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## Knowledge Transfer Strategies and Retaining Business Critical Information

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Silvia Dimma

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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2020

Abstract

Knowledge Transfer Strategies and Retaining Business Critical Information

by

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Bachelor of Business Administration, Laurentian University, 1996,

Bachelor of Education, Brock University, 2001

Master of Business Administration, Aspen University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2020

## Abstract

American business leaders are challenged to replace 70 million knowledgeable and experienced workers. Some leaders of organizations have no formalized knowledge transfer strategies in place to reduce lost productivity and negative financial effects of retiring and resigning employees. Seventy-five million baby boomers are leaving organizations, taking knowledge and skills with them, and leaving organizations with the challenge of training new employees. Grounded by Nonaka and Takeuchi's socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization model for knowledge creation, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore knowledge transfer strategies used by credit union leaders to retain critical business information. Participants included 14 managers and executives from 1 credit union in Michigan, United States. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and analysis of company documents. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data that resulted in 3 themes: documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and presentations and meetings. Participation in business meetings and job shadowing provides opportunities to learn critical information on organizational strategies and the ability to ask questions for clarity, which is significant for successful knowledge transfer. Implications for social change include the potential to increased credit union employees' knowledge, expanding opportunities for employees to learn new skills and knowledge, leading to promotions, or additional employment opportunities.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is devoted to the following members of my family who have in one way or the other shaped the direction of my life and saw to my achieving my ambitions: my darling husband, Darren Dimma, my loving parents, Albertina Rodrigues and Alfredo Rodrigues, and my loving mother and father-in-law, Lesley Dimma and Roger Dimma.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Employees within organizations develop expertise, skills and knowledge that can be transferred to other employees (Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2014). As new employees join organizations, they benefit from knowledge transfer as contributors to performance, competitiveness, and profitability (Omotayo, 2015). Business leaders and managers within organizations do not completely understand knowledge transfer between employees that it is essential for organizational success (Gunjal, 2019). Knowledge transfer has a positive influence on performance, turnover, innovation, and competitiveness (Vij & Farooq, 2014).

### **Background of the Problem**

Knowledge transfer is essential for organization innovation and competitiveness (Malarz & Paradowski, 2018). When employees transfer knowledge, they can expand current strategies rather than focusing on just handing off of information. This provides a competitive edge because when employees learn from each other they are engaged and more committed to the organization. Knowledge transfer is critical resource for organizations in the United States to be innovative and retain business critical knowledge (Abbas, Avdic, Xiaobao, Zhao, & Chong, 2018). Retaining the organizational history is important to advancing the organization otherwise understanding how and why decisions were made would be lost, which is used to make decisions and setting the direction of the organization. Organizations in the United States are losing business critical knowledge as employees leave and do not share, document, or pass their knowledge on to other employees (Sumbal, Tsui, Cheong, & See-to, 2018). In organizations, the transfer of

knowledge from subject matter experts to other employees is needed for retaining business critical information for better decision making (Rahim, Mahmood, & Masrom, 2017). Knowledge is a valuable resource for organizations to build a competitive advantage, innovation, and adjust in changing business environment (Muñoz-Pascual, Galende, & Curado, 2020). Knowledge transfer is a fundamental means by which employees can contribute to creating a complete advantage for the organization (Al-Arimi, Masrom, & Mahmood, 2017). Business leaders are seeking to manage and distribute knowledge flow and valuable company resources within the organization (Gunjal, 2019).

According to Vahlne and Johanson (2017) knowledge is a valuable organizational resource that provides a competitive advantage in a competitive economy. Organizations have strategically placed knowledge as an important resource to gain and sustain a competitive advantage (Abbas et al., 2018). Leaders create systems for knowledge management to share information across divisions (Janus, 2016). Employees need to be willing to share their knowledge and expertise within organizations for knowledge management and innovation to occur (Loebbecke, van Fenema, & Powell, 2016).

### **Problem Statement**

American business leaders are challenged to replace 70 million knowledgeable and experienced workers (Green, Roberts, & Rudebock, 2017). Seventy-five million baby boomers are leaving organizations, taking knowledge and skills with them, leaving organizations with challenges involving training new employees (Farrell, 2018). Ten thousand U.S. baby boomers are leaving the workforce daily, and more than 70 million

will leave the workforce by 2029 (Anderson & Guo, 2018). The general business problem is that the loss of business knowledge due to baby boomers retiring affects productivity and profits. The specific business problem is that some business leaders lack knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore knowledge transfer strategies used by credit union leaders to retain critical business information. Participants included managers and executives of a credit union in Michigan, United States. Findings may contribute to social change for credit union employees sharing knowledge enhancing the skills of other credit union employees that can lead to expansion of employment opportunities. Skilled workers who are more engaged and happier at both work and home will contribute positively to social change by socializing in their communities and sharing skills they learned with others. More skilled employees due to knowledge transfer makes credit union individuals more marketable so that they can pursue job advancements which may improve their living situations.

### **Nature of the Study**

Three methods used for research include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this research because participants will be sharing their viewpoints about knowledge transfer as well as their values, opinions, and behaviors. Qualitative methods are used for exploring individual experiences through direct interactions (Yin, 2017). Qualitative research is used to understand social or human problems from perspectives of local populations (Barnham,

2015). Quantitative research involves numerical data, measurements, and hypothesis testing (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The intent of my study did not include numerical data or testing hypotheses, and therefore quantitative methods were not the best choice. Mixed research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methods and includes numerical data, measurements, and hypothesis testing (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The information collected did not include numerical data, and therefore mixed methods was not an appropriate choice.

The four qualitative research designs are case study, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology. A case study involves analyzing a topic to get an understanding of the topic based on the perspectives of participants (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). A case study approach was the most appropriate to learn about current strategies from leader perspectives. Phenomenology is philosophically based and involves lived experiences to gain understanding involving experiences of participants (Jackson, Vaughan, & Brown, 2018). Using a phenomenological approach was not the best choice because I did not study the lived experiences of participants. Ethnography is a qualitative design that describes cultural behaviors within particular indigenous settings (Farrell, Walshe, & Molassiotis, 2017). The ethnography design was not appropriate for the study as the focus because I did not on cultural behaviors but rather knowledge transfer strategies used by credit union leaders. Grounded theory is a qualitative method used to evaluate data from participants' experiences and supporting data in order to generate new theories (Belgrave & Seide, 2018). Grounded theory was not appropriate because I did not focus on developing a new theory based on the study findings.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do credit union leaders use to retain critical business information as employees are resigning?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What knowledge transfer strategies do you employ to retain business critical information?
2. How is knowledge transferred between employees?
3. What role do leaders have in knowledge transfer strategies?
4. What barriers have you encountered when implementing knowledge transfer strategies?
5. How do employees respond to knowledge transfer strategies?
6. How do you evaluate or measure knowledge transfer strategies for success?
7. What additional information would you be able to share on this topic?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The fundamentals of knowledge transfer help organizational leaders understand that organizational knowledge transferred from existing and retiring employees to new employees will create competitive advantages for organizations. Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory indicates that knowledge not a fixed object, but a fluid exchange of ideas that creates and transfers knowledge. The theory indicates that knowledge creation is a process of four phases of categories: socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization (SECI) (Kaur, 2015). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), the SECI model brings the knowledge of individual employees to other employees within the

organization and puts that knowledge to effective use in achieving organizational vision, strategic objectives, and performance expectations. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) SECI model assumes that knowledge will be readily shared by the owner and that interplay between them creates a process of knowledge creation and transfer. The SECI builds relationships that create an environment for rationality, intuition, and explicit and tacit knowledge exchange to enhance creativity (Kaur, 2015). Nonaka and Takeuchi's 1995 SECI model aligned this study's focus on transferring business critical knowledge to understand if using knowledge transfer strategies will help retain business critical knowledge. The SECI model is used for knowledge creation activities needed for knowledge transfer to take place within the credit union.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Business critical information:* Business critical information that is needed to ensure businesses can operate successfully (Tyrrell, 2016). Business critical information is fundamental for leaders to make decisions founded on effective and accurate information.

*Explicit knowledge:* Knowledge codified and transmitted through methods such as writing, diagramming, and speaking. This involves written knowledge collected in a particular form that is easily shared and openly available to all (Obeidat, Al-Dmour, & Tarhini, 2015). Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be formally expressed using a system of words that is describable, tangible, rules-based, and object-based (Evans, Dalkir, & Bidian, 2015).



*Knowledge management:* Knowledge management is the practice within organizations to identify, create, evaluate, store, maintain, and share organizational knowledge (Gao & Bernard, 2018).

*Knowledge transfer:* Employees learn new information from experienced coworkers, suggesting that employees will learn from the other employees' experiences (Ugolini, Massetti, Sanesi, & Pearlmutter, 2015). Knowledge transfer is the action of moving knowledge from one individual to another. Formal or informal networks are necessary for social interactions needed to transfer tacit knowledge through activities such as documented practices, learning, and reports (Loebbecke et al., 2016).

*Organizational culture:* Organizational values, beliefs, theories, effectiveness, and efficiency provide the framework for organizational culture (Tong, Tak, & Wong, 2015). Organizational culture is built from shared values and beliefs that employees use to understand the organizational functions and expected behaviors (Tong et al., 2015).

*Succession planning:* Succession planning involves strategic initiatives to ensure leadership continuity of important positions with trained individuals for the future of organizations and encourages individual growth (Flynn & Rutherford, 2018).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

Assumptions include suppositions believed to be true but not verified. Limitations are restrictions outside of a researcher's control. Delimitations are boundaries or parameters of a study.

**Assumptions**

Assumptions is information assumed that may inadvertently influence research but are relevant and needed for the study to be validated (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first assumption was that participants were honest and truthful in their responses. Another assumption was each participant's experience was relevant to the study. Another assumption was that participants' experiences were reflective of other credit union leaders in the industry. Last, I assumed that data collected from participants accurately represent experiences of other leaders in the credit union industry.

**Limitations**

Limitations in research are potential weaknesses (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). A limitation of the study was the participation was limited to one federal credit union of the 5,335 federally insured credit unions in the United States. One limitation was that participants were limited to leaders working in the credit union industry, and employees of the credit union industry were not included. Another limitation was that participating credit unions were located within the United States; the results may not be representative of global credit unions.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are exclusions set by the researcher in refining the scope of the study (Theofanidis, & Fountouki, 2018). Delimitations are the characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the research study (Theofanidis, & Fountouki, 2018). The study targeted one credit union in Michigan, United States. Another delimitation of this study was that only one credit union was included; other financial

institutions were not included. A final delimitation was that only leaders and managers were part of the participation group; employees did not participate.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is of significance to credit union leaders to understand knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information. Knowledge transfer of critical business information is important to have for the process of innovation and the foundation on which innovation is based. Knowledge is a valuable resource within the organization that enhances competitive advantage (Vahlne & Johanson, 2017). Organizations have an advantage when the employees are skilled and retain business information.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

This study contributes to the practice of business by identifying knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information as employees leave. This study may contribute to credit union leaders understanding that different knowledge transfer strategies contribute to business-critical information. This study may provide credit union leaders with strategies for creating knowledge transfer environments and strategies for their organization. Knowledge transfer may assist remaining credit union employees to build skills and maintain organizational information.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study contributes to social change by increasing employees' knowledge which could contribute to happier and more engaged employees in life and communities they live in. Employees engaged in knowledge transfer strategies may increase job

satisfaction, which may increase their value within organizations and communities they live in. Through knowledge transfer, credit union employees increase productivity and enhance social value within the credit union (Argote & Fahrenkopf, 2016). This study contributes to social change because employees with increased knowledge may have enhanced career growth opportunities and be happier and more engaged in life and society by giving back to local charities. Credit union leaders may use the knowledge transfer strategies identified to enhance the job satisfaction and lives of the employees at their credit union.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The objective of this qualitative case study was to explore knowledge transfer used by credit union leaders to retain critical business information. The transfer of knowledge increases productivity, efficiency, innovation, motivation of employees, and competitive advantage of organizations (Hatak & Roessl, 2015). Organizational factors such as cultural values, leadership, and human resources practices influence knowledge exploration through practices and behaviors (Gonzalez & Melo, 2018). The review of literature includes published sources regarding retiring baby boomers, knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, organizational culture, leadership, knowledge loss, and succession planning. The literature involves concepts regarding internalization, externalization, socialization, and Nonaka's knowledge creation theory. The literature review includes the following topics: organizational culture, organizational leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, succession planning, knowledge loss, and knowledge transfer. I identified and accessed literature using Walden

University's online library, Google Scholar, related books, reports, web sites, and databases. The study had 230 resources, with 185 or 80% published after 2015, with 166 peer-reviewed articles. The research databases used were: Google Scholar, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, and Emerald Management. Pertinent keywords included: *knowledge transfer, knowledge sharing, knowledge strategies, knowledge transfer culture, leadership, retaining business critical information, succession planning, organizational culture, knowledge creation, knowledge sharing theory, learning, organizational learning, knowledge management, knowledge loss, tacit knowledge, knowledge types, explicit knowledge, and knowledge transfer strategies.*

### **SECI Model**

The SECI model according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) is a knowledge conversion theory that converts and creates knowledge of individual employees within the organization practice to collaborate, interact, and learn. The SECI model possesses four approaches to knowledge conversions: socialization, externalization, combination, and internationalization. The interplay between them creates a process of knowledge creation. The SECI builds relationships that create an environment for rationality, intuition, and explicit and tacit knowledge exchange to enhance creativity (Kaur, 2015). Nonaka and Takeuchi's 1995 SECI model demonstrates the continuous process that takes place in organizations which relates to this study's focus on transferring business critical knowledge through the use of knowledge transfer strategies. Knowledge creation occurs as the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge blends through the SECI process (Nonaka et al., 1994). This theory was the most appropriate framework for this study

since it addresses knowledge transfer with organization processes. The SECI model was an appropriate framework to focus on the conversion between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge through the four modes of knowledge conversions in organizations.

