of leaders using storytelling to lead their organizations.

Qualitative research designs typically have the premise of studying a behavior as it occurs naturally. Qualitative research can also focus on process orientation and

participant perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Because the focus of this study was to understand how exemplary leaders use storytelling by interviewing about their lived experiences, a qualitative research design was chosen.

Method

The methodology of this qualitative and phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead and create transformational change in educational organizations. This nonexperimental descriptive approach is the most appropriate for gathering data that are intended to capture the lived experience of this group. The participants had direct experience with the phenomena and participated in interviews to collect the desired data (Patton, 2015).

When evaluating a mixed-methods research, the thematic team considered both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages to conducting a mixed-methods study approach include providing more comprehensive data; studying the process as well as the outcome; compensating for limitations with the use of a single method; allowing the investigation of different types of research questions, including those more complex; and enhancing the credibility of findings from a single method.

Patton (2015) described phenomenological studies as the sharing in common focus on investigating how human beings made sense of events and transmuted these experiences into realization. The thematic team of peer researchers evaluated and discussed the appropriateness of a phenomenological study. The goal of this study was to describe the lived experiences of the phenomenon of human resources administrators who are exemplary among their peers and to describe their shared experiences.

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A phenomenological study was chosen as the most appropriate method because "phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (Patton 2015, p. 115). Leaders are tasked with a huge feat of being the heart of the organization, often setting the tone of the culture (Baldoni, 2003). There is no exception with human resources administrators in this regard. By using a phenomenological approach to the study, the researcher was able to find common themes to gain a better understanding of how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead and create transformational change in educational organizations using Denning's (2011) narrative patterns.

Population

A research population is the complete collection of individuals or objects that are the focus of a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, the population was human resources administrators leading and supporting public school districts in California. Human resources administrators play a key role in driving the culture of the company. These leaders oversee many aspects of the organization including the processes for all employee recruitment, hiring, placement, evaluation, collective bargaining, and ensuring that the organization is equitable, compliant with the law, and nondiscriminatory. The human resources leader is also a critical member of the leadership team who sets a positive culture. How the human resources leader as a member of the leadership team behaves and interacts often funnels down through the rest of the team. The human resources leader must support a culture in which employees are valued and motivated to achieve the organization's goals and objectives (Ezenne, 2010).

According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, there were 1,037 public school districts in California during the 2018-2019 school year. In all 1,037 school districts, one administrator was designated with the responsibility of human resources. This population of 1,037 school districts was too large to sample every possible respondent.

Target Population

The intent of the study was to identify and explain how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead their school districts. A target population is the total group of individuals from the overall population from which the sample might be drawn (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The population for this study was exemplary human resources administrators in California school districts. It is typically not feasible, because of time or cost constraints, to study large groups; however, the researcher chose population samples from within a larger group. The target population was chosen from the overall population for which the study data were used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The target population was identified as 61 human resources administrators working in a school district in Placer and Sacramento counties of Northern California. This target population allowed the researcher to interview each participant in an accessible environment.

Sample

In research, a sample is a set of participants in a study selected from the population that the researcher intends to generalize. Sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). Likewise, a sample is defined as a subset of the target group representing the entire

population according to Patton (2015) and Creswell (2003). When a researcher chooses a quantitative approach, the sample is often random; however, the sample population for this study was criteria based. The study used purposeful sampling for the qualitative approaches. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), purposeful sampling is when the researcher "selects a sample that is representative of the population or that includes subjects with needed characteristics" (p. 138). Purposeful sampling was chosen as the method of sample selection based on specified criteria. Purposeful sampling was used as the researcher selected exemplary individuals to study because it allowed a purposeful understanding of the research problem and study's phenomena (Creswell, 2008). Moreover, Patton (2015) noted that sampling benefits the researcher because of the ability to identify themes from a smaller group representative of a larger population.

The process of choosing a controllable sample size depends on the research problem and population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study utilized nonprobability sampling. Participants were purposefully chosen in public school districts in Northern California because of the researchers' time, geography, and resources with these populations. A recommendation was five to 25 participants for phenomenological studies according to Creswell (2008). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 2015). The sample for this qualitative study of 10 human resources administrators was arrived at in consultation with the peer researchers and faculty advisors. Furthermore, criterion-based sampling was used to find participants to address the study purpose and enable the

researcher to select participants based on the study's definition of exemplary (Patton, 2015; see Figure 1).
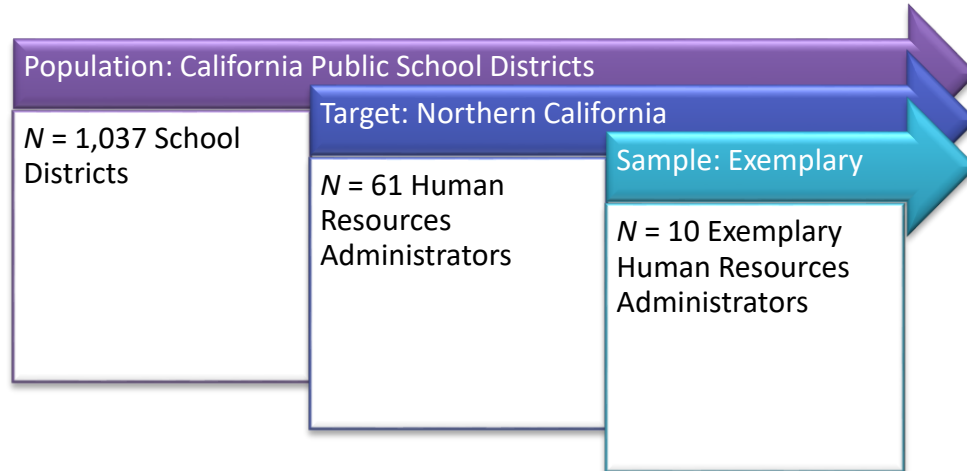
Figure 1. Population, target population and sample.

For the purposes of this research, exemplary leader was defined as those who met at least four of the following characteristics:

1. They show evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a California school district.

2. They have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the human resources profession.

3. They have had articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings in the area of human resources.

4. They have received recognition by their peers.

5. They have a membership in human resources professional associations.

6. They have received a recommendation from one or more recognized district superintendents.

The following process was implemented to select the study participants:

1. An e-mail was sent to all of the superintendents in the selected Placer County and Sacramento County California school districts to describe the research study and exemplary leadership criteria, requesting the names and contact information of human resources administrators who met the exemplary criteria (Appendix A). Verification of the exemplary human resources administrators was made with examination of the district social media, websites, and the ACSA website.

2. When verification of human resources administrators who met the exemplary criteria was received, the leader was placed on a list. Ten eligible human resources administrators were selected. The selected potential human resources administrators were sent an invitation via e-mail that described the purpose of the research study and asked whether they were willing to participate (Appendix B). The first 10 human resources administrators to confirm participation were selected for research. Interviews began immediately after eligible human resources administrators confirmed their involvement.

3. Ten semistructured interviews were conducted with the human resources administrators who met the criteria of an exemplary leader.

A qualitative phenomenological study allowed data to be gathered to tell the stories of the lived experiences of human resources administrators in California. Qualitative questions were designed as exploratory and led to discoveries in common themes (Flipp, 2016). The sample size of 10 was enough to explore deep meaning and understanding of how stories are told in educational organizations (Patton, 2015). In purposeful sampling, the analysis of patterns continues until there is nothing new being discovered, and the data reach a saturation point (Patton, 2015).

<center>**Instrumentation**</center>

Researcher as Instrument

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patten, 2012; Patton, 2015). Because of the researcher being the instrument in a qualitative study, Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) contended that the unique personalities, characteristics, and interview techniques of the researcher may influence how the data are collected. As a result, the study may contain some biases based on how the researcher influenced the interviewee during the qualitative interview sessions. At the time of this study, the researcher was employed as an assistant superintendent of human resources with the Placer County Office of Education. As a result, the researcher brought a potential bias to the study based on personal experiences in similar settings to those that were studied. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews with the research participants. The interview questions and responses were conducted face-to-face and were recorded digitally via a hand-held recording device.

The three-member thematic group developed the interview questions with the two faculty advisors over the course of several meetings. Each thematic member identified three narrative patterns from Denning's (2011) theoretical framework. A thorough review of the literature and analysis of the synthesis matrix were used to develop the interview questions. The interview questions were designed to align with the purpose statement and research questions. Semistructured questions were developed to allow for individual responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The questions were submitted to the two faculty advisors for feedback, and revisions were made. The finalized versions were field-tested by each researcher. Once the questions were completed, probes for

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each interview question were developed through a similar process. According to

McMillan and Schumacher (2010), probes are questions to elicit further clarification and

detail. The probing questions deepen the understanding of the answers from the main

interview questions and provide deeper meaning to the eight narrative patterns for

organizational storytelling.

The semistructured interview and probing questions were finalized by the three

peer researchers. The three peer researchers also developed an interview protocol to be

read conversationally by each researcher prior to beginning the semistructured interview.

The components of the protocol included an introduction to the interview, a brief

overview of the study, an informed consent narrative, and an opportunity for the

interviewee to ask any questions prior to the interview (Appendix C).

All three peer researchers used the same protocol during the field-testing and

evaluated for revisions prior to beginning the data collection. An agreement was made

by the thematic team of peer researchers to follow the exact interview protocol in order to

maintain consistency and integrity of the process.

Field Test

In data collection, field tests are crucial in order to test for bias (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010). Field tests are also important to identify practical problems in regard

to data collection instruments, sessions, and methodology. The three peer researchers

conducted field tests on leaders who met the criteria of exemplary but were not included

in the respective studies. The field-test interviews were observed by expert qualitative

researchers. The expert observers were individuals who completed their doctorate in

education and a qualitative research study. The expert observers provided feedback to

the researcher regarding the questions, length of interview, and potential cues to consider (Appendix D). The field-test interview was conducted by each researcher who recorded notes of the participant responses and digitally recorded the session. The researcher received a feedback form from the expert advisor developed by the expert faculty advisors. The feedback form contained information on interview style, delivery, and adherence to the protocol. The feedback assisted the researcher in being aware of potential bias in the study.

By participating in a field test, the researcher can be confident in the reliability and validity of the instrument (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The thematic team of peer researchers used the interview questions and protocol to guide the field tests. Adjustments were made based on a field-test participant and expert observer responses. A team meeting was scheduled between the researcher and faculty advisors to finalize the instrument.

Validity

Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that qualitative researchers should employ a multitude of procedures in order to check for the validity of an instrument and accuracy of findings in a study. Systems employed in qualitative research that verify trustworthiness and credibility of findings include triangulation, elucidating bias, making field observations, and using peer feedback and external observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Roberts, 2010). A number of strategies and multiple researchers were used in this study to increase the validity of the data.

The instrument was created, revised, and field-tested by the three thematic peer researchers. The thematic team was guided by the two faculty advisors who provided

expert validation with the instrument and protocol. The main method used in this qualitative study was semistructured interviews. The data from the interviews were triangulated with the collection of observations and artifacts. Creswell and Creswell (2018) posited that multiple methods approaches expand the interpretation of the participants' lived experiences. In addition to the 60-minute interview, the participants were e-mailed a copy of the transcripts to review for accuracy. The time to review the transcripts was approximately 10 minutes.

Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument being measured is consistent. If the circumstances or phenomena were measured at a different time and resulted in a similar outcome, then the instrument is considered to be reliable (Roberts, 2010). Internal reliability and intercoder reliability were the methods deployed for this study.

Internal Reliability

Internal reliability refers to how the three thematic peer researchers and two faculty advisors collectively developed and tested the study's instrument but also checked the alignment of the purpose, definition of variables, and the research questions. The two faculty advisors were instrumental in guiding the team in understanding the importance of harmonizing the elements. Both faculty advisors had extensive experience as superintendents and had presented at conferences and symposiums on the topic in addition to collectively having more than 20 years' experience as researchers. This method encourages an objective view of the phenomena and heightens awareness of the researcher's underlying values and assumptions (Brink, 1993; Patton, 2015).

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patten, 2012; Patton 2015). Because of the researcher being the instrument in a qualitative study, Pezalla et al. (2012) contended that the unique personalities, characteristics, and interview techniques of the researcher may influence how the data are collected. As a result, the study may contain some biases based on how the researcher influenced the interviewee during the qualitative interview sessions. The researcher brought a potential bias to the study based on personal experiences in a similar setting to those that were studied. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews with the research participants. The interview questions were conducted face-to-face and were recorded digitally via a hand-held recording device.

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability is a method for researchers to check for bias while coding the data. Researchers need to concisely record detailed steps of the procedures and establish an archive so others may follow the exact approaches (Yin, 1994). The shared knowledge, interpretations, and lived experiences collected during the interviews were shared by the thematic peer research team. According to Patton (2015), multiple individuals analyzing the same data help to "discuss what they see in data, share insights, and consider what emerges from their different perspectives" (p. 667). Additionally, one of the 10 interviews was coded by both the researcher and a peer researcher, and the results were reviewed for agreement with a threshold of 80% or higher (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Campanella Bracken, 2010). This process of review and reflection of coding ensured the reliability of the codes.

Data Collection

Qualitative research uses data that are descriptive. The three kinds of qualitative

data are interviews, observations and field-work, and documents (Patton, 2015). The data

for this study were collected via interviews. Prior to data collection, Institutional Review

Board (IRB) approval was essential to assure participant confidentiality and safety (Yin,

1994). Each leader who agreed to participate received a copy of the Brandman

University Bill of Rights (Appendix E), the IRB informed consent (Appendix F), and an

e-mail confirming the time and location of the interview. Data for this phenomenological

study were collected from 10 exemplary human resources administrators through face-to-

face interviews, observations, and artifacts. Field notes were stored in the researcher's

personal computer protected by secure passwords.

Interview Process

Interviews provide the researcher a chance to inquire, listen, and assimilate

others' experiences (Patton, 2015). All 10 exemplary human resources administrators

who agreed to participate were provided the 20 semistructured interview questions

developed by the three thematic peer researchers (Appendix G). Prior to the interviews,

each participant signed the Brandman University's IRB Research Participant's Bill of

Rights (Appendix E), the informed consent and audio recording release form (Appendix

F). The researcher reviewed the study's purpose and focus prior to the interview. In

addition, the researcher queried the participants with additional probes to clarify their

understanding of each question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face. Human resources administrators

were in their professional work sites for the interviews. Two recording devices were

utilized: one was a handheld audio recorder and the other an app on the researcher's

phone. The purpose of two devices ensured that the researcher had backup information

from the interviews. Handwritten notes were taken that reflected nonverbal behaviors

including body language and facial expressions. After each interview, the audio

recordings on the phone app were converted to a word document. Finally, the transcribed

documents were submitted to NVivo for analysis of themes.

Observations

Direct observation of the setting and verbal and nonverbal communications of

five of the participants were documented at a different time than the semistructured

interview. This was completed to enhance the breadth and scope of data collected. The

observations supported the triangulation of research findings. Patton (2015) stated that

observational data and field-work allow the inquirer to "see things that may routinely

escape awareness among the people in the setting" (p. 333). Furthermore, observers may

represent participants in their own world and ask general questions to allow them to

freely provide views (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Observational data were gathered from organizational meetings, presentations,

and conferences. In addition, notes were taken regarding interactions with peers and

colleagues. Prior to the observations, the researcher received permission from the study

participants to assure ethical data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The

observations provided the researcher with additional information to support data

triangulation.

Artifacts

Artifacts are additional sources of information to support claims made by the participant (Patton, 2015). Examples may include organizational documents, individual reports, community documents, and social media excerpts. These artifacts represent "an inventory of documentation that can deepen fieldwork and qualitative analysis" (Patton, 2015, p. 378). Participants were given verbal examples of artifacts to support their interview responses although submission was voluntary.

Data Analysis

The objective of data analysis in a qualitative study is to decipher and understand a large amount of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Roberts, 2010). The data collected in qualitative studies may be complex, so the researcher needs to decipher the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Different researchers may use various strategies to approach the data so that narratives about how the vast amount of data is themed and organized would channel the analysis.

Ten hours of interviews from the 18 interview questions, observation notes, and artifacts were synthesized. The structure of the data analysis included transcription of audio recordings of interviews, review of handwritten notes, artifacts, and observation for themes. The data were uploaded into NVivo software, coded, and organized into themes. The themes were analyzed to identify the narrative patterns that exemplary human resources administrators practiced with organizational storytelling.

Coding the Data

Coding the data is the identification of classifications into themes (Patton, 2015). This categorization is crucial to allow for analysis of the interviews and artifacts in order

to determine the significance of the data. Researchers also need to align the data with the study's purpose and research questions (Patton, 2015).

For this study, interview transcriptions, field notes, and artifacts were uploaded into NVivo, a coding software. The researcher reviewed the interview transcriptions in entirety. Topics were organized into classifications of similarity. The topics were then condensed into codes and organized to check whether new themes emerged. The categories were abbreviated, and the codes were alphabetized. The codes were then organized into themes and analyzed to describe exemplary human resources administrators' practices for organizational storytelling. The analytical process of review and reflection of the coding ensures the reliability of the codes (Patton, 2015).

Limitations

Limitations of a study are elements that may negatively modify the ability to generalize findings (Roberts, 2010). Interviews in phenomenological studies are restricted to the participants' lived experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Roberts, 2010). The limitations of this study of exemplary human resources administrators were sample size, geography, sampling technique, and the researcher as an instrument of the study.

