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High-Performance Organizational Culture and Corporate Success

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Alexander Lapshun

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

High-Performance Organizational Culture and Corporate Success

by

Alexander Lapshun

MS, College of Management, 2009

BTech, SCE, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

October 2020

Abstract

Some Singapore global corporation business leaders experience difficulties building a high-performance culture. Building a high-performance culture encourages high performance, promotes excellence, and nurtures a continuous improvement climate. Grounded in Gilbert's behavioral engineering model, the purpose of this qualitative mini ethnography single case study was to explore strategies midlevel managers in Singapore use to create a high-performance organizational culture. Six midlevel managers representing a Fortune 500 information technology firm in Singapore participated in the study. Data collection included semistructured interviews followed by member checking, direct observations, and a review of the company's documents. Marshall and Rossman's 5-step data analysis process identified the following 4 themes: (a) creating an environment of trust and safety, (b) way of doing things matters, (c) embracing leadership style, and, (d) enforcing a culture of work-related, immediate, specific, and educative feedback. Recommendations for business leaders include creating an environment of safety and trust, striving for excellence, leading with the end state in mind, and creating a feedback culture. Firms that sustain high-performance organizational culture may contribute to social change by creating more growth opportunities, add jobs, and provide help for communities.

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this work to two people whose role in my life couldn’t be overestimated. First, to my Dad, whose dream for the highest education was stopped by cruel decease. The decease that eventually took his life twelve years ago. Dad, I hope you can fulfil your dream trough me. Second, I would like to dedicate this work to my wife, Nadya, the person who supported me through my entire professional life, who was and is my source of energy and inspiration.

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I would like to say thank you to my classmate. Your feedback and comments, mostly your positive support in the critical moments were amazing! I also want to thank my entire family for support and understanding–my Mom, brother, my sons.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In the fast-moving and result-oriented global world, culture is an invisible construct people create to justify and survive in collective harmony. Organizational culture is one of the most critical factors helping the organization to respond to its external environment (Schein, 2010). Culture is more powerful than strategy (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). Business leaders should invest in developing an organizational culture that stimulates and promotes creativity, innovation, and high-performance (Ali Taha, Sirkova, & Ferencova, 2016). Some employees in Asia perceive their manager's ability to provide future-looking constructive feedback and positively influence their performance as mediocre (Yamazaki & Yoon, 2016). Furthermore, in the dynamic context of the contemporary business world, many of the traditional approaches to gaining strategic advantage have proved to be inadequate (Hakkak & Ghodsi, 2015). At the same time, organizational leaders are increasing their dependence on human capital to survive and attain competitive advantage (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Organizations with a high-performance organizational culture based on human capital have the potential to develop a sustainable competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017).

Background of the Problem

When it comes to compensation, Asian employers understand its importance in motivating employees. However, they misjudge the importance of the reputation of the organization, its mission and value, and both the physical and social work environment (Budhwar, Varma, & Patel, 2016). The way people are treated in the workplace may affect the quality of the work they do (Linetsky, 2012). Business leaders are responsible for setting high-performance standards, enforcing supportive organizational culture, and promoting excellence (Kim & Thapa, 2018; Wang & Hackett, 2016). A supportive corporate culture is essential for high performance (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). In recent decades, scholars and practitioners paid more attention to high-performance organizational culture as a critical component of corporate sustainability and competitive advantage (de Waal & de Haas, 2018). However, Kontoghiorghes (2016) noted that there is not enough clarity in the definitions and core practices of high-performance organizations in general, and the ways these practices connect to organizational culture, in particular.

Problem Statement

Business leaders are looking at high-performance organizational culture as a crucial factor in an organization's survival and success (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Daher, 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Graham, Grennan, Harvey, and Rajgopal (2016) learned that 92% of business leaders acknowledge the importance of organizational culture and its influence on corporate performance. The general business problem is that global corporation business leaders experience difficulties building a culture that encourages high-performance, promotes accountability for excellence, and nurtures a climate for continuous improvement. The specific business problem is that some Singapore midlevel managers lack strategies to create a high-performance organizational culture.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative miniethnography single case study was to explore the strategies midlevel managers in Singapore use to create a high-performance organizational culture. Kontoghiorghes (2016) asserted that organizational culture constantly shapes companies' competitive advantage. The targeted population comprised midlevel managers working in a global high-tech corporation in Singapore who have demonstrated successful use of organization culture strategies to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Corporations with a high-performance organizational culture could demonstrate better business results. Well-performing businesses can generate more job opportunities benefiting society and local communities.

Nature of the Study

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discussed three methods of research: (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) mixed methods. Quantitative researchers use close-ended questions to test predefined hypotheses (Barnham, 2015). Qualitative researchers interpret data in the context of a phenomenon, including human senses and subjectivism (Leung, 2015). The qualitative researcher asks open-ended questions, to understand the context of the phenomenon and describe all facets of the topic of interest (Tran, Porcher, Falissard, & Ravaud, 2016). Mixed methods researchers use both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single or multiphase study to complement and enrich the findings (Hesse-Biber, 2016; Venkatesh, Brown, & Sullivan, 2016). To explore the strategies that midlevel managers use for creating high-performance organizational culture, I used a qualitative study with open-ended questions rather than using closed-ended questions and testing hypotheses as part of a quantitative study. As there was no quantitative segment involved in my research, I found the qualitative approach apposite in contrast to the mixed methods, which includes a quantitative approach. The qualitative method was, therefore, appropriate for my research.

There are four different qualitative designs I considered for my research: (a) phenomenology, (b) historical narrative, (c) case study, and (d) miniethnography. The purpose of phenomenological research is to investigate the meanings of participants' lived experience with the phenomenon (Gill, 2014). Phenomenology is different from the purpose of research on organizational culture; hence, phenomenology was not an appropriate design for my study. Historical narrative, an impersonal and unbiased representation of events, is appropriate when there is no access to real participants (Yin, 2018). In my study, all participants were available for the live interview; therefore, historical narrative was not the best fit. Yin (2018) argued that a case study is an empirical method for in-depth investigating a contemporary phenomenon and bounding the population to the unit of the study defined by its scope. The researcher might consider using multiple case studies when investigating similarities or differences across situations (Yin, 2018). In my case, single case study was appropriate as I focused on one organization for study in-depth, not on the comparison of multiple organizations. Miniethnography is an effective method for understanding cultural competence (Hsieh, Hsu, & Wang, 2016), which was crucial for my study's purpose. Blended method researchers could benefit from the advantages of both the width of miniethnography and case study protocol (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017). By using miniethnography I was seeking the essence of values, norms, and behaviors that represent the culture of the organization. By using a single case study protocol, I sought to explore the strategies midlevel managers used to maintain and develop a culture of high-performance.

Research Question

RQ: What strategies do Singapore midlevel managers use to create a high-performance organizational culture?

Interview Questions

1. What are the norms, values, and acceptable behaviors in your organization?
2. What strategies do you use to encourage high-performance in your organization?
3. What strategies have you used to motivate your employees to improve their performance?
4. What strategies have you implemented to change the organizational culture?
5. What strategies did you find worked best to change the culture of your organization to one with high-performance?
6. What method did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies for effecting a high–performance organizational culture?
7. What methods did you use to measure employee performance?
8. What additional information would you like to share on the strategies your organization employs to achieve a high-performance organizational culture in your organization?

Conceptual Framework

Gilbert (2007) introduced the behavioral engineering model (BEM) in 1978, which postulates a person's performance is based on the person's behavior. To improve performance, it is usually necessary to do things that change behavior (Winiecki, 2015). Based on the BEM, environment and performers (or employees' behavior) define the performance of the organization; the management is mainly in charge of the environment. The categories of information, instrumentation, and motivation contribute in both the employee and environmental domains, including different aspects of data/knowledge, instruments/capacity, and incentive/motivation, which collectively affect employees' performance (Table 1).

Table 1

Behavior engineering model

	S^D *Information*	*R* *Response*	S_r *Motivation*
E	(Data)	(Instruments)	(Incentives)
Environmental Support	1	2	3
P	(Knowledge)	(Capacity)	(Motives)
Behavior repertory	4	5	6

Note. From "Human competence: Engineering worthy performance (Tribute ed.)," by T. Gilbert, 2007. *San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer, p.92.* Copyright 2007 by the International Society for Performance Improvement

The organizational culture is the glue that binds the organization together and the compass that guides it forward at the same time (Bolander, Werr, & Asplund, 2017). A hallmark of BEM is an ultimate connection between fundamental elements of organizational culture and sustainable performance. Also, the BEM connects performance with economic outcomes (Crossman, 2010). In my study, I explored the current situation in a multinational organization in Singapore. I used the BEM as a lens to seek understanding of how midlevel management build a culture of high-performance.

Operational Definitions

In this section, I provide definitions for the basic terms and jargon in the context in which I used them in my study.

High-performance organizational culture: Organizational culture is the way things are done and the norms that define and characterize the organization (Chatman & O'Reilly, 2016). High-performance organizational culture is built on values of integrity and openness, encourages innovation and risks taking, and is heavily dependent on leaders who develop top talents in the organization. Kontoghiorghes (2016) summarized high-performance organizational culture as a culture that constantly sharpens the competitive advantage of the firm.

Midlevel manager: Midlevel manager is an individual who directly manages other individual contributors or managers as well as initiates and champions the company's strategy processes (Ou, Seo, Choi, & Hom, 2017). For this research, the job title of a midlevel manager varied subject to the size of the organization and level of financial responsibility, from team/department/section/region manager to director of department/section/country/region.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

By setting assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, the researcher creates a context for the research and working platform that ensures the investigation will address the research question (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). In this section, I provide assumptions, limitations, and delimitations that provided the context of my study.

Assumptions

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) defined assumptions as preliminary beliefs the researcher made about the study in general. Yin (2018) identified participant's knowledge as primary concern for qualitative research. My first assumption was that study participants had sufficient knowledge about the topic of the study. My second assumption was that participants would make adequate time to answer my interview questions and participate in follow–up discussion. I planned to record the interviews; therefore, my third assumption was that participants would accept the idea of being recorded. My fourth and last assumption was that participants would answer my questions truthfully and candidly.

Limitations

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) defined limitations as uncontrollable factors that may affect the results of the research. I saw three limitations to my study. Firstly, the participants were part of the same company within the IT industry; they might have similar views and opinions. I mitigated this limitation by choosing participants responsible for different parts of the business and with diverse cultural backgrounds. Singapore is a hub for professionals from all over the world working for the multinational corporations (MNCs; Yeung, Poon, & Perry, 2001). The interviewees represented a diverse cultural, professional, and experiential background. I revealed multiple points of view, which alleviated my concerns about this limitation. The second limitation was the participant's bias and possibly inaccurate recollection of events. I mitigated this limitation by using several sources for data collection along with semistructured interview: collecting documents, personal observation, and interactions analysis. Thirdly, the findings in this study were limited to the one company and may not apply elsewhere.

Delimitations

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) argued that delimitations represent the boundaries of the research. The participants in this study included Singapore midlevel managers. I narrowed the scope of the study with one multinational IT company in the Asia Pacific region. I screened each participant to ensure each had people management experience with the company in Singapore and had a proven record of building teams with high-performance organizational culture. By doing this screening, I guaranteed that every participant had participated in several cycles of a team-building process that affected cultural and performance aspects.

Significance of the Study

By creating high-performance organizational culture, business leaders establish an environment where employees strive to perform to their best (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). This study provides value for business because business leaders seek understanding and guidance on how to create, develop, and maintain a high-performing team to achieve results demanded in a 21st-century business environment. Through the findings of this study, I may contribute to social change by showing the way for business success that leads to a happier and more sustainable community.

