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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LEADERSHIP, MOTIVATION, AND  
COMMUNICATION IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the University of Lynchburg

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education (Ed.D)

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by

Olayinka Basorun, B.Tech, MBA, MA

July 2022

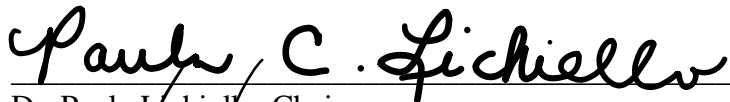
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July 2022

University of Lynchburg  
Lynchburg, Virginia

**APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION**

This Dissertation, A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Communication in the Construction Industry, has been approved by the EdD Faculty of the University of Lynchburg in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the EdD degree.

**Signatures**

  
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Dr. Paula Lichiello, Chair

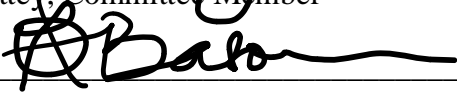
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July 22, 2022

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for His sustaining grace, my wife, Adefunmilola, and children Anjolaoluwa and Ayooluwa for their endurance and support throughout the journey, and my parents for always believing in me.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am eternally grateful to everyone who believed in me, encouraged me, and supported me in my dissertation journey. Special appreciation to my Dissertation Committee, comprising Dr. Paula Lichiello (Chair), Dr. Jimmy Roux, and Dr. Emmanuel Clottey, for their tutelage and support throughout my dissertation process.

Many thanks to the organization's management that allowed their employees to participate in the research study and all other participants. Your participation made the research study possible.

Special appreciation to my mentors, Dr. and Dr. (Mrs.) Ojuola, and Pastor and Dr. (Mrs.) Ayodeji for their encouragement, guidance, and moral support. I am grateful to God for the love that binds our families. Many thanks to every member of my church family for their prayers and support. To family and friends, I appreciate you all. Your words of encouragement, patience, and understanding are commendable.

To cohort 5 members, you are extraordinary. I thank God for seeing us through, and I appreciate your participation as we went through the coursework. The diverse composition of our cohort is a testament that “we can accomplish great things if we work together as a team.”

Special thanks to the Ed.D faculty for taking the time to impart knowledge in cohort 5 and for their willingness to attend to our questions constantly. You just made a new crop of leaders!

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**ABSTRACT**

The construction industry in the United States of America pays a high litigation cost due to late project delivery or substandard projects. Despite the training construction organizations expose their project teams to, research has shown greater emphasis on skill training than leadership training. This phenomenological study sought to understand the dynamics of the relationship between project leaders and construction site workers in Central Virginia. Understanding the perceptions of project managers, superintendents, and construction site workers about leadership, leadership development and training, motivation, and communication gave insights into these dynamics. The research study allowed the researcher to understand the work experiences of project leaders and how they managed their teams, motivated, and communicated with them. Additionally, the construction site workers described how they would like to be led and managed. The findings suggested that there is a need for project managers and superintendents to exhibit intentional leadership attributes to motivate their teams to perform optimally. On the basis of the study, appropriate recommendations were made for the construction industry and future studies.

*Keywords:* project leader, project manager, superintendent, motivation, communication, leadership, leadership training and development, construction site workers, labor crew, leadership capability

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study**

Leadership is important for the successful performance of organizations. According to Carter, DeChurch, Braun, & Contractor (2015), leadership is a vital topic for organizations due to the role that effective leaders play in helping their firms attain their goals. Research has shown that organizations function effectively when a leader has leadership abilities and sustainability knowledge (Haque, 2021). The leadership role usually depends on the leadership styles that a leader deems appropriate in influencing the staff or subordinates for optimal performance. However, due to the competitive and evolving nature of the business environment, organizations need to be proactive to mitigate the need for a constant leadership change. Hence, the need for leadership training and development.

The emphasis on leadership training and development in the construction industry cannot be underestimated due to the benefits that come with it. Project leaders/managers may engage in favoritism among their team members which might result in less-favored workers being less motivated and committed to tasks assigned. Leadership, further complicated by issues of social and cultural differences, has significant effects on the performance of construction projects and is pivotal in determining project success (Li et al, 2019). Therefore, organizations need to engage in human capital development by investing in their workforce through leadership training and development to reduce employee turnover, provide growth opportunities, and attract the best workers. According to Megheirkouni (2016), the emphasis on leadership and its effect is crucial to developing a learning organization, which is the only sustainable competitive advantage in response to an increasingly unpredictable business environment.

The nature of the construction sector allows construction workers to easily switch allegiance between organizations partly due to the role of project leaders. Lukiyanto et al. (2015)

asserted that employees are attached to the project leader because the leader plays a role in fulfilling the responsibility to the company.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Project leaders are known to have broad knowledge in project handling and execution. They develop their on-the-job skills and experience as they continuously work on different projects. Additionally, some organizations offer their project leaders the opportunity to develop their technical skills by providing them classroom training. However, there is less attention on developing the leadership capabilities of their project leaders and construction site workers.

Owing to the intricacies of the project sites, project leaders must communicate effectively with their subordinates. It goes beyond possessing the technical skills and experience needed to handle projects and assign responsibilities. Hence, the need for the right leader with the right attitude who can influence and motivate. According to Groetsch and Davis (2006), leadership style is about how leaders interact with their lead people. Therefore, there is a need for project leaders to enhance their supervisory skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, build relationships with their subordinates, and create an enabling environment for leadership development. Research has shown that lack of these factors usually has grave consequences due to late delivery of projects or abandonment of projects due to under budgeting. According to Allen et al. (2015), construction litigation costs in the construction industry varies between \$4 billion to \$11 billion US dollars annually. This further shows that lack in leadership training and development is partly responsible for the financial consequences.

This study seeks to understand the communication dynamics between project leaders and their subordinates and their perceptions about leadership. It will explore the importance of effective communication, relationship building, and leadership training and development in the

construction industry. Ding et al. (2013) suggested that team managers should facilitate social interaction among the team members and development of a correct attitude on work that would increase the level of trust among the team members and as a result promote their willingness to share knowledge.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This phenomenological study aims to understand the dynamics of the relationships project leaders share with their subordinates, their perception of leadership, and the importance of leadership development. Although, research has shown that “investment in research and development in the construction industry runs well behind that of other industries: less than 1% of revenues, versus 3.5 to 4.5% for the auto and aerospace sectors” (Agarwal, Chandrasekaran & Sridhar, 2016, p. 3), this study aims to affirm the importance of leadership training and development. Furthermore, this phenomenological approach will not seek to solve the present communication and leadership challenges but instead seeks to understand the participants' lived experiences and their perceptions about leadership. Their reconstructed stories will seek to underscore the importance of leadership training and development in the industry. This study will recruit eight to 15 participants from at least two construction firms within the Central Virginia area.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to understand the perception of construction workers about the importance of leadership. This study will explore the importance of effective communication in construction between project leaders and construction site workers, and how it influences their motivation level. According to Du (2012), some of the major issues that do not promote collaboration and effective teamwork include misinterpretation, ineffective

communication and prioritization, and insufficient contribution from team members. In addition, their perceptions will be used in recreating a narrative about their experiences. The outcome of the study can be used to make recommendations to organizations about the importance of leadership training and development for their employees.

### **Research Questions**

This study responds to specific research questions that will help in understanding the dynamics of communication within construction teams and the effects of lack of leadership training and development in the construction sector by answering the following questions:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of project leaders about leadership?

RQ2: What is the understanding of project leaders on effective communication and its importance in projects handling?

RQ3: What are the perceptions of project leaders about leadership development and training?

RQ4: How can project leaders motivate their team members to optimal performance?

RQ5: What is the perception of construction site workers on leadership?

RQ6: What is the understanding of construction site workers about effective communication and its importance?

RQ7: What are the perceptions of construction site workers about leadership training and development?

RQ8: How can construction site workers be motivated to perform optimally?

### **Definition of Key Terms**

It is important to define the key terms in this qualitative study to give a better understanding of the construction industry. Creswell (2005) asserted that researchers should define terms so that readers outside the field can understand.



*Construction site workers:* They are the employees that execute the manual labor on construction projects and infrastructure. Their responsibilities include removing debris, erecting scaffolding, loading and unloading building materials, operating heavy equipment, and structuring together.

*Effective communication:* Effective communication is the successful transmission of information and knowledge (Ishaq et al., 2019). It involves the ability of project managers to be able communicate the project scope to construction site workers in a way that fosters cooperation so that everyone is willing to execute their assigned tasks.

*Labor crew:* labor crew are the employees that execute the manual labor on the project site. The term labor crew is used interchangeably with construction site workers in this study.

*Leadership capability:* Leadership capability refers to essential resources, support, and direction from the organization to achieve effective performance (Muda et al., 2016). It is a leadership potential that project leaders use in coordinating and propelling project teams to success.

*Leadership training and development:* Leadership development is a way of helping employees understand how to relate and cooperate for the organization's common goal. Leadership development is about increasing the collective ability of members of an organization so that they can effectively function in leadership roles and processes (McCauley, Moxley, & Van Velsor, 1998).

*Leadership:* It is the ability of a person or persons to coordinate the activities of a group of people with common goals to achieve success.

*Motivation:* It is a means by which project managers influence their construct site workers to perform optimally. It is a process that leaders use in instigating and sustaining goal-directed activities in a team (Schunk, Meece, & Pintrich, 2012).

*Project leader:* A project leader is responsible for delegating and coordinating all the activities on construction sites. The term project leader is used interchangeably with the project manager, superintendent, and supervisor in this study.

*Servant leader:* Servant leadership is about service, teaching, and mentoring. Servant leaders put the needs of their followers before theirs and focus their efforts on helping their subordinates develop to reach their maximum potential and achieve optimal organizational and career success (Greenleaf, 1977).

*Situational leader:* It is a management style where a leader manages to adapt his/her style to suit the situation (Spahr, 2016). It involves a leader being able to adjust to the organizational environment that suits employees.

*Transactional leader:* Transactional leaders inspire their followers to achieve specific target performances by helping them to recognize their assigned job descriptions, identify goals and develop the confidence needed in meeting the desired performance levels (Mickson & Anlesinya, 2019).

*Transformational leader:* Transformational leaders can conduct the changes in the organization's strategy, vision, attitude, and culture (Zaman, 2020).

### **Limitations**

The proposed number of participants for the study may be a limitation because of the size of the projects that construction site workers and project leaders have experienced. The types of projects that they have previously handled can also be a limitation. Another consideration could be limiting the data collection method to telephone interviews and to two construction companies.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides an overview of the research topic, definitions, and significance of leadership development training in the construction industry. It also discussed the rationale for choosing a phenomenological approach for the study. Phenomenological research explains the ordinary meaning for several people of their lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Webb & Welsh, 2019).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Due to the nature and complexity of the construction industry, organizations continuously expose their project teams to training to maintain compliance for safety regulations and building codes and to remain competitive. However, the bulk of such activity is tailored towards skills acquisition while there is less attention on improving individual leadership competencies. A project leader's ability to ensure timely completion of projects and project success depends on how well they can motivate their teams. An essential factor of this is the leadership traits of project leaders and their ability to communicate effectively. Monzani, Ripoll and Peiro (2015) opined that to build trust with subordinates, leaders must have a greater understanding of what psychosocial factors are involved in winning their subordinates' hearts and minds. An established trust relationship enables effective communication, which can help improve the relationship between project leaders and their teams, and thereby positively impact their motivation level.

This study aims to explore the dynamics of leadership and communication in the construction industry and how it impacts project outcomes. This chapter discusses the articles, research documents, and journals reviewed for this study. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the history of leadership development, theories of leadership, and power dynamics. It also focuses on selected leadership styles and leadership principles pertinent to this study.

### **Historical background**

Leadership training and development is a discourse that cuts across all spheres of life. Generally, project leaders have to provide direction for their followers. The primary reason for this is to ensure that employees remain guided by the visions of their organizations which parallels Zheng, Wu, and Xie's (2017) assertion that leadership drives organizations to perform better. Although the term leadership can mean directing a group of people to achieve collective

success, Burns (1978) noted that it is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena. Additionally, leadership development is a way of helping employees understand how to relate and cooperate for the organization's common goal. According to McCauley et al. (1998), leadership development is about increasing the collective ability of members of an organization so that they can effectively function in leadership roles and processes. Due to the evolving business environment, leadership's importance has grown over the years from developing employees' capabilities to reducing employee turnover.

The continuous research on the importance of leadership development is essential to improving the efficiency of workers with emphasis on building and using their interpersonal competencies. It extends to cooperation and coordination of people towards achieving a common goal. According to Barnard's (1938) classic theory of cooperative action, there has been an acknowledgment that leadership functions involve defining the objective for a group in order to make them committed and supportive of the group's goals.