Sample Size

Purposeful sampling is important when there are limited resources in qualitative research in order to make the most effective use of the data available. Phenomenological studies typically have sample sizes of six to 25 participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The thematic team of peer researchers and faculty advisors mutually agreed to a sample size of 10 exemplary leaders. Although the sample size limited generalizability, the

widespread information generated provided rich data. A total of 30 study participants

were interviewed by the three thematic peer researchers.

Time

A limitation of the study was time. Human resources administrators are busy with

the day-to-day operations of a school district. Each interview was limited to 60 minutes.

Geography

The study examined exemplary human resources administrators in school districts

in California. Data collection for the study was limited by the proximity of the researcher

to the study participants. At the time of this study, the researcher worked in Northern

California. The researcher performed face-to-face interviews in Northern California

while intentionally performing site visits during the workweek in school districts in

Placer and Sacramento counties.

Researcher as Instrument of Study

The researcher as an instrument of the study was also a limitation of this

qualitative study. The quality of the research depends significantly on the skills of the

researcher with the conducting of interviews. The presence of the researcher during data

gathering can also have an effect on the responses of the subjects (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010).

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

A phenomenological research study was used to describe the lived experiences of

exemplary human resources administrators who lead using Denning's (2011) eight

narrative patterns of storytelling. Chapter III included the purpose statement, research

questions, research design, study population, sample criteria, instrumentation, data

collection, data analysis, and limitations. Chapter IV provides detailed descriptions of

the data and research findings. Finally, Chapter V summarizes the findings, conclusions,

and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study described the behaviors of exemplary human resources administrators practiced to lead their school districts using storytelling based upon the eight narrative patterns: ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organization's brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision, along with transformational change leadership. The framework of storytelling and leadership was developed by Denning (2011) in his book *The Leader's Guide to Storytelling, Mastering the Art and Discipline of Business Narrative.* The group of three peer researchers and two advising faculty collaborated and determined that a qualitative phenomenological research design would gather rich descriptions of exemplary leaders' lived experiences. The thematic research team collaboratively created research-based definitions of the eight elements of storytelling, the criteria for an exemplary leader, the sample size, and the semistructured interview questions. This chapter presents the purpose statement, research questions, population, study sample, research methodology, data collection procedures, analysis of data collected, and a presentation of key findings from the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns (ignite action and implement new ideas; build trust; build your organization's brand; transmit organizational values; foster collaboration; share knowledge; neutralize rumor; create and share vision). In addition, it

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was the purpose to understand how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in organizations.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How do exemplary human resources administrators lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns?

Subquestions

1. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to ignite action and implement new ideas?

2. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build trust?

3. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build the organization's brand?

4. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to transmit organizational values?

5. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to foster collaboration?

6. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to share knowledge?

7. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to neutralize rumor?

8. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create and share vision?

9. How do exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in their organizations?

Population

According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, there were 1,037 public school districts in California during the 2018-2019 school year. In all 1,037 school districts, one administrator was designated with the responsibility of human resources. This population of 1,037 school districts was too large to sample every possible respondent. The population for this study was exemplary human resources administrators in California school districts. It is typically not feasible, due to time or cost constraints, to study large groups; however, the researcher chose population samples from within a larger group. The target population was identified as 61 human resources administrators working in a school district in Placer and Sacramento counties of Northern California.

Sample

The thematic dissertation team collectively developed the sample criteria. Sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). Likewise, a sample is defined as a subset of the target group representing the entire population according to Patton (2015) and Creswell (2003). When a researcher chooses a quantitative approach, the sample is often random; however, the sample population for this study was criteria based. The target population for this study was narrowed to include all 61 human resources administrators in Placer and Sacramento counties because of convenience to the researcher's time, geography, and resources. The process of choosing a controllable sample size depends on the research problem and population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study utilized nonprobability sampling. A recommendation was five to 25 participants for

phenomenological studies according to Creswell (2008). There are no specific rules

when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative size

may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives

(Patton, 2015).

For the purposes of this research, exemplary human resources administrator was

defined as those who met at least four of the following characteristics:

1. They show evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a

   California school district.

2. They have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the human resources profession.

3. They have had articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at

   conferences or association meetings in the area of human resources.

4. They have received recognition by their peers.

5. They have a membership in human resources professional associations.

6. They have received a recommendation from one or more recognized district

   superintendents.

Furthermore, criterion-based sampling was used to find participants to address the study

purpose and enable the researcher to select participants based on the study's definition of

exemplary (Patton, 2015). The sample for this qualitative study was 10 human resources

administrators and was determined to be adequate by the three peer researchers and two

faculty advisors. To identify the 10 study participants, all district superintendents in

Placer and Sacramento counties with human resources administrators were contacted to

gather a prospective list of administrators who met the above criteria of an exemplary

leader.

Research Methodology and Data Collection

A phenomenological study was chosen for this study to identify and describe the behaviors of exemplary human resources administrators who led through storytelling. This was a collective decision by the thematic research team because phenomenological studies produce rich descriptions of lived experiences and add to the depth of the research. Personal, face-to-face, in-depth interviews were conducted with all 10 exemplary human resources administrators to provide insight into their experiences with the eight narrative patterns and leading through transformational change. These interviews served as the primary data collection for the study, and additional sources of data, including artifacts and observations, created richer and deeper meanings of the study participants' leadership.

The interview protocol (Appendix C) developed collaboratively by the peer research team with faculty input included 18 open-ended questions with two questions for each of the eight narrative patterns of storytelling and leadership and two questions on leading transformational change based on Denning's (2011) work. A field test was conducted with an expert observer to ensure that the questions were valid. All 10 interviews were conducted in person either at the human resources administrator's office or the researcher's office, depending on schedules. The interviews lasted between 27 minutes and 1 hour and 38 minutes, and were audio recorded. All recordings were transcribed and sent to each participant for review to ensure the accuracy of the transcription.

Artifacts and observations were additional data sources collected to provide triangulation of data collected in the interviews. Five observations of study participants

were conducted either after the interview, at a separate time, or in a conference

presentation. These data collection experiences comprised staff meetings, human

resources meetings, one-on-one interactions with staff, and a conference presentation. In

addition, 40 artifacts were gathered directly from participants and public electronic

sources. Artifacts included brochures, staff memos, written communication, videos, and

presentation materials. Electronic sources were collected through a search of online

databases, websites, and social media platforms. All of these documents were uploaded

into NVivo and reviewed to identify connections and emergent themes. Observations

and artifacts allowed the researcher to further validate the interview data.

Study Participants

To ensure the confidentiality of study participants, each was assigned a unique

identification number. No participant names or school districts were used in this study.

Table 1 identifies the participants, their gender, years in human resources, and number of

students in their district. Table 2 identifies participants and their qualifications according

to the six criteria of an exemplary leader developed by the thematic team. All 10

participants met or exceeded the requirements. Of the 10 participants, nine were male

and one was female. Due to the exemplary requirements, nine of the 10 had been in the

human resources field for a minimum of 5 years, but the one with 4 years met four of the

six criteria to qualify as exemplary. It is interesting to note that there was only one

female exemplary human resources administrator in the target sample.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Study Participants.

Study participant	Gender	Years in human resources	Students in school district
1	Male	12	27,000
2	Male	4	13,000
3	Male	21	11,000
4	Male	8	6,800
5	Male	6	9,020
6	Male	8	39,750
7	Male	12	10,300
8	Male	5	10,300
9	Female	5	3,500
10	Male	12	6,800

Table 2

Exemplary Criteria, Human Resources Administrators

Study participant	Evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a California school district	Minimum 5 years in Human resources	Articles, papers, materials written, published, presented at conferences, association meetings in the area of human resources	Recognition by their peers	Membership in human resources professional associations	Recommendation by one or more recognized district superintendents
1	x	x	x	x	x	x
2	x		x	x	x	x
3	x	x	x	x	x	x
4	x	x	x	x	x	x
5	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	x	x	x	x	x	x
7	x	x			x	x
8	x	x		x	x	x
9	x	x	x		x	x
10	x	x	x	x	x	x

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Chapter IV findings were based on the results from the interviews, observations,

and artifacts. These findings highlighted the lived experiences of the exemplary human

resources administrators related to the eight narrative patterns and transformational

change of storytelling and leadership presented by Denning (2011).

Data Analysis

The 10 recorded interviews were transcribed through a phone application,

reviewed for accuracy, then uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative software coding

application. The use of NVivo provides an avenue for qualitative data analysis, which

requires the researcher to recognize emergent themes across large amounts of detailed

data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These codes were categorized into themes

following the conversational leadership framework of Denning (2011), which include

ignite action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, collaboration, share knowledge,

neutralize rumor, share vision, and transformational leadership. When the coding process

was completed, the researcher analyzed the strength of each theme from the frequency of

the codes tallied.

Reliability

Gathering and analyzing multiple sources of data provide triangulation as

common themes and information are compared from different sources and settings

(Patton, 2015). The 10 semistructured interviews were the primary source of data

collected for this study; observations and artifacts were also gathered to increase the

reliability of the study. Furthermore, intercoder reliability was used because a peer

researcher independently coded 10% of the data generated from the study. This

independent assessment of the data, using the same metrics as the researcher, provided

for similar conclusions to be reached, thus establishing intercoder reliability. This

secondary coding of the data reached an agreement of 85% and therefore established that the coding conducted by the researcher was trustworthy.

<center>**Central Research Question and Subquestion Results**</center>

This presentation and analysis of data in this chapter were obtained qualitatively through face-to-face personal interviews with 10 identified exemplary human resources administrators, observations of five of the identified exemplary human resources administrators, and 40 artifacts. The findings from the interviews, observations, and artifacts are reported in the following section in relation to how they answered the research questions.

Central Research Question

The central research question asked, "How do exemplary human resources administrators lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns?"

The all-encompassing coding process resulted in 14 themes with 999 frequencies across the data sources of 10 interviews, five observations, and 40 artifacts. The calculation of frequencies involved data from interview transcriptions, observation data, and artifacts. The element of spark action produced three themes, build trust three, build brand three, transmit values three, foster collaboration four, share knowledge five, neutralize rumor three, share vision four, and create transformational change three (see Figure 2). The frequency of themes suggests that there is an equal balance in what is important to the exemplary human resources administrators.
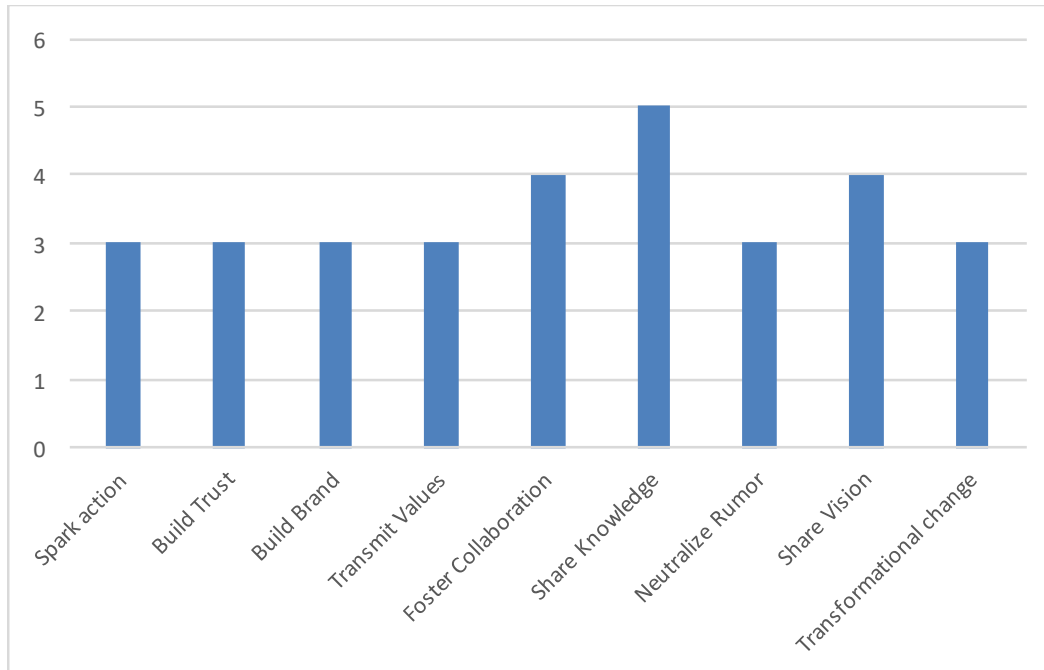
Figure 2. Number of themes in each element of storytelling and leadership.

The frequency of each theme was also analyzed. The element of share knowledge generated the largest number of references with 173, which was 17.3% of the coded data. Foster collaboration had 133 references representing 13.3% of the data. Share vision produced 128 references representing 12.8% of the data. Transmit values generated 120 references, which represented 12.0% of the data. Build brand yielded 118 references, which was 11.8% of the coded data. Spark action had 105 references, which accounted for 10.5% of the total data. Build trust generated 90 references representing 9.0% of the data. Transformational change had 73 references representing 7.3% of the coded data. Neutralize rumor yielded 59 references, which was 5.9% of the total data analyzed (see Figure 3).
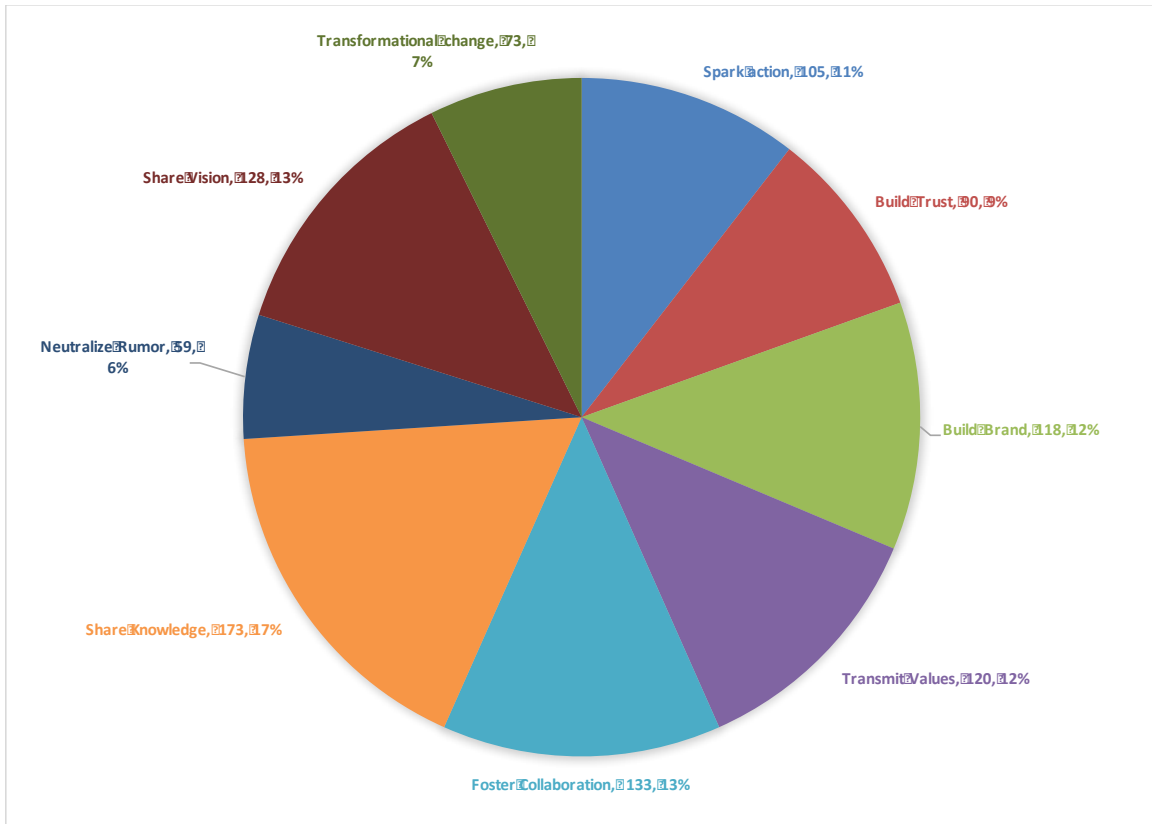
Figure 3. Number of frequencies in each element of storytelling leadership.

Subquestion 1: Spark Action

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to ignite action and implement new ideas?

Spark action in this study referred to how vision and ideas are generated within an organization to inspire and focus on what is important to success. The broader view of the future that is created through stories produces meaning and motivates others to act (Baldoni, 2003; Denning, 2011). The coding process yielded three themes in the storytelling narrative of spark action, with 105 references, which represented 10.5% of all data sources. Table 3 presents the themes related to spark action, along with the frequency and references.

Table 3

Spark Action Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Stories about students	16	2	18	36
Working together as a team	15	3	18	36
Vision and mission	11	3	19	33

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Stories about students. This theme emerged from 17 sources with 36 references, representing 34.3% of the coded content for spark action. Multiple authors referenced the use of stories about how students spark action to get people to engage in an initiative (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015), which is also suggested by the data. By winning the hearts of the audience when telling a story about a student, stakeholders are more likely to take action with the initiative to get results (Biesenbach, 2018). When the human resources administrators shared stories about students, they increased the buy-in of staff to open their hearts and minds.