Contribution to Business Practice

High-performance organizational culture is fundamental for achieving sustainable competitive advantage (Fareed, Noor, Isa, & Salleh, 2016). O'Neill and Salas (2018) and Saratun (2016) emphasized the role of high-performance culture in creating sustainable competitive advantage. Midlevel managers and business leaders might find the findings of my study useful for developing high-performance culture in their organizations and fostering an environment for performance excellence.

Implications for Social Change

Business leaders striving for excellence in a business organization will likely create positive reciprocity in a closed social environment. Large MNCs bear significant social responsibility for their immediate and more distant communities (Kim & Thapa, 2018). Positive workplace culture might have a positive effect on an individual's self-esteem, confidence, job security, and well-being. Working in a positive high-performance work environment might enable employees to experience enhanced job opportunities and steady financial security, which could benefit employees' families, friends, and communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Yin (2018) noted that a literature review should sharpen the gap in the existing knowledge, revealing a need in the new research. In my literature review, I presented historical and current literature on the organizational culture, high–performance organizations, leadership strategies, and connections between the topics. I explored the current field of the knowledge, which this study might potentially expand. I started with the review of existing views on high-performance organizational culture and culture mediocrity, the opposite of high performance. Then, I expanded discussion of the BEM, which I used as the conceptual framework for my study. I reviewed the principles, measures, and strategic notions of a high-performance culture in the context of the BEM. I presented supporting and contrasting theories and conceptual modules related to motivating employees and building a high-performance culture.

I searched for the sources that helped to address the specific business problem: some midlevel managers lack plans to create high-performance organizational culture. I used the following keywords/themes as search terms for this literature review: *organizational culture, corporate culture, high-performance, high-performance culture, performance analysis, mediocrity, a culture of mediocrity, business excellence,* and *effective leadership*. The literature review included 134 publications, 96 that were published within 5 years of expected publication of this doctoral study, in 2016 or later. 86.8% percent of the articles were peer-reviewed; 12.4% percent were seminal books.

Organizational Culture

The roots of discussion on organizational culture belong to the field of anthropology and go back to the 19th century (Daher, 2016). Historically, there are numerous definitions of the organizational culture. In a seminal work, Hofstede (1980) described culture as the collective programming of the mind, which makes members of one group different from another. Schein (1985) elaborated on this definition, stating that organizational culture is the set rules that members of the organization learned, invented, and adopted as a result of continuous learning, to better cope with internal and external challenges. Culture is about shared purpose, values, norms, and understandings of how the things are done; in other words, organizational culture (Schein, 2010) is the connection that makes one organization from geographically and culturally dispersed units.

Scholars of the 21st century continue to add characteristics to the definition of organizational culture. Douber, Fink, and Yolles (2012) described organizational culture as the underlying layer of habits that explains how the members of the organization do things in their work environment. Fusch, Fusch, Booker, and Fusch (2016) opined that culture is holistic and all-inclusive. This holistic system or gluing layer (Bolander et al., 2017) represents foundations, values, and norms, strategies that company build, and approaches to employees and future development. A vast majority of the business leaders believe that the culture of their organization affects a firm's performance and overall value (Graham et al., 2016).

Different organizations benefit from different types of organizational cultures. In a seminal work, Handy (2007) introduced four examples of the organizational culture: power, person, role, and task-related. Individualism and centralized decision-making process define the power-based culture. An employee is a center of person-based culture, and there is less emphasis on internal arrangement. Role culture is an exemplary bureaucratical structure with clear internal definitions and processes. The employees, efficiency of human resource utilization, and flexibility are principles of the task-related culture (Hiršová, Komárková, & Pirožek, 2018). Calciolari, Prenestini, and Lega (2018) differentiated the same four types of organizational culture in more contemporary way: (a) clan culture–internal relationship, loyalty, and tradition-based; (b) development culture, with a focus on entrepreneurship and innovation; (c) hierarchical culture, with reliance on internal control, stability, and order; and (d) rational culture, with an emphasis on competitiveness, goals setting, and external environment.

In the fast-changing economy of the world since World War II, the growth, productivity, competitiveness, and continuity of the organization are a function of employees' professional qualities and motivation (Losch, Traut-Mattausch, Mühlberger, & Jonas, 2016). Developing an organizational culture that stimulates and promotes creativity and innovation is imperative for every organization seeking a competitive advantage. It is even more acute for MNCs operating in a multicultural environment and dealing with organizational and ethnic differences. Employees are the most crucial asset and building blocks of any organization (Abid & Butt, 2017). In the modern rapidly changing world, loyalty and length of tenure carry little value (Lee, Yang, & Li, 2017) against an employee's decision to stay or to go. Readiness and acceptance to change are critical cultural qualities with a significant effect on an employee's loyalty to the company (Brymer & Sirmon, 2018). The connection between the firm and an employee might be found in healthy and stable values embedded in the organizational culture (Fareed et al., 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016).

Graham et al. (2016) researched 1,348 North American firms in an attempt to understand whether organizational culture matters and to which degree differences in culture could explain the differences in performance. Among executives Graham et al. surveyed, only 16% believed that the culture of their organization is where it should be, and 92% acknowledged that improvement in cultural norms would increase their companies' value. The lack of effective organizational culture is a primary cause of poor performance and productivity in the corporate group (Eaton & Kilby, 2015). Graham et al. defined effective organizational culture as one that promotes the behaviors needed to successfully execute the company's strategies and achieve the company's goals. In business and scholarly literature, there is a consensus that organizational culture matters for the firm's value and competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). For this study, I discussed the strategies midlevel managers in Singapore apply for creating high-performance organizational culture. Gilbert (2007) introduced his BEM and emphasized the importance of prioritizing values of accomplishment and high performance while developing a corporate culture.

High-Performance Organizational Culture

For organizations to become high-performance systems, they need to develop the type of culture that will allow them to effectively cope with the strategic trends while at the same time attract and retain a highly talented, motivated, and committed workforce (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Handy’s (2007) and Calciolari et al.’s (2018) classifications of organizational culture might not include the ultimate type that answers all needs of a growing competitive organization. The benefits of collaboration, flexibility, transparency, and creativity belong to organizations with a high-performance corporate culture (Ali Taha et al., 2016). Organizations could build a supportive culture for diverse talents to succeed and grow if the leaders exemplify and promote the values of high-performance culture.

A culture based on value-creating goals is crucial for an organization that is aiming to execute to its full potential (Gilbert, 2007). Organizations should carefully craft their culture if they seriously aim for consistency and high-level performance (Cravens, Oliver, Oishi, & Stewart, 2015). There are multiple definitions available in contemporary literature on high–performance organizational culture. Kontoghiorghes (2016) introduces high-performance corporate culture as one that promotes values of trust and integrity, risk-taking, quality, and innovation. Maintaining a healthy working culture in the organization is vital for developing a vision of excellence (Fusch & Gillespie, 2012). Fareed et al. (2016) defined high-performance work system as an effective means of fostering employees within an organization. High-performance organizational cultures and subcultures emerge in homogeneous populations with a democratic team leadership. Cooperation between high-effort employees at management levels interact with any types of effort behaviors of employees to form positive cultural foundations (Curry et al., 2018).

Effectiveness of various organizations depends on trusting and supporting different cultures (Nelson, 2014), which becomes a part of the organizational entity. The impact of the high-performance organizational culture on the business should not be overlooked. Companies' culture can facilitate positive communication and collaboration (Stapel & Schneider, 2014). O'Neill and Salas (2018) discussed the impact of high-performing teamwork on norms, processes, and behaviors in the workplace that encourage such performance. They specifically identified trust, psychological safety, and a supportive risk-taking environment as crucial elements for success.

The strive for excellence in the business organization creates positive reciprocity in the closed social environment. Large MNCs bear significant social responsibility for their immediate and more distant communities (Kim & Thapa, 2018). Kim, Kim, Han, Jackson, and Ployhart (2017) noted in an investigation of 350 office employees of three different firms a clear dependency between a corporate approach to social responsibility and employees' behavior. Corporate leader's decisions and actions could greatly influence civic climate by promoting the worth, dignity, and development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies. Corporate leadership demand for excellence should encourage innovation, creativity, and thirst for knowledge among young professionals.

Leadership Styles and Organizational Culture

Leaders impose their personal values on the group, which becomes the base of corporate culture (Schein, 2010). Also, Schein (2010) asserted that organizational culture might have an impact on the leadership style. Dajani and Mohamad (2017) argued that specific industry practices and demands, along with environmental requirements, shape the culture of the organization, which, in the later stages, influence leadership approach. Organizational culture and leadership are intertwined and influence each other. In the earlier stages of the organization, the leaders' personality will establish the foundational principles of the culture, while in a later, more mature stage, the culture will shape the leadership style and influence the choice of the next generation of leaders (Schein, 2010).

Although transformational leaders demonstrated a positive influence effect on their employees, hierarchical culture can also influence employees' behavior in the opposite direction, showing a two-way relation between leadership style and organizational culture (Lee, Idris, & Delfabbro, 2017).

Different organizations might have different cultural foundations, and they might require different leadership styles. Avolio and Bass (2004) distinguished three types of leadership style: transformational, transactional, and nonleadership. Dajani and Mohamad (2017) summarized the differences between transformational and transactional leadership, stating that while charismatic and inspirational transformational leaders show the way by coaching, engaging, and driving continuous change for better, the transactional leaders manage interactions (transactions) that presumably maintain existing status quo in the organization.

Few types of culture can coexist in the same organization simultaneously (Dajani & Mohamad, 2017; Gao, 2017). However, different situations and times might require a combination of leadership styles. Odetunde and Ufodiama’s (2017) research supported a general assumption that a transformational leadership style supports company innovation. This type of leadership might be a good fit for development or market type of organizational culture (Calciolari et al., 2018; Gao, 2017). That said, the responsibility for company performance belongs to the company's leadership team (Witt & Stahl, 2017).

Addressing the role of leader, Gilbert (2007) stated that for any case of performance deficiency, although the symptom might belong to either employee behavior or environmental flow, the actual cause lies with the management. Accepting the consequences of this theorem is not easy for business leaders. Defining shared values based on diverse cultures is also a challenge. It is not easy to change behaviors when values and norms do not support the change (Coulson-Thomas, 2014). However, Coulson–Thomas (2015) found that performance support can be an effective strategy for altering behaviors, especially when major cultural change is not required. Yet, the organizations where leaders promote clarity of purpose, transparency of in decision making, and openness to diverse views and opinions and who live the values through real actions benefit from higher employee engagement and better business performance (Aitken, 2007; Ali Taha et al., 2016). Leadership's job is to address systematic conditions that impair the ability of individuals and teams to fulfil their stated purpose (Winter, 2018). In today's world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA), there is an expectation from the leaders to develop resilience of the team for embracing the challenge of change (Grint, 2020; Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018). Culture starts with the leaders and the ways they guide and lead their organization.

Review of Selected Motivational Theories

Employee motivation is crucial for organizational performance. Lăzăroiu (2015) provided a comparative analysis of different motivational theories: Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory, Locke and Latham's (1990) goal-setting theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model, McCleland's (1984) achievement motivation theory, and Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's (1959) two–factors motivational theory. The expectancy theory is based on the assumption that a person will endeavour or select a specific undertaking that will lead to a highly regarded outcome. Locke and Latham (1990) claimed that the selection of a significant aim would support the purpose and drive satisfaction of the employee. Hackman and Oldham (1976) based their model on fundamentals of job design, stating that a properly designed job will help an employee to achieve comfort and maintain a high level of motivation. McCleland (1984) established the motivational theory that fits most individuals with entrepreneurial characteristics. These employees will be highly motivated by potential achievement and will be ready to assume responsibilities over others to accomplish the task. Herzberg et al. (1959) pointed out on two sets of needs by employees: one to prevent discomfort, the hygiene factors, and one to advance psychologically, the motivators. Lăzăroiu (2015) recommended managers and leaders make their communication with employees two-dimensional, task-oriented, and people-oriented as may be appropriate. No one solution fits all. A personal evaluation is required in the case of each. All these theories and models have value.