However, its definitions have been changing over time. In further shaping what leadership development is, Gou (2021) viewed it as a way of developing the capacity for groups of people to learn their way out of unforeseen problems while McCauley et al. (1998) perceived it as a collective growth capacity that helps to create direction, alignment, and commitment.

This study on leadership training and development focuses on the construction industry. Despite the continuous training in the industry, most of these trainings are focused on technical skills and competence. Simultaneously, an identified gap in previous studies has shown that little or no attention focused on the leadership capabilities of project leaders or construction workers. This is one major reason why 80% of project failures result from poor leadership including leadership skills, lack of teamwork, ineffective communication, and lack of problem-solving

(Zulkiffli & Latiffi, 2019). Furthermore, it has been discovered that significant leadership challenges, especially in the construction industry, are related to the workforce and lack of quality workers, aging workforce, teamwork, communication, training, and education (Tabassi et al., 2017). As a result, project leaders and managers have a broad knowledge of technical skills but have fewer non-technical skills, especially in leadership.

Another critical area hampered by the lack of leadership training and development that hinders this industry is high employee turnover. In a study conducted by Ismail and Varghese (2019), it was discovered that “there is significant correlation between the overall job satisfaction factors such as monetary benefits, job security, ethics and integrity, sense of accomplishment, technical knowledge to perform work, chances to learn new things, relationship with co-workers, working in teams” (p. 650). There is a general belief that employees would likely remain with employers that value them. In other words, when organizations invest in the professional development of their employees, both the organization and its employees benefit from it. Employees improve on their performances, thereby leading to high productivity. The goal of leadership training and development in construction is to train leaders to effectively manage their relationships with their subordinates and communicate with them and improve their problem-solving skills. These two factors are essential in influencing and motivating them. Leadership development can therefore be considered a way of teaching interpersonal relationships, team building, cooperation, and expanding social networks by applying self-understanding to social and organizational imperatives (Larson & DeChurch, 2020).

### **Leadership in the Construction Industry**

Leadership plays a significant role in the coordination and execution of any business enterprise. For the construction industry, leadership is necessary for the successful and timely

delivery of projects. Project leaders or supervisors must attend leadership development training to improve their knowledge on how to work effectively. Doing so will teach them how to influence their subordinates to see that project success is a collective responsibility. Despite the general appreciation of the importance and value of leadership, the concept of leadership still lacks clarity and agreement in leadership literature (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017). For a leader to influence his/her subordinates, he/she must be passionate about leading and motivating people to work. Therefore, the construction industry needs to develop people who are not only good managers but also have a genuine and authentic passion for leading project teams (Arain, 2012). With an in-depth understanding of leadership development training, project leaders or managers will understand the importance of sharing leadership roles through teamwork.

### **Leadership theories**

Leadership is described as a phenomenon that helps a leader influence and motivate his/her subordinates to high performance. It is a dynamic and reciprocal relationship fitted within a social setting (Ashikali, Groeneveld, & Kuipers, 2020). Leaders employ unique leadership styles in influencing their teams, and their leadership roles are essential in guiding these teams. Groetsch and Davis (2006) view leadership styles as to how managers interact with people they seek to lead. Leaders in different industries employ several leadership theories. However, in a study of the leadership styles of project managers working on 52 projects in Thailand, it was discovered that project managers apply leadership styles based on the demands of the project, predominantly transactional and laissez-faire (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). In another study by Ismail and Fathi (2018), they opined that some of the common leadership styles in the construction industry include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, full range

leadership, servant leadership, contextual leadership, safety specific transformational leadership and charismatic leadership styles.

### **Leadership styles**

Project leaders or supervisors must monitor, oversee, coordinate and guide the projects to be delivered in a timely manner. People are unique, and these leaders must have unique principles that guide their work in the construction industry. Projects can thus be completed in phases with corresponding timeframes for timely delivery. Leadership style can be described as a combined outcome of the leader's self-related cognitive information, character, primary motives, and thoughts on operating situational variables (Aljundi & Draki, 2021). Leadership styles of project managers play a significant role in influencing the attitudes of construction site workers. Project leaders must adapt their leadership styles to different circumstances, attitudes, beliefs, preferences, and team members' values. Charismatic, instrumental, strategic, and interactive leadership styles can impact an organization's innovativeness towards sustainability (Alrowwad, Masa'deh, & Abualoush, 2020). A leader that adopts the charismatic leadership style may find it easier to communicate his vision, energize his team, and accelerate innovative ideas. Charismatic leadership "entails a unique connection between a leader and her or his followers that can account for extraordinary performance and accomplishments of individuals, work groups, units, and organizations" (Pitts, 2017, p. 70).

### **Servant leadership theory**

By simple definition, a servant serves people, while a servant leader is a person who leads by serving his/her followers. It involves having empathy for others, a conscious desire to empower followers, high ethical standards, and valuing relationships to mention a few. The term "servant-leadership" was introduced by Robert Kiefner Greenleaf (1904 – 1990) in his essay



titled *The Servant as Leader* in 1970. It summarizes how a journey embarked upon by a band of men went into disarray when their servant, Leo, suddenly was nowhere to be found. The story highlights the essence of leadership as service to others. Leadership should be about service (Jang & Kandampully, 2018). Greenleaf (1970) defined a servant-leader as follows:

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant: - first, to make sure that the other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least not be further deprived? (p. 7)

As seen in Greenleaf's definition, he noted that leadership is about service, teaching, and mentoring. Servant leaders "place the needs of their subordinates before their own needs and center their efforts on helping subordinates grow to reach their maximum potential and achieve optimal organizational and career success" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 163). The purpose of leadership is to guide and direct a group of people's affairs to achieve desired goals. Greenleaf (1977) asserted that the essence of leadership is to inspire people towards pursuing common goals by leading them. Therefore, the servant leader should be willing to sacrifice his/her ambition for the good of others to influence them. Liden et al. (2008) opined that servant leadership involves how leaders use the art of effective communication to understand the needs, desires, and individual potentials of their subordinates as a way of influencing and motivating them to perform optimally. This assertion underscores the need for leaders to be able to influence their teams in the construction industry. Additionally, the nature of the construction industry requires open

communication that can engender trust, influence, and motivation. Its complex nature requires a leader's ability to properly manage both human and material resources to deliver projects in a timely manner.

Another critical aspect of servant leadership is that it helps to build long-lasting relationships. A servant leader operates an open-door policy to build trust relationships with their subordinates and meet their needs, fostering the belief within subordinates that the leader is actively pursuing a quality relationship (Liden et al., 2008). When there is trust and mutual respect, followers find it easier to relate with their leaders and express their views. Liden et al. (2008) underscored the importance of trust by asserting that "trust develops in the relationship due to the subordinate finding the leader's judgment and actions to be thoughtful, dependable, and moral" (p. 163). A valued relationship of mutual respect enables communication, making it easier for a leader to influence and motivate followers.

### **Transformational leadership theory**

Transformational leadership can be described as a phenomenon where both the leader and the subordinate pursue mutual goals. It involves the ability of a leader to influence members of the team to accomplish set targets. Although Burns (1978) opined that its focus is on the exchanges between leaders and followers, Northouse (2007) saw it as a process whereby people create a connection that elevates the level of motivation and ethics in both the leader and follower. There is a mindset that a target needs to be achieved, and as such, the leader and follower will benefit from the outcome. In transformational leadership, followers achieve objectives through higher ideals and moral values, and they are motivated by being encouraged to put group interests first. This leadership style involves inspiring others to follow, and it requires coordination, communication, and cooperation.

In the construction industry, successful completion and the timely delivery of projects depend on team coordination and cooperation. Project managers work with groups of people with different skills and responsibilities. A distinctive ability common with members of project teams is that they have different skill sets needed to execute projects. However, a project manager is responsible for harmonizing and harnessing these abilities to execute and deliver projects. A project manager must foster, coordinate, and transform these people and their skills into a team pursuing a common target. Transformational leaders are people that have the ability to conduct the changes in the organization's strategy, vision, attitude, and culture (Zaman, 2020). In research studies on Thailand construction companies, it was discovered that there is a relationship between leadership behaviors and work performances (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008; Ul-Hameed et. al., 2019). Limsila and Ogunlana (2008) further asserted that "work quality has positive significant relationship with inspirational motivation and idealized influence (attributed in the transformational leadership style" (p. 177). Another study by Igbaekemen and Odivwri (2015) underscored the importance of positive relationships between project managers and their team members on project outcomes. Leadership and leadership styles of project leaders help in influencing the performances of employees (Ismail & Fathi, 2018).

Martin (2017) asserted that transformational leaders use relationship-building to motivate and transform followers to exceed their expectations and develop their leadership abilities. The nature of the construction industry requires the talent of a leader who can influence and motivate team members to high productivity. A common trait that transformational leaders possess is their ability to use trust relationships to influence their subordinates (Martin, 2017). In this leadership style, goals are set for the team to prevent loss of focus. The role of each team member is as important as the other and depends on that of others. Furthermore, transformational leaders are

similar to servant leaders because their priority comes after that of others. To ensure optimal performance, the needs of their followers are of utmost priority (Rawat, 2017).

The need for transformational leadership in construction is important for delivering projects in a timely manner. The leader and worker relationship have a significant impact on performance improvement, and as such, the leader's role determines whether the workers would perform well or not. When this relationship is not adequately maintained, it could result in late delivery of projects or substandard jobs. Arcadis, an organization that delivers sustainable design, engineering, and consultancy solutions for natural and built assets globally, found that “the highest value dispute our team worked on in North America was \$1.5 billion. Consistent with findings in 2018, the buildings sector in North America saw the most disputes for 2019” (Arcadis, 2020, p. 12). This finding suggests that the inadequate coordination among stakeholders working on construction projects is partly responsible for the losses. In addition, “construction litigation costs the industry between \$4 billion to \$11 billion US dollars in annual transactional costs” (Allen et al., 2015, p. 37). It underscores the importance of transformational leadership because it will help eliminate obstacles to cooperation, decrease ambiguity, and improve communication among team members.

### **Transactional leadership theory**

Transactional leadership can be defined as when a leader takes the initiative to contact others to exchange valued or intangible things. Burns (1978) pioneered transactional leadership and indicated that transactional leaders seek to motivate their subordinates by appealing to their self-interests. Transactional leaders inspire their followers to achieve specific target performances by helping them to recognize their assigned job descriptions, identify goals and develop the confidence needed in meeting the desired performance levels (Bass, 1985). Franco

and Matos (2013) also asserted that transactional leaders focus on structure, strategy, and roles to make their followers achieve the organizational goal.

Transactional leadership underlies most leadership models, which focus on exchanges between leaders and followers (Northouse, 2007; Rathi, Soomro, & Rehman, 2021). Such an exchange requires communication and an understanding between both parties. Transactional leadership involves compensating for the followers' services, and this compensation serves as a motivating factor that influences the follower(s). "It is an extrinsic-based motivation process by which leaders achieve their goals, while followers receive external rewards for job performance" (Liphadzi, Aigbavboa, & Thwala, 2015, p. 286). Although the rewards for the leader could range from accomplishing set targets and milestones while followers get monetary or personal rewards, the transactional leadership style is time dependent. Timely delivery of projects is the guiding principle of transactional leaders.

Transactional leadership helps in unlocking high employee productivity. When followers have assurances that there will be a reward for specific performances, they are more likely to put in the expected work output. Transactional leaders use rewards to inspire their subordinates' involvement, loyalty, commitment, and performance (Rizan et al., 2020). However, the transactional leader determines the desires of team members. Despite the result-oriented leadership style, it does not cultivate personal relationships. The relationship depends on reward, and the project leader uses reward as a tool for motivating team members.

In the construction industry, the relationship between project managers that adopt the transactional leadership style and their subordinates can be termed contractual. In a vantage position, the leader can reward subordinates for high productivity or penalize them for nonperformance and thereby cause the subordinates to obey instructions. According to Franco

and Matos (2013), the reason for this measure is to help clarify the leader's expectations. Unlike the transformational leadership style that involves bringing about positive change and improving productivity levels, the transactional leadership style is task-oriented and strictly focuses on results within a given time frame. Therefore, followers achieve results through rewards and punishments set by a leader, and the leader motivates them by appealing to their self-interests. It is like a form of bargaining, and their purposes are related. Besides, the project manager has less emphasis on supervision since there are specific rewards attached to productivity.