One participant shared, "That sense of urgency for students and telling stories, telling the story about your students and your families and your demographics and that need and really helping people to internalize and kind of feel . . . what needs to happen in order to institute change." Another human resources administrator used an athletics analogy working together for students with "one for all, all for one to serve our students and our families. And I thought that was a really good approach." The common thread with stories about students told by the participants kept the focus of the story on the needs of the students and families, many with very challenging life situations.

Stories about students were also evident during observations of the human resources administrators engaging with staff in meetings and one-on-one conversations. They were also evident in a number of the 18 artifact frequency gathered, such as website links, new employee orientations, and postings on social media. One human resources administrator shared,

> Stories about youth that . . . had some risk factors, whether it was poverty or language barriers. And adults who kind of went out of their way to be a game changer for those kids and invested in those kids . . . then the follow up with that, like what are they doing now years later . . . the child is either in college or their definition of success was working there in the workplace. So the stories about like youth who have every reason to just give up and adults that inspire them and invest in them and allow them to give their life some kind of direction.

By using inspiring stories about students, human resources administrators motivate staff to think differently and make changes to help students succeed.

Working together as a team. This theme emerged in 26 sources across all interviews, observations, and artifacts. This theme had 36 references and represented 34.3% of the coded content for spark action. To spark action with those they are working with, these human resources administrators told stories about working together as a team. Multiple authors agreed that engaging the audience with stories to work collectively can spark action with the group (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015).

Participants in the study noted that working together collectively creates an increase in opportunities to make needed change and improvements. Several human

resources administrators stated that no one person can do it all; no one has all of the

answers. One human resources administrator shared,

> If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together and try to
>
> collectively bring everybody together under that idea that . . . we're a team and
>
> how do we move the group forward and keep the group headed north.

The concept of working together as a team, brought up by multiple participants, meant

they included various stakeholders in all steps of a change process from brainstorming to

working together to find a collective solution. One human resources administrator

shared, "What comes to mind is a story told before, like a large group of people like to

get people to inspire them or present a problem, so that you can work on collective

solutions." This administrator also shared that sometimes the vision originally imagined

can change slightly because of the collective work and ideas of the group.

This theme was evident in the observations and artifacts gathered from the human

resources administrators. During one observation, a participant presented a concern of

hard-to-fill positions with the human resources staff. Allowing the human resources team

to brainstorm and openly give suggestions about how to improve opened the team's eyes

to collective solutions. This team approach allowed the members to suggest ideas that

may not have been considered before since they deviated from past practice and

procedures.

Vision and mission. This theme appeared in 23 sources with 33 references,

representing 31.4% of the coded content for spark action. Within the review of the

literature, multiple authors presented the importance of sharing the mission and vision of

the organization to the audience through stories to spark action (Biesenbach, 2018;

Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015). The use of stories around a shared vision can spark action to implement change (Aidman & Long, 2017). The human resources administrators made concerted efforts in sharing the mission and vision of their school districts to spark action among the stakeholders.

Study participants indicated that by sharing the mission and vision through stories frequently, they were able to gather more collective support and spark change. Common reasons that the participants felt sharing the mission and vision was important to spark some sort of change or initiative were student safety, district or department reorganizations, and budget development and reductions of staff and programs. One human resources administrator stated,

Where it's relevant and when igniting action . . . it's almost that sense of urgency of something needing to change . . . one is in budget development, especially in times of budget crisis and budget reductions. Just really being able to tell that story about our district, about our values, about what's important in the work that we're doing and then the action that needs to take place.

He later said,

(Be)cause there's the reality of the budget reductions and how do you make those reductions while at the same time keeping in place kind of the core of who you are and being true to who you are and your vision and in mission . . . and really telling that story so that people understand kind of that crisis and the decisions that need to be made.

The premise of sharing the district vision and mission to spark change was evident in the interview responses, observations, and artifacts collected. One human

resources administrator shared a story aligned with the vision of the district during a human resources staff meeting. A number of artifacts that were collected displayed district mission statements along with the beliefs of the organization.

Subquestion 2: Build Trust

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build trust?

Build trust was defined as the ability of an organization and its people to build reliability, truth, and strength through strong relationships, shared experiences that evoke emotion, vulnerability, and authenticity (Auvinen, Aalito, & Blomqvist, 2013; Denning, 2011). The coding process yielded three themes in the storytelling narrative of building trust, with 90 references across all data sources representing 9.0% of all data coded. Table 4 identifies the three themes related to the conversational narrative of building trust.

Table 4

Build Trust Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Get to know people personally	14	5	20	39
Admitting failures and mistakes	26	1	3	30
Negotiations	8	5	8	21

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Get to know people personally. This theme was found in 25 sources with 39 references, representing 43.3% of coded content for build trust. When leaders tell their own personal story and get to know the audience personally, trust can be gained (Auvinen, Aalito, & Blomqvist, 2013; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). These human resource leaders recognized the members of the team and organization and celebrated

both individual and collective accomplishments. All 10 of the administrators in this study provided data that supported this theme.

Participants identified this theme as an important aspect of their jobs. One human resources administrator shared,

It's getting to know people personally. I mean there's stories we've all shared personally about raising kids and how I might be struggling with something at home with my own kids and they might be too. I think a lot of people in the organization look up to you as the assistant superintendent or superintendent. . . . So like sharing that with people, that you're a real person is super important . . . but mainly . . . it's your actions following up your words. That's how you get trust.

The theme was echoed by another participant who shared,

Stories about who you [are] as a person, who you are as a child, things you used to do in your past that can link with something that that person does. It becomes just a flowing part of your conversation. Especially when you're meeting a new employee or trying to help someone to feel comfortable within a conversation that might be tough. You connect with them and tell stories.

Another human resources administrator posited,

When you're building trust, it's that integrity piece and honesty, and being truthful and telling a story in a very real and authentic way. I think people can tell when what you're telling them is authentic and truthful and that helps them internalize that as well. . . . Part of that is bringing them into the story and helping

them understand the purpose and the why of what you're doing. But that building

trust is really a critical component of that relationship piece.

Human resources administrators indicated through shared data sources that

getting to know the stakeholders personally was a large factor in developing and building

trust. One participant reinforced that the theme of the importance of getting to know his

staff personally was imperative in building trust with his human resources team. He said

that sharing personal things about us, like "cancer to divorce to relationships" and other

personal struggles, can help build trust as a team. Showing that vulnerability can enhance

productivity as a team when trust is established. Another participant simply stated that

human resources administrators are in the "people business" a number of times

throughout his interview.   He emphasized the importance of getting to know people.

Admitting failures and mistakes. This theme surfaced in 12 sources with 30

references, representing 33.3% of the coded content for build trust. Numerous authors

supported that admitting previous failures and mistakes helps build trust with followers

(Auvinen, Aalito, & Blomqvist, 2013; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). Through all data

sources, 100% of the human resources administrators provided content to support this

theme.

One participant stated, "Both using vulnerability and sharing times where maybe I

thought something was going to work a certain way and it didn't. And how I learned

through feedback from my supervisors about what to do and what not to do." Another

human resources administrator shared,

And what I have found, the way to build trust between me and all the other

members of the district is just kind of, admitting when you're wrong and but then

being, but then being solution oriented to make it right.

Another common thread woven throughout the area of building trust with the data

collected is in telling stories to serve as a mentor. One leader disclosed stories he shares:

Oftentimes it's about mistakes I've made along the way. And what I learned from

those . . . one that that stands out that I often tell, especially the principals,

because the tendency is to want to protect your staff.

Additionally, one administrator shared with staff his failures as a long-distance runner:

But along the way I've had many failures. I've had some DNF, I've gotten hurt

. . . and I've used that to build us an illustration around how the organization can

try [to] give an honest effort. I think that they've got everything aligned and yet

fail. And yet it can also, the failure can also then help them gain knowledge in

terms of being able to build for a successful run later.

This theme was also evident in one observation and several artifacts: sharing mistakes

and being authentic with the audience. The artifacts gathered that displayed this theme

were with leadership team meeting agendas.

Negotiations. This theme came from 15 sources with 21 references representing

23.3% of coded content for build trust. When these human resources administrators told

authentic stories during negotiations, it increased trust between the management team and

the union team. According to multiple authors, leaders need to build trust with their labor

partners to better meet the needs of stakeholders, specifically students and employees

(Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Smith, 2012).

Multiple participants shared stories of how they have used authentic stories during negotiations to build trust. One participant asserted that the labor groups understand what they do and why: "I do have their best interest at heart of being able to solve the problems." Another participant affirmed that during negotiations with labor groups:

> Coming back to that whole issue as let's, how can this work on behalf of our kids? And usually when you do with employee groups, you're also kind of keeping in the back of your mind the employee too, because that's where their focus is. They're not always . . . thinking about the kids, but your stories about the kids, keeping [them in] the back of your mind.

Another participant expressed the importance of telling stories to build trust around negotiations by telling of the history and relationships in the past:

> History of our negotiations and so as far as building trust in terms of, which I hate to say you've been here that long and I have history of negotiations . . . because the history is helpful. . . . To be able to go in when we start negotiations and talk about how we want to be with each other.

Combining two themes of building trust by admitting mistakes, sometimes at the negotiations table was stated by a human resources administrator during the interview:

> The things that in my role is as the lead labor negotiator, one of the things I value so much with my union leadership is just being very authentic with them. I'm not afraid to have one-on-one conversations. I'm not afraid to have [them] with their leadership or at the table to even admit that the district was wrong in implementing something.

This theme was evident in several observations conducted. During one observation of a conference presentation, the participant shared the importance of storytelling with union leadership around negotiations topics. He also shared that building that trust with the unions allows for more authentic conversations to occur around changes to the contract language or working conditions for employees to better benefit students.

Subquestion 3: Build Brand

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build brand?

Build brand referred to the authentic interactive exchange of stories to promote meaningful dialogue and distinguish an organization from its competitors in the eyes of the customer. It is about communicating through visual means and interactive dialogue the core of organizational culture and values (Denning, 2011; Schultz, 2010). The coding process established three themes in the storytelling narrative of building brand, with 118 references, which represented 11.8% of all data coded. Table 5 identifies the three themes of the storytelling narrative of build brand.

Table 5

Build Brand Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Power of social media	22	3	20	45
Stories about students	22	3	16	41
Recruitment	10	3	19	32

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Power of social media. This theme occurred in 21 data sources with 45 references representing 38.1% of the coded content for build brand. This theme aligned

with the review of the literature, where multiple authors agreed that leaders need to

capitalize on the power and use of social media as a form of storytelling to build brand in

and around an organization (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015; Lund et al.,

2018; Schultz, 2010; Zielinski, 2018). Within this study, this theme was evident in nearly

every data source.

Participants said they used social media in their organization to build brand.

While the majority of the respondents stated that they did not personally do the social

media posts and the district social media contact did, they gave direction on what to post

in regard to human resources. One participant stated that is great to "share great ideas."

He added that he will post Powtoon videos through social media to help build the brand

and identity of his district. Another human resources administrator who has a district

communications person shared,

> I can't tell you I'm Mr. social media . . . but you know, certainly trying to
>
> understand and utilize that, as a way of showing . . . who we are . . . the big thing
>
> that's been in our district now is we were talking about our pupil, our programs,
>
> our infrastructure. We'll try to show, what are some of the things that we value in
>
> our district.

Another leader affirmed what he was sharing on social media:

> Things happening at the sites and our new construction that's happening. And
>
> just through the mission [and] vision on the website and things just kinda that
>
> we're about relationships . . . it's not an official slogan, but we kind of
>
> communicate that through just things we tweet about and things we say on our
>
> website and things we do for our families.

Two other administrators posited that they tell stories to reinforce the branding and help principals use social media to show how their schools are special. An additional leader in the study referenced the importance of social media and the importance of knowing one's audience to build brand:

> Knowing your audience and knowing who you're trying to speak to. Because when we're trying to speak . . . families are engaged, we want to be targeting that messaging. When we're targeting maybe the community at large, our message, may have a similar theme but be a little bit different style on how we're communicating that. Building our brand identity is absolutely critical to have out there and within our brand identity, telling stories about, our students telling our story about, successes that we've had with students, especially students who are facing adversity in their lives. The positive outcomes that happen or strategies or programs that we have in place to serve those students. . . . Personalizing those stories so that people outside of our organization can relate to those stories as well and what we're doing.

The most common type of social media that was referred to in the interviews was Twitter. Artifacts collected that displayed the theme of the power of social media were a variety of social media posts. One observation referenced the power of social media as a means to build brand of the school district.

Stories about students. This theme appeared in 19 sources with 41 references, representing 34.7% of the coded content for build brand. The leadership behavior of telling stories about students occurred frequently with the data collected to help build the brand of the organization. Using stories about students to build the brand both internally

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and externally with stakeholders can build trust, retain and gain customers (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011). When leaders tell stories about students within the school district, they can remain competitive with charter and private schools.

Human resources leaders shared that sharing stories about students helps build the brand with parents, staff, and the public. One administrator shared,

It's a competitive environment . . . parents have choices. We're a flat-to-declining enrollment school district and so we need to do all we can do to promote. So you have to go back and communicate whatever you're communicating . . . it has to be, concurrent with your goals. So our narrative pattern . . . our mission is to provide a safe environment for students, whether it's physical or social, emotional.

Another administrator commented similarly about student stories as "things we say on our website and things we do for our families." An additional human resources administrator proclaimed that we need to share stories of our students to build brand of "school events, whether it's an athletic event or a performance or graduation." Sharing stories or pictures of kids and the success of students in the district was a common theme. Multiple interview responses and artifacts reflected the idea around the success of students, sharing successes with the public, and celebrating the positives of students.

Recruitment. This theme emerged from 19 data sources with 32 references, representing 27.1% of coded content for build brand. According to multiple authors, storytelling leaders use various recruitment techniques to build and share the organization brand in order to recruit and retain employees (Becker & Huselid, 2010; Edlinger, 2015; Hansen, 2007; Losey et al., 2005; Lund et al., 2018; Zielinski, 2018). When the

administrators in this study used various storytelling strategies, typically through social media and job fairs, it increased the district's brand to better recruit and retain employees.

Human resources administrators in the study shared multiple stories of recruitment strategies to build brand such as posting photos and recognition of all new hires at the district office and publishing them on social media, using various forms of social media to post job vacancies, and developing a human resources recruitment video to distribute, post on the district website, and share at job recruitment fairs.

In regard to the human resources videos, four participants stated that they tell stories about the district with personal experiences or student backgrounds to recruit the best fitting candidates. All four participants shared stories to build the brand and of why their district is different and why candidates would want to work there. One stated,

> I said if you want to talk about making a difference in a child's life, you want to work here. . . . So you can take that child that doesn't know any different, that is just happy to be at school today. And I can take that first grader that has never seen print, never had a held a book in their hand, never done that. And now I got a chance to be able to teach them to read what a rewarding experience that can actually be compared to the child that comes in with lots of preschool, lots, everything else. And then you're going to make them read a little bit better this year. I said you have a difference where you can be a life-changing person in a child's life. In our school district. You can't in every school district. That's the difference.

Another stated that "we created a promotional video as to why would anyone want to work here." The third participant shared,

We do a lot of communicating via Twitter, and other electronic means, regarding

employment opportunities. And why would you wanna work here? . . . last year

we made an HR video . . . that video spoke to what we view, we value and what

we think prospective employees would value, as far as working for our

organization. So our narrative pattern . . . it's kind of a recruiting tool and if you

have to share all your goals and then the why anyone would want to work here.

The fourth participant emphasized helping to build their brand around recruitment:

We reached out to teachers because that's who we were recruiting and had them

tell us their story that we included in the pamphlet. . . . It's a great place to raise a

family to establish yourself as part of a community. So that's how we develop

our narrative.

Several human resources administrators who participated in the study shared that

they use statistics, narratives, and personal experiences to develop recruitment materials

and videos. One leader stated that he shares what professional development, programs in

the infrastructure, and other supports are available to new employees as a recruitment

strategy by building the brand of his district. He also said the following about

recruitment:

We are the best we can be in terms of our craft, but we want to have fun too,

because if you're not having fun, your students aren't having fun and then you're

just going to be a drag all day. So I think that that's what we try to utilize in terms

of social media. . . . We're trying to utilize social media to be able to show, in

action, the things that we do.

Of the five observations conducted, only one produced a reference for recruitment strategies of storytelling to build brand. Eleven artifacts produced the theme of recruitment enhancing brand. Those artifacts included recruitment videos, website postings, and recruitment materials.

Subquestion 4: Transmit Values

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to transmit organizational values?

Transmit values referred to how an organization makes outsiders feel like insiders by sharing its culture, values, celebrations, and challenges. Transmit values also means shared the meaning of the group norms, standards, customs, and traditions as shared through stories (Boal & Schultz, 2007; Denning, 2011). The coding process generated three themes in the storytelling narrative of transmitting values, with 120 references, which represented 12.0% of all data coded. Table 6 identifies the three themes for the storytelling narrative of transmit values.

Table 6

Transmit Values Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Building relationships and connections	20	5	26	51
Being authentic	8	6	23	37
Stories about students	12	9	11	32

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Building relationships and connections. This theme emerged from 34 sources with 51 references, representing 42.5% of coded content for transmit values. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study employed the strategy of

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building relationships and connections as a way to transmit values. According to

multiple authors, this relationship development enables leaders to transmit the department

and organizational values (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Denning, 2011;

Smith, 2012).