The hierarchy of needs. The contemporary history of motivational theories arguably started with Maslow’s (1954) hierarchy of needs. Robbins and Judge (2017) called Maslow’s work the best-known of all motivational theories. In his seminal work, Maslow (1954) defined five levels of human needs: psychological, safety and security, love and belonging, self–esteem, and self–actualization. These needs, prioritized in this specific order from lowest to the highest, represent factors influencing an individual’s motivation. The moment the individual reaches reasonable satisfaction at the most basic level, the need for a new motivator arises (Kovach, 2018). However, following Maslow’s

(1954) theory, the individual might seek motivation on different levels simultaneously based on circumstances. Harkins (2019) stated that in a business environment, a basic psychological need could correspond to stability at the workplace, fair remuneration, and sufficient leave allowance. The security level in the workplace refers to an understanding of the rules and processes. The relationships with superiors, peers, and subordinates define a level of belonging or loneliness in the workplace. Once a person satisfies the essential need at the workplace, that individual starts seeking out esteem and self-actualization (Etzioni, 2017). Respect, title, place on the hierarchical ladder are associated with the fourth level of appreciation; learning and exploring new domains of knowledge could address the fifth and the highest need in Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization (Harkins, 2019).

Shaughnessy, Moffitt, and Cordova (2018) discussed the relevance of Maslow's theory in twenty first century. The basic needs of today are much bigger than just shelter, air, and basic food. Shaughnessy et al. argued that access to internet and Facebook account today belong to the same group of basic needs. Tay and Diener (2011) investigated a sample of 123 countries and looked at needs that define well-being in local terms. They found that definition and content of basic needs depend on the country of living.

On the positive side of the Maslow's theory, Etzioni (2017) noted that the hierarchy of needs demonstrates that monetary reward is barely the dominant, people mostly motivated by esteem and opportunity of self–actualization. Ryan and Deci (2000) referred to a link between self-determination and intrinsic motivation, using it as an argument to support principles of self-determination theory. The critics, on the other hand, opined that Maslow did not offer a clear definition of what need is the most important for one to fulfil and therefore, it is not easy to apply the theory in real life (Berl, Williamson, & Powell, 1984). Etzioni (2017) called Maslow's theory selfish as if individual's needs to drive one's behavior and priorities, individual might neglect any needs of surrounding societies. In 1959, Herzberg introduced two–factor theory attempting to explain on factors that motivate employees in the workplace (Fareed & Jan, 2016).

Herzberg's two–factor theory. Herzberg et al. (1959) explored the effects of job satisfaction factors on employee motivation. Herzberg et al. researched nine different organizations involving 200 employees. As a result, Herzberg et al. concluded on two sets of independent from each other factors that respectfully motivate or demotivate employees in the workplace. The motivators exist when employees have satisfying experiences that are intrinsic to their actual jobs (Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). The set of motivating factors includes achievement, work itself, responsibility, and potential for promotion (Herzberg et al., 1959). The other set of factors, when absent, provide a reason for dissatisfaction (Fareed & Jan, 2016; Kotni & Karumuri, 2018). Herzberg et al. (1959) defined this set of factors as extrinsic to the actual job and named them hygiene factors. Policies, supervision, salary, and job security belong to the hygiene set. Fareed and Jan stated intrinsic rewards persuaded worker behavior while extrinsic rewards deterred dissatisfaction on the job.

Herzberg et al. established their motivational theory in 1959, period where most of the employers did not apply anything but carrot and stick approach to motivate their employees (Johnson, Irizzary, Nguyen, & Maloney, 2018). The first few researchers to use two-factors theory applied it for improving prison management systems in the US. Champion (1990) found that the congregate system would result in a higher level of productivity compared to the segregate system. Marriott, Sexton, and Staley (1994) conducted survey of 188 social workers on their job satisfaction and found importance of intangible motivators that could keep social workers happy at work. Although Marriott et al.'s, Champion's, and other studies contributed to understanding that not only money motivate employees, still the majority of practitioners and scholars of the previous century associated Herzberg's theory with carrot and stick management approach (Johnson et al., 2018).

The two-factors or also called hygiene–motivation theory included the concepts of both job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which affects production and employee attitudes in the workplace (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Habib, Awan, and Sahibzada (2017) validated the two-factors theory investigating the performance of bank employees in Pakistan. Habib et al. found Herzberg's motivators and hygiene factors of a strong influence on employees' performance. Kotni and Karumuri (2018) researched 150 salespeople in India to examine the applicability of the two–factors theory. Kotni and Karumuri found both hygiene and motivational factors important for salespeople motivation and performance with hygiene factors playing a more dominant role. These results continued a long line of criticism towards Herzberg's theory from scholars, mainly because of oversimplification and lack of additional empirical confirmation beyond initial research (Fareed & Jan, 2016). Johnson et al. (2018) opined that Herzberg's theory could be applicable for public sector, where the value of intangible motivators is higher. Based on decades of research, Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced self–determination theory as a next step towards understanding of motivational factors and motivation performance relationship.

Expectancy theory. Victor Vroom (1959, 1964) introduced his first version in 1959, which he called expectancy-valence theory. In 1959, Vroom won the Ford Foundation dissertation of the year for his work in expectancy valence. In 1964 Vroom modified his first version to the expectancy theory of motivation aimed to fill the gap between theoretical work industrial psychologist and lack of practical tools and models for managers to use in the workplace (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018). Kopelman and Thompson (1976) formulated expectancy theory stating that a persons' motivation to work is a positive multiplicative function of (a) the perceived relationship between effort and work-related rewards and (b) the value or valence of these anticipated work-related rewards. The relationship between effort and work-related rewards explains effort-performance and performance-reward components. Vroom (1964) described human motivation as a product of expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

Expectancy is the employee's belief that a particular effort will lead to specific performance. Lloyd and Mertens (2018) explained that expectancy would range from 0 (no expectation) and 1 (full expectation) as it relates to whether they believe their efforts will achieve a specific outcome. Lee (2019) described instrumentality as a probability that a given level of performance on a particular task will lead to receiving an anticipated reward. The range of instrumentality is also from 0 (no expectation of outcome delivery) to 1 (full expectation). Valence refers to the subjective value of potential rewards that employees expect as a result of achieving a performance target (Lee, 2019). Valence can be positive or negative, therefore ranging from –1 to 1 (Vroom, 1964).

Vroom (1964, 2005) in expectancy theory provided a powerful heuristic for predicting individual behavior. In the late sixties and seventies, the results of many studies provided support to Vroom's expectancy– valence (E–V) model (Kopelman & Thompson, 1976). However, further modernization and globalization of the world raised additional questions about factors influencing employee's motivation. Baumann and Bonner (2017) asserted that Vroom (1964) treated expectancy, instrumentality, and valence as equal and allowed for them to appear in any order. An evaluation and selection process is typically non-conscious but might be subject for conscious deliberation as well (Vroom, 1964). In recent decades many studies offered an extension to the traditional formula of the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Kominis and Emmanuel (2007) studied motivational factors among 200 plus midlevel managers in a large company. Kominis and Emmanuel recommended offering additional schemes of extrinsic rewards to drive the motivation of midlevel managers. Baumann and Bonner urged to include group coordination factor when different teams work on the same goal, after researching motivation of 384 undergraduates at sizeable American university. Lloyd and Mertens (2018) concluded a comprehensive investigation of recent literature with the recommendation of adding an element of social context to expectancy theory formula.

Vroom (1964) based expectancy theory on four assumptions: (a) people join organizations with expectations about their need, motivations, and past experiences, (b) individual behavior is a result of conscious choice, (c) people want different things from organization, and (d) people will make a choice to optimize for their personal outcomes. Lunenberg (2011) noted that Vroom’s theory is different from Herzberg’s, Maslow’s, and other theories because expectancy theory doesn’t point on any specific motivational factor, but rather provides a set of cognitive variables that demonstrate individual differences in work motivation. Differently from Vroom (1964) and his successors, Gilbert (1978, 2007) sees motivation as a low-influence factor on employee's performance attributing more importance to competence.

Job characteristics model. Hackman and Oldham (1975) introduced the job characteristics model (JCM) to explain how job dimensions affect employees' intrinsic motivation. What are the factors that motivate an employee at work? Generations of researchers and practitioners tried to address this question. Hackman and Oldham found the answer to this question in interaction between job design and employee’s motivation. Rooted in two-factor motivational theory, the JCM predicts job satisfaction and job performance to be influenced by five job characteristics: employee’ capabilities, task distinction, significance of the job, level of autonomy on the job, and feedback (Blanz, 2017).

Hackman and Oldham (1975) proposed that motivation, job satisfaction, and performance will result when an individual reaches the critical psychological state, characterized by (1) feel of meaningfulness at work, (2) feel of responsibility for the outcomes, and (3) knowledge of the results of the work activities. Luthans and Youssef (2004) introduced a firm's psychological capital, that consists of employees’ confidence, hope, optimism, and resiliency as a source of a company's competitive advantage. Sameer, Amin and Mohamad (2019) researched 251 professionals in Egypt to demonstrate the connection between five job characteristics of the JCM and four components of psychological capital.

The contemporary work environment is competitive, more dynamic, and complex than ever before (Sameer et al., 2019). Organizational leaders are increasing their dependence on human capital (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016), attaining to create a high-performance corporate culture in a multicultural environment to develop a sustainable competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). Casey and Robbins (2018) evaluated the validity of JCM in different cultural backgrounds. They concluded that cross-cultural differences contribute to employees' motivation – the effect of five job characteristics on motivation is stronger in the U.S. than in other countries. The leaders of MNC's encounter bigger challenge developing human capital and positive psychological capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) as they have to address cultural differences along with everyday challenges of human resources development.

Blanz (2017) claimed that Hackman's and Oldman’s JCM has strong evidential prove for job satisfaction. However, Blanz didn't find enough empirical evidence to demonstrate the connection between an individual's performance on the job and skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Casey and Robbins (2018) asserted that JCM is helpful in job design and change processes. Gilbert

(1978,2007) drew a strong connection between performance and well-prepared job design and job aids. Reliable and comprehensive set up of job design and job aids would save many potential drops in performance.

Self determination theory. The end of World War II and the following industrial progress encouraged researchers' interest in evolved and acquired needs, intrinsic motivation, and motivational theories (Ryan, 2012). Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT) is one of the most significant theories of human motivation. SDT relies on the premise that human beings inherently desire to develop and grow toward their fullest potential (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000) built SDT on classic distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Howard, Gagné, and Bureau (2017) wrote that two significant forms of motivation derive from STD, and they are different in nature and quality: autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Deci and Ryan (2000) presented continuum model of controlled versus autonomous (Zhang, Zhang, Song, & Gong, 2016). Zhang et al. (2016) opined that multidimensional conceptualization of motivation, as presented by Deci and Ryan, enables more nuanced way to explore relationship between motivation and work performance. Autonomous motivation is inherently intrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2000); this is motivation of higher quality. In the workplace, employees with autonomous motivation will engage in activities that fit their interest or desire (Reizer, Brender-Ilan, & Sheaffer, 2019). Controlled motivation has mostly extrinsic character (Zhang et al., 2016). Reizer et al. (2019) described controlled motivation as an engagement in action out of pressure, rewards or threats of punishment.