Furthermore, transactional leadership involves leaders engaging with their followers, raising their consciousness about the importance of results, and showing them how the results could be accomplished. Project managers pay less attention to the personal needs of their subordinates and focus on completing the project. Due to the transactional nature of this leadership style, it is likely that employees will feel less motivated when their expectations are low. This might lead to high employee turnover. Employees would instead prefer to work for organizations or leaders willing to offer them more significant incentives. Additionally, leadership training and development are of less importance to such workers. Instead, they would prefer to acquire skills that are beneficial to their trade. However, the significant advantage of transactional leadership is that projects are more likely to be timely completed, especially when additional incentives are attached to specific project phases and corresponding milestones.

### **Situational leadership theory**

Situational leadership is one of the most popular and widely used leadership models in management because it involves task behavior, worker commitment and relation behavior (Ghazzawi, Shoughari, & Osta, 2017). Spahr (2016) defined situational leadership as a style of leadership in which a leader manages to adapt his/her style to suit the situation. Although

leadership styles are behaviors project managers use in influencing their subordinates (Toha, 2010), they are not talents that could be learned and used in existing situations (Herujito, 2006). Instead, the leader adjusts to the environment to influence team members. According to Henkel and Bourdeau (2018), “the situational leadership theory is based on two behavioral categories: task behavior and relationship behavior as first described by Fred Fielder (1967)” (p. 9). Zulch (2014) also opined that this leadership style is the best because the leader’s style is dependent on the situation, and this allows team members to be involved in the decision-making process and take responsibility for their work.

In the construction industry, the project manager is responsible for managing and allocating resources to execute projects. They are transformational role models that adopt relationship-oriented approaches towards their project team so that they can be successful (Raziq et al., 2018). However, leaders that adopt this style do so because they believe adapting to the work environment that suits subordinates is an effective way of influencing them to be very productive. The project leader adopts a flexibility trait as a motivation tool for his/her followers. The leader must find out his/her team members' needs and adapt his/her style accordingly. Hence, situational leaders are skilled in leading with different leadership styles and are ready and willing to adapt their style to meet the situational requirements (Tabassi & Bakar, 2010).

According to Tabassi & Bakar (2010), "situational leadership identifies that employees perform differently when doing different activities; likewise, they may act differently during different stages of the same task" (p. 253). This premise relies on the willingness of the leader to create such an environment. The adaptive nature of the leader's style becomes the incentive for motivation. Effective leaders have the ability to adapt their style to the task requirements and their subordinates' needs (Northouse, 2007). The project manager is responsible for providing

support and direction for his/her followers to move along the direction continuum (Ebere & Fragouli, 2015). The emphasis of situational leaders is that they have no specific preferred leadership style; they are flexible and match their leadership style with the requirements of different situations (Tabassi & Bakar, 2010).

### **Leadership capabilities**

Leadership capability is a leadership potential used in coordinating and propelling project teams to success. Capability refers to skills, qualities, and understanding and an individual's potential in each of these areas. Leadership capability refers to essential resources, support, and direction from the organization to achieve effective performance (Muda et al., 2016). Leadership capabilities are the vital resources, support, and guidance from the organization to achieve optimal performance. It also implies that the organizations have the processes and systems in place for a leadership process to flow successfully. Therefore, organizations should move from the traditional managerial language of competencies to leadership capabilities, going beyond functions to mindsets or capabilities of leadership (Lawyer, 2021). Project leaders must promote changes that can help transform the attitudes of their team or subordinates and their organizations in the execution of projects due to the continuously evolving and competitive business environment. Their leadership capabilities should be the catalyst that would help in transforming their team to one geared towards success.

Leadership involves a leader influencing his team members or subordinates to accomplish organizational tasks. A leader must have good character, values, maintain high ethical standards and communication skills, and these attributes would serve as motivating factors for his or her subordinates. According to Muda (2013), organizations seek to recruit individuals with critical adaptive leadership qualities to prepare them for challenging times.



Leadership capability will not undergo drastic changes; rather, the organizations should expect a sharpened focus on current skills necessary to accommodate intensified conditions in business and society (Letsoalo & Rankhumise, 2020). These assertions underscore the need for organizations to be proactive and intentional about the leadership abilities and capabilities of new hires and expose their employees to professional development training that can improve their skills. There are no poor engineers or scientists, but rather poor leaders (Mouad, 2020). If leaders have excellent resources but manage ineffectively, the outcome will be poor results. This presupposes that leaders are made.

Due to the complexity and dynamics of the composition of project teams and other stakeholders in the construction industry, research has shown gaps in leadership capability compared with other sectors. In a study conducted by Lucy, Poorkavoos, and Wellbelove (2015), they discovered that 54% of managers in the construction industry who evaluated the performances of their line managers rated their leadership skills as good or very good, compared to an average of 65% of managers in other industries. Although workers in the sector undergo training that improves their technical skills, there is a need to expose them to further training to enhance their leadership abilities.

### **Social Constructivism Theory**

To better understand this phenomenon, social constructivism theory will be used to understand the leadership development training gaps in the construction industry. “Social constructivism is a theory in sociology and communication that analyzes the knowledge and understandings of the world that are developed jointly by individuals (Amineh & Asl, 2015). The social constructivist theory was developed by a Russian, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). The theory emphasizes that the social environment and interactions facilitate learning and development

(Adam, 2017). Per Vygotsky, the human mind develops through a person's interactions with the social environment and is an attribute of the relationship between subject and object (Adam, 2017).

The connection to this theory is that it encourages a researcher to create a story from the lived experience of people with similar social experiences. While phenomenology seeks to understand the perception of the people with a similar experience, social constructivism considers reality by relying on those experiences and research results, and stories are created from those perceptions by the researcher (Howell, 2013). This theory provides a framework that seeks to identify the contrasting attitudes of construction workers due to the leadership styles of their project leaders or supervisors. Project leaders that are unexposed to leadership development training may struggle to influence and motivate all their team members while those who undergo such training are more likely to understand the importance of teamwork. According to Ofori and Toor (2012), "leadership is a key factor for success in any activity that involves collaboration among a group (or groups) of people" (p. 6). Continuous research underscores the importance of leadership training for project managers and how such leaders find it easier to influence their teams to succeed. "Greater challenges of modern times and increasingly different business environments necessitate a renewed vision for leadership research and call for a change in traditional perception and mindset about leadership in the construction industry" (Ofori, 2008, p. 620).

## Motivation



Motivation plays a major role in how a leader influences optimal performance in a project team. Project leaders tend to apply leadership styles that work for them. However, irrespective of the leadership style a leader applies, subordinates need motivation to execute tasks assigned. According to Hattie, Hodis and Kang (2020), “motivation is a function of the feedback learners receive as they work on a task; specifically, as they make progress (or not)” (p. 2). The theoretical framework diagram above illustrates how motivation is applicable to designated leadership styles and may be used to influence construction site workers.

## Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need is a five-level model of human needs. This theory focused on identifying the factors responsible for motivation of individuals (Steer, Mowday, & Shapiro, 2004). “Needs lower down in the hierarchy must be satisfied before individuals can attend to needs higher up. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization” (McLeod, 2007, p. 1). In research by Funso,

Sammy and Gerryshom in the Nigerian construction industry, they suggested that the lack of effective utilization of working hours per day by construction workers was a result of low performance; thus, the underperformance of the industry can be linked to the inadequate motivation of workers. Situational leaders will tend to fulfill all the needs in Maslow's five-tier pyramid. This is because they believe the only way to motivate their subordinates is by satisfying their basic needs and adapting to the situation.

### **Herzberg's Two Factor Theory**

This theory was derived to increase employee job satisfaction. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, organizations have two factors that guide job satisfaction and job performance. The first factor, known as satisfiers or motivators leads to satisfaction when the conditions are right while the second factor known as dissatisfiers or hygiene factors results in dissatisfaction when the conditions are not right (DeShields, Kara, & Kaynak, 2005).

Transformational and servant leaders are favored to apply this motivation theory because they need to address factors that can cause dissatisfaction which hamper their performances. Though, the presence of incentives is the motivating factor that promotes job satisfaction, employees will likely feel dissatisfied when those rewards are withdrawn. Project managers should endeavor to prioritize motivation and implement motivational incentives that can encourage employees to perform optimally to accomplish the organization's goals at the same time as they meet their own personal objectives (Patanakul, Pinto, & Pinto, 2016).

### **McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y**

According to Badubi, "McGregor's (1960) Theory X and Y models categorize employees as belonging to one of two groups based on two sets of assumptions" (2007, p. 46); employees can either dislike work, or work is natural for employees. The theory implies participation and

coercion. Employees are discouraged from taking initiative in completing tasks but rather prefer to be instructed and coerced. This theory is synonymous with a transactional leadership style because a leader can influence the level of input of his subordinates by offering incentives for performance. Both the leader and subordinates are less concerned about relationships and growth. In study research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cana (2015) recommended that project managers should make use of communication and feedback to build trust in project teams. “Companies could explore introducing flexible work hours and better worker-manager collaboration as non-financial motivators and introduce career development programs in order to motivate their employees to attain better performance” (Cana, 2015, p.111).

### **Communication**

Communication is essential for relationship building, trust, coordination, and collaboration in the construction industry. Several studies have shown that effective communication is a critical success factor with construction teams. According to Obuks, Oshodi, and Lam (2017), effective communication between project stakeholders (client, contractors, suppliers, users, etc.) in the construction industry is important to achieving optimal performance of construction projects. Despite the importance of communication in every project stage, all stakeholders view it from different perspectives. The construction industry moved toward a largely service-oriented industry where most of the production activities were outsourced, and effective communication was important for improving knowledge sharing and collaboration among all persons involved in the construction process (Ejohwomu, Oshodi, & Lam, 2017). Such coordination will facilitate improved project performance and help in propelling improvements where necessary.

Effective communication requires mutual respect and trust due to the interdependency among all stakeholders. Carlsson, Josephson, and Larson (2001) investigated the factors that affected communication, communication patterns, and communication methods and discovered that the major factors that reduced the effectiveness of communication in construction projects were the type of project, project briefing and time. In another research study to determine the factors that impact effective communication, Ejohwomu, Oshodi, and Lam (2017) discovered that “differences in personality and interest, lack of checking information with users and craftsmen, use of inappropriate visualization techniques, insufficient resources (time and manpower), timing of information, work experiences, client's attitude, site constraints, cultural barriers, and organizational cultural barriers” (p. 249) were the major factors affecting effective communication between clients and maintenance contractors.

Effective communication is important for construction teams for timely delivery of projects and relationship building. Ding, Ng, and Wang (2013) suggested that team managers should facilitate social interaction among the team members and development of the right attitude towards work that would increase the level of trust among the team members and as a result promote their willingness to share knowledge. Trust is a critical trait that project leaders need if they are to be successful in motivating their subordinates. "Trust provides an important resource for creating greater probability and certainty, hence building operational and dyadic confidence” (Smyth, Gustafsson, & Ganskau, 2010, p. 128). However, a trust relationship also helps in building strong communication within a project team. Project managers find it easier to influence their subordinates to feel motivated and committed to the timely delivery of projects when trust and communication are straightforward. Developing trust relationships and clear communication are important leadership skills for project managers in construction (Imam,

2021). Project leaders can be more successful by developing trust relationships and being equitable to construction site workers in addition to fostering an atmosphere of unity and collaboration.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides an overview of leadership and leadership development literature. Although the definitions of a leader and leadership development focus on expanding individual and collective capacity to be effective in leadership roles and bring about effective leadership, this review has presented the importance of leadership training for project teams. Leadership development training has been identified as an important avenue that construction organizations can employ in improving the leadership capability and competence of their employees. Additionally, effective communication is key to building trust relationships among project stakeholders and can be a determining factor in project outcomes. While there are many factors affecting communication in the construction industry, this study will seek to understand the importance of effective communication in project teams.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter discussed the method of data collection, population sampling, and research method for this study. It also discussed the appropriateness of phenomenology as the research method, the reason for the using purposive sampling, and the data analysis tool. The study was conducted in Central Virginia. Phenomenology was the overarching theoretical foundation of the study. The source of data was through in-depth telephone interviews by asking open-ended or semi-structured questions in order to identify common themes. The validity of the findings was tested using trustworthiness criteria of dependability and credibility.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Project leaders are known to have broad knowledge in project handling and execution. They develop their on-the-job skills and experience as they continuously work on different projects. Additionally, some organizations offer their project leaders the opportunity to develop their technical skills by providing them classroom training. However, there is less attention on developing the leadership capabilities of their project leaders and construction site workers.

Owing to the intricacies of the project sites, project leaders must communicate effectively with their subordinates. It goes beyond possessing the technical skills and experience needed to handle projects and assign responsibilities. Hence, the need for the right leader with the right attitude who can influence and motivate. According to Groetsch and Davis (2006), leadership style is about how leaders interact with their lead people. Therefore, there is a need for project leaders to enhance their supervisory skills, such as the ability to communicate effectively, build relationships with their subordinates, and create an enabling environment for leadership development. Research has shown that lack of these factors usually has grave consequences due to late delivery of projects or abandonment of projects due to under budgeting. It further shows



that lack in leadership training and development is partly responsible for the financial consequences.