Of the human resources leaders involved in the study, 80% responded in the

interview that building relationships and connections with either the department team or

with employees in the district is important with transmitting values. One leader shared

how that is important within his department and their actions:

> At least in my experience in human resources within our department meetings we
>
> often tried to establish, aligning with where the district is moving, where our
>
> department is moving, identifying what are the best practices in actions of people
>
> who work in the human resources department and where do we measure up
>
> against that? And then how do we fill that gap in the best way?

Another administrator shared, "Build a connection with your team. We're in the people

business." Another human resources leader shared how he told a story to mentor a

principal who was having difficulty developing a positive relationship with his staff due

to barriers with his communication. He said to the principal,

> So your perceived value is that you're a good communicator, but the example
>
> you're giving me saying that you're not. He tells me about the interaction and it
>
> goes back to an e-mail exchange he has . . . with another person. . . . I had a
>
> conversation with him about you need to have a rule . . . when you send an e-mail
>
> . . . walk down there instead . . . that will improve your communication skills,
>
> which you believe are one but may be perceived as another. If you follow that

rule, then you're going to be able to communicate . . . E-mail . . . It's like no face

to face. And I gave him a story of how I learned that lesson by my failure and

how I let a situation cause a disruption between myself and a teacher, which really

it was both of our faults for just miscommunicating even though I thought it was

great.

A couple of the participants shared their stories of how they have used stories to build

relationships and connections with staff over a long period of time by sharing their

personal vision while being authentic. One leader shared stories with his leadership team

and asserted,

I share stories with cabinet, with upper leadership of the district. . . . It's the

organization's operational value, but yet you can do something but you're not

doing it with heart. . . . But, I also want you to do that with passion and I want you

to do that with heart. . . . Because otherwise it doesn't feel authentic. So I've had

conversations with principals and I've told stories of . . . trust was eroded because

that authenticity wasn't there even though they were doing what they were

supposed to do. The authenticity was unfelt.

Another exemplary human resources leader expressed the following:

I think a lot of that is the relationship piece . . . helping people understand, I've

been in the district for 23 years now and helping people to understand kind of the

history and the foundation of our organization or an issue and kind of how it came

to be or why it is, the way it is. Really taking some of the values from the past

and bringing them to the present as we move forward into the future and helping

people connect with that I think has really been important.

Participants were observed telling stories about relationships and connections in four of the five observations. A number of artifacts included components around relationship building and connections. Those artifacts include leadership team meetings agendas, staff development agendas, and PowerPoint presentations.

Being authentic. This theme was found in 32 sources with 37 references and represented 30.8% of coded content for transmit values. According to numerous authors, leaders consider being authentic and sharing those stories to help transmit the organizational values to others (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). When human resources leaders acted authentically and shared genuine stories, the district's values were clear and believable.

One human resources administrator stated a number of times how important it is to be and tell authentic stories in an organization to show the true values. He said,

So a leadership I often talk about . . . you are all part of one team and if you are not sticking with what we value in terms of authentic, positive, authentic feedback that is direct, that gives them, a picture of why there's a challenge. . . . You're letting down your team mates and so if that occurs, that's just not appropriate. . . . So you as administrators need to understand that when you're out there and you've seen a challenge, you have an obligation to say something about that. And that's what we value and that's what we expect.

Another declared,

And then people know that you value even the little things that people are doing. And it's not just when there's a big issue, but it's the everyday things that

sometimes are menial. . . . They need to be done and you need to acknowledge

those things. And so you do it with a story and you're authentic.

The observations and artifacts yielded a number of references to being authentic

in regard to transmitting values. One observation was targeted specifically to a human

resources team that was working through a complicated staffing issue. The human

resources leader shared authentic stories about himself as a principal that resonated with

the district's values of dedication and doing what was needed to best support students.

This was reaffirmed with his interview where he said,

Take the time, let them know that you don't know all the answers. And that's

okay. Like a lot of times when I mentor new leaders, they don't get it. That it's

okay to show that you don't know the answers.

Research (Biesenbach, 2018; Briody et al., 2012; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011;

Smith, 2012) stated and was reaffirmed by the PowerPoint presentations, staff meeting

agendas, and website artifacts of showing authenticity by human resources leaders by

way of a story.

Stories about students. This theme surfaced in 20 sources with 32 references

and represented 26.7% of the coded content for transmit values. The dialogue created by

leaders through storytelling to transmit values, following the review of the literature, was

maintained by sharing stories about students (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007;

Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). Human resources administrators promoted stories about

students to transmit the school district values. All participants provided content to

support this theme.

A number of the study participants proclaimed that telling stories about students around the topic of equity and serving the most vulnerable students was a strategy to transmit the organizational values. One participant shared, "Helping these kids who need it the most and it's supported by data, they're attending more, they're getting better grades and they're not in as much trouble." Another shared that transmitting those values through the mission statement by telling stories of students who have overcome life obstacles helps share the values of the school district.

Another leader shared how the employees transmitted the district's values by working in his district because employees truly care about kids and are committed to serving the students. He championed,

Those expectations are that that you're here for kids, that [it is] all about kids. School district kids depend on you to be here for kids. . . . You got to get up in the morning, be here for our kids because our kids expect you to be here. If you're half an hour late, 20 minutes late, then they think, "I can be 20 minutes late 'cause it doesn't matter either." I said, "No, you need to be there on time and you need to say why the heck are you 10 minutes late because . . . education's important and you need to be all in." We wanted to hold the kids accountable . . . when we talk about being that positive influence for our kids, just by asking the question differently, now I can be that positive person.

Another participant shared the concept of transmitting the values around student stories with students being the top priority. He claimed,

I think part of it is that when I work with staff, as I say, we all have a part in the success of our students. Doesn't matter who you are or what your position is, that

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if any one of us break down, then we're not gonna be as good of an organization

we can for our kids. And that's our ultimate goal that we have.

The last common thread discovered with sharing student stories was with those

stories with which the audience has an emotional connection. Two participants stated

that when they can tie a story to emotions, the audience will connect. One leader

proclaimed,

> When I use what I'm trying to connect my staff to the organization in this case,
>
> say our strategic plan, most of my stories I try and use are either as a parent or as
>
> a student. So most of our values that are expressed, written down, et cetera, are
>
> built around the students . . . and serving students in the district. . . . So I'll share a
>
> story I may have about myself when I was a student or myself as a parent. . . .
>
> Being able to do that allows my staff or the staff to say, "Okay, I see, maybe I can
>
> see them tie the organizational values to themselves." . . . When I can tie the
>
> story to something emotionally felt by either myself or as a student or parents or
>
> somebody, staff members have a way of connecting to that and tying in.

A second participant shared that an "emotional tie to them through a story, that emotional

tie usually resonates with people . . . can help broaden and deepen an explanation and

make them more connected."

The observations indicated that human resources administrators told stories about

students in order to transmit the department and district values. The artifacts collected

implied that human resources administrators told stories about students to evoke emotion

with their employees and potential recruits. As reviewed in the literature, a powerful

story can evoke emotion in the audience, creating opportunities for the organization

(Biesenbach, 2018; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018).

Subquestion 5: Foster Collaboration

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to foster collaboration?

Foster collaboration referred to a collective intelligence that honors and respects the contribution of each person and contributes to group learning. It is also about working together to identify community values and create something new in support of a shared vision (Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011). The coding process yielded four themes in the storytelling narrative of foster collaboration, with 133 references across all data sources, which represented 13.3% of all data coded. Table 7 presents the themes related to fostering collaboration, along with the sources and number of references.

Table 7

Foster Collaboration Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Building relationships and connections	24	5	10	39
Working together as a team	12	4	23	39
Vision and mission	12	3	22	37
Negotiations	7	3	8	18

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Building relationships and connections. This theme occurred in 19 sources with 39 references and represented 29.3% of coded content for foster collaboration. These human resources administrators focus on building relationships and making connections with those with whom they work and interact. Numerous authors agreed that

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when leaders build relationships and make personal connections with teams through stories, they build cohesion and foster an environment for working together (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Senge, 2006; Smith, 2012).

In all sources of data, the human resources administrators told stories to help build relationships and connections with their team. One leader described his department as being a great place to work and "we want this to be a place where people feel comfortable." Another administrator told a story about how an entire school built a connection around a common cause of fundraising for a teacher who is a quadriplegic. He said because of the relationships and connections, "All staff, not just at that school, but districtwide rallied around her." Another human resources administrator brings humor into his staff meetings to build relationships and break down barriers. He stated,

> Try to build connections based on stories of laughter. Very often in our meetings we would show videos that tell stories. And those stories were often humorous and it would allow for people to relax and to kinda open up to being themselves. And once people's affective filter where it was down then you could start to work on who we were and how we related to each other in getting the work done that we were expected to do . . . in essence to build relationships in to get people to trust each other so that we could collaborate to get the work done that we're supposed to be getting done to support schools and students for achievement.

The artifacts supported the interviews. During three of the observations, the human resources administrator told stories to build relationships and connections with the team or individuals involved. Eight of the artifacts included evidence that there was

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relationship building. Two of those were leadership team meeting agendas where there was a team-building activity on the agenda. Another was the act of bringing in the team member's favorite ice cream flavor to celebrate successes. As human resources leaders, they value relationships and connections.

Working together as a team. This theme appeared in 27 sources with 39 references, representing 29.3% of coded content for foster collaboration. As noted by several authors, leaders hold working together as a team in high regard in their organizations (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Senge, 2006). When human resources administrators fostered an environment in the department or organization to work together as a team using stories, there was a much more collaborative effort and increased engagement of stakeholders.

Human resources administrators in this study actively supported those they worked with to work collectively as a team. By using the team approach, the groups were collaborative in their efforts. One administrator stated a commonly referenced topic, "Feeling in the organization that everybody has a voice." Another commented, "If we come together and work together then we can be successful." Teamwork and working collaboratively was echoed with another participant who shared the following:

> So if we get everybody together in the room and we talk about this together as a system, what are some ways that we can systematically be able to make number one, either make changes or suggested changes as we go through that process . . . so everybody becomes part of the solution . . . if we bring people together where we work together in that environment systematically then now we're working on that same common goal.

Another participant added,

> And so now when we talk about trying to address issues, we talk about how we
>
> addressed that one and I'll give that story about how we came together as a team
>
> and spin it, the better part of a year, going through a process to come up with the
>
> best system we could have and then going out and presenting that as a team.

During the review of the artifacts collected, there were a number that supported this theme. There were several screenshots of social media posts showing human resources teams working together on an initiative. Another was a communique to the district leadership team about an upcoming leadership meeting that changes in the independent study program were going to be discussed and new procedures to be collectively developed. These artifacts demonstrated that working together as a team is imperative, which was supported by the human resources administrator.

Vision and mission. This theme was found in 25 sources with 37 references, representing 27.8% of coded content for foster collaboration. This was consistent with the review of the literature as the sharing of the organization's vision and mission was deemed critical to foster collaboration (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Senge, 2006). Participants indicated the importance of sharing stories to message and reinforce the mission, vision, and goals of the district to foster collaboration.

Human resources administrators indicated a common strategy of telling stories based on vision and coming up with common goals and a common vision collectively. One participant shared,

I use their thoughts to build a collective story based upon all of them and then share that and make sure that they understand this. It's a complete department vision of how we see things . . . not the directors, but everybody.

Another human resources leader affirmed,

It goes back to the stories that I share. Are they not necessarily . . . they are more interactions than like a story I'm telling. But I bring people back to the board goals. I bring people back to my goals. I show it to them in writing, here's my goal, here's how you are going to help me achieve this goal. And I think it gives them purpose and it gives them worth.

Another interview yielded a similar response:

There's a real excitement when you can bring people together around a common goal and common vision, and allow people to share in generating ideas. And it's almost like story time, like sitting around the fire talking, sitting around the campfire imagining a future that doesn't exist. There's something to be said for people just being able to talk around an idea, whether it's a problem or an issue that's being faced and really generate without an agenda, really generate ideas together about how to solve something or how to, really look towards something and in the future.

Artifacts in the data solidified this theme. During observations of team meetings, there was a consistent sense of a shared vision and mission working collaboratively to review the department goals. By placing items on the agenda, the human resources administrators made it a priority to share a story and foster an environment of collaboration.

Negotiations. This theme emerged from 11 sources with 18 references, representing 13.5% of coded content for foster collaboration. This theme was congruent with the literature as leaders who value and foster collaboration (Bilbeisi, 2019; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Dunn, 2018; Hackman, 2011; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Senge, 2006; Smith, 2012). When these human resources administrators told authentic stories during negotiations, it fostered collaboration between the management team and the union team.

One human resources administrator said about negotiations, "When we get new team members that come in to the group . . . we share our success story . . . it seems more collaborative." Another noted,

In negotiations, things can get contentious, and working with the unions and working with individual employment issues. But if we've spent time collaborating and developing relationships and getting to know each other, it will help us get through some of those difficult times . . . and focus on the issue.

A third interview participant emphasized the importance of telling stories around negotiations topics to work together collaboratively. He proclaimed,

What's been really important to us here, is because we do have a lot of challenges with changing demographics and that sort of thing, is really being able to tell the story of those changing demographics issues that that brings and then how we can work together to solve them. . . . When you look at things like budget development, budget crisis or budget reductions, that then ties into negotiations and ties into settlement agreements or ties into contract language . . . trying to take things from a collaborative approach and truly trying to understand where is the

union coming from, what are their goals and their interests, where's the district coming from.

The observations yielded examples of this theme as one leader shared with the group he was presenting to the importance of collaboration and stories during negotiations and the negotiations process to be successful where one team does not feel like it won or lost. Proclaiming that they are collaborative labor partners, including negotiations around contract language was evident in another observation. Several artifacts messaged the topic of negotiations and one was inclusive of a joint messaging posted on the district website.

Subquestion 6: Share Knowledge

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to share knowledge?

Share knowledge was defined as telling personal stories of actual human resources experience and expertise in narrative exchange, which act as repositories of knowledge. It is about informal networks of communities which accelerate knowledge sharing (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Jabri & Pounder, 2001). The coding process yielded five themes in the storytelling narrative of sharing knowledge with 173 references across all data sources representing 17.3% of all data coded. Table 8 identifies the five themes related to the storytelling narrative of sharing knowledge.

Table 8

Share Knowledge Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Negotiations	12	3	23	38
Getting to know people personally	15	4	17	36
Working together as a team	12	4	19	35
Personal conversations	10	5	19	34
Working with union leadership	16	3	11	30

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Negotiations. This theme surfaced in 26 data sources collected with 38 references and represented 22.0% of coded content for share knowledge. When these human resources administrators told authentic stories during negotiations, knowledge was shared between the management team and the union team. According to multiple authors, leaders need to share knowledge with their labor partners to better meet the needs of stakeholders, specifically students and employees (Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Smith, 2012).

One participant shared the following about negotiations, "The importance of having a historian on your team because people can make up their own stories and having a record." Another indicated the importance of sharing knowledge during negotiations to keep on track with "how this union was just about getting their agenda across and getting through negotiations and there was a disconnect."

There were a number of artifacts and observations that referenced the sharing of knowledge in negotiations. One confidential document of a negotiations session shared both the district and union leadership discussing two contract articles and three working conditions issues. Both teams presented information to each other with two anecdotal

stories told to illustrate the issue at hand. By telling these stories to share knowledge or

information, all parties were informed and could make a better decision collaboratively.

Getting to know people personally. This theme emerged from 26 sources with

36 references, representing 20.8% of the coded content for share knowledge. According

to several authors, getting to know people personally is one of the best ways to share

knowledge and break down barriers (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning,

2011; Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012).

One human resources administrator shared that one of his primary goals is to get

to know people personally. He told a story of how he does this with his human resources

department, specifically with one employee:

Being vulnerable enough to share those kinds of stories that about yourself, but

also I got to know everything about the people that I work with and the details

about them and for them to be able to come to me and share theirs. One . . . was

served with divorce papers just last week and so now I know, but nobody else

knows . . . just came to me and just gave it all of a sudden and might not be 100%

on my game. . . . "I just want to let you know what's going on just in case I need

to take an hour here and there." . . . I think sometimes we forget that people go

through those things in their lives too. . . . We need to remember that all of us,

everybody has those life challenges that we go through and we need to make sure

that we understand that.

Another leader shared the importance of getting to know people personally and how that

ties into the types of employees and how they want those employees to care about

students. He pointed out, "You notice that it was built upon a personal relationship. Did

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you realize it was built upon somebody caring about you? Somebody praising you."

Another human resources administrator reaffirmed the theme of getting to know people

personally:

> I talk about their hobbies, interests in their families and share those things about
> myself. I think that helps kind of break down the walls of communication a little
> bit. . . . I think we have to establish a rapport. We can exchange ideas about and
> information about our organization. . . . It helps and learning about them
> personally, it helps to break down those walls and allow them to hear things about
> the organization with a little more clarity, be more open to it.

This theme was reflected in the observations conducted and artifacts gathered.

During one observation, the human resources administrator shared personal stories during

a staff meeting team-building activity. One artifact that emerged was a leadership staff

meeting agenda. Lastly, a PowerPoint agenda of a new employee district orientation

showed two frequencies of structures and activities of getting to know people personally

in order to more freely share knowledge.

