GROWTH BEGINS FROM WITHIN:
How Internal Transparency Influences Organizational Learning

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NPA 622: Nonprofit Data Analysis - Capstone
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Instructor: Marco Tavanti, Ph.D.
Ample research exists that focuses on organizational learning in the context of program efficiency and outcomes, and organizational transparency in the context of governance and compliance.

The goal for this project is to further explore the relationship between organizational learning and the commitment to internal transparency, specifically pertaining to the internal members of an organization (i.e. board members, executive leaders, staff, and volunteers).
DEFINITIONS

- **Transparency** – “a continuous flow of information from an organization to the public about the organization’s mission, financial situation, and governance” (BoardSource 2010: 366).

- **Organizational Learning** – “The intentional practice of collecting information, reflecting on it, and sharing the findings, to improve the performance of an organization” (Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2011).
OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

1. Research Question: How do internal successes and short fallings in an organization influence organizational learning culture and growth?
2. Highlight the impact of these factors on multiple levels within an organization
3. Outline model for incorporating internal transparency into the development of organizational learning culture
METHODS AND APPROACHES

1. Literature Review

2. Qualitative Analysis: Expert Interviews
   1. 10 Interview Participants
      1. 2 Board members, 2 Executive leaders, 3 Staff, 1 Volunteer, and 2 Content experts
      2. 4 Participants with secondary roles, 14 Nonprofit Perspectives Total
   2. Semi-structured, 45-60 min.
   3. Purposive & Snowball Sampling
DATA ANALYSIS: Literature Review

- Prioritized by top management
- Free up employees’ time

Open Boundaries
- Promote information flow
- Access across all levels

Cultivate Environment

Create Forums
- Programs, events, activities
- Tailor to needs
DATA ANALYSIS: Literature Review

Figure 1: Nomological Network of Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations

Nomological Network of OL and LO

Antecedents
- Trigger events

Core Concepts
- Processes of OL
- Structure of LO

Consequences
- Learning outcomes
# DATA ANALYSIS: Expert Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Non-management</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More formal</td>
<td>More informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent Structure</td>
<td>Ambiguous / Inconsistent Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiered Process, Situational</td>
<td>Dependent on individuals/situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based off Strong Culture</td>
<td>Lack of Strong Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows Up in All Spaces</td>
<td>Shows Up in Formal Spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy-Driven</td>
<td>Experience-Driven</td>
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IMPLICATIONS

- Disconnect between Management & Non-management levels – misaligned values on transparency and organizational learning.
- Organized structures lose formality and accountability as hierarchy level decreases.
- Process and priority shifts based on situational needs, either internally or externally.
- Once aligned and prioritized, organizational learning is carried by the leadership, culture, and learning structures for internal transparency.
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING MODEL W/ TRANSPARENCY

Leadership
- Transparent Management
- Team-based Structure
- Consistent

Learning Structures
- Formal & Informal Spaces
- Adaptive to Situational & Non-situational Needs

Culture
- Fosters Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Prepare through Transition
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Leadership
  • Align Executive leadership and board directors on transition into learning organization.
  • Promote & model unified vision with transparency and consistency – share with entire organization (i.e. town halls, internal newsletters/reports, etc.)

• Culture
  • Promote inter-departmental collaboration and transparency sharing.
  • Prioritize time to develop transparency and learning projects (i.e. communications, focus groups, etc.).

• Learning Structures
  • Build consistency and transparency sharing within pre-existing structures – both formal and informal (i.e. meetings, check-ins, feedback sessions, employee surveys, etc.).
REFERENCES


**GROWTH BEGINS FROM WITHIN: HOW INTERNAL TRANSPARENCY INFLUENCES ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING**

Wes Cheung, MNA - Master of Nonprofit Administration - Capstone Project

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**SUMMARY**

Ample research exists that focuses on organizational learning in the context of program efficiency and outcomes, and organizational transparency in the context of governance and compliance. The goal for this project is to further explore the relationship between organizational learning and the commitment to internal transparency, specifically pertaining to the internal members of an organization (i.e. board members, executive leaders, staff, and volunteers).

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**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to highlight the impact of these factors on multiple levels within an organization. Adopted from previous models, this project highlights an outline model for incorporating internal transparency into the development of organizational learning culture.

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**RESEARCH**

How do internal successes and short fallings in an organization influence organizational learning culture and growth?

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**METHODS**

1. Literature Review
2. Qualitative Analysis: Expert Interviews
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**RESULTS**

Figure 1: Nomological Network of Organizational Learning and Learning Organizations

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**LEADERSHIP**

- Team-based Structure
- Consistent

**CULTURE**

- Team-built Environment
- Team-based Structure
- Beliefs and Values

**OPEN BOUNDARIES**

- Programs, events, activities
- Tailor to needs

**CREATE FORUMS**

- Programs, events, activities
- Tailor to needs

**DATA AND ANALYSIS**

**REFERENCES**