This study sought to understand the communication dynamics between project leaders and their subordinates and their perceptions about leadership. It explored the importance of effective communication, relationship building, and leadership training and development in the construction industry. Ding et al. (2013) suggested that team managers should facilitate social interaction among the team members and development of a correct attitude on work that would increase the level of trust among the team members and as a result promote their willingness to share knowledge.

### **Population and Sample**

Purposive sampling was used to select the research participants. According to Creswell (2005), purposive sampling in qualitative research is purposefully selecting participants, sites, or documents and materials that provide the researcher a means to understand the problem or research question. The participants were chosen from four construction companies that handle both residential and commercial projects. According to Moustakas (1994), selecting participants must be based on the following factors:

The research participant has experienced the phenomenon, is intensely interested in understanding its nature and meanings, is willing to participate in a lengthy interview and (perhaps a follow-up interview), grants the investigator the right to tape-record, possibly videotape the interview, and publish the data in a dissertation and other publications (p. 107).

The researcher approached six construction organizations to seek the voluntary participation of their workers. Only one of the organizations accepted to allow their employees to

participate voluntarily. The researcher submitted a modified Institutional Review Board (IRB) request to allow him to recruit participants directly from construction sites (See Appendix G.) The organizations that the participants represented had experience in handling both industrial and residential projects. Other criteria in determining the choice of the appropriate organization for the study was the number of employees in their construction workforce. The preferred organizations had a mixture of at least 10 construction site workers and project managers. The goal of the researcher was to seek participants from both groups (project managers and construction site workers) in each organization that participates in the research study. The researcher explained the purpose and benefits of the study to the designated representatives of the companies. The goal of the researcher was to recruit a combination of eight to 15 project leaders and construction site workers who had a minimum of two years of industry experience.

If the minimum number of participants was not recruited, the researcher planned to use focus groups. Each focus group would be comprised of a minimum of four participants from each of the main groups of participants. That is, project managers would be grouped together, and construction site workers would be grouped together as well. Another alternative plan would reduce the criteria for selecting organizations from a minimum of 10 workers to five, and the work experience of participants from a minimum of two years to one year.

The participants were selected from four construction companies in the Central Virginia area with the help of a key informant with over 40 years' experience in the industry. The researcher contacted and informed the management of the identified organizations about the study and its likely merits to obtain their permission to have an introductory meeting with their project teams. The merits could range from the importance of team cohesion to effective communication, and the need for leadership training and development. The meetings enabled the

researcher to share the purpose of the study and its potential benefits and solicit for prospective participants.

The researcher informed the organizations that the identities of both the construction organizations and the selected participants would be protected to maintain confidentiality, and the participants would be compensated for their participation. Permission was obtained as needed from organizations to allow the researcher to recruit their employees for participation in this research study. (See Appendix D.) Additionally, a flyer with the researcher's contact details was given to the participating organizations to be displayed on their notice boards to enlighten prospective participants. (See Appendix E.) Interested participants were encouraged to contact the researcher via email or telephone from March to May 2022 after obtaining initial (IRB) approval from the University (See Appendix F.)

### **Instrumentation**

The method of collecting data for this study was via in-depth telephone interviews by asking open-ended or semi-structured questions. (See Appendix A and B for interview questions.) Due to social distancing regulations and to maintain participant privacy, the interviews were conducted via telephone after each participant completed an Informed Consent Form (See Appendix C.) The researcher sought the permission of each study participant to record the interview session before the interview began. All the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. Each interview session was scheduled for 30 to 60 minutes per participant with an option for a follow-up interview. Additionally, each participant was required to review their interview transcripts (member checking) to verify their intended communication accuracy and proper representation (Mertler & Charles, 2011).

After each interview session, the interview transcripts were sent via email to each participant within a week after the interview. This afforded the participants the opportunity to review their responses and prepare them for an optional second interview in case there were experiences that were omitted, or ones they would like to add in the follow-up interview.

The purpose of the in-depth interviews with the construction site workers was to reveal the following:

- their motivation to succeed;
- the kind of relationship they had with their project managers;
- expectations of their project managers;
- their understanding of leadership;
- how they could be motivated;
- their understanding of communication; and
- the impact of effective communication on construction projects.

The interviews with the project leaders sought to understand the following:

- their perception about leadership development and training;
- their understanding of effective communication;
- how they motivated their subordinates;
- how they attained their leadership position; and
- their perception about relationship building.

These designated points allowed the researcher to learn about the perceived experiences of the participants in research which follows along with a phenomenological approach and addresses the research questions in this study.

### **Data analysis**

Data was collected and recorded by the researcher via one telephone interview during the time period of March through May 2022. The researcher verbally sought the consent of the participants before recording the interview sessions, and the recordings were done using a cellphone. After each interview session, the researcher was unable to replay each participant's interview session for the participant as planned to verify if they were satisfied with their responses and make additions or retractions due to the participants' time constraint. Subsequently, each recorded session was given pseudonyms to represent each participant and transferred to a storage file.

Interview data was transcribed by the researcher for each participant using Otter software, and transcripts were checked for accuracy using member checking. This helped in avoiding the omission of sensitive data. The next step was analyzing the data using the NVivo software to identify and code themes. NVivo enables different types of qualitative analyses which include constant comparison analysis, classical content analysis, keyword-in-context, word count, domain analysis, taxonomic analysis, and componential analysis (Mani, Gunasekaran, & Delgado, 2018). For this study, the researcher used classical content analysis. Content analysis is a research tool that is used in making judgments from data by analyzing the trend of prevalent words or themes. It can be defined as a technique for condensing words of text into fewer content categories based on coding rules (Bell & Waters, 2018). It can be used to create concepts, categories, and themes from interview transcripts, speeches, and images, which can be extended to create models, conceptual structures and maps that describe the subject under study (Kyngas, 2020). The codes and themes were determined consistent with the research questions and the interview questions.

**Ethical considerations**

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from the University of Lynchburg before proceeding with the research. This facilitated the handling of consent forms and full disclosure of the study's intent and the process for handling data. (See Appendix C for Informed Consent Forms.) In addition, it helped in ensuring that all responses as well as participants' names and organizations were confidential. The recorded interviews and transcription documents were stored in a password-protected file with an external drive as a backup. The external drive was kept with the dissertation committee chair. This enabled the chair to access it if the need arose and served as added security for the participants' information and transcripts.

Furthermore, the researcher offered incentives (a \$20 Amazon gift card) to each participant after the first interview session as appreciation for their willingness to participate in the study and sent personal appreciation notes after the data collection process was completed. According to Patton (2016), some researchers believe that offering incentives to participants increases the response rates, even if the participant is a corporate CEO.

**Role of researcher**

The researcher was an observer in this research and not a participant or observer-participant. It enabled the researcher to focus attention on listening to each participant's narrative of their experiences. The researcher used the interview sessions to reconstruct the participants' experiences through their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions from their experiences. Therefore, the researcher ensured that the surrounding was free of distractions in order to avoid interruptions and maintain confidentiality during the interviews, and the researcher conducted all interview sessions in an enclosed private study in his home.

The researcher established a positive rapport with the participants to help them feel comfortable expressing themselves. Patton (2016) opined that an effective interviewer must establish rapport, be nonjudgmental, be trustworthy and authentic, ask genuinely open-ended questions, be transparent, ask appropriate follow-up questions when necessary, and be a good listener.

### **Credibility**

To ensure the credibility of data, member checking was used to verify data accuracy. This involves the researcher sharing interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, observer notes and comments, and drafts with the participants in the study (Mertler & Charles, 2011). It allowed the participants' narratives to be reflected accurately. Credibility and trustworthiness are vital elements of qualitative research (Mertler & Charles, 2011). The credibility of research is vital because of the audiences who may read it. According to Patton (2016), credibility is a measure of how study participants describe their experiences and how the researcher has chosen to represent these experiences. Participants were, therefore allowed to review transcripts of their narratives in the interviews and read the interpretation. The transcribed data was emailed to the participants within a week after each interview to enable them to address any omission or misrepresentations of their narrative.

### **Dependability**

Dependability can be described as how reliable and consistent the findings from the research are documented for the process to be assessed and critiqued (Moon et al., 2016). It helped in avoiding mistakes during the process of conceptualizing the study, data collection and analysis, and reporting the results. Journal and observation notes from the beginning of the research process were maintained to ensure dependability. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014)

opined that studies should strive for stability and clarity of method, including a consistent process for collecting data, precise research questions and clarity about the researcher's role, and implementing various quality checks. Journal keeping was used to give a detailed report and audit trail of the research. The audit trail helped to document the research process for anyone who may replicate or extend the study in the future.

### **Summary**

This study explored how project managers motivate their team members and the personal experiences and perceptions of construction site workers regarding leadership. Additionally, it investigated the importance of effective communication in project teams and how it impacts project outcomes. The method used for this qualitative study was phenomenology because it was appropriate for interviewing people that have shared experiences. Additionally, it helps researchers understand and reconstruct the lived experiences of study participants.

This research study conducted one open-ended telephone interview with each of the nine construction workers and project leaders from four construction companies in Central Virginia during March and May 2022. Member checking was used to verify data accuracy, Otter software was used for transcription, and NVivo software was used to analyze the data.



## **Chapter 4: Findings**

This phenomenological study aimed to understand the relationship dynamics between project managers or superintendents and labor crew workers. The research study explored how the leaders communicated with their subordinates, how they motivated them, and their perceptions about leadership and leadership development. The reason for using a phenomenological approach was to understand the shared lived experiences of people in the same industry. Creswell (2013) asserted that a phenomenological design is ideal for research that seeks to understand a lived experience of a particular group of people. This chapter discusses participants' characteristics, themes, and subthemes from the research study.

### **Description of the study sample**

Purposive sampling was used to recruit nine male participants (N=9) comprising labor crew, superintendents, and project managers, for the study. These participants represented four construction organizations presently working on projects in the Central Virginia area. Three of the participants were recruited with the assistance of their organizations while six were approached directly on the construction site. The researcher applied for IRB modification to allow recruitment of participants on the construction site to meet the research study's minimum required number of participants (8 to 15). After the IRB modification was approved, recruitment provided additional participants to meet the minimum required number. All participants returned signed copies of the consent forms.

Table 1 presents the participants' demographic characteristics. Please note, the names given to the participants are pseudonyms to protect their identities. Their years of experience in the construction industry ranged from three years to 50 years, and the youngest of the participants was 23 years and the oldest was 66 years.

Name	Position	Years of experience	Education
Aaron	Project manager	30	Bachelor's
Abe	Project manager	36	Bachelor's
Adam	Assistant project manager	3	Bachelor's
Alex	Superintendent	23	Bachelor's
Anthony	Labor crew	15+	High school
Bob	Superintendent	8	Bachelor's
Cameron	General superintendent	50	High school
Daniel	Labor crew	6.5	High school
Dave	Labor crew	7	High school

Definition of positions discovered during the interviews include the following:

*Project manager:* Their role is to oversee the entire project. They visit the construction site once or twice every week to see the progress of the project. They monitor supplies and purchases, cost and schedule and ensure work is continuous on the project. They report to the project owner and their management. They are regarded as project leaders.

*Superintendent:* They oversee all the activities on the construction site. They assign and coordinate the tasks and ensure the job gets done. They report to the project manager and are regarded as project leaders.

*Labor crew:* They are the construction site workers that execute all the assigned tasks. They report to the superintendents. During the interviews, it was discovered that they are referred to as labor crew instead of construction site workers.

The data analysis revealed themes which correspond to the four main research questions. The main themes generated from the study included the following: 1. Perception about leadership; 2. Perception about communication; 3. Perception about leadership development; and 4. The role of motivation. Telephone interviews were used to collect data due to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC's) guidelines on social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial interviews were scheduled at a convenient time for participants and interviews ranged from 18 minutes to 61 minutes. As a result of the volume and demand of the projects that the research study participants were working on, none of them were willing to participate in a second interview.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were conducted via cellphone and the participants gave their consent to be recorded prior to the start of the interviews. The researcher replayed the recorded interview and used Otter software for the transcription process. Following this, the researcher played the recorded interview and compared it with the transcription to ensure data accuracy, and the transcribed data was sent to the participants for member checking and approval. Then, the researcher imported the approved transcribed data into the NVivo software for coding. Initially, the researcher ran a query of all the imported data to ascertain the frequency of words and this was followed by coding and defining the words with high occurrence and those that were related to the research questions. After that, the transcribed data (interview) and exported statements that answered the research questions were matched to the corresponding codes that were generated. At the end of this process, the exported statements were linked to applicable words and phrases and subsequently into subthemes.