Working together as a team. This theme emerged in 28 sources with 35

references, representing 20.2% of the coded content for share knowledge. The human

resources administrators confirmed through the interviews that working together as a

team was a key factor in successfully sharing knowledge through stories. This was

congruent with the review of literature as effective leaders use stories to share knowledge

but working together as a team (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011;

Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012).

One human resources administrator commented, "Share the learning about the importance of collaboration and establishing a relationship with others." Another leader shared, "What can we do to improve the feeling that it's all of us together working for the same goal?" A third human resources administrator asked, "How can we work better together for the benefit of the organization?" An additional human resources administrator mentioned, "I think that really all of us, our willingness to work as a team work together . . . as the evidence." These human resources administrators remarked that working together as a team is important when sharing knowledge both inside and outside of the organization with stakeholders.

During the review of the artifacts collected, there were a number that supported this theme. There were several screenshots of social media posts showing human resources teams working together on an initiative. Another was a communique to the district leadership team regarding an upcoming leadership meeting with changes in the district nursing services. These artifacts demonstrated how working together as a team is imperative to share knowledge among stakeholders and was supported by the human resources administrator.

Personal conversations. This theme appeared in 24 sources with 34 references, representing 19.7% of the coded content for sharing knowledge. These exemplary human resources administrators pointed out that having personal one-on-one conversations with stakeholders is a key strategy to sharing knowledge within and about the district. This aligned with the literature review as numerous authors noted that when leaders had personal conversations with individuals and told personal stories to share knowledge, the results were positive for the organization (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning,

2011; Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012). One human resources administrator shared the following:

> I think this goes along with you have to be just as interested in hearing someone else's story as wanting to tell your own story. And I think that helps with that connection, in understanding the other person that you're talking to and the lens that they're looking at things through and how can we better connect, and in education, especially when there's so many opportunities where we're together in groups or individually or meetings where it's a missed opportunity if we don't use that moment to connect through telling stories, through sharing through two-way exchanges of ideas in information. I think when we get in that one-way communication mode, I think we really lose the kind of the authentic side of being human. It's a missed opportunity to have that connection with another person. When you can establish that connection, great work comes out of it. It's just like if you start your meeting with a meaningful team-building activity that relates to whatever it is you're meeting about, that connection, that personal connection and that storytelling that happens at the beginning really adds value to the rest of your meeting. So I think every time you get together as an opportunity to share with each other and have it be authentic stories about the past, enable us to make sense of the past and then move into the future.

Other participants agreed that personal, one-on-one conversations are a good way to share knowledge. They stated that having the opportunity to connect and clarify individually can help many misunderstandings. The artifacts supported this theme as well. Personal conversations occurred in all five of the observations conducted, some

with several frequencies. Through personal conversations and with less misunderstandings, the information provides clarity and leads to less confusion and the sparking of rumors.

Working with union leadership. This theme appeared in 12 sources with 30 references and represented 6.9% of coded content for share knowledge. The human resources administrators told stories about working with union leadership to share knowledge and inform them about new information. This aligned with the literature review as numerous authors noted how sharing knowledge can be done through stories, especially in regard to labor relations (Bilbeisi, 2019; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Dunn, 2018; Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012).

The interviews yielded a number of references to working with union leadership in order to share knowledge with the bargaining groups. One human resources administrator shared the following:

> We talk about some heavy-duty topics in regards to agreements we want to make
> with the teachers union with the district and come to a common understanding.
> And sometimes there's some conflict between those two ideals. So there are
> some stories being told at the table. . . . We're kind of seeking to understand
> where each other's coming from but also gather information well where, how
> many times has that happened and what site was that? I think that sharing
> information, it's all they get also gathering information but it also talks
> specifically to the district as a whole that we want to talk through issues and
> concerns and problems and come to a mutual decision, which is, which includes

a two-way conversation or two-way stories. Their story is certainly different on

some levels than the district stories.

Another leader agreed that sharing knowledge through stories can help with labor

relations. She stated,

I told the story of a polarizing teacher union and to share the learning about the

importance of collaboration and how establishing a relationship with a bargaining

unit and the district will really help you at the table to negotiate successfully. . . .

There was no connection, there was no interpersonal interactions about anything

other than the agenda and the session. I talk about how that didn't work and talk

about how if we had asked people usually and no response, but just kind of see

. . . if we had better relationships, better communication, how would that have

improved over time? Not only the relationship with the union, but our ability to

solve world [problems] when they became bigger issues.

There were only a few artifacts that confirmed this theme with union leadership.

One artifact shared a union update. One observation exhibited the frequency of telling

stories with union leadership to share information or clarify a topic.

Subquestion 7: Neutralize Rumor

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to neutralize

rumor?

Neutralize rumor referred to the commitment of leaders to reduce organizational

uncertainty and proactively clarify the future through narratives. It is about proactive,

frequent, transparent and honest communication directed toward shedding light on the

organizational vision (Denning, 2011; Brown et al., 2005). The coding process

established three themes in the storytelling narrative of neutralizing rumor, with 59

references, which represented 5.9% of all data coded. Table 9 identifies the three themes

of the storytelling narrative of neutralize rumor.

Table 9

Neutralize Rumor Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Transparency	13	2	7	22
Power of social media	12	1	9	22
Working with union leadership	12	1	2	15

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Transparency. This theme was found in 14 sources with 22 references,

representing 37.3% of coded content for neutralize rumor. Multiple authors posited the

need for transparency in messaging in order to reduce rumors (Biesenbach, 2018; Brown

et al., 2005; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Grove, 2015). When the human resources

administrators conveyed transparent information with stakeholders, it created a much

more positive working environment and district culture. One human resources

administrator shared that it is important "to build a culture where people respect one

another." One participant shared what it means to be transparent:

> That's just getting, getting the information out there, being transparent, being
>
> open, filling in the gaps and anticipating what people might be fearful of because
>
> when there is uncertainty as special about the future, people get nervous about
>
> change. People are fearful of the unknown. And so they may start rumors or start
>
> getting out misinformation to try to prevent something from happening. It's our
>
> job to kinda tell the story to help them get excited about the future and get excited

about change, and so a lot of that is really helping that unknown become known. And if we can fill the gaps and help it become known, that'll take away a lot of anxiety. And then that transparency piece is really important. And so people know what the plan is. People know what to expect and then people develop more of a comfort level for the future or for the change.

Another human resources leader shared the importance of neutralizing rumor by being transparent and using existing resources to get the message out there. He said, "So that's that publications, the website. It's the transparency, trying to get all that information out . . . especially high-profile issues . . . like closing a school." Additionally, a participant shared, "I use a run to the fire approach so you have the facts and then be honest, honesty and transparency and being willing to admit your mistakes."

Transparency was evident during two of the observations of the five human resources administrators with open and honest information that was shared to correct a misguided staff member. Of the artifacts collected, transparency as a strategy to neutralize rumors was observed most frequently in leadership team meeting agendas and in union leadership documents. One human resources administrator stated that honesty and transparency is pivotal with most interactions with the union. This genuine nature proved to be most beneficial to him in past experiences to squelch rumors around union business.

Power of social media. This theme appeared in 14 sources with 22 references, representing 37.3% of the coded content for neutralize rumor. Within the review of the literature, multiple authors affirmed the importance of the use and the power of social media to neutralize rumors (Biesenbach, 2018; Brown et al., 2005; Choy, 2017; Denning,

2011; Grove, 2015; Karia, 2015; Smith, 2012, Zielinski, 2018). The human resources involved in this study made concerted efforts to use various forms of stories told through social media to neutralize rumors.

Two of the human resources administrators made similar statements about the negative impact social media can have and to use it wisely. One stated, "The issue with social media is that [it] happens instantaneously. And so helping people understand the scope of rumor in how that happens. The other piece is just bringing them facts." Another participant uses stories to share the messaging through social media. He said, "Illustrate the impact of social media in rumors and though you think you're sharing it with this close group of close knit group of friends, how quickly it can spread." A different participant indicated,

> Know the impact necessarily of your words. And though you think you're being funny or you don't realize that what you tell somebody who's going to get told to someone else . . . that the harm that can have in someone who is dealing with that personally and the choices that they may make. We don't ever want to lose a student.

He went to clarify that he utilizes his district communications person to help post updates and information on social media to correct misinformation or rumors about negotiations or upcoming districtwide changes. He stated that a current issue that is brewing with a lot of rumor in his district is about changing a graduation venue. He stated that the district needs to better use social media to neutralize the rumors with parents, students, and the community.

The power of social media to decrease a rumor was noted in one observation. The use of social media to neutralize rumors and correct misinformation was observed in a number of artifacts, particularly social media posts. The most frequent social media outlet noted in the artifacts was the use of Twitter.

Working with union leadership. This theme came from seven sources with 15 references representing 25.4% of coded content for neutralize rumor. In working with union leadership to neutralize rumors, these human resources administrators used stories with union leaders to effectively tame the grapevine. Multiple authors agreed that the use of stories can get accurate information to an audience, decreasing the rumor mill, including those around labor relations (Biesenbach, 2018; Bilbeisi, 2019; Brown et al., 2005; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Dunn, 2018; Grove, 2015; Smith, 2012).

Two human resources administrators shared stories about working with union leadership where an old district folklore or legend needed to be corrected. One stated,

Labor relations . . . one of the things that in doing all my research and hearing all of the folklore and the stories of the past is acknowledging those stories of the past and valuing those stories of the past surrounding like the . . . property. How it could never be sold and how it has to go back to the original land owner. I mean, that was folklore, that if you were taught to ever tie [the district] or that was a fact. So sometimes, folklore, if it's said enough, then it becomes a fact.

Another shared a similar response:

There were generations of employees and leaders who came before me that I've heard stories about—anecdotal stories or things that happened—or even when you talk about union and contract issues, things that are in the contract and why. I'm

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really purposeful about trying to help people understand that history now, not to get stuck in the past but really to be a better version of ourselves in the future and understanding the what, and the why, and the how, and the how of the past . . . learn from that and helping us move forward. And that one thing that's really driven our district moving forward . . . really focusing on the future, but understanding the past and kind of honoring, honoring the past but not getting stuck in it, using those stories to drive you forward.

The concept of getting the accurate, correct, truthful information out to stakeholders appeared in a union document, one observation, and a website screenshot. The union document displayed the correction of one issue's misunderstanding of the information that was a rumor with many members of the teacher's union. During one observation, a participant was heard sharing how he uses stories to talk to his union leadership around the desire to change contract language. The union's perception was inaccurate and his story and explanation helped curb the rumor.

Subquestion 8: Share Vision

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create and share vision?

Share vision referred to the purposefully combining and integrating stories to set a tone, clarify expectations, communicate important ideas, and provide hope. Through these positive stories the organization can raise the quality and focus on innovative actions to drive change (Aidman & Long, 2017; Patterson et al., 2008). The coding process yielded four themes in the storytelling narrative of share vision with 128 references across all data sources, which represented 12.8% of all data coded. Table 10

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presents the themes related to sharing vision, along with the number of sources and references.

Table 10

Share Vision Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Vision and mission	15	4	24	43
Stories about students	14	5	14	33
Personal experiences	10	5	16	31
Recruitment	8	1	12	21

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Vision and mission. This theme emerged from 32 data sources with 43 references, representing 33.6% of coded content for share vision. When leaders told stories about their districts, most included a message about the vision and mission or where they were headed in the future. This theme was supported by the literature that the strategic use of stories and help share the vision and mission of the organization (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

Many of the participants shared the importance of telling the district's story of vision and mission or someone else will. One participant stated that the story does not always have to be initiated by him. In regard to stories, he shared,

It starts with our superintendent as well. I mean, he always shares his vision and goals with everybody nothing to be hidden there. When you do that, you share what's meaningful to you and for those that work with you that they're going to

have and what role they're going to have in meeting those goals. It doesn't need

to be, all of these stories don't need to be in a keynote type.

A different human resources administrator commented about his district's vision

regarding providing customer service:

I'm looking for examples of successful vision—people who have had your

organizations, schools, districts, who have had a successful vision. And I give an

example about what process they would go through in order to get there. So I

would point out . . . when we're talking about customer service, sometimes I'll

use a model like a Starbucks model or a Nordstrom's model, and I'll ask people,

so how many of you who shop at Nordstroms, how do you feel about that

experience? Why do you like Nordstrom's? Why [do] we like going in there?

So people will say, REI, why go to REI [it] is more expensive? Why do you go

there? That's what I'll use in order to paint a vision of how we can have the

customer service that models that.

Lastly, another human resources administrator posited,

That to me is an alignment of vision. So having a vision out there that's a simple

vision that people can understand and get excited about. And then being able to

communicate that vision, live that vision, and have it make sense to people and

people to get excited about it and want to follow it. And for an organization like

ours, that's aligning the personal vision and the organizational vision and really

your employees have to espouse and believe in that vision as well. If they don't

believe in that vision and it doesn't make sense to them, it doesn't matter what I

believe in, it's just not going to happen. And so really sharing and celebrating

that vision personally, the leadership vision, the organizational vision, and helping

employees to really see and feel and believe it so that it becomes all of our vision

together. Not just reliant on any one person, but together we all carry that torch to

the future.

The observations and artifacts supported the theme of using stories to share the

vision and mission of the organization. One artifact was the messaging on the district

website about the mission and vision and pictures showing students with disabilities and

various backgrounds in graduation ceremonies to reinforce that mission to educate and

provide success for all students. Another artifact where vision and mission emerged was

with a PowerPoint presentation for new employees regarding what the vision was for the

year and the future.

Stories about students. This theme occurred in 18 data sources with 33

references representing 25.8% of the coded content for share vision. When human

resources leaders shared stories about students, it helped them convey the district's vision

more effectively. Several authors supported that using stories, especially those that evoke

emotion, can help share the organization's mission and vision (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal &

Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom &

Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

One administrator shared student stories with his human resources staff

highlighting the importance of all levels of work and the impact on students, reinforcing

the district's vision and mission. He said,

Reminding people, especially in the district office who maybe have never worked

on a school site, that the entire purpose of what we do is to support schools and

staff. So they can support their staff at the school so that they can educate

children. I've used that story multiple times and it still helps people . . . ground

where they're at and why they do what they do. Cause it's very easy sometimes

being removed from a school site for people to understand that they have a direct

impact on the, on that organization all the way down to that child.

Another human resources administrator used stories about students with staff to both

share the vision of the district and spark action for change which was echoed by several

others. He said,

Imagine if you had that opportunity to do those retakes to work with a student in a

small group of students when they were struggling. Helping them see basically

how they could use that time and how it would be beneficial and then trying to

answer all of the logistical questions cause oftentimes . . . that's what gets in the

way. But if you can get them to start to envision what that extra time could mean

for them. . . . Then that helps them to buy in to at least giving it a try. . . . There

are others that need to hear the story. They need to see and hear what it could be

and that we were able to as one of those staff votes and we had enough teachers

that voted and we established the roar period.

An additional human resources administrator shared student stories with staff and stated,

Our changing demographics and challenges and what that does to academic

achievement and what it does to student outcomes and social emotional issues that

kids deal with. And then what that then translates into our staff and working with

our union to make sure we're putting programs and supports in place and have the

training in place for teachers to help them be equipped to deal with these students, and support these students and these families.

He later added,

Vision for the future and really focused on our students. And people will say things like, students come first. And okay, what's the impact on a student? . . . But when start to tell those stories that really tug on the heartstrings and tug on the emotions of their realities of what some of our students are dealing with. And the students that are living in cars or they don't even have that. They're living in shelters. They're trying to do their homework without resources. We've got students who are not just homeless but don't have food, literally don't have food on the table, who've lost their parents to violence. We've got a lot of trauma in our community. Really helping our staff to understand that trauma when they're getting frustrated with certain students, understanding what that student may or may not have, that they're bringing with them to school, and putting us in a mindset of doing, again, everything we can do for that student, no matter who they are or how challenging they may be. But there's a lot of students out there with trauma and really telling that story and being persistently focused on doing everything we can to make a brighter future for those students, and part of that is us continuing to be a better version of ourselves and the services we're providing for those students and families.

This theme was evident in two observations and eight artifacts collected. One observation that had a few references was from a presentation given to a large group and a number of student stories were shared to inspire and share the vision of the district. The

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artifacts were consistent and were from a variety of sources including district website postings and leadership team meeting agendas.

Personal experiences. This theme emerged from 26 data sources and 31 references and represented 24.2% of coded content for sharing vision. When these human resources administrators shared personal experiences through a story, the district's vision was shared with that audience. According to multiple authors, leaders created emotional connections with the audiences when they told of personal stories aligned with the values of the organization (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

Multiple participants shared personal stories that they have used to convey the district values such as doing anything for student success, balance, and showing vulnerabilities to make connections. One participant shared,

> So I did share a story about how during my doctoral program at one point we learned about and talked about how our lives are a big circle and there's pieces of pie out of that circle. And sometimes the circle isn't quite a circle. [There's a] divot here because you're doing too much and there's a big bump sticking out here or that's [when] you're doing too much and the others you're not doing enough. It's not full and kinda drew this picture on this PowerPoint and just kinda talked about my life and how I'm always trying to keep that wheel as, as rolling as smoothly as possible. but that becomes kind of like the vision for the year. It was balance.