This framework indicates an understanding of knowledge transfer and the knowledge conversion process that occurs at all levels of organizations. Knowledge transfer and creation supports organizations' capability to sustain a competitive advantage, which leads to positive performance relationships involving knowledge management and innovation. Knowledge creation within organizations with a learning culture strengthens knowledge transfer among employees.

### **Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture is developed through employees' values, beliefs, and behaviors. Organizational culture is defined as a system of values that drives people to make choices and decisions in the organization (Harris, 2017). Culture is the set of values, beliefs, and behavior patterns that separates one organization from other organizations (Harris, 2017). Behaviors and values modeled by employees create the culture of an organization. The behaviors that employees of an organization experience and describe shape how employees behave and adapt to obtain results in the organization (Cao, Huo, Li, & Zhao, 2015). How employees of an organization interact with each other and with stakeholders contribute to the organizational culture. Organizational culture evolves based on values, beliefs, and behaviors of employees.

Credit Union leaders understand that organizational culture contributes to the success of organizations. Leaders use organizational culture to differentiate their

company from other companies. Organizational culture positively relates to corporate leadership and governance by setting the behaviors employees will follow (O'Connor & Byrne, 2015). Credit Union leaders contribute to building a positive organizational culture to motivate employee performance. Credit union leaders understand the influence of organization culture on corporate performance (Unger, Rank, & Gemunden, 2014). Warren Buffet indicated how organizational culture is necessary to organizational success (Childress, 2013) and Howard Schultz, a founder of Starbucks Coffee Company explained that organizational culture is a critical factor in the success of Starbucks (Martins, Rindova, & Greenbaum, 2015). Leaders who focus on building a positive culture will increase organizational performance.

Maintaining an effective working culture in organizations promotes a positive vision of excellence (Unger et al., 2014). An healthy and positive culture has: value driven management, motivated employees, quick decision-making and problem-solving, autonomy and entrepreneurship in leadership, and productivity through people (Pathirana, 2019). In a positive organizational culture, employees have similar views regarding the organization and they behave consistently with organizational values (Unger et al., 2014). Organizational leaders display a strong organizational culture to influence employees' work attitudes and performance because culture engages and motivates employees (Warrick, 2017). Strong organizational cultures includes work that is aligned with the organization's current and future direction (Warrick, 2017). By contrast, in a weak organizational culture, employees have problems defining the organization's values and determining the right process of conducting business

(Childress, 2013). When organizational culture is weak, the organization's existence is at risk because organization members have different values and beliefs, where they may work against management's priorities (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). A positive organizational culture includes employees who are engaged in achieving business goals.

Leaders are tasked with the responsibility of building a cultural foundation that aligns with organization goals. In a strong organizational culture, leaders foster a vision, share values, and achieve goals in the organization (Warrick, 2017). Employees observe behaviors of organization members and work trends to identify which actions support organizations' culture and promote success (Beauregard, Basile, & Thompson, 2018). Leaders communicate with employees about their behaviors that contribute to healthy culture which in turn, encourage desired behaviors. Customers and stakeholders may perceive and use organizational culture as a distinguishing factor to identify a good organization from a bad organization (Childress, 2013). Leaders use frequent and transparent communication to develop and encourage a culture of sharing and teamwork among members of organizations (Cao et al., 2015). The coordinated effort of leaders and employees may contribute to a positive working environment (Miguel, 2015). In a strong organizational culture, leaders encourage their employees to participate in decision-making processes (Lukic et al., 2017). When employees and leaders develop respect and dignity for each other, they can help each other and integrate their knowledge and experiences to improve organizations (Miguel, 2015). Leaders and employees together create a positive organizational culture that supports the transfer of knowledge and skill development.



A positive organizational culture is important to motivate employees by creating a work environment that is engaging. Employees in organizations use an effective organizational culture to develop teamwork and knowledge sharing culture (Körner, Wirtz, Bengel, & Göritz, 2015). Leaders across organizations face cultural challenges generated from social interaction and communication (Serrat, 2017). Practices, values, and assumptions shared by employees identifying appropriate behaviors define organization culture (Alas & Mousa, 2016). Organizational culture can influence how employees communicate and share information and social interactions and establish norms that identify right and wrong behaviors (Alas & Mousa, 2016). Organizational culture is a driving factor for why knowledge management and initiatives fall short of meeting leaders' goals. The creation of knowledge is affected by values and trust placed on the creation of knowledge from leaders and teams (Akhavan & Hosseini, 2015). Organizational culture driven by trust and communication supports and encourages knowledge sharing.

Continuous learning and employee development that is supported by leaders within the organization, supports a culture of knowledge transfer. Organizational cultures that include continuous improvement and learning result in increased knowledge transfer among employees (Chang & Lin, 2015). Employees constitute the culture of the organization that influences motivation, productivity, perspectives, and problem-solving techniques (Nikpour, 2017). When employees do not support a knowledge transfer culture, it leads to the creation of knowledge silos (Tong et al., 2015). The creation of silos separating employees, departments, and divisions prevents knowledge transfer. Silos

are created because of a lack of knowledge by employees regarding other departments or people (Johnson, Grove, & Clarke, 2018). Silos would prevent the sharing of best practices for creativity, innovation, resource use, and competitive advantages across departments within the organization (Cao & Xiang, 2012). Organizational culture has a direct effect on the employees' influence of knowledge transfer and an indirect influence on the managers' attitudes toward knowledge transfer (Tong et al., 2015).

Knowledge sharing behaviors in employees are influenced by organizational culture. Organizational culture can influence employees' attitude about knowledge sharing and perceived behaviors (Tong et al., 2015). Organizational culture and weak employee relationships are critical barriers to successful knowledge transfer (Solli-Saether, Karlsen, & van Oorschot, 2015). An organizational culture that supports a knowledge transfer concept includes social networking, emerging relationships, trust, and innovation (Elrehail, Emeagwali, Alsaad, & Alzghoul, 2018). Leaders impact knowledge transfer attitudes of employees by creating a culture that encourages employees to share their experiences. According to Chang and Lin (2015), to develop knowledge sharing attitudes among employees, managers must model supportive attitudes. Creating a culture of knowledge transfer will engage employees in sharing information and experiences across the organization (Elrehail et al., 2018). An innovative organizational culture is created when employees are empowered and encouraged to create and explore new ideas (Islam, Jasimuddin, & Hasan, 2015). Organizations with a culture of open communication results in increased knowledge transfer among employees (Islam et al., 2015). Knowledge transfer is most successful when the organizational culture has

continuous learning and accepted change (Chang & Lin, 2015). Organizational cultures that embrace innovation and creative ideas encourages knowledge transfer.

Organizational cultural values, beliefs and behaviors significantly influences knowledge sharing and job satisfaction (Islam et al., 2015). Sharing of knowledge results in the development and promotion of new ideas that prove successful and become routine and part of the organizational culture (Mueller, 2014). A positive organizational culture influences knowledge sharing and job satisfaction which leads to improved organizational financial performance (Islam et al., 2015). Improved organizational performance is supported through knowledge transfer. According to Mueller (2014), treating corporate culture as a knowledge resource and an enabler for knowledge management will improve knowledge transfer. Knowledge sharing is defined as the process of knowledge transfer where an organization maintains complex and valuable information regarding the organization (Alsam, Rehman, & Imran, 2016). Leaders influence the organizational culture and understands that knowledge transfer improves organizational performance.

### **Organizational Learning**

Organizational learning is the process of obtaining knowledge from employees' experiences within organizations (Chadwick & Raver, 2015). This knowledge may influence employees' behaviors and improve the organization's performance. An organizational learning process supported by leaders manage the knowledge assets of an organization (Tamayo-Torres, Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, Llorens-Montes, & Martínez-López, 2016). An organization of learning supports individuals to strategize, innovate, and

survive in a competitive world (Saadat & Saadat, 2016). Organization learning includes employees participating in knowledge transfer.

Organizational learning enhances knowledge transfer cultures. Organizational actions and decisions to transfer and accept knowledge are essential to support organizational learning by engaging employees (Tamayo-Torres et al., 2016). Organizational learning and knowledge management can improve knowledge transfer when positive organizational cultures exist (Saadat & Saadat, 2016). A learning culture motivates employees to share knowledge learned through experiences. Organizational learning provides perspectives to create and maintain organizational knowledge, which motivates employees to become productive, creative, and confident (Chadwick & Raver, 2015). Leaders need to develop a learning process to enhance knowledge transfer (Saadat & Saadat, 2016). Establishing a culture of learning will encourage and support behaviors share knowledge among employees.

The effectiveness of an organizational learning process may depend on many factors including culture and leadership values. The organizational culture influences the organizational learning process, which could affect knowledge acquisition, knowledge distribution, and knowledge application. Characteristics of organizational culture that negatively influence learning include coercion and lack of trust among employees (Chatterjee, Pereira, & Bates, 2018). Employees' willingness to share and learn new knowledge is adversely affected and stopped when managers do not support or prevent their employees to participate in sharing (Chadwick & Raver, 2015). Organizational culture that encourages learning to employees with interest in learning and knowledge

transfer potential (McGee & Diala, 2017). Organizational leaders that support a learning culture will motivate employees to participate in knowledge transfer activities.

Organizational learning creates a culture of continuous learning, which encourages knowledge transfer. Organizational learning is a performance driver in organizations (Argote & Fahrenkopf, 2016). Organizations with a focus on organizational learning are engaged in knowledge transfer (Sheng & Chien, 2016). Building and communicating a shared vision and fostering collaboration and empowering employees, leads to organizational learning (Rana, Ardichvili, & Polesello, 2016). Empowerment of employees leads to a learning culture (Jain & Moreno, 2015). Organizational learning enhances innovation through knowledge creation and use (Sheng & Chien, 2016). Organizational learning could present performance challenges involving knowledge creation and application that prevent organizations from being profitable as that new knowledge was incorrect (Starbuck, 2017). Employees empowered to engage in continuous learning, participate in knowledge transfer because they are empowered to share their skills and experiences with other employees.

### **Organizational Leadership**

Knowledge transfer strategies also support team building and team performance. Leaders that model ethical and caring behaviors that focus on employee well-being engages employees in knowledge sharing (Tuan, 2016). Effective leaders who are committed and motivated in undertaking knowledge management initiatives in the organizations (Sheehan, Garavan, & Morley, 2020). Empowering leaders to support knowledge transfer will increase the absorption capacity of the employees, leading to

higher performing employee teams (Lee, Lee, & Park, 2014). Leaders supporting knowledge transfer improve organizational performance. According to Le and Lei (2018), leaders who initiate innovation and share and develop their skills with employees, enhance the increase the employees' willingness for knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer at a team level has the direct effect of improving project performance by providing information and knowledgesharing (Lee et al., 2014). According to Altinay, Madanoglu, De Vita, Arasli, and Ekinici (2016), individuals in managerial positions should acknowledge the importance of learning to promote knowledge transfer, knowledge creation, and knowledge acquisition. Knowledge transfer and absorption capacity through recognition of the value of new information, contributes to improved team performance (Lee et al., 2014). Leaders who empower employees raise the level of knowledge transfer, enhancing individual, team, and organization performance.

Leaders set expectations for employees to share knowledge. Leaders should realize the value of new information and information sharing to lead to innovative actions (Lee et al., 2014). Leadership plays a primary role to encourage employees to valuable share knowledge (Koohang, Paliszkievicz, & Goluchowski, 2017). Team leaders empower team members through information sharing in team-based activities which leads to increased team performance (Lee et al., 2014). Knowledge leadership is associated with customer knowledge management and is also an approach to enhancing organization performance (Yang, Huang, & Hsu, 2014). Leaders empower employees to learn and share experiences which benefits the individuals, teams, and the organization.