**Theme 1: Perception about leadership (Research Questions 1, Appendices A and B)**

Participants expressed various views about leadership in the industry. Most joined the industry due to genuine interest in the field with the hope of becoming leaders. The three labor crew participants interviewed noted their desire to become leaders in the near future and emphasized that their internal motivation will enable them to become eventual superintendents and business owners. The superintendents and project managers all agreed that leadership involves responsibility both administratively and on the construction site. Leadership in the construction industry goes beyond directing and coordinating various activities needed to achieve specific goals and also includes ensuring that all parties share the project manager's or superintendent's thoughts.

Abe (project manager) reiterated the views of others by stating that:

I think that leadership involves this, and I've been through some training classes. And you glean different things, and you develop your style. But the first word that pops into my head is responsibility. As the leader, you are responsible, and you need to accept that responsibility 100% for the success or failure of the project. That's an internal aspect of leadership. And then you have to as far as the external aspects of leadership, you have to guide to, as I said earlier, support by filling in weaknesses and exploiting the strengths of your people that you are leading.

The labor crew's perception of leadership did not differ from their leaders. Dave (labor crew) believes that supervisors and project managers should carry every subordinate along. He said,

“A leader is someone who is in charge of a group of people and tries to get everybody to achieve or pursue the same goal and do it effectively and efficiently.”

However, for supervisors and project leaders to succeed in their responsibilities, they need to possess various attributes. The recurring qualities discovered during the interview sessions included effective communication skills, coaching or mentoring, patience, and being unbiased. To Abe (project manager), communication can only be effective when the receiver can decipher the message communicated by the leader. In his words, he noted that:

The characteristics I think of a good leader are someone that listens and communicates. Most of the problems you ever have in construction, or in marriage, or anything else results from poor communication. So a leader needs to be a communicator, first of all - What the goals are, what the parameters are, and what the expectations are of the project, to communicate that if I haven't told you that and understood that you understood that by you telling me back what I just told you. Then you're going to have some issues of communication.

Bob (superintendent) pointed out the need to set examples. He noted that it was important for leaders to bring everyone together and foster a friendly environment. He said:

I think the typical thing there is that you have to set the example or set the tone for how things should be done, lead by example. So, you're supposed to be bringing everyone along with you to complete whatever the task, okay. But ultimately, you're responsible for the work being done, you're delegating tasks basically, but you're still making sure that you've completed.

Alex (superintendent) views leadership as a participatory endeavor. He noted that his preferred way of exhibiting leadership is by being involved. Rather than sit in the project office or just issue instructions, he prefers to execute the tasks with them. This trait helps him to gain the respect of his subordinates. According to him:

I wouldn't ask my guy to do anything that I wouldn't feel comfortable doing. So, I'm out there, and I get hands-on with my guys because they respect you more. If I'm this kind of guy going to walk around, put my hands in my pocket, chew chewing gum, and talk all day, the guys don't respect me. You need to be a hands-on person to get more out of you guys. They respect you more, and you build that relationship between you and your guys. I mean, that's what you really want. You just don't want to be somebody they look up to; you want to be more than that; you want to be a leader. They want to look at you like, "I want to work beside this guy" I feel comfortable working beside this guy.

Adam (assistant project manager) believes that relationship is as meaningful as effective communication, in his opinion, on how to make positive impacts when leading. When asked about his leadership style, he said he viewed himself as a transformational leader because he values maintaining positive relationships and giving everyone a voice. In his words, he said:

I would say the second one, transformational. I would say it's very much like that where whenever I'm a part of a team, I always want to make sure all parties are seen and heard so everyone can get along. And so, everyone can do a good job because I feel like the moment a job or a project goes south, and the relationship is broken between everyone, that is when everything can kind of crumble.

Cameron (superintendent) sees his leadership style as coordinating the activities of the team. He said:

As long as they know what they need to do, I just want to guide them and make sure they are doing the right thing.

All the study participants agreed that leadership plays a significant role in executing projects. Successful project managers and superintendents are expected to build friendly relationships, communicate well, exercise patience with their subordinates, and be unbiased and encouraging. Table 2 shows the subthemes and the frequency each subtheme was mentioned by participants when discussing perceptions about leadership. All participants viewed collaboration as an essential character of a leader. Other subthemes had responses from either group of participants or both. Because the number of participants was small (3 labor crew and 6 project leaders), all responses were reported together as one group.

**Table 2: Leadership Subthemes**

Subthemes	Number of participants	% of participants that share the same view
Collaboration	9	100
Leading by example	5	55.6
Responsibility	4	44.4
Motivator	4	44.4
Communicator	3	33.3

**Theme 2: Perception about communication (Research Questions 2, Appendices A and B)**

Communication in the construction industry is vital for the timely completion of projects. This level of communication extends beyond information exchange between project managers or superintendents and labor crews to all projects' stakeholders. The information has to be free flowing and complete to avoid ambiguities. Adam (assistant project manager) said team members must be able to express their views and not hold back information. In his words, he said:

I would describe communication as just the open flow of knowledge; nothing is withheld. I think that it's super important within this industry to be transparent because bad news does not get better with time. And I feel like the best way to implement that is that kind of open-door policy where if anybody has a question, I don't want them to feel or have a problem with anything that goes wrong. I don't want them to feel like they can't tell me because I'm going to be angry or not have a good response. I think it's super important to let everyone know early in the project how important it is to communicate with one another no matter the circumstance.

Bob (superintendent) feels it is important to communicate every necessary part of project information to the entire project team which bolsters Adam's view further. He said:

It's very important because a lot of people are involved. You got a team of people, and they're all working on the same thing. So, it's important that everyone has all this information. So that's communicated throughout the entire team; whether they're directly involved or not, they should have that information. So, if there comes a time when they're asked about it, or it might help that they know that information, they'll have it whether they need it or not. All the information is very important to be communicated to everybody.

Daniel (labor crew) feels poor communication is the reason why projects suffer setbacks. As a labor crew member, he said he would prefer that project managers and superintendents learn to communicate with their subordinates with respect. In addition, he said supervisors should endeavor to communicate with the labor crew what tasks they need to perform to avoid people lazing around. In his opinion:



If you're not communicating, then the job doesn't get done right, and people will be standing around and won't be doing anything if you don't try and keep them busy and tell them what they need to get done for the day. I mean, I think there are people in the industry who probably talk down to people, which is not effectively communicating because nobody wants to be talked down to. It's just always like you have to treat people how you want to be treated, and I think that kind of gets lost in this industry a little bit.

Alex (superintendent) sees effective communication as a significant responsibility. Every activity executed on the construction site must correspond with the project expectations at every phase and the project plan. He stated:

That is very important. Communication I think is the top keyword in this business.

Without that, you don't have anything. I mean, we actually thrive on that. Friday when I had to go to the superintendents' meeting, that was our main way of communication.

Cameron (superintendent) said project leaders need to communicate to get the job done. He said:

You have a chat about what is going on. Sometimes I ask them question, sometimes they are big questions. What you communicate is important to how the job is done.

Communication is complete when the receiver understands the information that is transmitted, and for this to be seamless, project managers and superintendents need to maintain positive relationships with their construction crew. All the project managers and superintendents interviewed shared similar views regarding maintaining positive relationships with their team members. Abe (project manager) responded when asked to describe his relationship with his subordinates by stating:

I am more of a friend, perhaps sometimes too much of a friend with my subordinates. I want them to feel comfortable around me. I want them to feel like I'm not a threatening, authoritative leader. That I'm their buddy.

Adam (assistant project manager) said maintaining a good relationship with his subordinates has helped him gain their respect. His way of inspiring his subordinates is by getting involved in their assigned tasks, which encourages every crew member's active participation. He further said he has been able to get closer to his subordinates by spending time with them and showing that he cares about their well-being by asking if they have any challenges both on and off work. He said:

Every time I start a new project, I get to know my project team, and I always make sure to visit the project once a week, maybe more, if I have time to get out there, and I just usually go around there, break with them, and I sit there and kind of talk with them. Ask how their day is going, and I think it's important to build that relationship with your laborers. You know, because they'll go out and, you know, they'll give you that extra mile if they know that you really care for them and you also understand what they're going through and that you are all on the same team. You're all working towards the same goal. And so, I try to establish that early as long as I'm not afraid to get out there and go out and do it with them. Two weeks ago, when our superintendent left and I was out there learning, I learned a lot because, you know, I'm very new to the industry, but I was out there doing a lot of their work with them and learning how to do it, and they really liked that.

Anthony (labor crew) also believed that working as a team and maintaining cordial relationships with fellow crew members contributes to project success because it aids effective communication. In his words, he said:

Quite honestly, we all get along better than family because, like I said, we've got a job to do, and when one of them tells me something to do, I've got to do it because if I don't do it, then it won't get done because they're expecting me to do it. And as we do it, we do it together. I mean, like I said, it's a communication thing, and we all got to communicate in order to do it correctly. So, I will say that my relationship with them is very good because they like what I do, and I like what they do and again in the order in which we do it. So, it just makes everything work out much better.

For Dave (labor crew), his relationship with his superintendent is not cordial, and as such, it hinders effective communication. He said having a friendly relationship would help prevent frustrations and disagreements. He stated:

I would consider it a little strained. We don't communicate effectively out there. The way we talk and interact shows it doesn't line up very well. We're just different, and I guess as people, so we clash a little bit out there, but nothing to the extent of work is not getting done. We still get our work done and everything. Everything goes to plan. It's not like we're on the verge of fighting. There's nothing as serious as that, but it's just sometimes he does something that I don't like, and it kind of frustrates me, and sometimes I do something he doesn't like that frustrates him.

Table 3 gives a breakdown of subthemes under communication. Communication enhances project delivery. The flow of communication among project stakeholders must be clear to avoid

setbacks. The table shows that clarity is essential for effective communication and project leaders need to be effective communicators.

**Table 3: Communication Subthemes**

Subthemes	Number of participants	% of participants that share the same view
Clarity	8	88.9
Communicator	3	33.3

**Theme 3: Perception of leadership development and training (Research Questions 3, Appendices A and B)**

Participants shared their views about leadership training and development in the construction industry. Aaron (project manager) with 30 years of experience, said it is vital for them to constantly look for ways to improve and see it as a daily endeavor. He said:

Doing my job is better, and it is extremely important. And as I said, I try to study that daily and maybe hourly and constantly look for ways to do it. But from a sort of a leadership perspective, you know, it's tied together. So, you know, the better I am at my job, and since I have the role of being a project manager, which obviously carries leadership responsibilities, so I guess I'm constantly trying to work on that as well. So, it's doing my job better is my focus, but with it comes leadership responsibilities and trying to improve my leadership skills. So, it's extremely important, and I work on it, like I said, daily.

Adam (assistant project manager) thinks it is important because good and skilled people are needed to manage projects in the industry. Project management involves different activities, and as such, as a project manager, you must be able to handle the volume of tasks. He said:

I think it's super important. Just mainly because this industry is so reliant on good leaders. I mean, it's super hard to get a job done. When there's nobody willing to go the extra mile to put the bullet for everyone to push that job long. And I think it's also important to be able to be comfortable in your shoes and with your ethics and comfortable with your integrity and all of those things. And I think all of those traits can definitely be developed over time.

Cameron, (Superintendent) who has 50 years' experience, said the training is important for understanding how to avoid or react to an accident. He said:

I would say they're very important because, in a bad accident, you have got some knowledge and what you need to do. A better deal is not to have an accident when driving or see it before it happens. Other than that type of training, that's all the training you get.

A general view shared by all participants was that growth in the industry depends on the leadership development and skill training they have attended. The project management certification (PMP) is not a criterion to be made a project manager but rather the training attended and the job experience determine advancement opportunities. Aaron (project manager) said:

I would say I've never heard of it. So no, I've been with some big and small companies, and I've never heard of anybody being certified as a Project Manager. In my experience, it is purely the owner or division head or whoever's opinion that if you have the skills necessary to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a project manager, they can just assign you that title. But there's definitely no certification, in my opinion.

They all agreed that the training they have attended is industry-specific and that's what determines their promotion. Personnel development is important for the growth of the organization and its employees. Bob (superintendent) said that they use it to evaluate their performances and reduce retention rates. He put it this way:

I think it's important. A lot of what I see a lot of companies that do, they have annual reviews, and they set goals and expectations and, kind of have someone to interact with you to just talk once in a while, make sure you're on track, and you're progressing. So, I think a lot of people have that and a lot of companies have that. It is good for everyone's growth. That's kind of the key to you developing, but then also that's how you're going to advance financially because some companies where it's like people don't think they're being noticed or that they don't have a goal on a path to get somewhere there, they struggle with not getting evaluated, not getting pay raises they think that they should deserve and then I think you lose retention on your employees that way.