Another participant added,

How you interact with somebody who's going to say a lot about us as a district and how do we value people? Because if we're not able to interact with other adults in a positive, in a positive way, did they go look and say, well how are they treating my kid? So that is something that I think that for me it's told and it's retold from the past. It's true. The future, and we'll continue to be told is that interaction that we have as adults with each other, with the parents that come to us, should always be respectful.

An additional human resources administrator shared a personal story about a colleague he once had a close relationship with that he later learned his teaching and grading practices and expectations for students were not aligned with the district's vision. He disclosed,

Believing in all kids, and this is about being student centered. This is about not giving up on kids and I talk about how when I first entered teaching and I established a friendship with one teacher in particular that was really supportive of me. But one thing that always stuck with me is that he would give a pre-assessment at the beginning. . . . And then based on that test, he would go into his grade book and he'd pencil in what grade that student was going to end up with at the end of the year. It was his prediction and it came to fruition most of the time. And then you counter that with having a particular teacher . . . that was remarkable, who never gave up on kids and she would incorporate a lot of strategies and work around helping kids develop a growth mindset. And oftentimes . . . she had a higher success rate than anybody else. And the idea was that kids will become who they think you think they are. If they get a sense that the teacher doesn't believe in them or doesn't care about them, or accepts that a

student has some kind of limit or cap on what they are capable of doing, the

student is going to live up to that. But if you, if you, if a student sees that you

believe in them, then you're working as hard as they are harder than they are and

you haven't given up on them, they'll go miles for you.

The artifacts and observations gathered supported this theme of personal stories.

In one observation, a human resource administrator shared a personal story from when he

was an assistant principal and got to know two students who were being raised by their

grandmother. While he made a difference in their lives, he tells that personal story to

convey to other staff members that they can make a connection with students, regardless

of the job duties. There were a number of artifacts including an inspirational video and

social media postings that revealed personal stories to share the district's vision.

Recruitment. This theme emerged from 16 sources with 21 references,

representing 16.4% of coded content for share vision. The leadership strategy of telling

stories to recruit the most qualified candidates and best fit was confirmed in the

interviews. The theme aligned with the review of the literature, where multiple authors

agreed leaders were storytellers to share the organization's vision, potentially to recruit

new employees (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning,

2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Edlinger, 2015; Hansen, 2007; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018;

Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012). One participant expressed,

I talked about our HR video, and what we even have plans for their future are

exemplary videos, like recruiting that have someone in that position that talks

about their position and how much they love it, which shares the, the vision for

organization . . . when you do that, you share what's meaningful to you and for

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those that work with you that they're going to have and what role they're going to

have in meeting those goals.

Another interviewee shared,

That's great way to really help a new employee. And we do it all the time. . . . So

that if we can create a greater power of moments and we've got a better chance of

retaining folks. . . . It's like what a difference in the first day of your employment.

. . . So if we can create those power moments to engage our employees, then I've

got a better chance of retaining and keeping them employed for us. So using that

kind of vision, how do we continue to create those moments for our members and

for our new employees?

A human resources administrator shared how she retells an institutional story when

recruiting and bringing on a new employee sharing the district vision of supporting all

employees. She stated,

I would say that it has to do with conversations I have with new employees that

that is a consistent story. When folks come on, they often ask about, can I get

help with this? How will I get training? How will I know what to do? So there's

a story that gets told and retold about my arrival to the district . . . a repetitive

story. It's not just me that does it . . . my administrative assistant does the same

exact thing. I've heard her do it. She tells the story when she gets there and talks

about other employees who have gotten there and what they've heard and what

they've seen and what, how they feel. We do a bus tour for new hires in our

district and principals get on at every bus. We go to every site. They get on the

bus and talk about their experiences in the district, and a lot of them tell that exact

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story, that it's welcoming place. You're going to love it. It feels like family.

They hear that over and over and over about eight times before they even step

foot on their campus.

Several other participants share stories of how they use stories to share with recruits to

explain the supports, staff development, and positive infrastructure they have that

resonate the district vision.

There were several artifacts and one observation that solidified this theme of

using stories to share the district vision for recruitment purposes. One artifact was the

PowerPoint presentation by all district administration for new certificated hires at the

beginning of the school year. Another artifact gathered that displayed the theme was a

PowerPoint presentation given by a participant around the topic of recruitment displaying

the district's vision of serving a diverse population and meeting the needs of at-risk

students.

Subquestion 9: Transformational Change

How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create

transformational change in their organizations?

Transformational change was defined as using stories in a timely manner to

engage people across the organization to contribute creative ideas, learn new skills, and

explore possibilities in an environment supportive of transformational change in the

organization (Aidman & Long, 2017; Denning, 2011). The coding process yielded three

themes in the storytelling narrative of transformational change with 73 references across

all data sources, which represented 7.3% of all data coded. Table 11 presents the themes

related to transformational change, along with the frequency of the sources.

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Table 11

Transformational Change Themes

Themes	Interviews	Observations	Artifacts	Frequency
Get to know people personally	15	5	14	34
Stories about students	10	2	10	22
Working with union leadership	12	1	4	17

Note. Frequency of sources came from transcribed interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Get to know people personally. This theme emerged from 24 sources with 34 references, representing 46.6% of coded content for transformational change. The strategy of getting to know people personally and telling personal stories about themselves was confirmed by the participants in the study and validated by the review of the literature (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Denning, 2011; Schlebusch, 2001). All participants provided content to support this theme.

One human resources administrator told a personal story about his upbringing to his staff to get to know them personally. He shared the lack of money when he was growing up and how he was independent and had to be responsible. When he shares these stories, he is engaging his staff to show that "there were a lot of things that I needed to overcome and I didn't do it without the support of others, whether that was the teachers I had, who made a difference for me." He then went on to share stories of AVID students at his school. These stories can help inspire a transformation in the culture of how students are served and "how impactful they can be on a student's life." Another participant echoed that sentiment by telling stories "to create that connection with others no matter what your job is like, you might have a profound impact on somebody." Two

other human resources administrators shared the concept of valuing people and one stated,

> Take a personal interest in people and we meet so many people, and sometimes you just kinda hit it off and maintain that personal connection . . . talk about the poor health of a family member, inspiring me and others too . . . to kind of make better choices with exercise and diet. So personalizing that transformation I think is makes a big impact and being open and transparent about if you had that experience and not making it up. Making it authentic.

Getting to know people personally was a theme that was evident in several artifacts and observations. One artifact was a staff meeting agenda where several items of transformational change were on the agenda, but a team-building activity was also included. One observation yielded a participant structuring a staff meeting to have each person share something personal that the group did not know.

Stories about students. This theme surfaced in 12 sources with 22 references and represented 30.1% of coded content for transformational change. According to multiple authors, transformational leaders use stories to engage audiences to make transformational change within the organization (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Denning, 2011; Schlebusch, 2001). When the human resources administrators used stories about students, they engaged stakeholders to create transformational change.

Several participants shared the theme of stories they tell in their districts to engage staff to do more for the students coming from adversity. One human resources administrator shares stories of students and "meeting the needs of students and families in

our community who experienced trauma." He goes on to say that he wants to "create change for people that need change to happen." Another human resources administrator shared a story from when he was a teacher and a basketball coach. He wanted to have a much stronger commitment from the players and parents. When he told stories of students getting college basketball scholarships, "that solidified their commitment at a much deeper level . . . it allowed me to push people harder than I'd pushed them before." Another participant shared a story of why he spends time and resources with recruitment. He focused on "higher quality candidates that we've had . . . how we've raised our retention rate to 95% because of the things we've implemented . . . so isn't this better for our kids?" Another human resources administrator shared stories of students to engage stakeholders with transformational change:

> Work towards teacher buy in around learning teams, collaboration time and the focus was on not looking at data in the sense of, "Hey, look, 70% of our kids are being successful in X." It was focusing on the 30% that weren't okay. And I know this is a strategy of a lot of principals had used, but we started looking at individual kids . . . it was if we're satisfied with 30% on being successful, which kids are we going to tell they're not going to be successful and we don't care about them. And when you put faces and names, it was tough for the teachers take that . . . when you tell the story about those individual students.

The theme was reinforced by other data collected in the study. During one of the observations, a story was told about the needs of at-risk students and how transformational change needed to occur in the district with recruitment strategies to create more diversity in the schools that are more representative of the student population. Several artifacts collected

contained evidence that telling stories around needs of students and school populations was important, including staff meeting agendas and staff development presentations.

Working with union leadership. This theme was found in 10 sources with 17 references and represented 23.3% of coded content for transformational change. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study mentioned working with union leadership by telling stories to spark and create transformational change in their districts. This theme is supported by an extensive review of the literature (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Denning, 2011; Schlebusch, 2001).

Using union leadership as a leverage point and strategy to create change in an organization can help engage buy-in of stakeholders. Clear and honest communication with the union leaders was prevalent in the responses. One participant stated,

> Whether you're talking to the union at the table or you're dealing with a personnel issue, you know, trying to figure out if you're going to hire someone or not and you're looking for that person that aligns with your organizational values and someone who can be a part positive, support or driver of change in your organization, and change that you need to happen. And the flip side of that is when you have someone in your organization that isn't a positive agent of change in transforming your organization in a way that it needs to be transformed, then part of that thread and part of that story is that person shouldn't be part of the organization anymore if they're not going to be part of the values and the vision, moving forward.

Artifacts and observations confirmed this premise of the importance of using stories with union leadership to create transformational change. While the concept of

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creating transformational change is complex, the participants said that having the buy-in of union leadership is critical to the transformation to be effective and long lasting. One observation displayed an example of the importance of the relationship with the teacher's union leadership to making a change initiative be successful.

Key Findings

The nine key findings of this study addressed the research questions for each storytelling element. To refine the key findings, it was determined only those themes that gathered data from a minimum of two themes of all data coded and accounted for at least 5.0% of all data coded within the study were selected. These key findings yielded references representing 82.6% of all data coded represented in Table 12.

Table 12

Key Findings

Key findings	Theme representation	Frequency	Percentage of total coded data
Stories about students	5	164	16.4%
Sharing the mission and vision	3	110	11.0%
Stories used to get to know people personally	3	109	10.9%
Stories to build relationships and connections	2	90	9.0%
Stories told through the power of social media	2	67	6.7%
Stories shared with union leadership	3	62	6.2%
Stories shared around negotiations	3	58	5.8%
Stories to help with recruitment	2	53	5.3%

Key Findings: Stories About Students

1. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories about students to spark action, build brand, transmit values, share vision, and implement transformational change.

This theme produced 164 references, representing 16.4% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Sharing the Vision and Mission

2. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories about sharing the vision and mission to spark action, foster collaboration, and share vision. This theme produced 113 references, representing 11.3% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories About Working Together as a Team

3. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories about working together as a team to spark action, foster collaboration, and share knowledge. This theme produced 110 references, representing 11.0% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Used to get to Know People Personally

4. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories about getting to know people personally to build trust, share knowledge, and implement transformational change. This theme produced 109 references, representing 10.9% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories to Build Relationships and Connections

5. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build relationships and connections to transmit values and foster collaboration. This theme produced 90 references, representing 9.0% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Told through the Power of Social Media

6. Exemplary human resources administrators tell stories to show the power of social media to build brand and neutralize rumor. This theme produced 67 references, representing 6.7% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Shared With Union Leadership

7. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories shared with union leadership to

share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and implement transformational change. This

theme produced 62 references, representing 6.2% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Shared About the Negotiations Process

8. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories shared about negotiations to

    build trust, foster collaboration, and share knowledge. This theme produced 58

    references, representing 5.8% of all the coded content.

Key Findings: Stories Told to Help With Recruitment

9. Exemplary human resources administrators use stories to help with recruitment to

    build brand and share vision. This theme produced 53 references, representing 5.3%

    of all the coded content.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the

behaviors exemplary human resources administrators utilize to lead their organizations

through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narratives of storytelling leadership:

spark action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, foster collaboration, share

knowledge, neutralize rumor, and share vision as well as how to create transformational

change. This chapter covered the purpose of the study, methodology, and presented a

summary of data collected. This data showed that 14 major themes emerged from the 10

semistructured interviews, five observations, and 40 artifacts. Nine key findings

describing the behaviors of exemplary human resources administrators were identified

from the 14 themes.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This phenomenological qualitative research study described the lived experiences of exemplary human resources administrators who lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight elements of storytelling and leadership: spark action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and share vision as well as creating transformational change. An extensive and thoughtful analysis of data collected from interviews, observations, and artifacts led to 14 storytelling leadership themes and nine major findings. The following conclusions were the culmination of extensive research, data collection, and analysis that produced important implications for action and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V contains a final summary of the research study and includes the purpose statement, research question and subquestions, methodology, population, and sample. The major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for further research are also presented. Chapter V ends with the researcher's concluding remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns (ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organizations' brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision). In

addition, it was the purpose to understand how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in organizations.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

How do exemplary human resources administrators lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight narrative patterns?

Subquestions

1. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to ignite action and implement new ideas?

2. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build trust?

3. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to build the organization's brand?

4. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to transmit organizational values?

5. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to foster collaboration?

6. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to share knowledge?

7. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to neutralize rumor?

8. How do exemplary human resources administrators use stories to create and share vision?

9. How do exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in their organizations?

Population

According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, there were 1,037 public school districts in California during the 2018-2019 school year. In all 1,037 school districts, one administrator is designated with the responsibility of human resources. This population of 1,037 school districts was too large to sample every possible respondent. The population for this study was exemplary human resources administrators in California school districts. It is typically not feasible, due to time or cost constraints, to study large groups; however, the researcher chose population samples from within a larger group. The target population was identified as 61 human resources administrators working in a school district in Placer and Sacramento counties of Northern California.

Sample

The thematic dissertation team collectively developed the sample criteria. Sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). Likewise, a sample is defined as a subset of the target group representing the entire population according to Patton (2015) and Creswell (2003). When a researcher chooses a quantitative approach, the sample is often random; however, the sample population for this study was criteria based. The target population for this study was narrowed to include all 61 human resources administrators in Placer and Sacramento counties due to convenience to the researcher's time, geography, and resources. The process of choosing a controllable sample size depends on the research problem and population (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study utilized nonprobability sampling. A recommendation was five to 25 participants for

phenomenological studies according to Creswell (2008). There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research. Qualitative size may best be determined by the time allotted, resources available, and study objectives (Patton, 2015). The thematic dissertation team determined 10 participants for each respective study was an appropriate sample size.

For the purposes of this research, exemplary leader was defined as those who met at least four of the following characteristics:

1. They show evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a California school district.

2. They have a minimum of 5 years of experience in the human resources profession.

3. They have had articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings in the area of human resources.

4. They have received recognition by their peers.

5. They have a membership in human resources professional associations.

6. They have received a recommendation from one or more recognized district superintendents.

Major Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's eight narrative patterns: ignite action and implement new ideas, build trust, build your organizations' brand, transmit organizational values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create and share vision. In addition, it was the purpose to understand how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to

create transformational change in organizations. The central research question was answered through analysis of the subquestions. Chapter IV presented the key research findings and results of the coding of the themes, which included the frequencies from the interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Spark Action

Major Finding 1. Stories about students and working together as a team are vital to spark action. Stories about students represented 34.3% of the coded data for spark action, 16.4% of all coded data, and was mentioned by eight of the exemplary human resources administrators interviewed for spark action. This finding yielded the highest number of references, along with working together as a team, for spark action. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study agreed that telling stories about students is vital to spark action with any initiatives. This finding was congruent with the work of Denning (2011), as stories should have a clear and worthwhile purpose, have an authentically true example to relay to the audience, and be stories that get the attention of the audience. Tugging at the heartstrings of stakeholders in the audience by telling a story about a student can ignite change (Baldoni, 2003; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011).

Stories about working together as a team is a critical element of sparking action. This theme represented 34.3% of the coded data for spark action, 11.0% of all coded data, and was cited by six of the exemplary human resources leaders interviewed. It yielded the highest references for spark action as well as the most stories about students. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study also agreed that working together as a team fostered a collective body to spark action. By getting a team together,

the collective force can gain traction to spark action that will engage others. Leaders in today's school districts are tasked with many initiatives and challenges. When those leaders can spark action by telling stories about successful teams and teamwork, the initiative is more likely to occur, which is supported by multiple authors in the research (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015).

Build Trust

Major Finding 2. Telling stories to get to know people personally and around the negotiations process helps build trust. Telling stories that help one get to know other people personally represented 43.3% of the data coded for build trust, 10.9% of all data coded in the study, and emerged in eight interviews conducted with human resources administrators. It was confirmed by all exemplary human resources administrators that getting to know people personally was the primary behavior to build trust with those with whom they were engaged. This included human resources department teams, leadership teams, principals, union members, and the school board. This is consistent with the literature as getting to know people personally helps build trust, which helps them to work together more efficiently and to understand each other (Auvinen, Aalito, & Blomqvist, 2013; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Telling stories about labor relations and negotiations represented 23.3% of the coded data for build trust and 5.8% of all coded data, and data emerged from six interviews conducted with exemplary human resources administrators. This theme received the second highest number of references for build trust. The storytelling leadership behavior of telling stories about negotiations, past negotiations experiences, and the authenticity of those stories was used to build trust and a strong relationship with

members of the union, the negotiating team, and union leadership in particular. The

crucial decision to engage in these stories and relationships about negotiations was also

apparent in the literature (Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Smith, 2012).