Groen, Wouters, and Wilderom (2017) investigated 86 pairs of employees and their supervisors aiming to understand the effect of performance metrics on actual performance through lenses of SDT. Groen et al. discovered that use of the metrics for evaluation and feedback drives positive improvement in performance. Moreover, akin Reizer et al. (2019), Groen et al. (2017) concluded that engaging employees – in this case in metrics development – contributes to autonomous motivation and better performance on the job. In later work, Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan (2017) proposed that employees with autonomous motivation act out of their genuine interest and purpose, demonstrate a positive attitude and hence, likely to perform better on the job. In the same paper, Deci et al. opined that employees feel conflict with their values and believe when acting out of controlled motivation. Groen et al. (2017) echoed this opinion, stating that managers attempt to improve performance by using metrics for monetary or non–monetary compensation yielded no effect. Therefore, the effect on performance is mostly negative. Many empirical pieces of evidence are supporting the former assertion on autonomous motivation; however, there are lesser empirical proves for the latter (Reizer et al., 2019). Kuvaas, Buch, Weibel, Dysvik, and Nerstad (2017) even opined that employees' willingness to the task to avoid guilt, punishment or to gain a reward might be a driver for performance. Deci and Ryan (2000) proposed that as the internalization of work value increases, persistence, positive self-perceptions, and quality of engagement heighten, thereby the level of employees' performance will increase. Thus, it would be important for supervisors to provide a supportive environment that promotes employees' internalization of the importance of organizational goals, similar to identified self-regulation, which leads individuals to display better work performance (Zhang et al., 2016).

The way Deci and Ryan (2012) addressed motivation is the main difference between the STD and the foundational theories of Maslow and Herzberg. Gilbert (2007), in his BEM, saw motivation as a combination of incentives (environmental factors) and personal reportorial factors (motives). It is easy to see the line of similarities between two theories, although Gilbert made it clear that for consistent performance at the highest level the motivation is not enough, instrumentation (tools) and information (knowledge) should be equally available. The STD covers the contribution of motivation to high performance, the area that Gilbert consciously left aside in his BEM.

Behavioral Engineering Model

Since the early days of his professional career, Thomas Gilbert focused on employees' abilities. Continued observation of an individual's knowledge and abilities to perform on tasks led to understanding that people tend to stop using the experience they -acquired from initial training very fast (Turner & Baker, 2016). In 1978, Gilbert introduced his behavior engineering model (BEM), which he continued to enhance until 2007 (Gilbert, 1978, 2007). Fundamental to the concept of BEM, Gilbert assumed that to improve performance there is a need for a change in employee behavior or the workplace environmental system. The BEM offers the most cost-effective multilevel intervention for improving performance (Winiecki, 2015). In his work, Gilbert broke three stereotypes: (a) there is no virtue in a hard work if it doesn't result in significant accomplishment, (b) there is no virtue in knowledge if the knowledge doesn't contribute to significant performance and meaningful accomplishment, and (c) the drivers of high-performance relay rather on incentives than motivation.

The framework of the BEM includes two primary layers responsible for behavior and environment (Table 2). Managers are accountable for making essential for employee's data available: accurate job descriptions, norms and behaviors, and expectations. They also should make the necessary instruments available and offer incentives to these employees. Employees will gain knowledge from the data, the capacity to perform the task from the instruments, and motives from the incentives (Gilbert, 2007; Winiecki, 2015). Data and knowledge belong to a stimulus discriminative (SD); they help the manager and employee to define the specific task. Instruments and capacity, both refer to response (*R*) – an action that will logically follow stimulated individual. Incentives and motives, both refer to reinforcing stimulus (*Sr*), which will ultimately define the effort the employee will put on the task.

Table 2

Behavior engineering model

	S^D *Information*	*R* *Response*	S_r *Motivation*
E	(Data)	(Instruments)	(Incentives)
Environmental Support	1	2	3
P	(Knowledge)	(Capacity)	(Motives)
Behavior Repertory	4	5	6

Note. From "Human competence: Engineering worthy performance (Tribute ed.)," by T. Gilbert, 2007. *San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer, p.92.* Copyright 2007 by the International Society for Performance Improvement

Gilbert's BEM is a cornerstone work on engineering worthy performance and human competency (Winter, 2018). Gilbert (2007) taught that competent employees can create valuable results for the organization without using excessively costly behavior. Fusch and Gillespie (2012) considered Gilbert a father of human performance technology. Wooderson, Cuskelly, and Meyer (2017) called Gilbert's (2007) BEM comprehensive performance framework for identifying the underlying challenges of workplace performance, addressing both the environmental and individual influences.

BEM and performance. Cicerone, Sassaman, and Swinney (2007) found Gilbert's (1978, 2007) BEM useful for measuring customer loyalty. Cicerone et al. defined six critical interactions with the supplier organization that define customer loyalty. Using BEM in their research, Cicerone et al. succeeded in identifying factors of employee job performance that affected customers experience. Wooderson et al. (2017) investigated performance improvement practices of 175 front-line managers in Australia. Wooderson et al. used the BEM framework for this study. While most of the first-line attributed poor staff performance to the motives, Wooderson et al. found the reason for lack of clear expectations. The first-line managers in this study, believed more in staff replacement than in taking personal responsibility for not providing sufficient data (expectations, goals, norms) to their employees. Managers are looking in the wrong direction, trying to address performance challenges. This situation is typical for many workplaces. However, in most of the cases, the real reason for poor performance lays either with personal behavior or working environment with responsibility ultimately sitting within management (Gilbert, 2007). This notion is also known as Gilbert's third leisurely (or management) theorem (Gilbert 1978, 2007).

Campbell's (2014) study of Circuit City's disaster illustrated the importance of Gilbert's management theorem in practice. Circuit City, once leading retailing chain of home electronics, failed under pressure from growing competition not because of incompetent or not-motivated workforce, but because of wrong management decision to cut most competent, although more expensive, workforce and change incentive–based compensation to hourly–based compensation. By doing these changes, management promoted incompetent behavior and eliminated any chance to compete (Campbell, 2014). Gilbert (2007) demonstrated value of knowledge for competence and importance of applying incentives that drive accomplishment, not performance.

In contemporary competitive business environment, organizational leaders strive for continued performance improvement. Fusch and Gillespie (2012) developed a Performance Improvement Model (PIM) relying on the basics of the BEM and current practices of performance management. Fusch and Gillespie's 6-step cycle (Figure 1) is a comprehensive and practical workbook on how to improve performance and continuously maintain the improvement process in the organization.

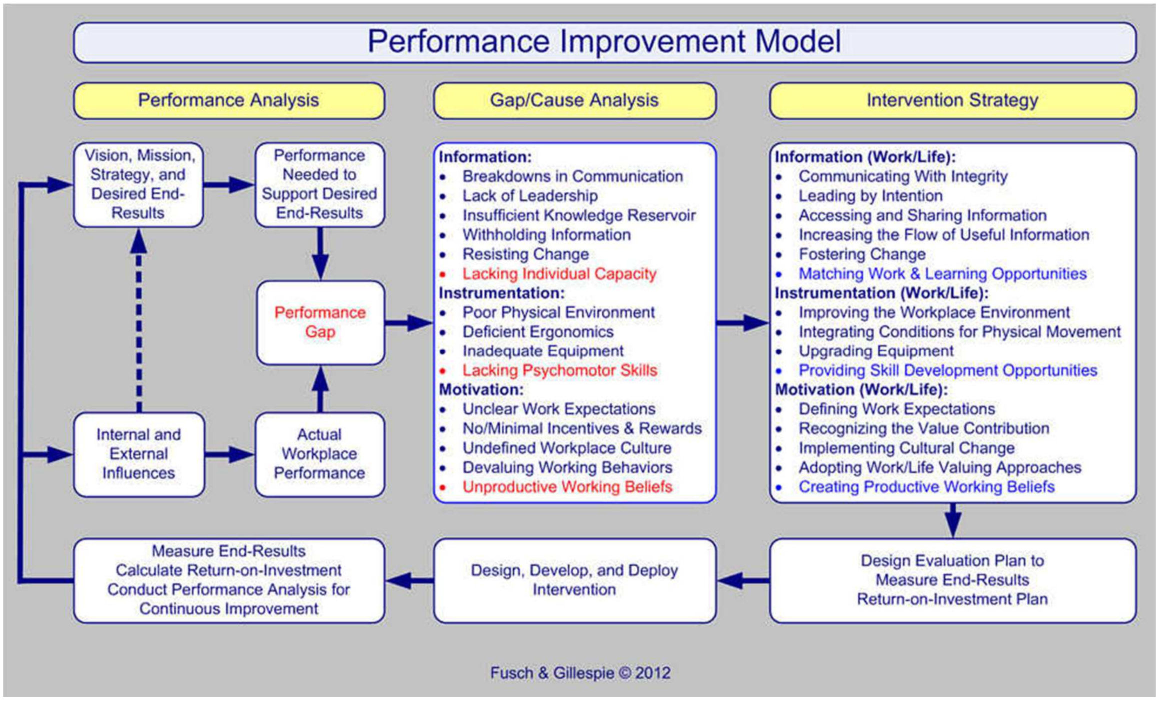

Figure 1. Six steps performance analysis and intervention planning model for performance improvement. Adapted from “A practical approach to performance interventions and analysis: 50 models for building a high-performance culture” by G.E. Fusch & R.C. Gillespie, 2012. *New Jersey, NJ: FT Press.* Copyright 2012 by Fusch & Gillespie.

Continues strive towards improving performance is one’s of the organizational priorities. Gilbert (2007) stated that for most of all jobs, performance engineers could find significant improvement without a lot of effort. Gilbert (2019) summarized this process in three steps: (1) systematic performance analysis with the participation of relevant people; (2) continues look to the environment for the best opportunities for improving performance; and, (3) immediate implementation of improvements when needed. In a truly collaborative, empowered, and agile team environment, everyone can contribute to engineering worthy performance (Winter, 2018).

Workplace culture. Workplace culture is an essential component in creating a safe and productive work environment (Shier, Turpin, Nicholas, & Graham, 2019). Entrepreneurship and individualism are typical cultural characteristics common to the majority of western workplaces (Gilbert, 2019). Gilbert's (1978, 2007) BEM promoted and supported individual accountability and decision making. Organizational culture is an overarching concept of the corporate way of life (Porter, Day, & Meglich, 2018). Workplace culture is a driver of formal and informal ways of working, communicating, and sharing power (Page, Boysen, & Arya, 2019). In the era of globalization, the leaders started focusing on their employees' workplace behavior and wellbeing (Islam, Khan, & Asad, 2019).

Shier et al. (2019) interviewed 85 human service employees in Canada to understand the workplace conditions contributing to creating a culture of the place. The researchers learned that openness, positive approach to problem-solving and conflict management, mechanism and procedures ensuring workplace safety, and preventing violence were all are crucial contributors to workplace culture (Shier et al., 2019). Shier et al.'s findings resonate with Page et al.'s (2019) case study results, which were conducted in a medium-sized nonprofit company in the United States. Page et al. emphasized trust, integrity, and respect as the essential characteristics of the culture. Attending to culture is central to developing workplaces with trust, safety, and high–performance (Manley, Jackson, & McKenzie, 2019). Islam et al. (2019) studied the cultural conditions of 248 Pakistani banking sector employees. Islam et al. learned that workplace spirituality provides meaning to employees' job.

Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) called workplace spirituality a significant influencer in increasing the employee’s commitment towards the organization, reduced turnover intention, job satisfaction, and job involvement. Gilbert (2007) and Gilbert (2019) wrote that workplace where sufficient information is easily accessible, rewards system promotes an effort for the right cause, and instructions on how to succeed are clear would benefit both employees and employers. I considered the workplace as an environment where the team perform. Hence, the culture of this environment would necessarily contribute to the performance of the key players – the employees.