Leadership influences employees to participate in knowledge transfer. Customer information management positively effects project performance and therefore, organizational performance (Yang et al., 2014). Organizational leaders identify the gaps in employee knowledge and provides knowledge resources to employees (Berson, Da'as, & Waldman, 2015). Practical experience should be shared from other departments to create new knowledge and increase innovation (Yang, et al., 2014). Managers should be actively engaged with employees to facilitate the transferring of critical information and to create a continuous learning environment (Berson et al., 2015). Leaders build knowledge integration and innovation is improved when managers enhance the team members' innovative ability and develop a reward system to encourage a learning environment (Yang et al., 2014). Management has an important role in facilitating and creating a positive culture of knowledge sharing (Llopis & Foss, 2016). Managers is responsible for gaining knowledge and skills to help develop future leaders of the organization (Yang et al., 2014). Managers modeling knowledge transfer and engaging in supporting employees to sharing their experiences will affect organizational performance. However, management has no influence on the trust and the perceived knowledge sharing effectiveness (Llopis & Foss, 2016). Leaders in organizations shape the structure of knowledge transfer that ensures employees will engage in knowledge transfer process (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Leaders build, maintain, and facilitate the creation of new knowledge that can be transferred to co-workers (Le & Lei, 2018). Leaders must support the development of information management channels and initiatives for knowledge exploration and encourage information management practices in the organization through

motivation and communication (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Leadership styles and the support employees receive from leaders contribute to employees actively participating in knowledge transfer. When leaders make knowledge transfer a priority, employees feel empowered to share and learn to and from others.

**Transformational leadership.** Transformational leaders influence the behaviors of employees through positive attitudes and empowering them. Transformational leaders have a positive influence on organizational performance (Xiao, Zhang, & Ordóñez de Pablos, 2017). Transformational and empowering leadership styles result in increased knowledge sharing (Carmeli, Gelbard, & Reiter-Palmon, 2013). The findings indicated that transformational leaders have the greatest potential for enhancing motivation and improving moral standards for the organization (Xiao et al., 2017). Leaders' behaviors indicate direct and indirect support through knowledge sharing which helps increase employee problem-solving capacity (Carmeli et al., 2013). Transformational leadership is well suited for engaging organizational change among employees (Xiao et al., 2017). Leaders that facilitate internal and external knowledge sharing improve employees' creative performance (Carmeli et al., 2013). Transformational leaders influence followers' beliefs, assumptions, and behavior by appealing to the importance of collective or organizational outcomes (Ghasabeh, Soosay, & Reaiche, 2015). When leaders demonstrate higher levels of trust, integrity, and ability to lead an organization, followers support is increased (Breevaart, Bakker, Hetland, Demerouti, Olsen, & Espevik, 2014). Transformational leadership differs from transactional leadership that depends on self-interest as the main motivating factor for followers (Ghasabeh et al.,



2015). Building an environment to motivate followers to perform beyond expectations is a characteristic of transformational leadership (Breevaart et al., 2014). Transformational leaders provide an environment that encourages knowledge transfer to contribute to organization performance.

Transformational leaders motivate employees to follow leaders in the organization. Transformational leadership are often: influential, inspirational, motivational, provide individual consideration, and evoke intellectual stimulation (Breevaart et al., 2014). While supporting individual development and encouraging team contributions transformation leadership sets in motion the appropriate behaviors to handle the situation (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Idealized influence denotes that followers identify with their leaders and respect and trust their leader (Breevaart et al., 2014). This type of leader conveys the importance of a shared mission and infusing a sense of purpose (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Transformational leaders create an environment that encourages employees to perform. Inspirational motivation is creating and communicating a vision of the future and the leaders' own confidence about the future (Breevaart et al., 2014). The starting place of an innovative culture and the transferring of knowledge to obtain the best organizational performance is motivated by transformational leaders (Ghasabeh et al., 2015). Transformational leaders embrace an innovative culture and organizational performance through knowledge transfer.

Leaders are mentors and coaches to employees to provide guidance for development and growth. Individual consideration is when the leader is the mentor and recognizes that each employee has his or her own needs and abilities (Breevaart et al.,

2014). Transformational leaders have charisma, provide inspiration and promote intellectual stimulation (Dong, Bartol, Zhang, & Li, 2017). Intellectual stimulation is the challenging followers to rethink ideas and to bring a different perspective to their work (Breevaart et al., 2014). Leaders with a transformational leadership appreciate diverse thought and innovation, and motivate employees through communicating high expectations to followers (Dong et al., 2017). Transformational leaders promote intellectual stimulation by encouraging employees' intelligence, knowledge and learning, and permitting employees to be innovative in their approaches to problem solving and solutions (Dong et al., 2017). Employees are motivated by transformational leaders who support an innovative and learning environment.

Transformational leadership is more practical and applicable than transactional leadership to motivate followers. These types of leaders are able to understand their environment and create strategic goals followers find interesting. Subordinates of transformational leaders display higher levels of loyalty to the organization, a higher level of eagerness to work harder, and have higher levels of trust in their leader (Obeidat, Zyod, & Gharaibeh, 2015). Leaders demonstrate a personalized approach when they communicate strategic goals of the organization. Transformational leaders create a link between what is important to employees' and the organizational goals and values by introducing social exchange (Astrauskaite, Notelaers, Medisaukaite, & Kern, 2015). Leaders that show individual attention to employees and establish personal relationships with employees experience loyal employees in exchange.

**Transactional leadership.** Employees who are motivated by rewards as a form of recognition for performance work well with transactional leaders. Transactional leaders have many components that vary in effectiveness and ensure that expectations are met (Breevaart et al., 2014). As leaders, they play an important role to create, share, and explore knowledge in organizations (Sheehan et al., 2020). They specify that rewards are contingent on individual achievements that make individual task performance noticeable and setting employees apart regarding terms of their performance (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014). Transactional leaders motivate employees through reward to achieve performance goals. Transactional leaders are committed and motivated to support knowledge management initiatives in the organizations (Sheehan et al., 2020). Transactional leaders use rewards or incentives as effective methods to motivate employees to complete tasks (Breevaart et al., 2014). Transactional leader focus on each individual to meet performance goals by motivating earning rewards.

Transactional leaders focus on individual accomplishments. Transactional leaders emphasize individual accomplishments versus collective accomplishments tend to reduce cooperation within teams (Hamstra et al., 2014). Transactional leaders can limit employee development in innovation, creativity, and personal and organizational growth (Masa'deh, Obeidat, & Tarhini, 2016). Transactional leaders focus on independent performance and scarcity of resources when individual employees are aware that their performance will be evaluated, they tend to socially compare their performance and aim at normative, interpersonal standards (Hamstra et al., 2014). Transactional leadership does not support team accomplishments rather they focus on individual achievements. In

contradiction to transactional leadership style is the management-by-exception is confronting employees with their mistakes and expressing disapproval (Breevaart et al., 2014). A transactional leadership does not support knowledge sharing through an environment where employees demonstrate their competence by outperforming others (Hamstra et al., 2014). An ineffective component of transactional leadership is management-by-exception; they anticipate that mistakes will happen and the enforcement of specific rules that would prevent mistakes from happening (Saleem, 2015). Transactional leadership is based on achieving individual goals that contribute to the overall organizational goals.

Transactional leadership influences organizational effectiveness through the individual accomplishments. Transactional leadership is a form of strategic leadership that is important for organizational effectiveness because of they focus on tasks that support the organization's priorities (Jabeen, Behery, & Abu Elanain, 2015). Transactional leaders set clear objectives, monitor progress, hold individuals accountable for actions, and engage employees in organizational commitment (Delegach, Kark, Katz-Navon, & Van Dijk, 2017). Leaders using power for control, bureaucracy, and policy are transactional leaders (Jabeen et al., 2015). Fairness creates strong relationships and transactional leaders enhance a level of trust between employees and their leaders (Afshari & Gibson, 2016). Transactional leadership focus on organizational effectiveness; process improvements and performance improvement seen by employees (Sharma & Nair, 2018). Transactional leaders know what employees want, reward employee efforts, and are responsive to employee needs that align with the organizational

priorities for efforts performed (Rawung, Wuryaningrat, & Elvinita, 2015). Transactional leaders maintain the day to day functions, short-term plans, and adjust for the future (Masa'deh, Obeidat, Zyod, & Gharaibeh, 2015). Focus on achieving goals by being efficient and avoiding risk are behaviors modeled by transactional leaders (Bradshaw, Chebbi, & Oztel, 2015). Transactional leaders assume that employee knowledge belongs to the organization (Rawung et al., 2015). Transactional leaders contribute to organizational effectiveness through clear objectives that align with corporate goals.

### **Succession Planning**

Succession planning is a process that leaders employ for continued success; individual employees are prepared for critical positions with an intentional effort to enhance their skills to better alignment to future organizational needs. By the year 2030, 20% of the U.S. population will be age 65 or older (Colby & Ortman, 2014). As 70 million Americans prepare to leave the workforce, organizations will experience a large amount of knowledge loss (Green et al., 2017). To identify successors for important positions, development plans are created for identified successors (Patidar, Gupta, Azbik, & Weech-Maldonado, 2016). Succession planning is fundamental to for an organization to be competitive (Johnson, Pepper, Adkins, & Emejom, 2018). Effective organizational leaders provide a competitive advantage but when there is turnover of leaders, it influences the strategic direction of the organization (Patidar et al., 2016). Organizational leaders identify knowledge gaps by assessing employees on the job knowledge and connect knowledge resources for the transfer of knowledge to others in the organization

(Johnson, 2018). Succession planning is used by leaders to prepare individuals for future needs of the organization through knowledge transfer and skill building.

As knowledgeable employees leave the organization leaders focus on succession planning to transfer knowledge to other employees. Organizations are affected by the retiring baby boomers and the loss of knowledge when they leave (Sumbal, Tsui, See-to, & Barendrecht, 2017). Managers use succession plans to transfer knowledge to employees who will have future ownership of duties. Leaders applying strategic succession planning to identify qualified and motivated employees to be developed that will prepare them to perform effectively (Kariuki & Ochiri, 2017). Some senior employees have a willingness to share and transfer knowledge to younger generations creating a positive relationship between job satisfaction and effective communication (Merchant, Kumar, & Mallik, 2017). Knowledge transfer between employees assist with development and growth of individual to succeed employees that are leaving the organization. Succession planning includes: organization vision and mission, values and guiding principles, organizational goals, personal goals and retirement plans, stakeholders, successor criteria, and intended legacy for the organization (Kariuki & Ochiri, 2017). Succession planning allows managers to be proactive to evaluate and develop employees to be prepared to fill future available positions within the organization (Kariuki & Ochiri, 2017). Succession planning is an important process for leaders to use in their organizations (Ramadani, Bexheti, Rexhepi, Ratten, & Ibraimi, 2017). Succession planning requires identifying the knowledge gaps to prepare individuals to grow within the organization. Identifying employees with the right qualifications, transitioning the

knowledge from the incumbent to the successor, organize the leadership transition, ensuring effective communication, and establishing a collaborative relationship existing between the incumbent and successor (Carpio Vázquez, & Lysenko, 2017). Strategic succession planning contributes to sustainability by identifying and retaining future leaders through leadership development (Manning, Jones, Jones, & Fernandez, 2015). Successful leadership transitions are a direct result of succession planning (Prestia et al., 2014). Losing important employees and the loss of knowledge is less likely if a succession plan was implemented (Manning et al., 2015). Succession planning supports knowledge transfer with employees to retain critical business information.

Leaders prepare high performing individuals to succeed them when they retire or leave the organization. Experienced leaders typically have a succession plan in place for key positions (Richardson, 2014). Attracting talented employees is a succession strategy preferred to finding a leadership heir (Manning et al., 2015). Succession planning is the coaching and mentoring of existing employees for future critical positions (Prestia, Dyess & Sherman, 2014). A successful succession transition required the self-leadership and role transparency by the departing employee (Flynn & Rutherford, 2018). Mentoring is a succession practice used to transfer knowledge that the organization requires to a high perform employees involved (Prestia et al., 2014). Coaching and mentoring individuals through knowledge sharing enhances succession planning. Employee development includes identifying candidates with high potential and providing mentoring for important roles within the organization (Flynn & Rutherford, 2018). Succession planning strategies include proactive efforts to identify internally and developing employees with high,

emerging potential (Prestia et al., 2014). Skills in complex situations, the extension of effort, attitude, and actions, were considerations in successor identification (Patidar et al., 2016). When leaders do not articulate a strategy for succession, organizations do not have a proper successor in the event of an unplanned departure of an employee (Tsui & Proctor, 2017). A succession plan prepares organizations to continue without interruption due to unplanned departures in critical roles or functions.