Daniel (labor crew) saw a need for leadership development to make the society better, and people can develop it. To him, leadership training help leaders become influential people. He said:

I think it is important. I think good leaders are important to society and getting stuff started and finished. I think it's something that you can become good at. I think some people are born good leaders, but I think at the end of the day, it's like you either possess it or you don't. But I think a good leader can gather his troops and convince everybody to go after the same goal, and everybody gets excited and encouraged and just really want to work for him and fight for him and whatever you have to do for that leader

Aaron (project manager) said personnel development is a good recipe for organizational success and noted that it is best practice because it helps his organization nurture younger employees and positions them for leadership opportunities. According to him, he said:

I think it's really going to determine the ultimate success of a company and, to some extent, the industry. The other constructions never going to go away, but this is good success for a company is almost directly tied to training, educating and improving everybody in the whole company, but not just the young ones, but everybody but it seems especially the younger ones who just don't have the experience and are more willing to learn and, and whatnot, but we are constantly trying to figure out how to get the training and experience to the younger folks in particular. So, they can you know, first of all, not become bored with their job, that they're trying to take steps up the ladder to improve their life and get more money, and be worth more to the company, and we strongly encourage people to grow and become more valuable obviously, and we try to train them.

Abe (project manager) noted that it is advantageous to train all employees regardless of their designation. He said personnel development could help prevent unexpected errors both administratively and on the construction site. He put it this way:

I think everyone should always be taking some classes once or twice a year, whatever your position is in the company. It does two things; one, it separates the person who's going to training and taking the time from the rest of the bunch. You've got two guys who are just trying to get to work to get a paycheck. And then you got the guys who try to move ahead. If I see someone you present the opportunity to receive training, and they take advantage of it, I'm going to watch that guy. Okay, because he wants to go

somewhere, he wants to be something, and then, there's an added benefit of they're learning something.

One common training that all the participants confirmed that their employees recommend they must go through is related to health and safety. This training is a standard in the industry. The most common one is the occupational safety and health administration (OSHA), which promotes a healthy and safe work environment.

Table 4 gives a breakdown of subthemes under leadership training and development. It is the means by which organizations train their employees to develop their leadership skills and enhance their competences. The participants pointed out that the leadership training they receive is industry-and-skill-specific, and their career advancement is dependent upon these trainings.

**Table 4: Leadership Development and Training Subtheme**

Subthemes	Number of participants	% of participants that share the same view
Leadership ability	9	100

#### **Theme 4: The role of motivation (Research Questions 4, Appendices A and B)**

In understanding the impact of motivation on project outcome, the study participants gave varying definitions of motivation such as monetary, incentives like paid time off, and recognition. Most of the project managers and superintendents shared the same view except Cameron (superintendent) who felt the best way to motivate subordinates was to offer them money, while others saw inspiring and establishing ownership as the right way. Cameron said:

You've got to keep the guys happy, keep them rolling. The biggest motivation is probably for the subcontractor with his foreman or himself keeping his guys happy by paying them. If they are working too hard and not getting enough money, it doesn't take long



before his motivated crew is gone; the whole thing works around money. If they are happy with the money they are getting, they'll run on it and do what they need to do.

One of the labor crew interviewed, Anthony, also said that he gets motivated to work because of the bills he has to take care to pay. In his words, he said:

My old lady is very expensive. I got to keep her happy. She's beautiful, so I got to keep her happy and make sure nobody else messes with her. So, if I got money coming in, I can keep her happy.

Aaron (project manager) said that he motivates his subordinates to perform optimally by explaining to them the reason for performing their tasks. He called it *the why*. He put it this way:

I personally am very motivated to try to do my job well. But as far as how to inspire or motivate, whatever you want to say, I think I didn't come up with this phrase, but everybody needs to know *the why*. Why are you doing something? If you just go over there and tell a crew, dig a hole, they would probably do it because you're the boss, but there's no motivation there other than just do it. But if you tell them why they have to dig a hole or why they have to frame a building a certain way, if you tell them why, then they have buy-in and motivation to do it right, and they're inspired to try to do it better because they know the why and so trying to explain things to people instead of just telling them to go do something, why they're doing it. And hopefully, they can see for themselves the reason behind it. I think you get a lot more motivation out of them, and you've inspired them to do a better job than they probably would have.

Alex's (superintendent) unique style of motivating his subordinates is a daily individual chat with them. To him, these one-on-one talks help to rid the atmosphere of negativity. He said:

A pep talk in the morning. Be positive, don't be a downer. We don't need negative pressure on the job we do; it's already stressful. Stay positive. If I stay positive, they'll stay positive.

Furthermore, in trying to find out the consequences of delivering a substandard or late project, Aaron's (project manager) response reaffirmed the high cost of litigation in the industry. A more significant percentage of this amount is penalty for renegeing on the signed contract. He put it this way:

So, either they're not going to want to hire you for another project, or there may even be financial penalties, liquidated damages that may be a sign that there could be a financial penalty that you disappointed the owner.

Alex (superintendent) said that liquidated damages cause a lot of stress on the job. He said that in his experience as a superintendent, the cost could vary and be devastating. He said:

Most of the time, they are able to charge liquidated damages. There's a fee associated every day that the job's not on schedule, and that's a set fee by the owner, whatever they agree on. It's \$1500 a day or \$1800 a day. I've known it to be \$3300 a day to be late, and that's when a job gets really stressful. That's the headache.

Other reasons vary from schedule conflict with other assigned projects or the same superintendent to distrust, overbudgeting, and lack of morale. However, all the project managers and superintendents agreed that these consequences could be avoided or mitigated. Abe (project manager) said the one way to prevent these consequences is to set realistic expectations. He said rather than assign the timeframe for subcontractors to finish a job, he works with their scheduled time. He put it this way:

I always try to look internally before I look externally, and by that, I mean I would give the subcontractor enough time to perform the tasks that he was given. If you give a subcontractor two weeks to get the floor, the walls from the first floor to the second floor, and you just complete the schedule and send it out and go, you're late. You got two weeks, and his manpower and his ability to do the work or just anybody's ability would take three weeks to do the work. You started setting up a train wreck. So, it's very important that you have the subcontractor going back to the motivation that had been their idea. You want them to tell you that it takes three weeks. That gives you a little bit more capacity to go to them and say, "Look, man, you said three weeks. I didn't say three weeks. You said three weeks. Why are you not making that deal?" So that's one of the things that could cause it is those unreasonable schedule expectations from the very beginning.

Adam (assistant project manager) said poor communication is another major cause. He pointed out that delay in submitting quotes or feedback between the general contractor and the subcontractors could lead to late project delivery. He said:

Poor communication between the contractor and the subcontractors because sometimes you're caught needing submittals or information, and your subcontractor takes weeks or even months to get it to you before you can even order it. Then you finally order it, and it's too late.

Material unavailability is the most prominent cause of project delay now, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Bob (superintendent) said that looking at substitute materials can help address the issue. He said:

You have to look for alternative materials. A lot of times, people want a material because that is a good product, and they want that manufacturer. Well, you could probably get the same material from a different manufacturer that's more available, but that is not as popular. So, you have to substitute. A lot of ways we get around things as we propose a substitute; we substitute specific manufacturers. So, like you can't get a roof, you can't order roofing materials from specific manufacturers, but there are other manufacturers that make a similar product. So, you have to talk to the owner and say, "Hey, if you want a roof on this building in the next year, we're going to have to order this other product, but it's going to come with the same warranty. It's going to be almost the same color. It's going to be comparatively the same. It's just not the same manufacturer." So, we just have to substitute stuff.

Responses from other project managers and superintendents included the need for a thorough inspection, setting realistic expectations, owning up to mistakes when they arise, and rectifying them early instead of waiting till the later part of the project.

Table 5 gives a breakdown of subthemes under motivation. Although the participants indicated motivation was influencing optimal performances, communication and collaboration and inspiration were the subthemes with more responses. The participants viewed team collaboration and inspiration by project leaders as a way of motivating the labor crew to work hard.

Additionally, they viewed communication within the team as a way of enhancing team cohesion.

**Table 5: Motivation Subthemes**

Sub themes	Number of participants	% of participants that share the same view
Communicate	3	33.3
Collaborate and inspire	4	44.4

### Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the data collected during the telephone interview sessions with the participants (N=9). The participants interviewed for the study included three construction site workers, three superintendents, one assistant project manager, and two project managers. Their years of experience in the construction industry ranged from three years to 50 years, and the youngest of the participants was 23 years and the oldest was 66 years. Five of the project managers and superintendents hold a bachelor's degree while the highest level of education attained by the labor crew was high school.

Participants provided useful insight into the importance of communication, motivation, and building relationships in the construction industry. Per the research study findings, a good example of intentional leadership when communicating is by letting the construction site workers know “the why” of the tasks that they are assigned, that is, the reason they were assigned the tasks, why they should execute the tasks, and how it fits into the larger picture. A project leader that gives a daily pep talk to his subordinates in order to rid the work environment of negative vibes or attitudes shows intentionality in motivating his subordinates. Additionally, project leaders who participate in the field tasks with their subordinates promote a collaborative environment and positive relationships and show that the project leaders are practicing leadership in an intentional way. They gave practical mitigating strategies to help the industry address some of its challenges that cause litigation and financial penalties. The research findings showed that project leaders valued good communication skills, positive relationships with their team members, mentoring abilities, encouragement, and patience.

Another finding from the research study was that the common training in the construction industry was related to safety and health. Additionally, these industry-specific trainings

determined the potential leadership roles and career advancement of project team members.

Chapter five will discuss the implications of the study, recommendations for future studies, the study's limitations, and conclusion.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the dynamics of the relationship between project managers and superintendents, and labor crew workers in the construction industry in the Central Virginia area. The researcher explored the perceptions of project managers, superintendents, and labor crew workers regarding their understanding of leadership, training and development, communication, and motivation. The research revealed that there is less attention on developing the leadership capabilities of project leaders and labor crew members and more concentration on technical skills required to handle projects and complete assigned tasks. Leadership, further complicated by social and cultural differences, has substantial impacts on the performance of construction projects and is pivotal in determining project success (Li et al., 2019). This is partly responsible for the high settlement costs in the construction industry due to late project delivery and substandard projects. According to Allen et al. (2015), the cost of litigation in the construction industry varies between \$4 billion to \$11 billion US dollars annually. Therefore, per this research, it may be beneficial for project leaders to enhance their supervisory skills, maintain positive relationships with their subordinates, and create enabling environments for high performance and project success. This chapter summarizes and discusses the research study findings and limitations and also provides suggestions for future research.

The goal of the study was to answer the following research questions.

For project managers (Appendix A):

1. What are the perceptions of project leaders about leadership?
2. What is the understanding of project leaders on effective communication and its importance in project handling?

3. What are the perceptions of project leaders about leadership development and training?
4. How can project leaders motivate their team members to optimum performance?

For construction site workers (Appendix B):

1. What are the perceptions of construction site workers on leadership?
2. What is the understanding of construction site workers about effective communication and its importance?
3. What are the perceptions of construction site workers about leadership training and development?
4. How can construction site workers be motivated to over-perform?

### **Perception about Leadership**

Research questions one in both surveys (Appendices A and B) sought to know the perceptions of project leaders and construction site workers about leadership. The subthemes related to these research questions were collaboration, leading by example, responsibility, motivation, and communication.

The study findings showed that both groups of participants agreed that collaboration and leading by example were essential factors of project success. Some project leader participants opined on the importance of practicing patience with their subordinates and mentoring them. The construction site workers recommended that project leaders exhibit fairness and be solutionists.

#### **Collaboration (Leadership subtheme)**

All the participants (N=9) agreed that collaboration was vital for team cohesion to achieve optimal performance. The research findings showed that participation by project leaders influenced high performance in their labor crew members. Additionally, it also earned them respect and steered the confidence of the labor crew. Namadi (2019) and Fisher et al. (2017)



opined that collaboration in the construction industry should involve people working together towards a common goal by trusting each other, understanding the project values, and having a sense of ownership. The project managers and superintendents in this study expressed that despite their jobs requiring them to play more supervisory roles, they believed playing participatory roles on the site helped motivate their labor crew members. They viewed leadership as participatory rather than issuing orders which is an example of transformational leadership style.

Another aspect of collaboration mentioned was the need for project leaders to value the opinions of their subordinates. Fisher et al. (2017) further asserted that collaboration extends beyond the interaction between the project team and should entrench trust, openness, cultural consideration, and a sense of ownership for the relationship to flourish. This emphasized the need for project leaders to encourage the ideas their labor crews share because it has the potential to boost their performances.