BEM at workplace. Over the years, researchers, mainly practitioners, developed a range of models to deal with employee performance (Wooderson et al., 2017). However, the leading professional association for human performance, the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), endorsed only the BEM as an acceptable framework (Van Tiem, Moseley, & Dessinger, 2012). Gilbert's (1978, 2007) BEM focuses exclusively on human competence and behavior (Wooderson et al., 2017) and works as a practical instrument for managers that keen on addressing challenges of poor performance.

Gilbert (2007) proposed a new way to maintain a circle of continuous improvement by introducing the second leisurely theorem, where he introduced the potential for improvement as a ratio between exemplary and typical performance. Logically, if we continue working on Fusch and Gillespie's (2012) PIM, both exemplary and typical performance results will continuously be improving. Managers strive to maintain this ratio as low and as controllable as possible. Ross and Stefaniak (2018) researched 61 managers on the quality of feedback these managers provide to their reporting employees. The BEM framework helped to identify the differences in the quality of training between the best and typical performers. Ross and Stefaniak's study, along with examples of Cicerone et al. (2007), Wooderson et al. (2017) show the strength and relevancy of the BEM.

Gilbert (2007) noted the important role of incentives or rewards to promote competence and performance. However, the BEM barely touches aspects of monetary incentives. Gilbert never diminished the value of monetary incentives, but honestly believed that information and knowledge could be greater influencers on employees' behavior, given a basic rewards system is fair and robust (Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). The role of incentives is to promote improvement in employee productivity (Binder, 1998). The BEM offered six areas of intervention to improve performance: (a) data, (b) instruments, (c) incentives, (d) knowledge, (e) capacity, and (f) motives (Ross & Stefaniak, 2018).

BEM and culture. Nathan and Foster (2011) challenged ISPI to recognize the cultural impact on performance improvement research and practice. Hofstede's (1984) introduced four dimensions of cultural differences: large versus small power distance, strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity, and individualism versus collectivism. Nathan and Foster (2011) added another four cultural dimensions: relationship versus task-driven, low versus high context, inductive versus deductive reasoning, and polychronic versus monochronic use of time. Later they applied all eight dimensions on Gilbert's (2007) BEM (Figure 2). Different cultural environments might react differently to the same challenge. For example, in hierarchical culture, the information frequently flows top-down and might not be available to all members. In more egalitarian organizations, the information is widely available. However, the members might question its credibility and value (Nathan & Foster, 2011).

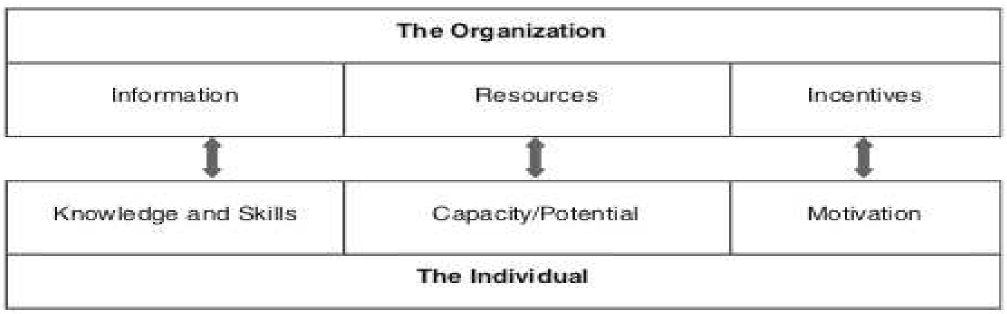

Figure 2. Adopted behavioral engineering model. “Human competence: Engineering worthy performance (Tribute ed.),” by T. Gilbert, 2007. *San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.* Copyright 2007 Pfeiffer.

Providing support for feedback is part of the organizational culture (Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). Gilbert (2007) distinguished between intrinsic feedback, which should always be available for employee’s self-assessment and reflection, and extrinsic feedback – usually provided by the peers or superiors. Ross and Stefaniak argued that the quality of the feedback influences the culture. If the quality is high, employees will find value in feedback and inquire for more. If the quality of the feedback is low, the demand for feedback will barely exist. London and Smither (2002) noted that the level of organizational support for feedback is a strong indicator of organizational learning and strive for improvement. There is no doubt that high-quality feedback has positive influence on the organizational culture. However, could high quality feedback exist in non-supportive culture?

Ramani, Könings, Mann, Pisarski, and van der Vleuten (2018) investigated three focus groups of participants in an American healthcare organization to answer the question of cultural characteristics to support high-quality feedback. Ramani et al. learned that culture of excellence and growth embeds need inherits a need for constrictive feedback while the culture of face-saving and politeness suppresses attempts for honest peer to peer and even supervisor to peer conversation. Organizational leaders who promote culture of excellence set up their companies for success and growth over time. The organizations with leaders living face-saving standards will likely lose their talents (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016) and will lose their competitiveness over time.

High-performance teams and organisations exhibit high level of employee's engagement. Huang, Ahlstrom, Lee, Chen, and Hsieh (2016) investigated 451 employees from 50 different firms in Taiwan to evaluate importance of employees' involvement in their job to high-performance work system. Huang et al. found strong positive influence of job involvement on high-performance work system. Cesário and Chambel (2017), Saratun (2016) provided similar findings in their studies, stating that employee engagement, commitment, and involvement are crucial for organizational performance and success. With information, including knowledge available for the employees at the moment of need and management complementing the missing pieces proactively, the employees will improve their behavior and performance (Gilbert, 2007).

Gilbert (2007) stated that organization leaders should evaluate worthy accomplishment in context of the culture (purpose, goals) the performance occurred. The greater meaning of this assertion is that the culture represents a shared tool for evaluation, and if this tool is different for different people, there is no room for comparison among different evaluations. Culture matters when performance and competence are under evaluation (Gilbert, 2007; Nathan & Foster, 2011). Building a culture of feedback that supports meaningful collaboration and connection as foundation for meaningful change is essential for any willing to grow organization (Drago–Severson & Blum–DeStefano, 2018).

Hawthorne effect and BEM. Since the 1930th organizational researchers expressed their interest in the phenomena of job satisfaction and motivation (Tillman, Smith, & Tillman, 2010), Elton Mayo with colleagues at Harvard Business School conducted an industrial research program at the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric in Illinois, US, from 1924 to 1933. The scientists created a special room for electrical relay assembly employees where they provided better seats, light, noise isolation, and other environmental improvements comparing to regular assembly environment (Mayo, 2000). When employees performed their task in the experiment room, their productivity took off regardless of environmental conditions; once they came back to an original environment – the results sank back to average or regular pre-experiment level. The significant findings of the original study included that (a) behavior and emotions are closely related, (b) individuals behave significantly different in the group, (c) group standards establish individual employee output, and (d) monetary incentive is less critical than group influence (Lee, 2016). Breznau (2016) mentioned the positive effect of the observer on an individual's performance as an additional outcome of the Hawthorne experiment.

The results of the Hawthorne experiment triggered continues discussions among social science scholars and business practitioners. Gillespie (1991) mentioned the term of Hawthorne Effect as a belief that the presence of, or interaction with, researchers affect outcomes for study participants stemming from studies done (1924-1933) in the Hawthorne Electric. Generations of researchers discussed controversial Hawthorne Effect. The supporters claim that Mayo built the scientific foundation of personal management while the opponents argue about the manipulative character of the experiment and presentation of the results (Mannevuo, 2018; Muldoon, 2017). Sommer (1969) found common ground stating that there is no simple relationship between the single environmental element and complex human behavior.

Gilbert recognized the extent to which people can undermine an individual's performance when the complexities of human psychology and surrounding conditions are discounted (Crossman, 2010). Parsons (1974) reviewed in detail, the Hawthorne experiment, including interviews with participants. Parsons learned that Mayo and his team, along with environmental improvements, offered monetary rewards for better productivity and, to track the latter, installed automated counters on each assembly table (Parsons, 1974). After a detailed investigation of all details, Parsons attributed productivity increase to two significant factors: incentives and information. Gilbert (2019) named information and incentives as the first two of the Four I's system (information, incentives, instruction, and implementation) to create and maintain high-performing organization. Latest works of Lee (2016), Mannevuo (2018), Muldoon (2017) supported the notion of inaccurate interpretation of initial results of the Hawthorne experiment. With all problems in the set-up of the trial, which was not clean of political and racial considerations (Lee, 2016), the results emphasize the crucial importance of human relationship and rewards factors (Gilbert, 2019; Gillespie, 1991; Mannevuo, 2018; Muldoon, 2017; Parsons, 1974).

Critics on BEM. Gilbert (2007) developed BEM as a combination of theory and observation: the model evolved from one-factor to six-factors theory through the years of practical observations and result from analysis (Turner & Baker, 2016). The behavior engineering model is a foundational model of human competence (Fusch & Gillespie, 2012). Marker (2007) stated that being the most prestigious and most used model for human performance technology, the BEM still does not address the external environmental factors. To address the elements of the external environment, outside of individual repertory and organizational factors, the researchers should use the environmental analysis models.

Dieter and Lenze (2018) analyzed Google's failure to challenge Facebook in 2011 using Gilbert's (2007) BEM and Chevalier's (2003) root cause-analysis worksheet. While the BEM provided a robust and reliable framework for identifying the point of failure, it didn't shed enough light on root-cause of the problem. Gilbert focused mainly on indirect interventions on behavior through the environmental factors associated with the performance. Chevalier (2003) updated the BEM framework intending to create a diagnostic tool that provides a more efficient method of troubleshooting performance and discovering the most important opportunities for improving performance.

In general, two most significant areas of criticism towards Gilbert's (2007) model come from putting motives on the last place for potential intervention and general complexity of the model for articulation (Winiecki, 2015). Gilbert himself admitted the former in his work, stating that the individual's motives are the hardest area to address (Gilbert, 2007). However, he pointed out on diffusion effect (Chyung, 2005). The diffusion effect explains the impact of the targeted intervention for performance improvement and other areas. Chyung provided a hypothetical example how promising improvement in compensation (incentive) may help employees to reduce tension and feel more motivated (motives), which in turn might cause them to pay more attention to the information about the task (data). Chevalier's (2003) development of the BEM aimed to address the complexity and lack of apparent root-cause analysis (Turner & Baker, 2016; Winiecki, 2015). Despite some weaknesses and complexities, the BEM stays relevant until today and provides reliable foundation for any competence or performance engineering (Fusch & Gillespie, 2012).

Regression to the Mean and Matthew Merton Effect

Organizational culture is a delicate organism that needs constant cultivation and care. Employees, as caretakers of the culture, need care and encouraging incentives to maintain and improve their performance (Gilbert, 2007). Leaders, defining rewards and incentives policy in an organization, establish cultural foundations for either promote or discourage competence and high-performance. Merton (1968) described Matthew Merton effect of marginalizing of adept, demonstrating how the wrong culture of incentives could harm organizational performance. In short, the Mathew Merton effect says that the world tends to praise individual who is already famous regardless of actual performance. The typical example of the Mathew Merton effect in the workplace is the state of where once achieved; the individual cannot fall below a certain level in the eyes of superiors. They, by default, will always make him a candidate for future awards. Hermanowicz (2013) called this situation inferiority. The result of inferiority is mediocrity.

Park, Chae, and Kim (2017) investigated contributing factors of job satisfaction of high–performing employees. Park et al. surveyed 320 employees and supervisors in South Korea. The authors concluded that unbalanced and unjustified distribution of appraisal could negatively affect the intrinsic motivation of individuals and team performance in general. The culture of mediocrity leads to the rewarding of ones who did not satisfy institutional goals at the expense of the ones who did or even overachieved in meeting the goals (Hermanowicz, 2013). To avoid or prevent such situations, leaders would consider connecting an incentive system to organizational context and culture (Saratun, 2016). Gilbert (2007) taught in his BEM to reward and incentive only worthy performance, because of only exemplary performance results in meaningful accomplishment. From a behavioral engineering perspective, this is merely behavior to encourage and duplicate.

