

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Identification of Managerial Strategies and Styles Used by Food Pantry Administrators in Delaware County, Indiana to Alleviate Food Insecurity

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Adequate access to food of acceptable quantity and quality is necessary to provide energy and nutrients for growth, development, and daily living. However, many Americans do not have access to an adequate food supply and are considered “food insecure”. Despite the critical importance of food pantries in reducing food insecurity, few studies have evaluated the management strategies used by food pantry administrators. Identifying and addressing problems in managerial practices has the potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of these establishments in their effort to help the food insecure. The purpose of this study was to identify the different leadership styles, food procurement practices, food distribution practices, public relations activities, and nutrition initiatives used by food pantry administrators in Delaware County, Indiana. Seventeen food pantry administrators from Delaware County were recruited for the study. Each administrator completed a one on one interview with the principal investigator. Each interview session was approximately 30-60 minutes and was audio recorded. These recordings were then transcribed, and data analyzed using QRS Nvivo2. Transcripts were coded, and major themes were derived using phenomenological theory. The following themes emanated from the study 1) There are unique leadership characteristics shared by pantry operators, 2) There are distinct principles that guide how agencies organize themselves as community-service

entities, 3) Food pantries are attentive to the nutritional well-being of their clients, 4) Food pantries are interested in growth and expansion to better meet client needs, and 5) Food pantries rely heavily on donated items, which are distributed to clients with specific guiding principles. Findings from this study implied that identifying the food pantry administrators' perceived "best practices" in the management of the food pantry and sharing this information with other food pantry administrators, may increase the knowledge of the best management strategies and styles and potentially help reduce the rate of food insecurity in the county.