Formalized succession plans and career planning ensure that critical programs continue. Career planning when used to prepare for replacing individuals, also assists with succession planning (Webb, Diamond-Wells, & Jeffs, 2017). Organizational managers must identify the employees' potential and assist them to achieve their potential (Zhu & Manjarrez, 2017). Formalized succession plans ensure that critical programs will continue after individuals in critical or leadership positions leave the organization (Stewart, 2016). Identifying skills needed for critical programs and identifying individuals to develop will ensure the organization is prepared for unplanned departures. Succession plan processes that have organizational purpose and that are documented and developed by management are most effective (Kariuki & Ochiri, 2017). Succession planning includes developing competencies through learning experiences such as job rotations and educational training (Kaihongani, Shukla, Zenon, & Mbabazize, 2016). Individuals are developed through formal succession planning to ensure the competencies for success are transferred.



## **Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management is sharing of business information with all employees. An important factor determining an organizations market position is knowledge management (Cupiał, Szelaq-Sikora, Sikora, Rorat, & Niemiec, 2018). Knowledge management is defined as the use of education, best practices, employee training and development to prepare employees for knowledge sharing (Basu, 2014). A conceptual tool for managers to ensure knowledge capture, creation, transference, and sharing occurs in support of organizational performance (Massingham, 2018). Leaders use innovation as a way to manage knowledge, which adds value to organizations (Benlabsir, Koubaa, & Benchrif, 2018). Innovation is motivated through a knowledge management process which includes capturing, distributing, and using knowledge (Salajeghe, Mehdizadeh, & Nazari, 2018). Knowledge management contributes to the innovation, competitiveness, and financial performance of organizations (Ramos Cerdas, 2018). Knowledge management allow resources to be shifted and retained from one employee to another (Bulitia, Wanjala, & Mwangi, 2018). Knowledge management includes employees transferring their knowledge to others.

Knowledge management and innovation requires the employees to be willing to share their knowledge and expertise to others within the organization. Knowledge governance plays a role in knowledge sharing (Cao & Xiang, 2012). Knowledge management includes an infrastructure capability and business strategy to affect the performance of the business. Leaders manage the infrastructure capability and business strategy which has a positive association with the knowledge management process

(Rezaeian & Bagheri, 2018). Knowledge management provides a competitive advantage by retaining business information. When employees leave efficiency and productivity is maintained when a knowledge management program is established. An effective knowledge management program includes elements such as: support to employees to become more effective, provide ways to increase innovation and develop new organizational knowledge, therefore, strengthening the competitive advantage of the organization (Tjakraatmadja, Ghazali, Putranto, Pringgabayu, & Badriyah, 2017). Implementing a knowledge management process will increase the innovation capacity of the organization to be more successful (Benlabsir et al., 2018). Knowledge process capabilities and creative organizational learning support knowledge management infrastructure and improve organizational performance (North & Kumta, 2018). Innovation and organizational success are improved by proper knowledge management.

Knowledge management strategies support innovation and influence performance. Barriers to knowledge transfer are different based on leaders' understanding and use of knowledge management (Lin, Wu, & Yen, 2012). Innovation and performance within an organization is influenced by knowledge transfer strategies (Bulitia et al., 2018). Managers design knowledge management strategies that will achieve higher innovation, effectiveness, efficiency, and profitability (Bulitia et al., 2018). Enhanced innovation and profitability can be achieved with incorporating proper knowledge management strategies. Knowledge management is a mechanism to enhance innovation and performance (Imran, Ilyas, Aslam, & Fatima, 2018). For successful knowledge management to occur, leaders encourage employees to share ideas, interact, and work

together (Bulitia et al., 2018). Employees are encouraged to share experiences and ideas to contribute to knowledge management.

Factors affecting knowledge management include: senior management, social capital and employee's job expertise (Pee & Kankanhalli, 2016). Other factors that affect knowledge management include: leadership, performance-oriented culture, training and development practices, and skills. Knowledge management thrives through positive leadership behaviors that support knowledge transfer and fails in organizations when this positive leadership behavior is absent (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Effective knowledge management and knowledge alignment positively influence project management targets and business profitability.

Knowledge management programs contribute to employee performance and organizational goals. Knowledge management enhances the competitive advantage and improves organizational success (Kotamarty, 2017). Knowledge management is an important organizational resource that provides the ability to be innovative and respond quicker to change (Kotamarty, 2017). Knowledge management programs designed to match the organizational culture increases the success of the process (Wang & Yang, 2016). Organizational performance is enhanced by employees sharing knowledge. Knowledge management is critical for organizational growth and leads to improved organizational performance and business outcomes (Kotamarty, 2017). Cultural and organizational context shape the acceptance of knowledge sharing strategies and systems (Alsam, Rehman, & Imran, 2016). Knowledge sharing strategies align with the organizational culture and values that influence the behaviors of the employees.

Knowledge management programs are used to ensure success but also align with the culture. Organizational culture provides the basis for effective knowledge management and learning (Mueller, 2014). Knowledge management programs designed to match the organizational culture increases the success of organizational processes (Tong et al., 2015). The corporate culture includes values and beliefs that shape organizational behavior to see knowledge sharing as a natural daily activity (Mueller, 2014). Creating a culture of knowledge sharing will engage the employees across in sharing information (Rahman, Moonesar, Hossain, & Islam, 2018). The type of organizational culture is fundamental in building and reinforcing knowledge transfer throughout the organization which will influence how employees learn, acquire, and share knowledge (Mueller, 2014). Knowledge sharing is an aspect of the organizational culture. An organizational culture that does not support knowledge transfer will negatively influence knowledge management (Rahman et al., 2018). Knowledge transfer strategies that supported by organizational culture will result in innovation and a competitive advantage for the organization (Al Saifi, 2015). Creating a culture as a learning organization encourage employees to share knowledge across departments and with each other (Rahman et al., 2018). The type of organizational culture can influence organizational knowledge through the integration of values, ethics, and trust (Bratianu, 2015). To increase knowledge sharing and organizational learning, leaders should promote affective trust building in daily operations (Ansari & Malik, 2017). The organizational culture has a significant influence on knowledge sharing and job satisfaction (Kianto, Vanhala, & Heilmann, 2016). Knowledge sharing has been

positively correlated with affective trust, cognitive trust, social networking and organizational learning (Bratianu, 2015). Organizational culture of trust also provides a foundation for knowledge sharing.

Continuous learning culture supports knowledge transfer strategies. An organizational culture of continuous learning and change contributes to successful knowledge transfer (Al Saifi, 2015). Creating a culture of knowledge transfer will require influencing employees to support knowledge transfer (Zhang & Ng, 2012). The success of knowledge sharing relies on the creation of new knowledge and sharing of existing knowledge through personal interactions (Tong et al., 2015). Employees engaged in sharing experiences and ideas contribute to knowledge transfer. Four factors that influence knowledge transfer by influencing employee's attitude toward knowledge transfer: utilitarian motivation, control believe, hedonic motivation, and contextual force (Zhang & Ng, 2012). Manager support and culture contribute positively in motivating employees to transfer knowledge (Al Saifi, 2015). Employees with high self-efficacy were able to overcome barriers to knowledge transfer (Zhang & Ng, 2012). Coaching to knowledge transfer behavior as a performance expectation results in increased knowledge transfer behavior (Mwangi, 2018). Managers must create a safe culture for employees to share knowledge.

Leaders must engage in creating an environment that support knowledge transfer. Empowering organizational leaders will shape employees' attitudes that lead to the desired knowledge transfer behavior in organizations (Rahman et al., 2018). Organizations that create a culture of trust between employees and managers encourages

positive leadership behaviors and promotes conditions where employees find value in sharing knowledge (Carmeli et al., 2011). Leaders must create a culture that encourage knowledge transfer. Support from managers is important for knowledge transfer, when organizational leaders set clear expectations and reward managers for encouraging knowledge transfer (Rahman et al., 2018). Clear expectations for knowledge transfer is needed for employees to engage in knowledge transfer.

### **Knowledge Loss**

Knowledge loss influences organization performance negatively when knowledgeable employees leave the organization. A significant business risk is created with the loss of knowledge as employees leave the organization (Rigby, Zhu, Donadelli, & Mockus, 2016). Organizations face knowledge loss when employees do not transfer information, employees quit a job without documenting knowledge or training replacement, and when knowledge is difficult to obtain (Massingham, 2018). To avoid knowledge loss, knowledge transfer as part of business processes, and systems is critical (Lin, Chang, & Tsai, 2016). When employees leave an organization without transferring knowledge, job and organizational knowledge is lost. The connection between knowledge transfer, succession planning, and the importance of developing and implementing plans could impact employee turnover (Rigby, 2016). Leaders who encourage knowledge transfer within employees' daily activities can reduce knowledge loss when unexpected turnover happens (Lin et al., 2016). Exit interviews can assist leaders to avoid or minimize losing critical knowledge (Massingham, 2018). To ensure continued business success, knowledge must be transferred prior to employees leaving (Burmeister & Deller,

2016). Knowledge retention is a common problem faced by organizational leaders, and if knowledge transfer is lacking, difficulties exist in attaining ample knowledge after employees leave (Lin et al., 2016). To create a competitive advantage, organizations should implement knowledge retention strategies (Lin et al., 2016). The organizational structure and culture will have a significant effect on knowledge retention (Acharya & Mishra, 2017). A competitive advantage is created for organizations with knowledge transfer strategies.

### **Knowledge Transfer**

Retaining job knowledge and company history is essential for organizational success. Knowledge is regarded as a strategic asset and the sharing of the employee job and company knowledge is critical to organization success (Mueller, 2014). A competitive advantage is created when leaders identify and overcome barriers to knowledge transfer (Cao & Xiang, 2012). Employees have a positive experience with transfer knowledge strategies when they are supported by leaders (Krylova, Vera, & Crossan, 2016). Knowledge transfer is a competitive organizational advantage. Knowledge transfer is important for innovation, organizational learning, the development of new skills and capabilities that lead to increased productivity and efficiencies creating a competitive advantage (Mueller, 2014). Intellectual capital is considered significant assets that contribute to the competitive advantage and survivability of an organization (Obeidat, Abdallah, Aqqad, Akhoershiedah, & Maqableh, 2016). The transfer of knowledge contributes to an increase in productivity, efficiencies, innovation, motivation of employees, and a competitive advantage of an organization. Close friendships, trust

among peers, and proactive learning will reduce the difficulties of knowledge transfer (Nakauchi, Washburn, & Klein, 2017). Knowledge transfer is of strategically important as innovation is distributed across a variety of different employees (Elrehail et al., 2018). Knowledge transfer is needed to ensure innovation, and a competitive advantage.

Organizations not engaged in knowledge transfer strategies experience a loss of knowledge as employees depart. The inability or unwillingness to transfer knowledge keeps knowledge from flowing and is a reason for knowledge transfer failure (Arekkuzhiyil, 2016). Employees can be a barrier to knowledge transfer of business-critical knowledge, which is another reason why some strategies fail (Farid, Davaji, & Barani, 2016). Knowledge ambiguity inhibits the knowledge transfer process (Sheng, Chang, Teo, & Lin, 2013). Change of behavior, lack of trust, and lack of time are the critical barriers to successful knowledge transfer (Razmerita, Kirchner, & Nielsen, 2016). Barriers to knowledge transfer increases knowledge loss within an organization. Successful knowledge transfer relies on many factors, such as people, organizational structure, culture, process and strategy, and information communication technology (Sheng et al., 2013). Knowledge transfer occurs through social networks, personnel movement, routines and alliances (Nakauchi et al., 2017). A higher level of innovation exists when employees seek and maintain knowledge transfer capability (Lai, Lui, & Tsang, 2016). Higher levels of innovation and performance are achieved when an organization increases knowledge internalization (Sheng et al., 2013). Employees influence the success of knowledge transfer which also contributes to innovation and organizational performance.



Knowledge creation is needed for organizational success. Researchers determined that organizational learning and knowledge transfer influences competitive advantage and strategic behaviors (Argote & Fahrenkopf, 2016). Knowledge can be shared across the organization and knowledge gained can be assist in new knowledge creation (Chung, Seaton, Cooke, & Ding, 2016). Knowledge transfer within a project-based organization is increasingly more difficult as each project team operates independent of other project teams (Bartsch, Ebers, & Maurer, 2013). However, sharing the knowledge would increase efficiencies and effectiveness of the project teams across the organization. Project teams often have little motivation to share their knowledge with other project teams (Bartsch et al., 2013). Building relationships with co-workers and social capital plays an important role in facilitating organizational learning (Bartsch et al., 2013). Knowledge sharing enables employees to be innovative and resourceful leading to increased productivity (Tufail, Ismail, & Zahra, 2016). Trust and personal relationships among the employees and management increase the sharing of knowledge (Sankowska, 2016). An organizational culture of trust and relationships also support knowledge transfer.