High-Performance Culture Versus Mediocrity

Overcoming mediocrity, or lack of ambitions for the best, is the one of the challenges leaders face on their journey to a high-performance culture. Baradat and Phillips (2017) shared a concern about democratic institutions that by proudly promoting ideals of fairness, equality, and egalitarianism perpetuate mediocrity and diminish the excellence. As it might be arguably correct in for life in general, is it also true for the business. Paul (2016) pointed out that excellence in business is replaced by average because of managers and leaders stop paying attention to what matters the most.

Hermanowicz (2013) described mediocrity as a situation in which an average-performing individual makes decisions on what to do with the high-performers. For years, general opinion considered midlevel managers as a bureaucratic, change opposing layer of an organization (Belasen & Belasen, 2017). But is this the case? Huy and Guo (2017) offered comprehensive literature and theories review, based on Bower's (1970) resources allocation framework, where they discussed the role of the midlevel manager in strategic processes within an organization. Huy and Guo concluded that the perception of midlevel managers as a bastion of the status quo mostly relays on the obliviousness of the senior leaders. The way executives relate to middle managers, and what they expect of them are interconnected. If the leaders expect mediocre performance from the midlevel managers and set up low expectations, the performance of the latter is likely to be reduced, which in turn reinforces that initial perception of uncommitted middle managers (Belasen & Belasen, 2017). Midlevel managers demonstrate mediocre performance to live down to the low expectations of the executive leaders. Manzoni and Barsoux (2002) called this process a vicious cycle of perceived incompetence. This cycle is also known as the Pygmalion effect from the Livingston's (2009) seminal work in which Pygmalion is the person who consciously or unconsciously is aware of an expectation and acts in a way that is consistent with that expectation.

Huy (2011) and Huy and Guo (2017) praised midlevel managers for being problem solvers under pressure. They called midlevel managers the main drivers of loyal drivers of change in the organizations. Gilbert (2007) warned that the only way businesses could avoid the potential trap of complacency and mediocrity is by adopting the policy of the fair distribution of the wealth and implementing the practices of good performance engineering. In other words, the maintaining incentives and accomplishments personal along with distinguishing exemplary from mediocre performance, continuously promoting the former. Gilbert defined the credo of performance engineering by inversing the Communist Manifest of Marx: “From each according to his need, to each according to his ability” (2019, p. 105). Leaders and managers may contribute to creating a high-performance organizational culture by adopting this credo.

In the literature review, I scrutinized previous researches made on the evolution of organizational culture in which they examined fundamental motivational theories, including that of the conceptual framework of BEM. The focus on worthy accomplishment rather than performance distinguishes Gilbert’s (2007) model from the rest, making the BEM an appropriate choice for my study as the conceptual framework. While the understanding of the importance of high-performance organizational culture for corporate success is beyond any doubt (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Daher, 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016), in MNCs the strategies for building and maintaining high-performing team are still not clear.

Transition

In Section 1, I laid the foundation for the study, uncovered the business obstruction and determined the research question. In the literature review, I provided a view on the major motivational theories and more recent researches on the ever-changing definition of high-performance organizational culture. I also discussed mediocrity as a phenomenon that plagues it. As part of the review, I presented each topic with perspectives from both a historical as well as the contemporary front.

Section 2 will comprise of discussions on the role of the researcher. It will also cover discussions on population and sampling, data collection, organization, and analysis, summarized by the discussion on reliability and validity. In Section 3, I will present the discoveries of the study and discuss the conceivable applications of them against the professional practice and the social order of society.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 1, I identified the general and specific business problem and the purpose, nature, and significance of the study. In literature review, I demonstrated the relevance of the contemporary business problem and offered a research question specific to the business problem. In Section 2, I describe the research project starting with restating the purpose, which is followed by detailed explanation of the role of the researcher, method and design of the study, ethical aspect of the study, and data collection and analysis.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative miniethnography single case study was to explore the strategies midlevel managers in Singapore use to create a high-performance organizational culture. Kontoghiorghes (2016) asserted that organizational culture constantly shapes companies' competitive advantage. The targeted population comprised midlevel managers working in a global high–tech corporation in Singapore who have demonstrated successful use of organizational culture strategies to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. Corporations with a high-performance organizational culture could demonstrate better business results. Well-performing businesses can generate more job opportunities, benefiting society and local communities.

Role of the Researcher

Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that the researcher is the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research. In an ethnographic study, the researcher needs to be attentive not only to a big event, but also to the most mundane aspects of ordinary lives (Trnka, 2017). Yin (2018) suggested that a researcher conducting a case study might need the ability to (a) ask relevant questions and actively listening to the answers, (b) comprehend the context of the study question and adjust as necessary to new directions brought on by the interview questions, and (c) be self-aware to avoid potential bias.

I have grown my career in the high-tech industry, possessing a breadth of executive positions in both the business and operations division. One-third of my professional career took place in the Asia-Pacific region. I previously worked for the same global Fortune 100 IT company as the study participants. The participants, midlevel managers from Singapore, were my peers in the organizational structure, and I had working relationships with most of them. The participants worked at different office spaces and represented different businesses and functions. A researcher's biases are a natural result of familiarity with the phenomenon, the participants' experiences, or the topic under review (Berger, 2015). I conducted my research a year after I finished my official assignment in the company. I based my knowledge on my experience. This knowledge was not current by the time I contacted the participants. Direct observations are subject to the researcher's own interpretation and bias (Wolcott, 2009). To overcome this potential flaw, I declared my position up front, before I commenced the observations.

I adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the *Belmont Report* (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979): respect for persons, justice, and welfare. Participation is entirely elective. I elucidated my role as the researcher and delivered reassurance of confidentiality over the interview data before obtaining informed permission from each participant. I submitted an application to the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a research ethics review.

Yin (2018) emphasized importance of remaining receptive to divergent opinions to alleviate bias. Therefore, I remained open to opposite points of view. I protected consistency, quality, and fairness in the interview process across all participants through a predefined interview protocol (see Appendix A). Steering the interview with open-ended questions assisted me in obtaining more prolific and comprehensive responses from all participants (see Fusch & Ness, 2015). I allowed participants to review and correct or modify my interpretation during a follow-up member checking process.

Participants

I explored strategies midlevel managers working in a global high-tech corporation in Singapore used to build high-performance organizational culture. For my research, I chose participants with a proven record of establishing an organizational culture that drives high-performance. Graham et al. (2016) noted that 92% of executives acknowledged that organizational culture increases the value of the firm. To obtain deep and rich data, I invited participation from six midlevel managers who represented six different functions in the regional structure of the company: sales, operations, supply chain, services, human resources, and manufacturing.

I had previously worked for the company for 15 years. During my tenure with the company, I had working relationships with each of the study participants. I reached out to the regional head of business to obtain the access to the company. Then, I communicated with my contact person in the company to obtain the details for connecting with the participants. I was able to reach out to participants via e-mail and mobile communication. Afterwards, I contacted the participants via e-mail followed by an introductory conversation over the phone.

Trotter (2012) suggested recruiting a group of experts capable of providing a saturation level of information on the topic of the study. In my selection process, I considered participants with experience and expertise on the research topic who held management positions with the company and an ability to provide richness of information on the study topic. I used this consideration for defining the final number of participants. The eligibility criteria for participants was a proven record of building high-performing teams, which is in line with my overarching RQ: What strategies do Singapore midlevel managers use to create a high-performance organizational culture?

Research Method and Design

By questioning and challenging reality while maintaining the order of events and fundamental rules, a researcher may discover and explain nearly everything (Descartes, 2007). Since Rene Descartes' *Discourse on Methodology* in the early 17th century, people began developing an understanding of the world from both objective empirical data and information gathered from direct observation and experience of the culture. Yin (2018) defined the core of the research design as a path that connects the research question to the outcomes of the study.

Research Method

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) discussed three methods available for social research: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative and quantitative research methods investigate different claims to knowledge. Both methods are designed to address a specific type of research question. The researcher makes a choice based on the best study approach for answering the RQ (Bryman, 2016; Yin, 2018).

The qualitative researcher explores the phenomenon to understand experiences or meanings (Gerring, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), uses open–ended questions to gather rich descriptive data (Yin, 2018), and provides a level of description that presents the dynamics and context of the study topic (Lewis, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) noted that researchers apply the qualitative method in many different fields, including education, social work, administration, and sociology. Myers (2019) argued that the qualitative approach plays an essential role in business and management studies. To explore the strategies that midlevel managers use for creating a high-performance organizational culture, I used qualitative research with open-ended questions.

Quantitative researchers reflect on objective measures of reality (Williams, 2007) and use closed-ended questions to collect quantifiable data (Barnham, 2015). The quantitative researcher compares variables before and after the test and analyzes data to test hypotheses (Barnham, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Comparing quantitative and qualitative methods, Leung (2015) argued that elements of emotions and attitudes are undesirable in quantitative research but essential and valuable for the qualitative researcher. I used participants' answers to my questions to form a perspective on my observations of the participant's behavior. I was not testing hypotheses. My RQ was about exploring strategies and not about comparing or analyzing any variables. Hence, the quantitative method was not appropriate.

Williams (2007) discussed the mixed methods approach as an extension for either qualitative or quantitative research. The mixed methods approach may enable positive enhancement by combining a complex view of the phenomenon from the participants' points of view and the relationship between measurable variables (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, in my research, I was not dealing with any measurable variables; rather, I focused on qualitative insights of the phenomenon. I ruled out the option of mixed methods research because it doesn't include any quantitative element. As the last argument, I based my choice on personal experience of conducting interviews and making observations. In conclusion, I found qualitative research as the best method of exploring social aspects of the phenomenon, organizational culture.

Research Design

As with choosing research method process, the RQ and the way of investigation are pivotal in making research design decision (Bryman, 2016; Yin, 2018). Marshall and Rossman (2016) recommended choosing the design that has better chance of answering the RQ. I considered for my research four possible designs: (a) phenomenology, (b) historical narrative, (c) case study, and (d) miniethnography. Phenomenological researchers strive to explain how individuals understand the meaning of their experience (Wilson, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined the essence of personal experience as a goal of phenomenological research. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that a phenomenological design is appropriate when exploring the lived experience of others. I was focusing on solving a business problem by exploring strategies, not individuals' understanding or their lived experience about a phenomenon. Therefore, I ruled out the phenomenological design as a fit for my study.

I also thought about historical narrative design as an option. Historical narrative, an impersonal and unbiased representation of events, is appropriate when there is no access to real participants (Yin, 2018). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) described the historical narrative approach as a collection and analysis of biographical viewpoints of participants. Although historical narrative researchers can focus on the cultural context of the event, they do so through the experience of the participating individuals and stories they tell (Clandinin, Cave, & Berendonk, 2017). I planned to focus on the constructs of culture and strategy; in my study, all participants were available for the live interview. Therefore, the historical narrative was not the best fit.

Yin (2018) advocated for a case study as a legitimate research design in social science for in-depth exploration. Case studies offer the opportunity to understand complex issues within the real-life context (Runfola, Perna, Baraldi, & Gregori, 2017). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) defined a case study as an in-depth description of the bound phenomenon, which determines the unit of analysis identified ethnography as an appropriate design to explore the cultural influence on individuals or groups. However, ethnographic research could be very labor-intensive and require many months or even years to accomplish (Sangasubana, 2011). Fusch et al. (2017) offered blended design – miniethnography and case study – to utilize advantages of both methods, the width of miniethnography and the depth of the single case study protocol. Hsieh et al. (2016) described miniethnography as an effective way of developing cultural competence. The research question of my research is about the strategies of creating culture. To develop cultural competence, I was focusing on one unit of the study, doing in-depth explorations. Blending the case study and miniethnography was the best fit for my research.