#### **Leading by example (Leadership subtheme)**

Five out of nine participants (55%) discussed the importance of leading by example. Leading by example involves project leaders being exemplary. Leadership by example is described as an endeavor by subordinates based on their leader's effort as the junior workers model the project leader's attitude (Al-Ganemi & Chalab, 2021). When the researcher asked the participants about their understanding of leadership, four of the project leaders echoed the need to lead by example. They emphasized that they would act in ways they expected their subordinates to behave. They noted that leading by example helped influence their subordinates to work hard. One of the project leader participants mentioned that he would not assign tasks he was not comfortable doing himself and would not laze around issuing orders without

participating in the tasks. One of the labor crew was asked how he would lead if he were the superintendent and he responded by saying he would lead the way his superintendent was leading the team. That can be likened to an authentic leadership style. Such leaders are influential in enhancing the ability of their subordinates to meet high-performance standards by supporting and creating an enabling environment that inspires them (Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004).

### **Responsibility (Leadership subtheme)**

The study's findings suggested that responsibility was essential to the industry. Four participants (44%) indicated the need for project leaders to show responsibility. Since the task of directing and coordinating the activities of a project requires that leaders take responsibility regardless of the outcome of the progress, "construction project managers must exhibit not only in-role behavior but also extra-role behavior such as initiative behavior to cope successfully with unforeseen, unique events" (Xia, Sun, & Ding, 2022). This study's findings revealed that the job of the project leaders was beyond mere oversight of getting the project executed timely. It started with familiarizing the project owner, contacting all subcontractors, and following up with materials purchased and delivery. Project managers were expected to manage the entire process, while superintendents coordinated all activities on the construction site. Per Gumusburun Ayalp (2019), project leaders are responsible for all actions in a project.

### **Motivator (Leadership subtheme)**

This subtheme emphasizes the need for project leaders to be encouragers. Four participants (44%) suggested that project leaders should be motivators. The project leader must be encouraged to lead his team and cheer them to work; his motivation should make sense to the work his labor crew members are undertaking (Love & Curtin, 2019). One project leader

maintained that the nature of their work involved a lot of pressure, and as such, they did not want a negative attitude from the labor crew. As a result, he put on a positive attitude to encourage the same from his subordinates. Pinto and Kharbanda (1995) opined that since construction site workers imitate their project leaders' attitudes and emotions, project leaders should endeavor to be motivators and encouragers. This research study also found that project leaders could be motivators by allowing all the labor crew to voice their opinions. It was discovered that doing so engendered positive attitudes and relationships.

### **Communicator (Leadership subtheme)**

Three participants (33%) saw a need for project leaders to be communicators. The subtheme emphasized a need for project leaders to be attentive to happenings on the job and communicate. This act starts with communicating the goals of the jobs and modalities for achieving them. Since different people usually work on various tasks, project leaders need to relay information clearly and demand feedback to ascertain the right things are being done. Zuo et al. asserted that "communication explains the effective information sharing and exchange amongst project stakeholders" (2018, p. 429). In addition, the communication ability of project managers has a major effect on the team's productivity (Henderson, 2008).

### **Perception about Communication**

Research questions two in both surveys (Appendices A and B) sought to understand the perceptions of project leaders and construction site workers regarding communication. The subthemes echoed in the study's findings are clarity and communicator. Project leaders and construction site workers noted that clarity was important to project success. However, being realistic and showing appreciation to their subordinates were other attributes that project leaders saw as necessary while a participant labor crew worker noted that respect was vital.

**Clarity (Communication subtheme)**

Eight of the participants (88%) echoed their views on the need for clarity in the industry. It was important that project leaders were clear when assigning tasks and conducting project oversight. Lack of clarity of project goals, scope, and expected outcome was often responsible for problems in construction work (Fageha & Aibinu, 2013). Everyone should be encouraged to express their views to promote openness and to achieve this. Per the interviews, the labor crew must be encouraged to ask questions so that the entire project team has the same expectations. Another finding highlighted the importance of sharing necessary information with everyone on the team. A participant noted that when a piece of information was needed and the project leader was unreachable, it could help avoid information breakdowns that could affect the project. Another participant pointed out that project leaders should practice openness. By doing so, he suggested operating an open-door policy so that the labor crew could access project leaders without fear. This could encourage the labor crew to report issues or defects that may need correction in the early life of the project. Being clear when relaying numerical information was essential as well. According to Vahabi, Nasirzadeh, and Mills (2020), clarity can positively enhance the cost and time performance of a project.

**Communicator (Communication subtheme)**

Three participants (33%) believed that project leaders should be effective communicators. This subtheme highlights the need for project leaders to be communicators. The project managers are expected to communicate with all stakeholders. A participant saw the project manager as the link between activities on the site and the administrative level. Project managers strived to foster a positive relationship among the crew which was necessary to avoid ineffective communication. When the team members did not have a cordial relationship, they

could likely withhold information from one another. Communication problems on construction sites result from a lack of shared language between project leaders and labor crew, project leader's attitude towards subordinates, poor communication among project team, and ambiguity of instructions (Olanrewaju, Tan, & Kwan, 2017). When communication between project stakeholders was effective and precise, project success was easier to achieve (Durdyev & Hosseini, 2019). This study's findings suggested that project leaders should promote effective communication among the project team to enhance the project activities.

### **Perception of Leadership Development and Training**

Research questions three in both surveys (Appendices A and B) sought to understand the perceptions of project leaders and the labor crew members about leadership development and training. The subtheme discovered was leadership ability which comprised components of employee growth, safety, and organizational success. The perceptions of all participants showed that leadership development and training for all employees drives leadership ability and leads to employee growth. The project leaders regarded safety as an essential aspect of leadership training in the construction industry.

#### **Leadership Ability (Leadership development and training subtheme)**

All nine participants (100%) echoed the need to develop every team member's leadership ability. The subtheme comprises employee growth, safety, and organizational success. These characteristics help in shaping and developing the leadership skills of project leaders. The project leaders attained their leadership positions due to training attended and on-the-job performances. They noted that professional certifications were not a criterion for leadership growth, but rather their organizations organized industry-specific personnel development and training to develop

their leadership abilities and to enhance project success. According to Sousa and Rocha (2019), the leadership abilities of project teams impact project success.

All the participants (100%) also agreed that leadership training and development were necessary for their growth. One participant said that there was a need for training and development in the industry due to its competitiveness to attract good project leaders. At the same time, organizing training for the project team could help reassure them that they are valued for their work. The industry is currently witnessing a shortage in manpower, and as such, there is high demand for experienced construction site workers. Other findings in this subtheme were that the retention rate could potentially be increased when employees were offered the opportunity for leadership growth, and if employees knew that they were on a career path to leadership. Since their performances were evaluated periodically, they were also rewarded for high performances. A project manager noted that exposing all employees to leadership development and training could help to prevent some clerical or administrative errors in ordering building materials or writing contracts or the project charter. He explained that the employees need to grow as the organization grows. Participants also highlighted the need for safety awareness. They mentioned that working in the construction industry required safety training and equipment handling licenses to operate specific equipment.

### **The role of motivation**

Research questions four in both surveys (Appendices A and B) were used to inquire about the understanding of the participants regarding the impact of motivation in the construction industry. Three participants (33%) stressed the need for project managers to communicate effectively with their subordinates. Four project leader participants (44%) said they collaborated and inspired their subordinates to motivate them. Although both groups of participants had

differing perceptions about motivation, the project leaders pointed out that allowing their subordinates to establish ownership was an excellent way to motivate them. The labor crew viewed openness and incentivizing hard work as good motivating factors.

### **Communicate (Motivation subtheme)**

A supervisor participant noted he tried to motivate his project team by communicating and explaining details to them. He said rather than assigning tasks and supervising, the labor crew members should have an idea of the bigger picture or the project's end product. Taking time to explain the reasons for executing their jobs and the need to work as a team created confidence in crew members that they were valued. Another aspect of communication discovered was the need to have conversations with individual crew members. A superintendent participant said he gave a pep talk to his labor crew daily to help them clear their minds of distractions. Tasks were easily accomplished when the entire labor crew started the day with a positive mindset. He noted that one advantage of this daily chat was that it helped him develop a rapport with his subordinates. Malik et al. (2021) recommended that project teams adopt communication willingness, and they described it as "the will to talk to each other that helps in the sharing of critical data among them and is an important factor that leads to enhanced coordination and trust" (p. 12). Therefore, "it is effective communication between the workers that gives life to the organizational structure and hence, the successful execution of the project" (Akunyumu et al., 2019, p. 346).

### **Collaborate and inspire (Motivation subtheme)**

Collaboration involves working with others to achieve the same goal. According to Hughes, Williams, and Ren (2012), collaboration seeks to accomplish good results promptly through a joint effort of people pursuing the same goal and harnessing their combined knowledge

and abilities to complete tasks. When there is a collaboration among a group of people, there is participation, and the result will likely be a success. Collaboration involves people sharing their skills and knowledge toward achieving a common goal (Gassel, Lascaris-Comneno, & Maas, 2014). A participant noted the need for project leaders to work with their crew members and explain the importance of establishing ownership. This let them know that their roles in executing and delivering a project inspired their active participation. They could relive their experience when they saw their project which could inspire their active participation in future projects. A project leader participant noted the importance of project leaders participating in some of the tasks on the construction site. He said it was a good way of inspiring the labor crew workers' participation. Additionally, he said it could also help in developing positive relationships and rapport with the labor crew workers.

### **Recommendations for Construction Industry**

On the basis of this study's findings, the following recommendations are made for the construction industry. For leadership development (theme three), the management of construction organizations should give equal consideration to their employees' leadership development as they do to their skills, safety, and equipment handling training. In addition, organizations should create environments that would enable mentoring of new and inexperienced employees. These two recommendations have the potential to impact the challenges and shortage of inexperienced manpower in the industry and increase the retention rate.

It is beneficial for project leaders to improve their interpersonal and relational skills with their subordinates regarding motivation (theme four). Project leaders should endeavor to hold morning conversations with subordinates daily. Pep talks could help defuse stress and pressure that the labor crew may be experiencing. This could also help the manager develop a cordial



relationship with the labor crew. Additionally, project leaders should seek the opinions of their labor crew to help them build self-confidence and establish ownership of their contribution.

There is a need for project managers to promote effective communication (theme two) among the project team. They have to manage the entire process including communicating with all the stakeholders. Project leaders should ensure that the construction site workers grasp the information when tasks are assigned. They can achieve this by clarifying the recipients of the information understood the instructions, and this may also help reduce misinformation that could hinder the project's success. Furthermore, if project managers query material purchases and supplies by suppliers and subcontractors, they may be able to help eliminate delays due to unavailable materials or late deliveries.

The occurrence of communicator and collaboration subthemes in more than one theme shows that from a leadership perspective, the study reinforces the importance of leaders communicating effectively and collaborating with their subordinates in order to ensure productivity and timely completion of projects.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

One of the limitations of this research study was the unwillingness of participants to make themselves available for a follow-up second interview. All the participants noted that due to the manpower shortage in the industry, they had to work extra hours to meet the completion deadlines of their projects. The researcher was advised to reduce the interview time because potential participants were discouraged from sitting for at least 45 minutes during the interview. A follow-up interview would have allowed the researcher to ask the participants about their opinion on some responses from other participants. For example, a participant suggested the

need for construction organizations to have a vast pool of materials suppliers to avoid delays instead of relying on a subcontractor's opinion.

Another limitation was that general contractors do not have labor crews anymore. They subcontract the entire project to smaller construction companies thereby making it difficult to get project leaders and labor crew workers from the same organization. It would have been beneficial to have both project leaders and labor crew members from the same organization as study participants because their responses would project a clear picture of leadership training and personnel development within an organization. This study's participants included one labor crew worker and four project leaders from the same organization plus two labor crew workers and two project leaders from three other organizations.

Conducting the interviews via phone calls was another limitation. The physical presence of the participants and their expressions and reactions during the interview sessions might have given more meaning to their responses. However, the interviews were conducted via phone due to the CDC's social distancing guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The last limitation was that despite having contacts in some prospective organizations, their top management were unwilling to allow their employees to participate for fear of divulging company information. This impeded the recruitment process and resulted in IRB approved modifications.