Organizations without a formal knowledge transfer process experience knowledge loss. Knowledge transfer cannot be successful when organizational leaders do not document and record employees' knowledge (Berson et al., 2015). Documenting organizational information, best practices, experiences, and ideas contribute to improved organizational performance (Navidi, Hassanzadeh, & Zolghadr Shojai, 2017). However, some employees resist documenting knowledge, as they do not perceive the value of

documenting and lack interpersonal trust (Navidi et al., 2017). Organizational leaders are faced with the problem of knowledge retention, and when knowledge transfer is lacking, the needed knowledge is not being documented before employees leave (Levallet, & Chan, 2019). Leaders must influence knowledge transfer among employees and formalize their proper documentation. Despite the need for knowledge retention, employees may decide not to participate in knowledge transfer to retain power and protect feelings (Navidi et al., 2017). Leaders who foster a culture where knowledge transfer is encouraged, trusted, socially accepted, and part of everyday life, will mitigate knowledge loss (Kucharska & Kowalczyk, 2016). Knowledge transfer provides a proactive approach to addressing knowledge loss especially with an increased number of employees leaving the workforce (Bernard, 2017). Formal knowledge transfer process increases the success of knowledge retention.

Organizations with formal knowledge transfer strategies have improved performance. Knowledge sharing leads to increase creativity and innovation in organizations (Sankowska, 2016). Organizations with communication and knowledge sharing strategies are the best predictors for innovation of new products over time (Carmeli et al., 2013). Organizations with an open communication culture results in improved knowledge sharing among the employees (Carmeli et al., 2013). Organizations have a competitive advantage with formal knowledge transfer strategies. Organizational knowledge and ability to transfer the knowledge is a strategic asset for creating a competitive advantage (Chung et al., 2016). Knowledge transfer is an essential component of succession planning to safeguard organizational specific knowledge

(Sibbald, Wathen, & Kothari, 2017). Knowledge transfer is important for innovation and competitiveness. Employee behaviors and culture play an important role in knowledge transfer (Sibbald et al., 2017). Knowledge transfer is successful when critical business specific knowledge being integrated into another employee (Dong et al., 2017). Leaders are seeking to manage knowledge flow of valuable company resources to distribute knowledge within the organization prior to individual leaving the company with the specific knowledge (Parboteeah, Jackson, & Wilkinson, 2016). Knowledge transfer process relies on the creation of new knowledge and sharing of existing knowledge through interactions (Tong et al., 2015). Knowledge transfer strategies support employee behaviors and the organizational culture are more successful when employees have more positive behaviors and are more engaged.

Leaders must support knowledge transfer strategies to increase success. Leaders influence workers to learn and use experiences to help others achieve knowledge transfer in the organization and applies information management as opportunities to be innovative (Donate & de Pablo, 2015). Organizations are able to benefit from knowledge transfer when knowledge transfer strategies are understood by leaders (Parboteeah et al., 2016). The transfer of information and experiences has led to increased creativity and innovation in organizations (Carmeli et al., 2013). The communication and the amount of information transfer about experiences of an organization are the best predictors for innovation of future products (Carmeli et al., 2013). Knowledge is one of the most important resources for a creating a competitive advantage (Sankowska, 2016). The retaining and learning of job skills among employees requires a knowledge transfer

process. Knowledgeable employees are critical part of the organization; their skills and experience contributes to the productivity of the organization.

Human resource strategies are critical in planning and developing employees for future organizational goals. Human resource enhances an employee's abilities and knowledge through recruitment and training, motivates employees' behaviors, and encourages continuous growth and development to increase skills and knowledge (Battistelli, Odoardi, Vandenberghe, Napoli, & Piccione, 2019). Knowledge transfer, knowledge creation, and knowledge dissemination are an important aspects of the human resources process. Implementing knowledge transfer processes in organizations will improve organizational and individual performance through innovation and creativity with the employees (Sankowska, 2016). Knowledge transfer initiatives influence company values regarding knowledge sharing, enhances the culture of the organization, and strengthens innovation (Mueller, 2014). Knowledge transfer is needed for efficiency management as it empowers employees to work together efficiently (Zafar, Ishaq, Shoukat, & Rizwan, 2014). Knowledge is regarded as a strategic asset and successful sharing of knowledge is critical to organization success (Mueller, 2014). Corporate values and culture must support knowledge transfer to improve organization success.

Retaining business critical knowledge supports overall organizational performance. Knowledge transfer is a source to enhance organizational efficiency and has a direct influence on employee motivation (Zafar et al., 2014). Knowledge transfer is essential to enable employees to work together efficiently when they are intrinsically motivated (Zafar et al., 2014). An organizational culture that encourages knowledge

transfer will support innovation. Knowledge transfer is important for innovation, organizational learning, the development of new skills that lead to increased productivity and efficiencies thus creating a competitive advantage (Mueller, 2014). Employee motivation contributes to knowledge transfer in two ways; the reward of the process itself and it enhances the individuals' participation of knowledge (Zafar et al., 2014). The findings demonstrate that knowledge transfer has a significant positive relationship with employee motivation (Zafar et al., 2014). Organizational culture that supports employees working together will enhance participation is considered knowledge transfer.

A learning organization supports knowledge transfer. The importance of managing knowledge transfer is to create a learning organization that continues to adapt to the changing environment (Zafar et al., 2014). Through human resources, a culture can be created encouraging knowledge sharing to meet organizational goals (Jin-Feng, Ming-Yan, Li-Jie, & Jun-Ju, 2017). Exploring the relationships among strategic human resources management (HRM), knowledge sharing, and innovation performance, a gap in knowledge transfer literature exists. The use of strategic knowledge mapping identifies knowledge owners and create a clear link to enable employees to connect with each other (Leyer, Schneider, & Claus, 2016). The importance of strategic HRM in innovation performance is outline in knowledge transfer literature. Knowledge sharing activates should be strategized by human resources to build a learning culture (Tong et al., 2015). HRM practices are essential to influencing and shaping the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of employees to achieve organizational goals (Chen & Huang, 2009). A positive relationship between human resources management and knowledge transfer assist leaders

to understand the importance for knowledge transfer within the organization (Runhaar & Sanders, 2016). HRM practices in managing knowledge acquisitions, sharing, and application stimulates creative and innovative thoughts (Chen & Huang, 2009). HRM and knowledge transfer create a learning culture.

Employee participation in knowledge transfer is driven by their manager's support of sharing knowledge behaviors. It is important for managers to communicate knowledge transfer guidelines, policies, and procedures to support a knowledge transfer culture (Carmeli et al., 2013). Organizations that link incentives to recognition of the knowledge transfer have improved the fostering a knowledge transfer environment (Zhang, 2018). When managers support knowledge transfer, employees experience heighten enjoyment, engagement, and participation as supported by leadership (Hussein, Singh, Farouk, & Sohal, 2016). Building a positive correlation between management and a knowledge transfer culture will result in increased participation (Zhang, 2018). Leaders play an important role in motivating employees to participate in knowledge transfer. Motivating employees to share knowledge and participate in knowledge transfer requires manager support (Hussein et al., 2016). Employees experience empowerment to transfer knowledge when supported by management and not transferring the knowledge to others in the organization with the lack of support from managers (Jiang, Flores, Leelawong, & Manz, 2016). Leader behaviors model interest in employee well-being, fairness, and open communication, positively affect employees' behavior to participate in knowledge transfer (Edú-Valsania, Moriano, & Molero, 2016). Leaders behaviors will influence

employees sharing their experiences by implementing formal knowledge transfer strategies.

There are many barriers that interfere with successful knowledge transfer activities. Knowledge provides power and some employees are hesitant to transfer knowledge because of the fear of being replaced (Wu & Lin, 2013). Knowledge is gained from work experiences and shared knowledge would permit job satisfaction, exceeding performance expectations, and career development (Lee, 2016). The loss of knowledge power would result in negative knowledge transfer attitudes (Wu & Lin, 2013). A bureaucratic organizational structure is organized with a high degree of formality will limit employees to transfer sensitive and important knowledge (Akturan & Çekmecelioğlu, 2016). Because of feeling embarrassed if the knowledge transferred is wrong or inadequate, employees often do not want to participate in knowledge transfer (Ghobadi & Mathiassen, 2016). Employees will not participate in knowledge transfer if they feel their knowledge is not adequate. Holding on to knowledge is beneficial to the employee as it makes that employee a critical resource for organizational success (Wu & Lin, 2013). Leaders are a strategic factor influence knowledge transfer by enabling their organizations to integrate, share, and use knowledge innovatively (Masa'deh et al., 2016). Ease of use and integrity will positively influences' knowledge transfer behaviors in employees (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, 2016). Some employees who participate in knowledge transfer have experience fear or the threat of losing their job, power, and personal advantages, and choose not to transfer knowledge because of not trusting the manager or other employee (Wu, Rivas, & Liao, 2017). Sharing of

information is limited when employees do not have trust, which negatively influences the effectiveness of business process (Rutten, Blaas-Franken, & Martin, 2016). Barriers can influence employees to not participate in knowledge transfer.

A trust culture is needed for employees to participate in knowledge transfer. Individuals who do not trust are less likely to participate in transfer knowledge (Dessie, 2017). Sharing of information is limited when employees do not have trust which will negatively influence the effectiveness of business process (Rutten, Blaas-Franken, & Martin, 2016). When there is a sense of trust, employees engage in knowledge transfer between project teams and departments (Dessie, 2017). To have employees to benefit from knowledge transfer from co-workers experiences, organizational leaders need to ensure that a culture of trust and collaboration is established (Khvatova, Block, Zhukov, & Lesko, 2016). Trust is beneficial to the knowledge transfer process-taking place within the organization (Dessie, 2017). If the individual requesting the knowledge transfer is untrusting there is a reduced chance that knowledge transfer will occur, even if the individual sharing the knowledge would normally transfer the knowledge (Yeo, Wildman, & Choi, 2017). Knowledge transfer is a social interaction and will not occur if employees do not trust the individuals needing the information (Dessie, 2017). In the absence of trust, developing a formal knowledge transfer policy will not be enough to encourage knowledge transfer (Raudeliūnienė, Meidutė-Kavaliauskienė, & Vileikis, 2016). A culture that supports hoarding knowledge to gain power, authority, and career advancement opportunities, will negatively influence knowledge transfer in the



organization (Muqadas, Rehman, Aslam, & Ur-Rahman, (2017). A culture built on trust will support employees to share knowledge.

Leaders must develop a culture that will support knowledge transfer.

Organizational leaders will increase knowledge transfer when creating an environment that influences and motivates employees to participate in knowledge transfer (Han, Seo, Yoon, & Yoon, 2016). Employees motivated by delivering new ideas and innovative product or process improvement engage actively in knowledge transfer (Sathitsemakul & Calabrese, 2017). Knowledge sharing plays an important role building the relationship between knowledge sharing and job satisfaction (Tong et al., 2015). Rewards and recognition lead to increased knowledge transfer reducing organizational knowledge to be lost (Razmerita et al., 2016). Leaders must motivate employees by creating an environment that encourages knowledge transfer. Emotional intelligence is a positive contributor to knowledge transfer (Sathitsemakul & Calabrese, 2017). Job satisfaction, knowledge sharing attitudes, communication styles, and performance are correlated (Tong et al., 2015). Knowledge transfer is more successful when employees have a desire to help, need for recognition, and enjoy social engagement (Sathitsemakul & Calabrese, 2017). A culture that encourages trust and team work will motivate employees to engage in knowledge transfer.

**Tacit and explicit knowledge.** Two types of knowledge are tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is developed through experiences that individuals have had, and the knowledge is maintained in their heads (Mezghani, Exposito, & Drira, 2016). Tacit knowledge is important task information, and is often difficult to share

(Abbariki, Snell, & Easterby-Smith, 2017). An additional core value for competitive advantage is tacit knowledge (Wipawayangkool & Teng, 2016). Tacit knowledge is more difficult to share. Individuals are able to review a problem or situation within an area of expertise and intuitively are able to resolve the problem, but not are able to communicate how they know what to do (Wu et al., 2017). This awareness is their recognition of their tacit knowledge and is not managed or shared by manuals (Abbariki et al., 2017). Often organizational leaders have difficulty obtaining tacit knowledge because the information is not documented and is only in the minds of employees (Mezghani et al., 2016). Organizational leaders struggle to record information that is built on intuition, skills, beliefs, and best practices (Mezghani et al., 2016). Both tacit and explicit knowledge play a role in knowledge creation and creating a competitive advantage (Roy & Mitra, 2018). Tacit knowledge sharing is more difficult than explicit knowledge.