Researcher riches data saturation when new piece of data doesn't represent any new information (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013) Fusch and Ness (2015) noted the importance of data saturation for the validity of the findings. A qualitative researcher should strive to quality(richness) and quantity (thickness) of the data rather than to a higher absolute number of participants (p.1409). Qualitative researchers maintain consistency of the data by posing the same questions to participants (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). To ensure the richness of the data and data saturation, I used methodological triangulating data from semistructured interviews, direct observations, and company documents reviews. I also defined criteria for participants that secured richness of the information from the one side and consistency in terminology from the other. All participants of my study were midlevel managers with a minimum 3 years of people management experience in the Company.

Population and Sampling

Midlevel managers working in a global high-tech corporation in Singapore participated in my study. Hennink et al. (2017) argued that the qualitative researcher focuses more on the quality and richness of the data. Therefore, ensuring setting rigid criteria for population selection is crucial. In the Singapore branch of global Fortune 100

IT company that is the focus of this study, there are a few dozen midlevel managers. Eaton and Kilby (2015) found that 72% of 500 global respondents acknowledged the importance of organizational culture to organizational performance, but only 25% of the leaders admitted on taken action addressing the culture. The research population included midlevel managers from a global high-tech company in Singapore with a successful record of high performance.

Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) defined purposeful sampling as deliberate process where the researcher picks participants due to specific qualities the participants possess. I chose purposeful sampling selection to ensure relevance and richness of the data. The qualities I was looking for were in line with my selection criteria and overarching research question: proven record of building organizational culture that consistently drives high-performance and being a manager. The topic guides on number of participants. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) explained that adequacy of the sample is not only about the size, but mainly about the quality and relevancy of the participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) discussing the role of sample size in reaching data saturation concluded on its secondary role after quality (richness) and quantity (thickness) of the data. I conducted this study using purposively selected group of six midlevel managers working in the Asia-Pacific region for a global Fortune 100 IT Company. The six midlevel managers participants represented all functions of the Company in the Asia-Pacific region, including Sales, Operations, Supply Chain, Services, HR, and Manufacturing.

Hennink et al. (2017) studied possibility of sufficient richness of information with a small number of interviews. The researchers learned that small group of subject experts can provide sufficient information for data saturation. Yin (2018) argued that the scope of the study bounds the population to the unit of the study. I derived my decision on the number of participants based upon consideration of participant's experience and expertise on the topic of research, position with the Company, and their ability to provide the rich and comprehensive information. The six experts I selected as participants for this study was able to give depth and breadth of their experience, ensuring richness and completeness of the data from both observations and the interviews. All participants work in the same office in Singapore. I booked a dedicated meeting room in the office for the interviews at the participant's convenient time. The observations took place at the same office, where I observed the participant's interactions with peers, managers, and reports.

Ethical Research

In the conduct of each study, the researcher has an ethical obligation to preserve the welfare of the human participants (Yin, 2018). I conducted my research under the Walden University IRB approval number 06–26–20–0736921. The IRB approval confirmed that my research met Walden University's IRB ethical protection standards. I provided the participants with informed consent form via personal e-mail. The informed consent document contains subject and purpose of the research, associated risks and benefits, compliance, terms of voluntary participation and withdrawal (Hull & Wilson, 2017). A participant was able to withdraw from my study at any moment by providing me with an e-mail, phone, or just a verbal notice. The informed consent provides transparency of the research and protection for the participant (Yin, 2018).

The researcher must consciously inform potential participants about what is known and what is not to comply with the ethical requirement (Ellis, 2019). I reviewed the purpose of the study with the participants and emphasized the voluntary character of participation. There were no incentive or gift for neither participants or the researcher. Some of the participants may know me in person. I shared my contact details with them. The participants were able to contact me for any verbal or written notification. Ellis (2019) emphasized the importance of respecting the confidentiality of the participants. To protect the identity of the participants, I used coded pseudonyms for the participants and pseudonym *the Company* to represent the firm.

To ensure uniformity of the interviewing and data collection process, I followed the same interview protocol (Appendix A) with all participants. I was the only person to have and maintain the identification of the participants and the materials they provided. I secured the documents data, audio recordings in encrypted hard drive. I have stored the hard drive and handwritten notes in secure cabinet in my home office for the 5 years followed completion of my study and will destroy all raw materials afterwards.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in the qualitative study (Richardson, 1994; Yin, 2018). Interviews and participant observation are two of the frequently used data collection methods among qualitative researchers (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). I acted as the primary data collection instrument. I collected data using semistructured in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document review. Collection of data continued to the point of data saturation. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) defined data saturation as the point when no new themes emerge and data coming forward is repetitive. At the point of saturation, new observations, interviews, and documents add no new data.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) defined face-to-face interview as verbal exchange for gaining information and understanding, precise and reliable process for finding answers to specific questions. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) characterized semistructured interviews as a set of predetermined open-ended questions, when other (probing) questions might emerge from the dialogue between the participants and the interviewer. In a semistructured interview, the researcher might use probing questions to clarify the original question for a participant or enhancing the original question to obtain more in–depth information. Qualitative researchers use semistructured interviews for the exploration of in-depth accounts of participants using open-ended questions (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Yin, 2018). I conducted the interview face-to-face in the participants' office. The semistructured interview lasted approximately 60 to 75 minutes, including eight open-ended questions opening for probing questions and in-depth responses. An interview is a critical and highly efficient way of collecting empirical data (Fritz & Vandermause, 2018; Runfola et al., 2017). I was using an interview protocol (Appendix A) to ensure structure, efficiency, and uniformed approach to each participant. Researchers engage participants in follow-up interview (member checking) for reaching depth, accuracy, and adding validity to the collected data (Chin-Feng, Ching-Jung, Walters, & Ching-Yieh, 2016; Sangasubana, 2011). I conducted a short follow-up member checking interview with all participants to conclude the data collection process.

I also used direct observations in my data collection process. Yin (2018) noted that the researcher could get closer to the topic of the investigation by using observation. During direct observation the researcher has access to participants and can observe in details and depth different situations and behaviors (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Runfola et al., 2017). The observation protocol (see Appendix B) was a guiding tool for my process of observation from each session. I reviewed the Company's documents, such as annual plans, performance reviews, business quarterly and annual reports, employee's satisfaction survey results, and mobility and promotion reports. Some of the documents, such as business quarterly and annual reports, are publicly available, the others I gathered from the participants.

Researchers use methodological triangulation to ensure richness and thickness of the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The stage when rich and thick data is available, and researcher can use this data to replicate the study, O'Reilly and Parker (2013) defined as data saturation. I used data from following sources to triangulate: semistructured interviews, direct observations, and document reviews.

Data Collection Technique

The essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognize patterns among empirical materials that depict problematic aspects of life (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Leung, 2015). Yin (2018) mentioned several data collection techniques available to the researcher for increasing reliability and validity of the study. I collected data using semistructured interviews, direct observations, and document review. Ellis (2019), Merriam and Tisdell (2015), as well as Yin (2018), argued that researches oblige to explain participants the purpose and essential details of the research (Ellis, 2019; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2018). Upon obtaining access approval from the Head of the Business in Singapore, I started my data collection process with introducing the research to participants, including aspects of privacy and data protection, followed by actual interviews and observations.

I conducted the semistructured interview in a quiet, dedicated environment to ensure the enable privacy and comfort feeling of the participants. I was following my interview protocol (see Appendix A), I was taking notes and recording the interviews. The format of semistructured interview allows the room for probing or follow–up questions in order to reach depth. The face-to-face semistructured interview process has certain advantages: (a) the researcher can use body language and other non–verbal cues to assess the level of rapport with the participants, (b) the researcher can collect rich and in-depth contextual information on specific topic of the phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), (c) researcher can use the interview process for setting stage for more personal interaction with the interviewee, allowing the latter some freedom of sharing on personal level (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), and (d) through the interview process the researcher can discover additional potentially relevant sources for the research (Yin, 2018) using probing questions. However, pursuing the interview as a data source the researcher must be aware of potential disadvantages or risks: (a) the need of particular skills to conduct the interview – for example time management or managing dominating interviewee (Moser & Korstjens, 2018), (b) personal biases of the participants and the interviewer might create deceiving picture of the event or phenomenon (Yin, 2018).

After synthesizing all the data, I conducted short member checking of the interviews via video conference with each participant. Participating in member checking, participants have an opportunity to authenticate the representation of the data and to clarify interpretations of the researcher or add additional perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). I asked participants to review my interpretation of their interview responses to ensure that I heard them correctly. In member checking, the researcher returns to the participant with their understanding of the responses to ensure the accuracy of the meaning (Fusch et al., 2017).

I also used direct observations in my data collection process. Yin (2018) noted that the researcher could immerse more in-depth into the subject of the research by using observations. During a period of 3 weeks, I observed staff meetings, planning discussions, one-on-one meeting, and ad hoc events with my study participants. I followed the observation protocol and took notes (see Appendix B) from each session. Ability to get closer to the topic of the research (Yin, 2018) and obtaining live cultural experience from the event or situation are advantages of the observation approach (Moser & Korstjens, 2018; Runfola et al., 2017). However, the time investment, potential influence of the observer, and observer’s personal bias (Yin, 2018) are disadvantages of the observation technique.

I used the Company’s documents, such as examples of performance reviews, recognition and feedback notifications, annual employee’s satisfaction survey results, and company policies. The Company’s policies helped me to validate the strategy, while the reviews demonstrated the actual results of the implementation. The employees satisfaction and feedback examples helped me to triangulate the data I obtained from the interviews and the observations. Yin (2018) discussed following advantages of the documents: (a) stable – researcher can review the documents at any time, (b) specific – can contain exact names, dates, numeric data with high relevancy to the research, (c) broad – can cover long span of time, and (d) unobtrusive – not created by or for the study. Yin also noted a few disadvantaged of using this technique for data collection: (a) can lead to biased selectivity if the document collection is not complete, (b) might reflect the bias of any document's author. From the Company's documents, I extracted factual pieces of evidence that relate to my overarching research question: what strategies do Singapore midlevel managers use to create a high-performance organizational culture?

Data Organization Technique

Constant organization of data is critical for conducting any investigation with quality and efficiency. Hancock and Algozzine (2017) emphasized the importance of concurrently organizing, examining, and interpreting data throughout the qualitative case study process. Yin (2018) discussed the need for maintaining an organized database of raw materials for increasing the reliability of the study. My purpose in organizing the data was to enable comprehensive and effective data analysis, easy way to apply to code, and a fast and convenient way of finding any written concepts and ideas from the data collection sources. Yin suggested that the researcher can use software tools for data organizing and analysis.

I used an Excel spreadsheet to organize and track data such as access permission, consent forms, interview transcripts, and observation notes, along with meetings scheduling and logistics. I used NVivo software for creating a database of the concepts and ideas relying on interview narratives, notes from observations, company documents, and audio recording files. Coding is useful in organizing and classifying the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). The overarching research question of my study is about the strategies that midlevel managers of a multinational company in Singapore employ to create a high-performance organizational culture. The concepts and ideas I found related to my research question defined the logic behind my coding concept.