Build Brand

Major Finding 3. Using stories through the power of social media and stories

about student success can help build the brand of the organization and assist with

recruitment efforts. Stories told to show the power of social media represented 38.1%

of the coded data for build brand, 6.7% of all coded data, and was mentioned by nine

exemplary human resources administrators who were interviewed. It yielded the highest

number of references for build brand. The exemplary human resources administrators in

this study agreed that the behavior of using social media to build the brand of the

organization is key. While not all of the participants did the social media postings

personally, they directed assigned staff as to the content and intentions. This finding is

congruent with the work of Denning (2011), as social media was one of the foundational

pieces of modern-day storytelling in organizations. Through stories told via social media,

the brand was built and school districts remain competitive with private and charter

schools. Effective leaders used social media to convey the district's brand (Biesenbach,

2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015; Lund et al., 2018; Schultz, 2010; Zielinski, 2018).

Using stories about students' success can help build the brand of the organization.

This theme represented 34.7% of the coded content for build brand, 16.4% of all coded

data, and was cited by seven of the exemplary human resources administrators in their

interviews. This yielded the second highest references for build brand. The exemplary

human resources administrators in this study also agreed that using stories about students

was an important leadership behavior as it engaged stakeholders, including staff and parents. Denning (2011) posited that telling a story about a customer has an impact if the audience can be induced to take an interest in the characters in the story. With students and student success being the primary focus of school districts, the participants in the study agreed that student success stories help build the brand. Employers are faced with the constant need to remain competitive in the modern world and a strong brand of the district through stories can help that be successful (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Karia, 2015; Lund et al., 2018; Schultz, 2010; Zielinski, 2018).

Using stories to build brand can help with the recruitment of employees. This theme represented 27.1% of the coded data for build brand and 5.3% of all data coded in the study, and emerged in seven of the interviews conducted with the exemplary human resources administrators. It was confirmed that a key storytelling behavior was the ability to build the brand of the organization, incorporating other recruitment stories to recruit classified, certificated, and management employees, specifically for hard-to-fill positions such as those of special education teachers, math teachers, speech and language pathologists, and instructional assistants working with special education students. This was consistent with the literature as recruitment of hard-to-fill positions is a key to the success of students, rather than having a substitute and unqualified staff (Becker & Huselid, 2010; Edlinger, 2015; Hansen, 2007; Losey et al., 2005; Lund et al, 2018; Zielinski, 2018).

Transmit Values

Major Finding 4. Using stories to build relationships and connections with staff and sharing stories about students will help transmit the organization's values.

The ability of an exemplary human resources administrator to use stories with their staff and teams to build relationships and connections helps transmit the values of the organization both internally and externally. This theme was denoted in 42.5% of all data coded for transmit values, 9.0% of all data coded in the study, and was mentioned in eight interviews. This was congruent with the review of the literature as the best leaders intentionally build relationships and connections with staff to transmit the organization's values (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Sharing stories about students will help transmit organizational values. This represented 26.7% of all data coded for transmit values 16.4% of all data coded in the study and was mentioned in nine of the interviews conducted. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study intentionally told stories about students, their successes, and overcoming adversity in order to transmit the organization's values both internally and externally. Although the participants had different stories about students, some as experiences while they were a teacher or principal in their districts, these leaders conveyed heartwarming stories to audiences to transmit the organizational values that doing whatever the organization can to support students was essential, including making changes in teaching practices. This behavior resonated with stories in the literature review with an emotional tie to the audience transmitting an organization's values to stakeholders (Biesenbach, 2018; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018).

Foster Collaboration

Major Finding 5. Sharing stories about building relationships and connections and working together as a team can foster collaboration within an

organization and between district and union leadership. Building relationships and connections represented 29.3% of the coded data for foster collaboration, 9.0% of all coded data, and was mentioned in eight interviews conducted. It yielded the highest number of references for foster collaboration, along with working together as a team. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study agreed that sharing stories of past and present and the importance of relationships and connections is imperative in fostering collaboration with current initiatives. This finding was congruent with Denning's (2011) work stating that teams with strong relationships who work collaboratively together get things done. The participants in the study shared that when they shared stories around strong relationships and connections with their team or stakeholders, it engages the audience and fosters an environment for collaboration with the task or initiative at hand. This premise is solidified in the vast research about teams and collaboration through storytelling (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011; Harvey & Drolet, 2006; Senge, 2006; Smith, 2012).

Stories about working together as a team can foster collaboration. This theme also represented 29.3% of the coded data for foster collaboration, 11.0% of all coded data, and was cited in five interviews. It yielded the highest number of references for foster collaboration as well as for relationships and connections. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study also agreed that telling stories about working together and the importance of teamwork is critical to fostering collaboration. Telling stories of personal experiences when they worked together for a common goal rallied the team together to better collaborate on a commonly agreed-upon solution. The leader does

not always have the answers, but working collectively, the team can come up with a positive solution. Leaders of the modern era tell stories about working together and they foster collaboration more effectively (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Brown & Duguid, 1991; Denning, 2011; Hackman, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Stories about and during negotiations can foster collaboration between the district and union leadership. This theme represented 13.5% of the coded data for foster collaboration, 5.8% of all data coded in the study, and emerged in five of the interviews conducted with human resources administrators. It was confirmed by the leaders that sharing past and present stories during negotiations can foster collaboration with labor partners to come to a common ground among issues and developing collective bargaining agreement contract language. Research supports the fact that telling stories can help foster collaboration in the negotiations process and lead to a more positive result (Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Hackman, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Share Knowledge

Major Finding 6. Stories during the negotiations process with union leadership, getting to know people personally, and working together as a team, can help share knowledge with stakeholders. Stories during the negotiations process made up 22.0% of the data coded for share knowledge, 5.8% of all data coded in the study, and emerged in six of the interviews conducted. It was confirmed with all data sources that a key storytelling behavior of exemplary human resources administrators was the ability to tell stories during the negotiations process to help share knowledge with stakeholders. While this was primarily with the negotiations team of the union, it was also with the district's own team and the public to inform of them of factual information during the

process. This is consistent with literature as human resources administrators who serve as one of the organization's chief storytellers share knowledge with stakeholders about the negotiations process (Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018; Smith, 2012).

By getting to know people through personal stories, knowledge can be shared. This theme was present in 20.8% of the coded data for share knowledge, 10.9% of all coded data, and emerged in five of the interviews conducted with exemplary human resources administrators. The storytelling leadership behavior of getting to know stakeholders personally and allowing them to get to know you helps with the two-way sharing of knowledge. By sharing knowledge, the organization can improve and make desired changes. These findings are congruent with the literature in regard to getting to know people personally in order to break down barriers, which can allow for the sharing of knowledge and true learning to occur (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012).

Sharing stories about working together as a team can help in the sharing of knowledge. This theme occurred in 20.2% of the coded data for sharing knowledge, 11.0% of all coded data, and occurred in five of the interviews conducted. Exemplary human resources administrators agreed that sharing stories of past experiences of a successful team working together and the possibilities of working as a team in the future can help with the two-way sharing of knowledge. When the two-way sharing occurs among the team members, learning can occur with all stakeholders. Members at all levels of an organization need to work together as a team in order to effectively share knowledge with each other and outside of the organization (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Jabri & Pounder, 2001; Smith, 2012).

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Sharing stories with union leadership can inform and share knowledge with them on topics at hand. This theme was present in 6.9% of the coded data in share knowledge, 6.2% of all coded data, and was represented in eight of the interviews conducted with exemplary human resources administrators. The ability of a human resources leader to share knowledge via a powerful story with union leadership can have an impact on the issue or topic being discussed. This was consistent with the review of the literature as the best human resources leaders develop a positive relationship with union leadership and share knowledge by way of stories on a regular basis (Bilbeisi, 2019; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Dunn, 2018; Smith, 2012).

Neutralize Rumor

Major Finding 7. Stories told through the power of social media and those told with union leadership can help neutralize rumor. Stories told through the power of social media represented 37.3% of the coded data for neutralize rumor, 6.7% of all coded data, and was mentioned in four of the interviews conducted to neutralize rumor. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study intentionally used the power of social media to inform stakeholders and neutralize rumor and was modeled by their behaviors of either posting personally on social media or directing staff to post information on social media sites, primarily Facebook and Twitter. Using the power of social media to neutralize rumor was supported by the review of recent literature (Biesenbach, 2018; Choy, 2017; Denning, 2011; Grove, 2015; Karia, 2015; Zielinski, 2018).

Sharing stories with union leadership can help dispel rumors. This theme was present in 25.4% of the coded data for neutralize rumor, 6.2% of all data coded in the

study, and four of the interviews conducted. The exemplary human resources

administrators in this study deliberately told stories to union leadership to dispel rumors.

Those stories and the information that tamed the grapevine (Denning, 2011) helped ease

tension and fear among union members. By decreasing the district "folklore" around

sensitive and politically charged situations through the sharing of information via stories,

district leadership was able to move in a positive direction for students and keep the

district fiscally sound. Dispelling rumors by sharing stories is substantiated with the

review of literature (Biesenbach, 2018; Bilbeisi, 2019; Brown et al., 2005; Choy, 2017;

Denning, 2011; Dunn, 2018; Grove, 2015; Smith, 2012).

Share Vision

**Major Finding 8. Deliberately sharing stories about the district's mission and

vision and stories about students with stakeholders shares the vision and assists in

recruitment efforts**. Sharing specific stories about the mission and vision represented

33.6% of the coded data for share vision, 11.3% of all coded data, and was mentioned by

eight of the exemplary human resources administrators interviewed. It yielded the

highest number of references for share vision. The exemplary human resources

administrators in this study agreed that the behavior of openly sharing stories about the

district's mission and vision on a regular basis through many avenues is important to

share the vision and make it widely known with all stakeholders. Effective leaders using

stories to share the mission and vision of the organization is solidified in the review of the

literature (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011;

Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

Sharing stories about students helps an organization share the vision of what it stands for. This theme represented 25.8% of the coded data for share vision, 16.4% of all coded data, and was present in eight of the interviews conducted. It yielded the second highest references for share vision. The exemplary human resources administrators in this study agreed that telling stories about students, their successes, and how the district supports them shares the vision of the organization with stakeholders. The leaders also posited that telling heartwarming stories of students who have overcome adversity due to the dedication of staff and resources tugs at the heartstrings and emotions of the stakeholders, echoing the district's vision to support all students and families. Effective leaders use stories that evoke emotion to share the vision and move the organization forward (Biesenbach, 2018; Boal & Schultz, 2007; Bublitz et al., 2016; Denning, 2011; Dolan & Bao, 2012; Ruebottom & Auster, 2018; Sargeant et al., 2018; Smith, 2012).

Sharing stories of the district vision assists with the recruitment of staff. This theme represented 16.4% of the coded data for share vision, 5.3% of all coded data, and was mentioned by four of the exemplary human resources administrators interviewed around share vision. The leaders asserted that when recruiting for various positions, it is important to share stories, images, and videos of the district vision in order to find the best fit to serve the needs of students. These findings are consistent with the review of the literature in regard to the importance of humanizing the organization in the eyes of potential employees by telling an evocative story (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Create Transformational Change

  Major Finding 9. Sharing stories in order to get to know people personally, stories about students, and those shared with union leadership helps an organization create transformational change. Stories used to get to know people personally represented 46.6% of all data coded for transformational change, 10.9% of all data coded, and was mentioned in five interviews. It yielded the highest number of references for transformational change and the highest for any of the storytelling framework areas. All exemplary human resources administrators in this study behaved in a manner consistent with the storytelling leadership element of transformational change by being authentic, showing vulnerability, getting to know their teams, and sharing personal stories about themselves. These findings were consistent with the literature on implementing transformational change in an organization by humanizing the organization modeled by its leaders (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Schlebusch, 2001; Smith, 2012).

  Sharing stories about students can engage stakeholders to implement transformational change. This theme represented 30.1% of the coded data for transformational change, 16.4% of all coded data, and was present in five of the interviews. It was consistent with the coded data that exemplary human resources administrators share stories with stakeholders to evoke emotion and actively engage them so that a transformation can occur in their respective school districts. This was reinforced by the review of the literature as leaders use compelling stories to evoke emotion in the audience to actively engage them creating much-needed change in the organization that is

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transformational (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Sharing stories with union leadership about initiatives can gain endorsements to implement transformational change. This theme was present in 23.3% of the coded data for transformational change, 6.2% of all coded data, and was stated in five of the interviews conducted with the 10 exemplary human resources administrators. The storytelling leadership behavior of sharing stories with union leadership regarding initiatives was used to get into "deep and meaningful conversations" regarding the intent of the initiative and impact to the working conditions of union members. By these sharing of stories, a two-way dialogue can occur engaging the union leadership to "get behind" the change, encouraging buy-in by all employees. The exemplary human resources administrators posited that getting the union to buy in to both short- and long-term proposals helps the district gain traction and truly take on a life of its own. This finding is supported by the review of the literature that when the members of the organization can see that the way they have been doing business cannot meet the needs of the current situation, an organization-wide transformation must occur (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012). The engagement of union leadership is imperative to make that transformation happen.

Unexpected Findings

The first unexpected finding, *stories about students*, emerged 164 times across all interviews, observations, and artifacts. This theme drew data from the greatest of sources across all themes and received the highest number of references, nine, among all

interviews conducted. This theme had a frequency of 164 and represented 16.4% of the coded content of all data sources. This theme emerged in five of the nine elements of storytelling. The literature, while discussing "stories that evoke emotion," did not overtly call out the concept of sharing stories about students and their adversity and success as an important storytelling leadership strategy in educational organizations. This study showed that human resources administrators shared stories about students from their experiences as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, and assistant superintendent to engage their audiences. With this vast experience, there were many stories to engage stakeholders of the district. Additionally, the research did not show that human resources administrators should tell stories about students in their work as a foundational behavior.

The second unexpected finding, *getting to know people personally,* arose 109 times across all interviews, observations, and artifacts. This theme had a frequency of 109 and represented 10.9% of all coded data. Although it was the fourth highest theme, it was only .4% behind the second highest theme and was mentioned in three different themes and was a key finding in the study. Exemplary human resources administrators in this study indicated that they value and deem getting to know people personally as an important story to tell, sharing personal stories about themselves, and getting to know their teams in order to implement initiatives. While human resources administrators are very focused on relationships naturally, the research on building teams has getting to know people personally in order to engage them as a primary driver (Aidman & Long, 2017; C. Anderson, 1997; D. Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2010; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Schlebusch, 2001; Smith, 2012).

The last unexpected finding, *the power of social media*, emerged in nine interviews. While the power of social media only occurred in two elements as major themes, it occurred 67 times and in 6.7% of all coded data. Many of the participants indicated that they did not consistently do the postings on social media, they relied heavily on the communications department or employees to do those postings. Exemplary human resources administrators intentionally created opportunities to share stories via social media either personally or through the district avenue to touch on every element of storytelling but primarily building brand and to dispel rumors.

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Conclusions

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The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the behaviors that exemplary human resources administrators practice to lead their organizations through storytelling using Denning's (2011) eight elements of storytelling and leadership: spark action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and share vison, and also creating transformational change. The following conclusions developed from the data analysis in Chapter IV and describe the lived experiences of exemplary human resources administrators as they lead their school districts through storytelling.

Conclusion 1: Human resources administrators who share stories about students will evoke emotion that engages stakeholders in making organizational changes. Human resources administrators who do not use stories about students to evoke emotion will not garner the level of support and engagement necessary to make organizational change. Decades ago, when a school or district administrator made a decision and stated a change initiative, many of those in their audience rallied behind

solely to be loyal but without truly buying into the change. Today's human resources administrators must use stories about students that evoke emotion with the audiences of their human resources team, leadership teams, labor partners, and school district employees in order to employ their full engagement with the task at hand. Oftentimes, human resources administrators operate as one of the key storytellers in the organization and interact with all levels of employees. By tugging at the heartstrings of their audience members, they can get their attention (Baldoni, 2003; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011). When stakeholders hear of a story of a student overcoming adversity and hardships, it can engage the stakeholders to spark action to make change, build the brand of the organization, transmit the values of the organization both internally and externally, share the vision and mission of the organization, and engage them to make true, authentic transformational change. A key storytelling leadership strategy is to engage the audience with narratives to improve the organization. Since the primary purpose in a school district is to educate and support students academically, physically, and socioemotionally, telling specific stories about students and their hardships and successes gets to the foundation of why educators chose the profession. Heartwarming and heart-wrenching stories about students actively engage the audience creating a perfect recipe for transformational change with maximum buy-in (Aidman & Long, 2017; Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Conclusion 2: Human resources administrators who intentionally use stories to build personal relationships will be more successful in communicating the organization's purpose and vision. Since human resources administrators are often seen as the heart of the organization, it is imperative that they build relationships with

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those teams they work with and get to know people within and around the organization personally to engage and make change as needed. When leaders get to know the teams they work with personally, they create a strong team and can more effectively take on the challenges that are presented. By intentionally building relationships and connections, human resources leaders can more easily transmit the organization's values and purpose and garner many more followers (Biesenbach, 2018; Denning, 2011; Smith, 2012).