Explicit knowledge is easily transferred. Explicit knowledge is written, saved, and readily shared (Federico, Wagner, Rind, Amar-Amoros, Miksah, & Aigner, 2017). Explicit knowledge may be read or shared but with tacit insight the meaning maybe lost (Cao & Xiang, 2012). Explicit knowledge shared is more consistent than tacit knowledge that may be more challenging to share. Not all knowledge holding employees have the opportunity or motivation or capability to transfer their experiences into explicit knowledge (Roy & Mitra, 2018). Tacit knowledge transfer occurs through sharing best practices and lived experiences with other employees (Cao & Xiang, 2012). Explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge contribute to sharing organizational knowledge that can create a competitive advantage.

## **Transition**

Knowledge transfer strategies in credit unions is critical for retaining important business critical information. Section 1 includes the purpose of the study, the business problem, and relevant research literature on concepts associated with knowledge transfer and the influence on retaining business critical knowledge. The scope of the literature review includes organizational culture, leadership styles, succession planning, and knowledge transfer. Section 2 includes information that links the purpose of the research to experiences and preferences of leaders that have benefited from knowledge transfer. In Section 2 is a description of the research method and design, collections of data, data analysis used, and methods to maintain data reliability and validity. I will provide an overview of the study, findings, and recommendations for future research in Section 3.

## Section 2: The Project

Knowledge transfer is the process of knowledge management occurring between employees that can be affected by factors such as trust, and communication (Marques, La Falce, Marques, De Muyllder, & Silva, 2019). The relationship between knowledge transfer and retaining critical business information will be identified. This section includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, data collection, data analysis techniques, reliability, and validity.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore knowledge transfer strategies used by credit union leaders to retain critical business information. Participants included managers and executives of a credit union in Michigan, United States. Findings may contribute to social change for credit union employees sharing knowledge enhancing the skills of other credit union employees that can lead to expansion of employment opportunities. Skilled workers who are more engaged and happier at both work and home will contribute positively to social change by socializing in their communities and sharing skills they learned with others. More skilled employees due to knowledge transfer makes credit union individuals more marketable so that they can pursue job advancements which may improve their living situations.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the researcher was to collect and record data, provide data integrity and confidentiality, analyze data, and present the findings. As the primary data collection

instrument, my responsibility was to limit potential biases. Also, my role was to interview participants and document comments and insights accurately. I implemented an interview protocol to act as a guide throughout the interviewing process (see Appendix A).

Although I am employed by the credit union, I do not have direct reporting or personal relationships with any of the study participants. I interacted with participants related to work business in the past, but have not had any interactions relating to this study. I upheld all ethical standards as required by Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by following standards to ensure safety of all participants. I followed the required American Psychological Association (APA) research ethics. I reviewed the Belmont Report protocol and completed the Protecting Human Research Participants training by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research (certification # 1360589). I protected participants by requiring that each participant review and sign an informed consent form prior to initiating each interview. I provided clear details of the study to participants, informing them that participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw at any time. Safeguards include providing an informed consent form, ensuring voluntary participation, and supporting withdrawing participation from the study at any time.

When experience and education could influence the interpretation of findings, researchers mitigate bias using a standardized instrument and statistical software. To mitigate bias, I did not have any of my direct reports participate in this study. I was transparent regarding the purpose of the study so that participants answered questions openly and honestly. The initial email (see Appendix B) to participants included my

background, purpose of the study, and information that their participation was voluntary. The email also said that participants would not receive rewards or incentives for participating. Participants were asked to review and acknowledge a consent form prior to participating in the interview. Interview questions were drafted to collect data regarding knowledge transfer strategies. I collected only what was said and observed. I confirmed with participants the data collected was what participants shared and not my personal opinion. I used NVivo 12 software to capture words from participants which avoided any personal bias to influence interpretation of findings.

### **Participants**

Participants in this study included managers and executives of a credit union in Michigan, United States who have knowledge transfer experience. Manager and executives were selected using purposive sampling to assure the participants had experience with the research questions on knowledge transfer. The sample included 14 managers or executives from the credit union who participated in knowledge transfer. As the Chief Human Resources Officer at the credit union, I have professional relationships with managers and executives in the credit union. I gained access to participants through the Human Resources Manager of the credit union with authorized email permission from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). I sent an email to participants including information about myself, the purpose of the study, eligibility criteria, and the consent form. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time without any penalty. Participation was kept confidential; data were not collected using the names of participants or organizations. To protect names of participants,

pseudonyms were used such as MGR1 and MGR2. I also offered Skype interviews if participants were unable to meet in person. All data is maintained electronically on a USB drive and will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home office for 5 years.

### **Research Method and Design**

Research methods commonly used are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The purpose of this study was to explore strategies used by credit union leaders to retain critical business knowledge and expertise of retiring or leaving credit union employees. To conduct this study, I used a qualitative research method with a case study design.

### **Research Method**

Qualitative research is applied to understand social or human problems from perspectives of local populations it involves (Pluye & Hong, 2014). The qualitative approach was appropriate for this research because participants shared their own viewpoint about knowledge transfer as well as their values, opinions, and behaviors. Quantitative research focuses on numerical data, measurements, and hypothesis testing (Pluye & Hong, 2014). Quantitative research is used as an investigative tool to examine relationships among variables (Rovai, Baker, & Ponton, 2013). Because I did not gather statistical data or examine relationships between two or more variables, the quantitative methodology was not the best choice for this study. Mixed methods research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative research methods and focuses on numerical data, measurements, and hypothesis testing (Pluye & Hong, 2014). Researchers use the mixed methods approach to develop hypotheses and research tools and combine quantitative and

qualitative data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The information being collected did not include numerical data or relationships between variables, and therefore mixed methods was not an appropriate choice.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative research designs include phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case studies. Phenomenology is philosophically-based and involves lived experiences for the researcher to gain understanding of the experiences of participants (Jackson et al., 2018). In this study, I explored strategies credit union managers and executives used for knowledge transfer. I did not research a shared experience of a phenomenon and consequently, phenomenology was not the best selection. Ethnography is a type of qualitative design that involves describing cultural behaviors within a particular indigenous setting (Farrell et al., 2017). This study does not involve cultural behaviors, making ethnography not a suitable selection. Grounded theory is a qualitative method that focuses on evaluation of data to generate new theoretical explanations and generalized theories based on participants' experiences and supporting data (Belgrave & Seide, 2018). This study was not focused on generating new theoretical explanations, making grounded theory not appropriate for this study. A case study is used to analyze a topic to obtain an understanding of the topic based on the perspectives of participants (Harrison et al., 2017). The qualitative case study approach was chosen because it most appropriate research design to collect data from credit union managers and executives using semistructured interviews to explore strategies being used for knowledge transfer the phenomenon under study.



### **Population and Sampling**

Upon receiving IRB approval and authorization, I obtained permission from the organization (see Appendix C) to conduct a study to collect data about knowledge transfer strategies. The population for this study included eight managers and executives of a credit union located in Michigan, United States. The participants in this study consisted of a Michigan credit union with more than four billion dollars in assets. I solicited the participants through email upon permission from the credit union president and CEO. The email sent contained an inform consent form and suggested dates and times for participating in the interviews.

The research included interviews with managers and executives in credit union who have a successful knowledge transfer program. A qualitative research method was used to understand how leaders are using knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information. The time for semistructured face-to-face interviews was 30 to 45 minutes, and the data collection process took approximately 2 weeks. The census-taking technique used for this qualitative case study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is selecting individuals who will be knowledgeable and well-informed about the topic (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The managers and executives who participated in this study are individuals who possessed the best knowledge regarding the research topic of knowledge transfer.

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical obligation requires researchers to minimize harm and respect for persons participating in the study (Wolf et al., 2015). Before collecting data, I obtained the

approval of Walden University IRB to conduct the study. IRB reviewed the proposed study to verify that the document fulfills Walden University standard of ethics and was in accordance with U.S. federal regulations. I followed the ethical principles provided by the American Psychological Association. I contacted the participants by email and share information about myself, the study, and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any penalties by contacting me by phone or email. They received the consent form and was informed that they would not receive any incentives or rewards for participation in the study. Additional information was collected by reviewing policies, succession plans, and knowledge management processes.

Minimizing risks to the participants and protecting the human rights of participants is a priority during of this study. I minimized risks to the participants by ensuring their names and any company information is kept confidential. I ensured that human rights were not violated during interview by following protocols. Protections include providing informed consent, ensuring voluntarily survey completion, and supporting the ability to withdrawal from the study at any time without negative consequences (Cummings et al., 2015).

I offered each participant a copy of the final summary. I have sole access to all data, which will be saved on an USB drive and stored in a locked cabinet located in my home office for 5 years. The final doctoral manuscript will include Walden University IRB approval identification number.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I collected data using semistructured interview questions (see Appendix D), taking notes, recording the interview, and review internal organizational documents and websites. Through semistructured interviews, I asked participants open-ended questions to obtain detailed information about their knowledge transfer strategies. All interviews were transcribed for analysis. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to guide the interview process. An interview protocol includes introducing the interviewer, recording the interview, taking notes during the interview, asking additional questions for clarification, and thanking participants (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I downloaded the Voice Recorder application from the Apple Store on my smartphone to audio record each interview and used a notepad to manually take notes. Follow-up questions were asked for clarification. I conducted member checking by having each participant review and verify my interpretation of their responses for accuracy. Member checking identifies feedback from research participants that the information is reflective what they provided (Thomas, 2017). At the expiration of five years, I will destroy all documentation by smashing the USB and shredding all paper documents.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The research question for this study was: What strategies do credit union leaders use to retain critical business information as employees are resigning? To examine the knowledge transfer strategies that business leaders use to retain business critical information, I conducted interviews with the managers and executives of the credit union. Participants reviewed the consent form in advance to the interview and provide a signed

copy before the interview begins. Each participant was asked the same seven questions and each interview took 30 to 45 minutes.

The data collection process involved interviews that used open-ended questions. Once I received approval from the organization, I obtained the names and email addresses of the managers and executives at the credit union from the human resources department. The credit union 25 managers and executives were initially contacted to participate in the study by work email. Of the 25 managers and executives contacted, 14 participated in study. The 14 individuals that agreed to participate received a consent form and details about the study. There were no incentives offered to the participants. This approach allows participants to review the information and at their own discretion and convenience decide to participate or not participate in the study. The timeframe for conducting the interviews was three weeks. Strengthens of the data collection process included ease of use, flexibility of completing interview based on own convenience, and guaranteed valid email by using work email address. Challenges of this process are that some employees may be out of the office on approved leaves, their mail box maybe full, or work demands resulting in rushing through questions. The required number of participants was met within this timeframe therefore no addition email was sent to request additional participants.

The final summary of the research included a descriptive analysis detailing the conclusions. Safeguarding participant information by ensuring confidentiality and protection from potential harm resulting from the research is a primary consideration in the process of data organization (Greenwood, 2016). The recorded audio files obtained

using the Voice Recorder application from each interview are maintained on a password protected USB drive using an alpha numeric coded file name that includes the participant pseudonym and date of the interview. For example, the interview file name for participants was MGR1mmddyyyy, MGR2mmddyyyy. I securely stored all data in a locked container in my home office. I used NVivo 12 software to conduct data analysis, coding, and theme development. All resulting hard copies and USB drive will be stored in the locked container in my home office for five years. At the expiration of 5 years, I will destroy all documentation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves presenting and interpreting research data. The research question that guided the study was: What strategies do credit union leaders use to retain critical business information as employees are resigning? Qualitative case study data analysis involves coding and notating themes that developed from the collected data (Howard, 2017). I applied logical techniques to describe, condense, recap, and evaluate data. This analysis of data enabled the discovery of meaningful patterns and themes. The data analysis process begins when the researcher works through the data to determine meaningful themes, patterns, and descriptions that answers the central research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Triangulation is a data analysis technique that allows to corroborate information from different types of data sources. The data sources for this study include the semistructured interviews, recordings, transcribed notes, and document review.

I used open-ended semistructured interview questions to gain an understanding of knowledge transfer strategies. The interview questions contained seven questions constructed according to the research question. I created categories, codes, and organized the data into common themes and organize the data into these groups. A technique is to categorize the interview data into groups and provide an explanatory label for each grouping (Howard, 2017). Connecting data between themes helps with analyzing the qualitative research, organizing the data, and comparing written notes and transcripts from recorded interviews (Howard, 2017). Researchers must analyze and interpret the data collected to draw meaning and identify emerging findings to answer the central research question I used NVivo 12 to prepare and code the data to enable for interpretation. As the researcher, I gathered the data, grouped the data, generated themes from the findings, and accessed the data, to find the strategies that business leaders used for knowledge transfer. To prepare the data for analysis, I uploaded the audio files and documents into NVivo to transcribe the audio files and electronic notes word-for-word into Microsoft Word documents. To protect identification, I coded all references to participants (MGR1, MGR2, or MGR3) in the transcribed files.