A significant strength of the study was the ability to interview the two groups of participants. The perceptions of both groups on the research questions supported the phenomenological approach, and member checking was used to validate data accuracy.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

Findings of the research suggest that the construction industry has the potential to reduce the high litigation cost it incurs due to projects that are delivered late or substandard. The first recommendation would be to replicate the study in construction organizations with a larger workforce and with their management who understand the benefits of participation. Doing this might encourage employees to participate without fear of being reprimanded. Another recommendation would be replacing the research method with focus groups to encourage face-to-face participation. This could also lead to in-depth insight into the dynamics of the leader-subordinate relationship. In addition, it might be possible to get groups of both project leaders and construction site workers to participate in the study.

Future research should include educating the management of construction companies to understand their roles in addressing leadership problems and the high litigation costs. Future research could study how organizations can prevent these causes and consequences of late project delivery and identify mitigating strategies to avoid future occurrences.

### **Conclusion**

This study explored the dynamics of the relationship between project leaders and construction site workers, their perceptions of leadership, and the importance of leadership development in the Central Virginia area. A phenomenological approach was used to understand the study participants' perceptions of leadership, motivation, and communication. The findings from this study suggest construction organizations could benefit from providing employees with leadership development and training because it could help develop the leadership abilities of their employees, enhance their productivity and overall organizational growth. It may also be beneficial to organizations if project leaders communicate effectively with all the major

stakeholders on a project and develop positive relationships with their subordinates. This may help address the challenges of the inexperienced labor and workforce shortage and increase the retention rate. This study's findings also suggest that the project leaders could motivate their labor crew workers to optimal performances by recognizing and incentivizing their hard work.

This study adds to the limited research about the construction industry in the United States and suggests that providing leadership development and training to employees could help address the inexperienced labor and manpower shortage and could reduce the high litigation costs that construction organization incur from late project delivery.

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## APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Interview Questions for Project Managers

	Research Question	Accompanying Interview Question
1	What are the perceptions of project leaders about leadership?	Briefly tell me about yourself
		Describe how you got into the construction industry
		Describe how you rose to the supervisory position
		As a project manager/supervisor, you may have worked on several projects and with different project teams. Describe how the project teams are constituted, and who assigns workers to the teams.?
		Describe your role in the team selection process.
		What is your understanding of the word “leadership”?
		How would you describe your leadership style?
2	What is the understanding of project leaders on communication and its importance in projects handling?	As a project manager/supervisor, describe the first major step(s) you take when you are assigned a new project.
		Describe your understanding of the word “communication” and its importance to your team.
		Describe the importance of communication in executing projects.
		Describe your relationship with your subordinates
3	What are their perceptions of project leaders about leadership development and training?	How often are you exposed to skill/leadership training?
		How important is leadership development and training to you?
		What are some of the trainings that you have attended?
		Describe what you think about personnel development.
		What certifications do you have?
4	How can project leaders motivate their team members to optimal performance?	What is your understanding of the word “motivation”?
		Describe how you motivate your team to optimal performance.
		In the event of late project delivery or substandard projects, what are the likely consequences?
		What are some of the likely causes of late project delivery of substandard projects?
		Can those causes be mitigated?

Final question to ask participants: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

**Appendix B: Interview Questions for Construction Site Workers**

	<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Accompanying Interview Question</b>
1	What is the perception of construction site workers on leadership?	Briefly tell me about yourself.
		Describe how you got into the industry and how long have you been in the industry.
		Describe the role you see yourself playing in the next five years.
		Explain your understanding of the word “leadership”
		If you are a project manager, how would your leadership style be different from your current project manager(s)?
2	What is their understanding of effective communication and its importance?	Explain your understanding of the word “communication” and its importance to your team.
		Describe your relationship with your co-workers
		Describe your relationship with your project manager(s)
3	What are their perceptions about leadership training and development?	What are some of the trainings that you have attended?
		Describe what you think about leadership development and training.
		How important is leadership development and training to you?
4	How can construction site workers be motivated to perform optimally?	Describe your relationship with your supervisor(s).
		What qualities do you look for in your supervisors?
		Describe how you are motivated on the job.
		Describe how you would like to be motivated.
		Describe a scenario where you did not feel motivated to carry out assigned task.

Final question to ask participants: Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

**Appendix C: Informed Consent Form**  
**Research Invitation and Informed Consent Agreement**

Hello!

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Satisfaction in the Construction Industry.” Kindly take a few minutes to read through this document before deciding whether you wish to participate in this study.

The purpose of study is to understand the dynamics of the relationships that both project leaders and their subordinates share, their perception about leadership, and the importance of leadership development. The researcher wants to know the type of trainings you have undergone and the impact of those trainings on project execution and outcome.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you have acquired a minimum of two years of professional experience in the industry working on both commercial and residential projects.

This study will be utilizing telephone interviews to gain an understanding of your experiences on the job. You will be asked semi-structured and open-ended questions relating to your on-the-job experiences. The duration of the interview will be between 45 - 60 minutes. A follow-up interview will be conducted to allow for a detailed storytelling.

Please understand that participation is voluntary. You reserve the right to refuse to participate and/or answer any question(s) for any reason, without penalty. You also have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time without being penalized. If you want to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher.

The interview will be conducted casually, and you will not be compelled to discuss any part of your experience you wish to keep private. If you experience anxiety due to the nature of sharing your story, you can inform the researcher and the interview can be terminated.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study (by the usage of pseudonyms) so that you can feel free to share your personal experience, which could help other project managers and/or construction site workers. Your participation in the study will remain anonymous and the researcher will not share information regarding the interview. The audio recordings and transcriptions will be stored on an electronic file that is password protected known only to the researcher. The audio recordings will be destroyed after a three-year period.

The potential benefit associated with this study is that you will have the opportunity to share your lived professional experience. The information gained from the outcome of this study will help the researcher make recommendations on the importance of leadership development and training and their impacts on project success. Additionally, the results of this research will be published in my dissertation and possibly in subsequent journals or books.

If you have any questions or would like additional information about your involvement, please contact me through [basorun\\_oo@lynchburg.edu](mailto:basorun_oo@lynchburg.edu) or 434.473.8313. You can also contact my dissertation committee chair, who is the Principal Investigator (PI) for this study, Dr. Paula Lichiello at [lichiello@lynchburg.edu](mailto:lichiello@lynchburg.edu) or 434.544.8464. The University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research has approved this study. The IRB approval number assigned to this study is LHS2122102. You may contact the IRB Director, Dr. Sean Collins, through the office of the Vice President and Dean for Academic Affairs at 434.544.8266 or [irb-hs@lynchburg.edu](mailto:irb-hs@lynchburg.edu) with any questions or concerns related to this study.

I have attached two copies of the consent form. Please sign both, indicating you are over 18 years old, have read, understood, and voluntarily agree to participate in this research. Please return a signed copy of the consent form to me in picture or pdf format via email by **May 7, 2022**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Olayinka Basorun  
Ed. D Candidate  
University of Lynchburg

**Consent Agreement**

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I am over 18 years old, have read, understood, and voluntarily agree to participate in this research study titled “A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Communication in the Construction Industry.”

Information below should be completed by the consenting participant:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

**Survey Summary of Result Option:** (Check if requesting information)

Yes, please send a summary of the study findings (available May 2022) to the email or postal address indicated below.

(Please print clearly)

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

OR

Street address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return a signed copy of this form by **May 7, 2022**.

**Appendix D: Letter of Invitation Requesting Participation**

February 1, 2022

XYZ Company  
Street address or P.O. Box  
Lynchburg, Virginia

Dear Mr. ABC,

My name is Olayinka Basorun. I am a doctoral student at the University of Lynchburg's College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling Program. I am kindly requesting permission to contact your employees about participating in a research study that I am conducting entitled, "*A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Communication in the Construction Industry.*" The purpose of the study is to explore the dynamics of the relationships between project leaders and construction site workers, their perceptions of leadership, and the importance of leadership development the results may provide recommendations for construction organizations regarding leadership training and development.

This research study involves telephone interviews with employees who volunteer to participate and share details about their work experiences.

Their participation is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time. The study is completely anonymous and as such, the identities of the organization and participants identities will be protected.

If you agree to allow me to contact your employees about voluntarily participating in this study, please fill out the attached Letter of Cooperation for Data Collection to enable documentation for Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and return it to me as soon as possible.

Your participation in this research has the potential to aid in exploring and identifying how construction teams can work more cohesively, deliver more projects timely, and reduce employee turnover in the industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this opportunity.

Sincerely,  
Olayinka (Ola) Basorun  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Lynchburg  
(434) [473-8313](tel:473-8313)/[basorun\\_oo@lynchnurg.edu](mailto:basorun_oo@lynchnurg.edu)

**Appendix E: Flyer****RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY FOR PROJECT MANAGERS AND  
CONSTRUCTION SITE WORKERS**

**You are invited to participate in a research study of project managers and site workers in the Central Virginia area during March and April 2022.**

**This study seeks to:**

- **explore the dynamics of the relationships between project leaders and construction site workers, their perceptions of leadership, and the importance of leadership development; and**
- **provide results/recommendations to construction organizations regarding leadership training and development.**



**You qualify to participate in the study if you have a minimum of 2 years' experience as a project manager or a construction site worker.**

**If you volunteer to participate, you will be interviewed via telephone for 30 minutes followed by an optional second interview of approximately 15 minutes. Participants will be rewarded with a \$20 Amazon gift card.**

**Kindly contact me at (434) 473-8313 if you are interested in participating.**

**Olayinka (Ola) Basorun  
College of Education, Leadership Studies, and Counseling  
University of Lynchburg**



**Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter**

University of Lynchburg

**University of Lynchburg Institutional  
Review  
Board for Human Subjects Research**  
*Research Approval Letter*

Date: February 28, 2022

To: Dr. Paula Lichiello

From: Institutional Review Board (IRB)

IRB Approval No.: LHS2122102

Project Title: A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Communication in the Construction Industry

Final Determination: Approved

Approval Date: February 28, 2022

Thank you for your recent submission to the University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research. Your request for a review of your research project listed above has been completed. The proposal and related study comply with the standards set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 CFR Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, and all applicable federal, state, and institutional policies. If a member of the research team is affiliated with and/or if there is an affiliated research site from which participants are recruited and/or data are gathered, then your study may necessitate review from another entity. It is the responsibility of the PI to inquire at other site(s) and with other IRBs regarding reviewability and, if necessary, secure approval from other site(s)/IRB(s) prior to the collection of data.

Please remember that if any modifications are necessary, these changes need to be approved by this Board. The IRB website includes detailed instructions and forms for this process. Investigators must report any adverse events involving subjects to the IRB Director as soon as possible but no later than three working days after the discovery of the occurrence. **Please submit a closure form within 30 days of completion of data collection (when no additional interaction will occur with human subjects).** While the Lynchburg IRB will make an effort to send reminder correspondence regarding completion of a closure form, it is ultimately the responsibility of the PI and research team, not the Lynchburg IRB, to ensure that this deadline is met. Please feel free to contact the Director at [irb-hs@lynchburg.edu](mailto:irb-hs@lynchburg.edu) if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sean Collins'.

\*The University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board website is located at

<https://www.lynchburg.edu/academics/institutional-review-board/>

**University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) – IRB-HS@lynchburg.edu**

Sean Collins, Ph.D., CSCS\*D

**Appendix G: IRB Modification Approval Letter**

University of Lynchburg

University of Lynchburg Institutional  
Review

Board for Human Subjects Research  
*Research Approval Letter*

Date: May 3, 2022

To: Dr. Paula Lichiello

From: Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Review Reference No.: LHS2122118

Original IRB Approval No.: LHS2122102

Project Title: A Phenomenological Study of Leadership, Motivation, and Communication in the Construction Industry

Final Determination: Approved (modification approval)

Modification Approval: May 3, 2022

Original Approval Date: February 28, 2022

Thank you for your recent submission of a modification form and supporting documents to the University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research. Your request for a review of modifications to the research project listed above has been completed. The proposal and related study continue to comply with the standards set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 CFR Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects, and all applicable federal, state, and institutional policies.

Please remember that if any additional modifications are necessary, these changes need to be approved by this committee. The IRB website includes detailed instructions and forms for this process. Investigators must report any adverse events involving subjects to the IRB Director as soon as possible but no later than three working days after the discovery of the occurrence.

**Please submit a closure form within 30 days of completion of data collection (when no additional interaction will occur with human subjects).** While the Lynchburg IRB will make an effort to send reminder correspondence regarding completion of a closure form, it is ultimately the responsibility of the PI and research team, not the Lynchburg IRB, to ensure that this deadline is met. Please feel free to contact the Director at [irb-hs@lynchburg.edu](mailto:irb-hs@lynchburg.edu) if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean Collins'.

Sean Collins, Ph.D., CSCS\*D

\*The University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board website is located at <https://www.lynchburg.edu/academics/institutional-review-board/>

**University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) – [IRB-HS@lynchburg.edu](mailto:IRB-HS@lynchburg.edu)**