Building strong teams through relationships is imperative to the success of an organization (Harvey & Drolet, 2006). When human resources administrators use this strategy to connect with their many levels and varied teams, they are able to bring more active and engaged followers in their wake. When the momentum is built, the team members can accomplish most any task at hand together.

Conclusion 3: Human resources administrators who use stories to build relationships will be more successful in building trust with union leadership throughout the negotiations process. When the union is on board and shares a common message with the district, transformational change can occur. Today's human resources administrator is faced with many challenges and the relationship with the labor unions is no exception. By sharing stories with the union leadership around past experiences and current issues to problem solve, human resources leaders can share knowledge and foster collaboration around initiatives or issues that come up. During negotiations, the stories that build relationships and garner trust are imperative to the weathering of any storm, especially post Janus (Bilbeisi, 2019; Dunn, 2018).

One key storytelling strategy is to share stories to dispel rumors and frame a background when working with union leadership on a regular basis. Another key

strategy is to share historical factual stories during the negotiations process to keep the process moving. Sometimes this strategy helps dispel rumors or historical school district legends that may be a barrier to moving forward. By sharing knowledge with these pivotal stakeholders in the school district, assumptions are confirmed or displaced, decisions can be made within negotiations, and the process can move on to benefit the staff and students involved (Bilbeisi, 2019; Choy, 2017; Dunn; 2018).

Conclusion 4: Human resources administrators who use stories of the district culture and successes will be more successful in recruiting and retaining employees. The storytelling human resource leaders in this study understand that narratives in different avenues are important in engaging potential employees for the organization. When human resources administrators tell the story of the school district and the students they serve, they are more likely to recruit and retain high-quality employees. By telling stories about the students to make a difference in their lives, classified and certificated staff are more likely to apply for positions and stay once employed.

The storytelling human resources administrators in this study understand that stories are a vehicle to recruiting and retaining high-quality employees. All 10 participants stated that telling stories as a way of recruitment was essential, especially in job fairs and through social media. When the stories are told, the applicants feel that they have found a good fit and want to stay for a longer career. When human resources administrators tell the story of the school district and the students they serve, they understand that narratives in different avenues are important in engaging potential employees for the organization (ACSA, 2002; Shadovitz, 2019).

Implications for Action

Implication 1. Brandman University's Doctorate in Organizational Leadership program should include storytelling and the behaviors leaders use, as delineated in this study, as part of its required curriculum for doctoral candidates. A proposal should be made to the Brandman University Course Lead Professors of the following Brandman University courses to implicitly include content from this research study: EDOL 705–Organizational Communication and Conflict and EDOL 707–Organizational Theory and Development.

Implication 2. The training programs offered by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) should include the findings of this study in their curriculum, specifically in their Human Resources Academy. The results of this study should also be included in the standards developed by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) as it supports and endorses the programs and credentialing of administrators for the Preliminary Administrative Service Credential and the Clear Administrative Service Credential programs. This training would require new and aspiring human resources administrators to develop storytelling leadership behaviors associated with sparking action, building trust, building brand, transmitting values, fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, neutralizing rumor, sharing vision, and implementing transformational change in their school districts.

Implication 3. ACSA should include the eight elements of storytelling leadership and transformational leadership through storytelling as a specific theme in its professional learning programs such as the Human Resources Academies, Personnel Institute, the Negotiators' Symposium, and Professional Development Human Resources

Office: The First 90 Days and Beyond. The key findings and conclusions of this study

should be included in the agendas of the ACSA Statewide Human Resources Council. In

addition, the ACSA Human Resources Council must incorporate storytelling and

leadership into conferences and professional development utilizing the research from this

study. Proposals should be submitted by the storytelling leadership thematic team of peer

researchers and two guiding faculty members to include this content in the above

programs and conferences.

Implication 4. The Placer County of Education (PCOE) and Sacramento County

Office of Education (SCOE) need to include storytelling leadership and its eight elements

(spark action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, foster collaboration, share

knowledge, neutralize rumor, and share vision, along with implement transformational

change) as universal concepts in the California Administrator Performance Expectations

(CAPE) required for completion of a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential

Program and the Clear Administrative Services Credential Program. Specific CAPE

modules that would benefit from adding storytelling leadership to their strands are 3B,

6A, and 6B. A proposal should therefore be submitted to PCOE superintendent, deputy

superintendent, and assistant superintendents and the Placer County Office of Education

Board of Education, to include content in the administrative credential programs.

Implication 5. The author should create a published handbook for leaders,

specifically human resources administrators, that includes storytelling leadership and its

eight elements (spark action, build trust, build brand, transmit values, foster

collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and share vision, along with implement

transformational change). This published document should have specific examples and

scenarios of dramatic stories that can be told in each of the eight areas as a foundation for effective storytelling. The document should include concrete strategies on how to personalize the stories and experiences for the reader.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Further Research**</div>

Leadership through storytelling is an emerging field that is on the edge of a breakthrough in education and in businesses. Although the researcher and thematic team extend the base of knowledge of storytelling leadership across several arenas, it is still relatively new territory. The specific research conducted on exemplary human resources administrators who lead through sharing stories also provides new opportunities for future research studies. The following future research on storytelling leadership is recommended:

Recommendation 1. It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted to explore the experiences of female human resources administrators and how they use stories. As the methodology of this study did not explicitly examine demographics of exemplary human resources administrators by design, a replicated phenomenological research study should be conducted that further narrows the focus on storytelling leadership by studying only female exemplary human resources administrators of public school districts. Following the criteria of an exemplary human resources administrator established by the thematic research team, the study identified, by chance, included nine male and one female exemplary human resources administrators. However, when coding the data, participant gender was not attached to the code. A future study would afford the researcher the opportunity to elucidate similarities and differences of storytelling leadership behaviors between males and females.

Recommendation 2. It is recommended that a multiple-case study be conducted to identify and describe the storytelling strategies that exemplary county office human resources administrators use to develop organizational culture. This study did not include exemplary human resources administrators in county offices of education. While the role of a human resources administrator is similar in county offices and school districts, there are many differences, including how they serve a varied population of employees and students and support the county's school districts. This study would examine the similarities and differences in how exemplary human resources administrators in county offices use storytelling to lead their organization and support the districts they support.

Recommendation 3. It is recommended that a mixed-methods study be conducted to identify and describe the storytelling strategies that human resources administrators use to build trust in labor relations. While this study resulted in some key findings around labor negotiations and relationships, the themes in this study did not focus specifically on strategies to build on the labor relationship. Admitting mistakes and vulnerability emerged in this study as themes but not in enough concentrated areas to emerge as a key theme.

Recommendation 4. It is recommended that a Delphi study be conducted to more deeply identify and describe the storytelling strategies that is used with the medium of social media. While this study resulted in some key and major findings around social media, the themes in this study did not focus on all aspects of social media using experts both inside and outside of education.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Storytelling and leadership is important in modern-day's human resources. While this study focused on education, this study can be applied to all areas of business and disciplines. Human resources administrators must fully commit themselves to intentionally telling stories to spark change, build trust, build the brand, transmit values, foster collaboration, share knowledge, neutralize rumor, and create transformational change.

Human resources administrators have a huge task of serving as the heart of the organization. There are many legal requirements, items requiring attention to detail, and serving as the listening ear to many. The daily tasks of a human resources administrator can range from investigating complaints, meeting with employees, facilitating leadership meetings, holding employees accountable, actively recruiting employees, negotiations, navigating labor relations, to terminations of employees. In one day's work, a human resources administrator has to delicately navigate through these responsibilities with ease. Human resources administrators also have to respond to changes in employment laws that have an impact on school districts. Since the start of this research and study, the JANUS decision, decrease in classified probationary periods, and a number of additional required annual trainings have all changed. By telling stories to help traverse these changes, human resources administrators not only handle the changes, they build trust and relationships along the way to make a difference with those that they serve.

As a human resources administrator, I must actively consider my own application of these research findings in my daily work to serve my county office employees and the 16 school districts that we serve. I am honored that this research process pushed me to

expand my thought processes and boundaries. I have made a conscious effort to tell

stories in my work and have begun to analyze my own storytelling leadership behaviors

to become more in tune to the way my organization is affected through stories. Now, the

challenge is to continue to tell my stories and inspire those that I work with to do the

same.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Human Resources Administrators Nomination E-mail

Dear Superintendent X,

I am an Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, and an active doctoral student at

Brandman University. I would greatly appreciate your assistance. I am part of a

thematic dissertation group of three peer researchers guided by two faculty members that

is studying how exemplary human resources administrators who lead organizations

through storytelling. The purpose of my phenomenological research study is to describe

what stories exemplary human resources administrators tell to transform their

organizations. The eight narrative patterns of storytelling used in this study are depicted

by Denning's framework of storytelling by leader. I am interested in what stories are told

to build trust, spark action, foster collaboration, motivate others, build brand, transmit

values and knowledge, create vision and neutralize gossip. Participants may experience

minimal risk during the in-person interview and all personal and professional information

including school district and county office will be kept confidential.

To complete the study, I need your help to identify potential candidates to participate in

one one-hour interview, be observed in the workplace, and provide artifacts of their

exemplary leadership. To be eligible for participation candidates need to meet four of the

following six exemplary criteria:

- Evidence of leading a successful human resources department in a California
  school district;

- A minimum of five years of experience in the human resources profession;

- Articles, papers or written materials published, or presented at conferences in the area of human resources;

- Recognition by peers;

- Membership in human resources professional associations;

- Recommendation by one or more recognized district superintendents.

If you could respond with a list of human resources administrators in your organization, emails, and phone numbers, or even send a quick email introducing me to the potential candidates, I would be very grateful.

Thank you, in advance, for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

Colleen Slattery

Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

Placer County Office of Education

APPENDIX B

Invitation E-mail to Participants

Dear _____,

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research study on Leadership

Storytelling in school districts and county offices of education. You are receiving this

email because you were nominated by your Superintendent as an exemplary human

resource leader. Your participation consists of one 60-minute audio recorded interview of

20 questions that were developed collaboratively by 3 peer researchers. These questions

are based on Steve Denning's (2011) The Leader's Guide to Storytelling eight narrative

patterns of storytelling; ignite action, build trust, build your brand, transmit values,

collaborate, share knowledge, tame the grapevine, & a vision for the future. If possible I

would like to observe you in the workplace prior to or after the interview and also collect

any relevant artifacts available for data triangulation.

The purpose of my phenomenological research study was to describe behaviors that

exemplary human resource administrators use to lead their organizations through

storytelling. Please know that your privacy and confidentiality is taken very seriously. I

have attached the Brandman University Research Participants Bill of Rights for your

review in addition to an "Informed Consent and Audio Recording" document. There is

minimal risk involved that may occur during the in-person interview.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule the one-hour interview. I look

forward to hearing about your experiences, perceptions, knowledge, and lived

experiences to better inform the understanding of the behaviors of exemplary human

resources administrators.

Kind regards,

Colleen Slattery

Doctoral Candidate, Brandman University

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Placer County Office of Education

APPENDIX C

Thematic Interview Protocol

My name is Colleen Slattery and I am the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources with the Placer County Office of Education. Thank you so much for taking time to share your expertise and experience. As an exemplary leader in Human Resources, sharing your experiences is very important to the study and those will benefit from the findings.

I'm a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I'm a part of a team conducting research to determine what strategies are used by exemplary administrators to lead their organization through storytelling. The eight narrative patterns of storytelling used in this study are depicted by Denning's framework of storytelling by administrators. Storytelling as used in this research applies to the full range of strategies and processes by which leaders use storytelling in an organization. It is all the ideas, images, and other forms of organizational content that passes between leaders and all members of the organization including personal, interpersonal, group and organization. This is study is about what stories you tell to build trust, spark action, foster collaboration, motivate others, build brand, transmit values and knowledge, create vision and neutralize gossip as you lead the organization.

Our team is conducting approximately 30 interviews with leaders like yourself. The information you give, along with the others, hopefully will provide a clear picture of the thoughts and behaviors that exemplary administrators use storytelling to create quality in their organizations and will add to the body of research currently available.

Incidentally, even though it appears a bit awkward, I will be reading most of what I say. The reason for this to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating exemplary administrators will be conducted pretty much in the same manner.

Informed Consent (required for Dissertation Research)

I would like to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether. For ease of our discussion and accuracy I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started, and thanks so much for your time.

APPENDIX D

Field Test Observer Feedback Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight about

your interview skills and affect with the interview will support your data gathering when

interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher you should reflect on the questions

below after completing the interviews. You should also discuss the following reflection

questions with your 'observer' after completing the interview field test. The questions

are writing from your prospective as the interviewer. However, you can verbalize your

thoughts with the observer and they can add valuable insight from their observation.

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem appropriate?

2. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?

3. Going into it, did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something
    you could have done to be better prepared?

4. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that
    was the case?

5. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the
    case?

6. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how
    would you change it?

7. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

APPENDIX E

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB   Adopted   November 2013

APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: Exemplary Human Resources Administrators: A phenomenological look at exemplary human resources administrators and their experiences on the use of storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's eight narrative patterns (new ideas, trust, values, collaboration, brand, conversation, knowledge, vision, and change).

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Colleen Slattery

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Colleen Slattery, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of this research study is to understand and describe how exemplary human resources administrators use storytelling to lead organizations using Denning's eight narrative patterns (new ideas, trust, values, collaboration, brand, conversation, knowledge, vision, and change). In addition, it is the purpose to understand how human resources administrators use storytelling to create transformational change in organizations. This study will fill in the gap in the research regarding the impact of storytelling on the human resources administrators to bring about transformational change in educational organizations. The results of this study may assist districts and county offices in the storytelling strategies to implement focusing on the outcomes of Denning's eight narrative patterns. This study may also provide much needed information to educational organization human resource administrators to create transformational change in their organization. By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an individual interview. The interview(s) will last approximately 60

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minutes and will be conducted in person. Completion of the individual interview will take place September through October, 2019.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding human resources and the impact storytelling has on educational organizations. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the human resources experience in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Colleen Slattery at cslatte1@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 916-960-9207; or Dr. Keith Larick (Advisor) at larick@brandman.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____

Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

_____

Signature of Principal Investigator

_____

Date

APPENDIX G

Storytelling Interview Questions

Trust:

1. How do you use stories that promote trust between you and members of your

   organization? Can you give me an example?

2. Optional probe: What would you identify as the most important factor in establishing

   trust with your team members?

3. Please share with me an example of a time when you disclosed a personal story that

   showed your vulnerability in an effort to build trust and authenticity with members of

   your organization. Optional probe: Tell me about the outcome from that disclosure

Manage Communication:

1. Can you share some examples of when you used storytelling to create clarity around

   your organization's purpose? Optional probe: What do you think you did that created

   that clarity?

2. How do you use storytelling to elicit feedback on the goals and direction of your

   organization? Optional probe: How have others responded to that?

Vision & Mission

1. How do you use stories to create a compelling vision and direction for your organization?

   Can you share an example?

2. What storytelling strategies do you find effective to ensure members of the organization remain committed to and included in the organization's goals and or mission?

   Optional probe: Why do you feel that these strategies encourage more commitment to organizational goals?

3. What strategies do you use to encourage all members to become active contributors and spokespersons for the organization? Optional probe: What are the ways that you gauge the impact of members' contributions?

Share Knowledge:

1. How do you engage members of your organization in storytelling that are two way exchange of ideas and information about your organization? Optional probe: What tools and institutional supports do you utilize to encourage the process of this back-and-forth conversation?

2. How would you describe the strategies you use to cultivate a culture of storytelling? Optional probe: What role does social technology (such as blogs, wikis, online communities, twitter, social networks, web-enabled video chat, video sharing, etc.) play in supporting this culture of storytelling?

Neutralize Rumor:

1. How do you use storytelling as a way to neutralize rumors? Optional probe: What tools and institutional supports do you utilize to encourage the process of positive organizational storytelling?

2. How would you describe the strategies you use to cultivate a culture of positive storytelling? Optional probe: What role does social technology (such as blogs, wikis, online communities, twitter, social networks, web-enabled video chat, video sharing, etc.) play in supporting positive storytelling to neutralize rumors?

Transmit Values:

1. What storytelling strategies do you find effective to ensure members of the organization know about the core values of your organization (school)? Optional probe: Why do you feel that these strategies encourage more commitment to organizational values?

2. What strategies do you use to encourage all members to become actively connected to the organizational values?

Collaboration:

1. How do you use stories to promote a culture of collaboration between you and

   members of your organization? Optional probe: What would you identify as the most

   important factor in establishing collaborative practices with your team members?

2. Research indicates that a leader can use storytelling to build collaborative cultures.

   Can you talk about a time when you used storytelling and it lead to collaboration?

Spark Action and Create Transformational Change:

1. Please describe the benefits of storytelling and how storytelling has led to action in

   your organization.

2. Please describe a time that storytelling has led to transformational change in your

   organization.

Build Brand

1. How do you tell stories to build organizational brand between you and members of

   your organization? Optional probe: What would you identify as the most important

   factor in establishing a strong brand with your team members? How have you

   branded your organization?

2. Research indicates that a leader can use storytelling to build organizational brand. Can you provide an example when you used storytelling and it led to building the brand?

"Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings."

APPENDIX H

NIH Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Colleen Slattery** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of Completion: 05/18/2018

Certification Number: 2822096

NIH National Institutes of Health
Office of Extramural Research