I compiled data using methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation entailed drawing information from interviews, and a review of documentation. The second step was disassembling the data. I disassembled the data using NVivo 12 software. NVivo 12 identified repeated words used throughout the data and provided codes to represent key words. The third step was reassembling the data. I placed coded and related words into clusters to seek patterns of information. The fourth step of data

analysis is interpreting the data (Yin, 2018). This step required careful and thoughtful efforts to reduce any personal bias that may alter the data analysis process. By maintaining a professional approach to interpretation, research is less likely to infuse personal bias and opinion into the interpretation of data (Yin, 2018). The fifth and final step was drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. I ensured that I drew meaningful conclusions by identifying key themes from the findings to draw conclusions that may answer the research question. Using thematic analysis, I focused on the themes and compared those ideas to the literature and the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework was Nonaka and Takeuchi's socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization model for knowledge creation. The themes identified in the study align with the conceptual framework.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are concerns of measurement involved in qualitative method. Repeating the test procedures and having the same results when interviewing participants demonstrate reliability (Yin, 2017). Reliability is one element to determine the precision of the study, and that if repeated, consistent results would occur (Wong & Cooper, 2016).

#### **Reliability**

To ensure reliability, a documented process would provide others who would replicate the processes and the survey administration process reflects the consistency of the study (Wong & Cooper, 2016). Reliability refers to the ability to which using similar study techniques can yield consistent results when repeated (Lub, 2015). Reliability is an

indicator of the trustworthiness of the research results (Wong & Cooper, 2016). To increase the reliability of qualitative research is to implement an interview protocol (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I followed the interview protocol I developed for this study to ensure consistency in participant questioning, which will increase the dependability of the findings. Qualitative researchers use interview transcription and member checking to improve dependability of findings (Wong & Cooper, 2016). Interview transcription supports the data analysis process and increases dependability of the research (Dasgupta, 2015). Dependability is enhanced by member checking which allows participants to confirm their statements and avoid misinterpretation of data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). I followed ethical standards and interpret study results based on scholarly methods to determine if construct relationships existed to accept or reject the hypothesis. I followed requirements set by Walden IRB and the Walden University doctoral study rubric and process.

### **Validity**

Validity refers to the truthfulness of the research instrument in addressing the topic of the study (Wong & Cooper, 2016). Validity is the credibility or trustworthiness of the research findings (Connelly, 2016). Qualitative researchers use member checking to establish credibility in research (Connelly, 2016). I used member checking as a means of extending the conversation with participants to increase credibility of data. I followed the interview protocol to ensure consistency in the interview process enhancing credibility of collected data. Important aspects of validity in qualitative research is transferability and confirmability. Transferability refers to the relevance of the findings to various contexts



(Connelly, 2016). Confirmability addresses the degree to which the findings are unbiased, attributed to participants, and linked to the data (Ang, Embi, & Yunus, 2016). I used the following measures to prevent bias and ensure integrity of the data member checking, appropriate research design, and the use of open-ended interview questions.

### **Transition and Summary**

The content of Section 2 related to the research project designed to address the business problem described in Section 1. The section begins with the purpose of the study: a description of the study method and design, and considerations made in the design of the research project. Section 2 includes the study method, research design, participant criteria, target population, sampling method, and how ethical treatment of participants. I also described the interview process, data collection, how the data was organized, and analyzed data. Finally, I presented a description of how reliability and validity influences quality of the study. Section 3 includes an overview of the study, a presentation of findings, applicability to professional practice, and implications for social change. In addition, I provided recommendations for action and further study based upon the results of this study.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 includes the findings of this study and applicability or results for social change. In addition, presented in this section are themes that are effective among leaders to retain business critical information. This section includes the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for future research, reflections, and a conclusion.

#### **Introduction**

The objective of the qualitative case study was to explore knowledge transfer strategies used by credit union leaders to retain critical business information. I used semistructured interviews to collect information from 14 leaders from a credit union located in Michigan, United States. Participants solicited for voluntary participation had implemented knowledge transfer strategies in their divisions. The credit union located in Michigan provided additional historical information related to the topic of study.

Following my analysis of participant interview data, I organized the findings into three principal themes: documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and presentations and meetings. Overall analysis of the three principal themes yielded that communication, mission alignment, and motivation promoted knowledge transfer among employees. The identified themes are techniques leaders use to foster knowledge transfer and knowledge creation to retain business critical information. The knowledge transfer strategies identified by participants align with knowledge transfer theories.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

For this qualitative case study, I interviewed 14 leaders and used semistructured interviews to address the research question: What strategies do credit union leaders use to retain critical business information as employees are resigning? In addition, I reviewed web links and program records to triangulate data to enhance my understanding of the information provided and improve the validity of the information collected from participants. Interviews were based on seven semistructured questions designed to solicit individual experiences from participants. From these seven questions, three common themes emerged from the data analysis findings: documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and presentations and meetings. These were specific strategies used by leaders to transfer tacit and explicit knowledge between expert and new employees to retain business critical information. Collected statements obtained from participants addressed the research question to explore knowledge transfer strategies leaders use to retain critical business information. Interview questions were designed to collect identifying statements related to knowledge transfer strategies used by leaders. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the credit union's headquarters in Michigan in a private office, and each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. After summarizing participants' statements, obtaining agreement of statements, and coding all data using NVivo 12 software, I analyzed data and identified 10 codes, of which I grouped into three themes.

**Theme 1: Documentation**

All 14 participants expressed that it was important to document processes and procedures as a primary strategy for transferring knowledge. MGR2, MGR5, MGR8, and MGR10 indicated that proper documentation of procedures serves as a guide to assist employees in understanding and comprehending work processes for completing certain responsibilities. MGR4 and MGR7 indicated that documentation of what has worked, new innovated processes, and required processes to follow for success is a strategy used for knowledge transfer. MGR7 stated, “lessons learned are documented to use in training and future activities.” MGR2, MGR6, MGR 11 and MGR12 shared that experienced employees document existing and new work processes used by employees, and any lessons learned from projects that can be applied in future situations. The credit union management focused on documenting established work procedures, new work procedures or solutions, clarifying the documentation to include changes to procedures, and lessons learned for completed projects for future activities.

MGR5, MGR8, MGR9, MGR12, MGR13, and MGR14 indicated that the types of documentation they used includes manuals, reference guides, electronic storage of information credit union intranet available for all employees to access, standard procedures for new employees and to increase depth of knowledge of current employees for understanding business critical information for day-to-day operations. MGR12 stated, “documentation plays an integral role in knowledge transfer and retention and is an effective method for organization to retain critical information.” All participants indicated that the documentation of knowledge retained by employees is important for

knowledge transfer and retention of business-critical information. Proper documentation of business-critical information is a method used for transferring information to employees. MGR3 stated that documentation by employees' of current work processes, new work processes as they occur, and lessons learned from the completion of projects to be used for future decision making needs. Employees properly documenting allows for identification of common procedures and specific decisions made to assist with future decision making (Massaro, Moro, Aschauer, & Fink, 2019). MGR3 said, "documentation of processes and procedures provides resources for others to reference in a time of need." A standard operating procedure documented can prove effective way to transfer knowledge to others easily using explicit knowledge (Zia & Shafiq, 2017). MGR3 said, "documentation of processes and procedures eliminates having a single source of business-critical information." MGR4, MGR3, MGR6, and MGR11 shared the types of documentation that they have their employees create include reference guides, manuals, and standard operating procedures. These documents are used to help new employees review and understand the day to day functions and responsibilities. MGR14 indicated they created a culture for managers to feel comfortable documenting big picture critical information to provide a guide for employees to reference as they are making decisions. MGR5 stated, "creating an environment for employees to develop and share documenting procedures is an expectation for managers." MGR4 established a formal review process for employees to follow after each project is completed to document the steps they took, and discuss new processes that would be better suited for future similar projects. MGR5 stated, "all documented procedures are easily available and searched by employees."

MGR13 indicated that the credit union has created a culture of sharing information in order to help new employees be successful. MGR12 indicated that it is especially great when procedures document how to do something or how to make decision in a particular situation. MGR9 indicated that they have an employee who is responsible for ensuring that documents are accurate and easily understood for employees to use. MGR8 stated, “having detailed documented procedures where employees can reference these documents as needed for making decisions or understanding the steps they must follow to complete a task.” MGR14 indicated that proper documentation of work procedures allows for employees to go back and review information for have to complete processes. All 14 participants indicated that proper documentation of procedures and policies is helpful for employees to be able to perform their job responsibilities and make proper decisions. Thirteen of the 14 participants indicated that documentation of processes and procedures is a resource for training employees. All participants indicated that documentation of processes and procedures allows for employees to learn from written processes and procedures.

## **Theme 2: Cross-Training and Job Shadowing**

Cross-training is a method used prior to employee transition into a new position or leaving the organization (Gluesing, 2015). Cross-training enhances the learning of employees to gain new skills from experienced employees at the organization (Gluesing, 2015). Thirteen of the 14 participants acknowledged cross-training as one of the most effective techniques being used to transfer knowledge. Thirteen participants responded with they use cross-training as strategy to transfer knowledge between employees. Cross-

training is a viable method of transferring knowledge between employees (Büke, Araz, & Fowler, 2016). MGR4 thought that cross-training was “a good method” for employees to learn from performing the task themselves and engaging with a coworker in explaining the process. MGR6 said, “cross-training provides new employees with hands on experience to learn tasks, polices, and procedures, which helps the employee understand and apply the new skills.” MGR12 commented that cross-training was a great way of sharing information and procedures for new employees to learn new skills and build relationships with coworkers. MGR11 stated that cross-training in a different department to gain new skills or understanding of concepts is a great opportunity for employees to advance their knowledge and to bring that new knowledge back to train the team. MGR7 said “employees are cross-trained and then given the opportunity to perform the tasks independently while partnered with the employee to create confidence and ask questions as they are applying the new skill learned.”

MGR3, MGR4, MGR6, MGR7, MGR10, and MGR12 indicated that job shadowing is used to provide an employee the opportunity to work alongside more experienced employees, so they can learn and develop within their current role. Job shadowing is a process where an employee from one area of an organization has an opportunity to work with and gain experience of the role of another employee and potentially gain awareness into that specific job (Mader, Mader, & Alexander, 2017). MGR12 stated that job shadowing is a great way for employees to develop an understanding of other positions and departments. During the interview, six of 14 participants identified job shadowing as a knowledge transfer strategy that helped

employees gain and retain new knowledge. Research of credit union policies and the interviewed participants indicated that the job shadowing process allows for employees to request to cross-train in different department to learn new knowledge and that new employees are partnered with more experienced employee to learned new knowledge from shadowing that employee. MGR4 stated that new employees would follow experienced employees performing expected job tasks and responsibilities for the position. MGR6 stated that a barrier they have encountered with cross-training and job shadows includes that sometimes incorrect information is shared or misunderstood. MGR13 indicated that errors happen in cross-training and those are hard to identify until a later date and additional training is provided. MGR11 stated that with the recent growth within the credit union that often times employees that have been in their roles 6 months are cross training new employees which creates lack of knowledge depth. However, all 14 participants responded that employees are accepting of cross-training and job shadowing knowledge transfer strategies and are very willing participants.

The flow of tacit to explicit knowledge between participants varied even though each of the participants acknowledged using some form of knowledge extraction. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), tacit to explicit knowledge transfer are connected. MGR4, MGR6, and MGR7 identified knowledge transfer as personal interactions that happen through two-way communication. MGR9 stated that sharing information verbally in one on one meetings helps employees receive information to do their jobs.



### **Theme 3: Presentations and Meetings**

All 14 participants indicated that department and credit union meetings and presentations were a successful way to transfer business critical information to all employees. The credit union conducts weekly all employee meeting, monthly management meetings, monthly leadership meetings and weekly executive team meetings. During the meetings business critical information is shared with leaders and employees to create knowledge transfer of information. MGR14 said “weekly meetings with their division leadership allows for the opportunity to learn new credit union strategies and knowledge.” MGR9 indicated that information is communicated to employees within the division to transfer that knowledge and build understanding. MGR7 indicated that employees conduct bi-weekly knowledge nugget meetings where the team shares knowledge they have learned that would be helpful for others on the team to know. MGR4 conducts weekly meetings with leaders in the division to share knowledge and learn from the team. MGR3 stated that after the completion of a project the team conducts a meeting to review the project successes and areas for improvement to be applied to the next project. MGR9 said “weekly department meetings are a good the opportunity to share knowledge with the team on process improvements and new practices to ensure everyone is on the same page.” MGR13 believed that meeting with the leaders of the division sharing knowledge prepares the team for greater success. All 14 participants agreed that verbal communication contributes to increasing knowledge transfer and understanding.

Although verbal communication in meetings and presentations are a viable method of transferring knowledge there are a few barriers that occur. MGR13 indicated that people sometimes focus on what they feel is important and may miss the critical knowledge being shared. MGR14 indicated that people lose focus in meetings and may not retain the knowledge needed to be able to communicate message to employees. MGR6 said “sometimes employees may share the wrong information in meetings creating bad knowledge transfer.” MGR10 indicated that team meetings are a great way to transfer knowledge and get the team on the same page. All 14 participants agreed that meetings are a great method to transfer knowledge and give people the opportunity to ask questions for greater understanding. MGR1 indicated that one on one meetings allowed for knowledge transfer and deeper understanding. MGR1 also indicated that department presentations allow for the team to come together and share knowledge from their experiences. MGR6 indicated that department meetings are valuable in transferring knowledge by giving the employees the opportunity to share valuable information with their co-workers. MGR5 said “weekly all employee meetings transfer knowledge to employees of critical things that are happening or coming.”

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The study findings contribute to the understanding of knowledge transfer strategies necessary to retain critical business information as individual leave the organization. Leaders should focus on retaining business critical information as employees leave the organization to remain innovative and competitive. The study adds to the foundation that knowledge transfer of critical business information is essential for

organizations to maintain capacity and utilizing the internal resources. Additionally, this study may contribute to the understanding the value of leadership strategies for knowledge transfer and to build a culture of knowledge transfer among all employees. Empowering employees and creating a culture of knowledge transfer will increase job satisfaction and productivity (Kianto et al., 2016). Business leaders may find the results of the study valuable for their organizations.

The findings from this study might help leaders create and implement knowledge transfer strategies by considering methods that may align with their organizational needs and culture. Leaders are encouraged to create knowledge transfer strategies that encourage tacit and explicit knowledge transfer by utilizing methods in which employees are encouraged and supported to transfer knowledge. The results of knowledge transfer strategies may result in increased productivity by decreasing the loss of knowledge as employees transition positions or retire. The results of this study also relate to knowledge creation theory and leaders must create social interaction, tacit, and explicit knowledge to retain specific knowledge (Nonaka, 1994). Organizational leaders ensure that knowledge transfer of critical business information strategies implemented to ensure business continuity. Organizations that lack effective and essential knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information will face risks of business continuity, financial burdens, and knowledge loss.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Findings in this study include beneficial strategies that create a process for knowledge transfer leading to retention of critical business information. The results

provide leaders with strategies they can apply to retain critical business information for their organizations. An effective knowledge transfer strategy may result in sustainable performance of an organization and may be a factor in positive social change resulting from increased job satisfaction. Organizations with knowledge management strategies in the working environment is linked to high job satisfaction (Kianto et al., 2016). Increased job satisfaction and sustainable growth of a knowledgeable workforce will positively influence society by producing improved economic development. Desired organizational performance outcomes can be enhanced by knowledge sharing practices throughout the organization (Greer & Egan, 2019). This study contains elements that might benefit those that review the results as supporting evidence to knowledge transfer strategies to retain business critical information.

Loss of business-critical information is one potential outcome of knowledge loss attributed to the increased retirement rates. Employees who are engaged in transferring explicit and tacit knowledge reduce productivity losses, and increase the ability of organizational employees to achieve organizational goals (Greer & Egan, 2019). The services provide by employees of the credit union provide financial solutions to meet the financial needs of members. Leaders implementing knowledge transfer strategies for transitioning employees may enhance the delivery of financial assistance to individuals, thereby causing a potential positive effect on social change. The result of this study may have an effect on leaders who support social change resulting from employee satisfaction through learning and increased productivity and quality of life. Another implication for positive social change includes the potential to increase knowledge, growth of leaders,

and increased retention of business-critical information to maintain organizational sustainability.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The purpose of this study was to explore knowledge transfer strategies used by leaders to retain critical business information. Based on the results of this study, leaders should focus on those strategies to transfer knowledge to retain critical business information. Based upon the results of this study, I recommend knowledge management systems, knowledge transfer activities, and leaders' involvement.

Recommendation 1 is: Knowledge management systems. Leaders should focus on developing an effective and efficient method of documenting business critical information that is accurate, easily accessible and understood by employees. Perhaps utilizing a knowledge management system to retain all documents. Proper documentation of information will assist with retaining the business-critical information and ensure that all employees can easily access information as needed.

Recommendation 2 is: Knowledge transfer activities. Leaders should provide employees with time segments from everyday work responsibilities to engage in knowledge transfer activities. Leaders should openly support knowledge transfer needs and practices to promote knowledge transfer activities such as training and job shadowing. Cross training and shadowing are knowledge transfer strategies used to develop careers, enriching succession planning, and retaining business critical information (Gibson, Wallace, & Kreis, 2018). Employment overlap may assist with knowledge transfer activities before an individual leave the organization. Leaders

develop knowledge transfer through meetings and presentations to employees on business critical information. Leaders need to create a relationship of trust with employees to be open to taking in the information and transferring the information to others.

Recommendation 3 is: Leaders involved in knowledge transfer strategies. By having leaders participate in knowledge transfer strategies such as meetings and presentations it openly demonstrates support of knowledge transfer activities. Management support is critical to sustaining knowledge transfer strategies (Gil-Garcia & Sayogo, 2016). Leaders need to take an active role in knowledge transfer strategies making it a priority to their departments. As leader they are able to lead the way for employees to see to value and needed to transfer knowledge. Leaders are able to create a culture and environment for knowledge transfer that will support the strategies to be successful.

The results of improved knowledge transfer strategies may result in increased organizational productivity by reducing loss of business-critical information when employees transition. Retaining business critical information can be accomplished through successful knowledge transfer strategies being used by all employees. After Walden's approval, I will contact each participant to share with them the Abstract and a one-page summary of my conclusions and recommendations.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Through the study findings, I determined that documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and meetings and presentations, are successful knowledge transfer strategies used by leaders in credit unions. As this study was a single credit union case

study, the results may not be generalized to other organizations. I would recommend further research that expands to other business sectors and other organizations types to determine if the finding results are consistent. Future researchers may use results from this study as the basis for additional studies in larger credit unions and financial institutions. My recommendation for future research would be to focus on additional methods for knowledge transfer focusing on how to engage employees to share knowledge. In addition, researchers may choose to research how different generations of employees prefer to obtain and share tacit and explicit knowledge from employees leaving the organization or transitioning into a new role.

### **Reflections**

Through my doctoral journey I developed an appreciation of independent scholarship, sacrifice, patience, and perseverance. The doctoral journey armed me with research and scholarly writing skills that I am using in my professional career. A major factor in this doctoral journey was time management, but more importantly staying dedicated to the goal despite the challenges faced each day. At the onset of this study, I had no preconceived thoughts about the possible findings. The participants identified three main knowledge transfer strategies, documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and meetings/presentations. I had concerns about participation and that I would not receive enough participants to reach data saturation. Fortunately, I had fourteen participants freely willing to share their knowledge transfer strategies. I was able to gain an understanding of their experiences of knowledge transfer strategies to retain

business critical information and avoid knowledge loss as employees leave the organization or transition to other positions.

During the study process, I had several revelations. The rigor needed to develop a literature review improved my ability to use sources and summarize concepts to educate others. Second, conducting semistructured interviews and identifying themes based on participant responds was daunting but informative to gaining additional understanding on knowledge transfer strategies being used. The doctoral study process was a humbling experience and I feel a sense of pride and self-reward for being able to manage my demanding career and school workload successfully.

### **Conclusion**

American business leaders are challenged to replace 70 million knowledgeable and experienced workers (Green et al., 2017). Seventy-five million baby boomers are leaving organizations, taking knowledge and skills with them, and leaving organizations with the challenge to train new employees (Farrell, 2018). There are 10,000 U.S. baby boomers leaving the workforce daily, and more than 70 million will leave the workforce by 2029 (Anderson & Guo, 2018). A solution to this knowledge gap in talent is to take the needed actions to capture and retaining critical business information of retiring employees prior to them leaving the organizations. The specific business problem and research question provided an avenue to gain an understanding knowledge transfer strategy to retain business critical information that should be implemented by leaders. To learn these strategies, I conducted a qualitative case study on a credit union in East



Lansing, Michigan by conducting semistructured interviews from 14 participants currently implementing knowledge transfer strategies.

The three themes that emerged from the study were documentation, cross-training and job shadowing, and presentations and meetings. Leaders may use these strategies to reduce organizational knowledge loss and increase productivity by having knowledgeable individuals. Increasing leadership support for knowledge transfer activities by providing employees with time to focus on knowledge transfer is a recommended action for leaders to develop knowledge transfer programs that support business continuity. Despite the limitations found, I believe this study adds to the understanding of knowledge transfer strategies used by leaders to retain business critical information. Leaders will need to apply knowledge transfer strategies that will further develop and retain knowledge prior and post employees leaving the organization. Leaders should use strategies to ensure business critical information is retained to ensure organizational stability and competitive growth. The findings provide information on effective knowledge transfer strategies used by leaders.

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### Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. Introduce the interview: Thank participant for assistance, reiterate purpose of the study, remind participant of length of interview (30-60 mins), and inform participant that questions asked will be focused on gaining insight on their perspectives of knowledge transfer strategies.
2. Present consent form (if not obtained prior), review with participant, obtain participant signature and provide participant a copy of consent form.
3. Remind participant interview will be recorded. Confirm participant's consent to record and start recording devices (Smart phone with voice recording app).
4. Introduce participant using assigned pseudonym (Participant number\_Date). Record participant pseudonym on note pad.
5. Begin interview with Question 1; follow with remaining questions and ask additional probing questions as required for clarification.
6. Record paraphrasing, observations about the setting, participant demeanor, and any additional information revealed during the interview.
7. End interview sequence and coordinate follow-on member checking with participant.
8. Thank participant for assistance and reinforce the importance of their contributions to the overall purpose of the study.
9. End protocol.

## Appendix B: Email Invitation to Potential Participants

Hello XXXX,

My name is Silvia Dimma, and I am a doctoral student at Walden University and also a current employee of the XXXXX. The research I am conducting is separate from any work responsibilities I hold as an employee. It is only related to my role as a student at Walden University. I am conducting research to explore knowledge transfer used by leaders to retain critical business information. I would like to gain your perspective on how you transfer knowledge to others. The participants include managers and executives of a credit union in Michigan, United States. The findings may contribute to social change by employees sharing knowledge enhancing the skills of other individuals that can be used at home and in society. More skilled workers, more engaged, and happier at both work and home will contribute positively to social change. More skilled employees from knowledge transfer makes individuals more marketable so that they can improve their living situation. My research involves an interview of less than 60 minutes. If you are willing, I would arrange for us to speak at a time and place convenient to you in which I will ask you several questions about your current experience, how is knowledge transferred between employees, what role do leaders have in knowledge transfer strategies and barriers have you encountered when implementing knowledge transfer strategies.

I will maintain your confidentiality in this research by using codes instead of your name on all research data collected. If you consent to voice recording for note taking purposes only, I will store the digital files using a password to protected the information. After the interview, I will ensure you have the opportunity to review the summary of our conversation for accuracy. All data reported in the research report will contain no names or any other identifying characteristics. If you are interested and willing to voluntarily participate in this research project, and/or if you have any questions, please simply contact me via reply email so I may complete this valuable research as soon as possible. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Best regards,

Silvia Dimma

E: [silvia.dimma@waldenu.edu](mailto:silvia.dimma@waldenu.edu)

P:517-243-2292

Walden Student #: A00461271

Walden University IRB Approval Number: 06-05-19-0461271



## Appendix C: Letter of Permission

Organization Name  
Contact Information  
Date

Dear Silvia Dimma,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Knowledge Transfer Strategies and Retaining Business Critical Information. As part of the study, I authorize you to call and/or email members of Organization Name to request participation of the study. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

I understand that our organization's identity will remain private and the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,  
Authorization Official  
Contact Information

## Appendix D: Interview Questions

The interview questions asked of participants:

1. What knowledge transfer strategies do you employ to retain business critical information?
2. How is knowledge transferred between employees?
3. What role do leaders have in knowledge transfer strategies?
4. What barriers have you encountered when implementing knowledge transfer strategies?
5. How do employees respond to knowledge transfer strategies?
6. How do you evaluate or measure the knowledge transfer strategies for success?
7. What additional information you would be able to share on this topic?