The researcher should treat participant's information with full confidentiality and keep study results no longer than needed (Dimitrios & Antigoni, 2018). I used pseudonyms to protect participants' confidentiality. I stored in a safe my study draft, list of codes, and data analysis in special protected folder on password-protected hard drive. Also, I stored all my handwritten notes in the same safe. After 5 years, I will permanently destroy digital copies and shred all the paper evidence.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers tend to provide well-grounded rich description and explanation of the phenomenon and processes in identifiable context (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) despite lack of pre-defined approaches for data analysis, instructions, and guidelines (Yin, 2018). Researchers obtain new and deeper understandings from a case study by comparing and analyzing different interpretations (Yin, 2018). In my research, I employed different data collection methods to enhance reliability of the results. Researchers use methodological triangulation, which includes more than one data collection techniques for crosschecking data, such as interviews, observations, and company documents (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Kern, 2016; Yin, 2018). I applied methodological triangulation using different sources: interview responses, member checking, observation notes, and company documents to identify the concepts and ideas and interpret data.

Marshall and Rossman (2016) offered the following steps for the data analysis: organizing the data, immersion in the data, coding, software-supported analysis, and themes development. As the first step in analyzing the data, I transcribed my audio recordings of the interviews and re-write my notes from the observations to make them clean. Then, I created a list of codes, based on concepts and ideas from the written materials. I read the coded list of themes over and over several times reducing the risk of overlooking any significant concept. Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin (2016) discussed NVivo as a well-established tool that qualitative researchers can use for data analysis. Woods et al. suggested that NVivo could portrayal of the concepts and ideas as a base for initial analysis and sense-making. I used the NVivo software graphical models to conduct a critical analysis of the data, as well as text word queries against the list of codes to categorize responses by participants and to identify the themes of my study. Morse (2015) noted that the validity of the qualitative research is a result of continuous analysis. I repeated reviewing emerging themes and concepts several times to ensure consistency in the results and inclusion of all important pieces of information.

Yin (2018) warned novice researchers that no software could define correct input and provide meaningful context to the output. Qualitative researchers use thematic techniques to analyze and explicate descriptive data top create a descriptive interpretation

(Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). Constant comparison with the field notes, member checking, and other raw data material is crucial for confirmation of major themes (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Houghton et al. (2017) recommended NVivo software for its dynamic ability to evaluate a myriad of data sources and identify themes. Another advantage of using NVivo is potential improvement of the data coding as result constant comparative analysis run by the software (Houghton et al., 2017). Consequently, I looked for the data alignment from the three sources: semistructured interview and follow up member checking interviews, direct observations, and company's documents. I reassembled the data into coded lists. Yin (2018) guided researchers to study outputs of computer-assisted to comprehend the reoccurring concepts and ideas. I reviewed and compared different codes, interpret and categorize them into key themes. I also compared and contrasted the themes to the conceptual framework of my research, the BEM) and the literature review.

Reliability and Validity

The greatest challenge of the qualitative researcher is to support the quality of the data without statistics and numbers, based only on the reliability and validity of the researcher's conclusions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Yin (2018) argued that the qualitative researcher uses design method, data analysis, and finding interpretation to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1989) offered strategies to a qualitative researcher to achieve trustworthiness or rigor of the study. Reliability and validity of the study are crucial components of these strategies (Morse, 2015).

Reliability

Reliability of research, in essence, is an ability to obtain the same results if the same study were to be repeated (Morse, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated the concept of dependability implies trackable variability, meaning that variability could be attributed to identify sources of data. Researchers could enhance personal orientation and focus along with the reliability of research through prolonged engagement and member checking (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was doing direct observations of participants along with 60 to 75 minute semistructured interviews. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) and the observation protocol (see Appendix B). Researchers engaging participants in member checking enhances data stability, in another words – dependability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used member checking to assure that my notes and interpretation reflect the perspective of the participant.

Validity

Morse (2015) described the validity of qualitative research as a degree or quality of representation of the actual phenomenon. Supporting evidence by multiple sources is one of the tactics researchers can use to increase construct validity when doing case study (Yin, 2018). Researchers can demonstrate validity through credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Credibility. The potency of the effect of qualitative research is dependent upon the degree of credibility existing in the study (Yin, 2018). Credibility refers to the overall believability of the study (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016), or, in other words, to how true the results are to the participants' meaning (Connelly, 2016). I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews, interpreted the information, and shared the interpretation with participants to member check and gain credibility. I also conducted direct observations of the actual events for three weeks. Fusch and Ness (2015) argued that prolonged engagement with the study might contribute to the credibility and might help to mitigate personal bias. As another data source, I used the Company's documents. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that for ensuring credibility the researcher would obtain the data from discovery of the human livid experiences and participant's perceptions. My choice of participants (purposeful sampling), as well as the research design (blended miniethnography and case study), helped me ensure the credibility of the sources. Notes from the interviews, member checking, observations, and company documents contributed to the quality of triangulation and research credibility.

Transferability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described concept of transferability of qualitative research as fitness into context outside of the study. Qualitative researchers support the transferability of the findings with a rich, detailed description of the context (Connelly, 2016). Yin (2018) suggested that adherence to established protocols enhances the transferability of the findings. I strictly followed the interview and observation protocols. I was working on detailed participants' criteria, details of geographical location, alignment with a research question, and the coding process. Yet, this is for future researcher and readers to decide whether they could use these research findings for their needs (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Confirmability. Hays et al. (2016) discussed confirmability as a degree to which the researcher can present the results of the study as a true reflection of the participants' experience. Morse (2015) compared confirmability of the qualitative research with objectivity. Connelly (2016) argued that confirmability is the researcher's neutrality, or an ability to disregard own bias representing participants' view. Fusch, Fusch, and Ness (2018) noted that triangulation might enhance study's confirmability. I was using several data sources: semistructured interviews, direct observations, and documents review to triangulate research findings. I was also using member checking to validate my interpretation of the answers and observations.

Data saturation. Theoretical data saturation is the state where no new significant information emerges (Hennink et al., 2017). In other words, when an additional source has no substantial contribution to the content, the researcher may reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation is vital for showing rigor in a qualitative study (Morse, 2015). The qualitative researcher's asses data saturation in terms of richness, when the data is of high quality, and thickness, when the information is of sufficient quantity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I achieved data saturation by (a) conducting semistructured interviews, (d) conducting direct observations, (c) making use of member checking for interview transcripts and notes from the observations, and (d) triangulating the data by reviewing company documents. These different data sources and triangulation method should ensure that the data for this study is both rich and thick.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore strategies that some midlevel managers of MNC use for establishing high-performance organizational culture. The objective of Section 2 is to provide a detailed description of how the project will take place. In Section 2, I included a description of the role of the researcher, the participants, and the purposeful sampling technique. I also presented the selected data collection method of open-ended interview questions and direct observations, emphasizing the ethical aspects, the reliability, and validity of the study.

In Section 3, I opened with an overview of the study and presentation of the findings. I discussed the application to business practice and consideration for the implication on social change. I concluded Section 3 with recommendations for actions, the potential for further research, reflection, and study's summary and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative miniethnography single case study research was to explore strategies midlevel managers of MNCs in Singapore used to create high-performance organizational culture. In the data collection process, I included interviews of six midlevel managers working in a global high-tech corporation, direct observations of the managers in action, and company documents. I found that to create a high-performance organizational culture midlevel managers of an MNC employed the following strategies: (a) create foundations for safety and trust, (b) strive for excellence, (c) take responsibilities and leading with the end state in mind, and (d) give and get feedback.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching RQ of this study was:

RQ: What strategies do Singapore midlevel managers use to create a high-performance organizational culture?

I used semistructured interviews and a member checking process, followed by direct observations and a review of the company's policies for data collection and methodological triangulation. Data analyses revealed following themes: (a) creating an environment of trust and safety; (b) the way of doing things matters; (c) embracing a leadership style; and, (d) enforcing a culture of work-related, immediate, specific, and educative feedback. In the interviews, the participants emphasized the importance of applying specific leadership style that includes the individual approach, protection of team members from turbulences of the corporation, coaching rather than directing, and continuous check-in for staying “on course” or in line with the purpose of the organization. In Table 3 I show all the themes that emerged from my data collection process.

Table 3

Emerged Themes

Theme	Subtheme	Appearances
Way of doing things matters	Culture, norms, teamwork, proactiveness, professionalism,	49
Creating environment of safety and trust	Clarity, feel of belonging, honesty, integrity, norms, transparency	65
Embracing leadership style	Empowerment, healthy competition, ethics, fair, invest in yourself, protect	42
Enforcing a culture of work-related, immediate, specific,	Rewards and incentives, appraisal, improvement, recognition	39
Alignment on purpose	Alignment with corporate objectives, customer focus	17
Performance		3
Tools and environment		2
Training and development		4

Theme 1: Creating an Environment of Safety and Trust

Maslow (1954) identified safety as one of the basic needs of the individual’s well-being. Hofstede (1984) mentioned the need for a manager to invest in trust with the employee before assigning any task. All participants defined safety and trust as a fundamental necessity for the high-performance organizational culture. They mentioned that none of their achievements would be possible if the feeling of safety and real trust in managers and teammates were not there. A company's ethical standards declare trust as one of the values that define the way organization acts and performs.

In a recent case study, Page et al. (2019) explored organizational culture of a midsize American company. Page et al. discussed two aspects of organizational culture: (a) content, or values that drive corporate purpose; and (b) the structure, or ways the values manifest themselves. I witnessed the manifestation of trust while observing a sequence of weekly forecast meetings with all participants present. The moment when Lee (pseudonym) delivered terrible news, all attendees were at rapt attention. There was a moment of silence during which everyone took time to consider the news. Luis (pseudonym) asked why the planned deal failed, Darren (pseudonym) asked about chances of recovery. However, these were not questions of mistrust but inquiries of more details. There was no judgement around the table, no cynicism. The team as a whole accepted the challenge to find a solution for potentially missing delivery. "Be transparent even when the news is bad," said Luis during the interview to emphasize the level of trust he encourages in his organization. I observed Luis's transparency during the meeting when he had to deliver bad news to his boss and his peers.

Manley et al. (2019) asserted that organizations where leaders promote a culture of safety and encourage team members to openly express their fears and concerns benefit from a higher level of efficiency and well-being. Participants emphasized the strategic effort they make to maintain safety and openness in their organizations Darren particularly mentioned his investment in developing confidence by creating a personal rapport with the team members, being transparent. He defined difficult and challenging situations as when he is not clear on the way forward or feels uncomfortable at moments of truth. Darren spoke how showing his doubts and vulnerability to the team contributed to building an atmosphere of trust and safety within his organization:

> Once we are done with the goals setting for individuals, I shared everything with the team. It helped to avoid silo-type operation . . . [I] use every opportunity to contribute to trust and cohesion. And then ideas will flow, performance goes up. Individuals know more than manager what the right step to do, listen to them and let them drive, facilitate . Build the atmosphere where people want to be at their best.

All participants demonstrated a high level of trust within the team.

This was relevant to the BEM principles. Gilbert (2019) discussed the environment of safety and trust as an a determinant of the quality of the firm. No improvement is possible in an organization where members do not feel safe and do not trust the leader and colleagues. I observed all participants during one-on-one meetings with their staff members. I felt an atmosphere of open and honest dialogue in all observations. Sam (pseudonym) impressed me by remembering the names and ages of his employees' children. At the same meeting, he criticized a lack of sense of urgency that cost the team one missing deadline. Despite a tough message and tense arguments, I could feel the trust between the two. Sam pointed out the mistake in judgement and prioritization of activities. He also offered help for the future, inviting the employee to ask for his help or consider higher-level objectives when making decisions.

For an organization to execute to its full potential, trust and safety are necessary ingredients of the organizational culture. Although every manager has personal practices and strategies to get there, all participants discussed the atmosphere of safety and trust as a cornerstone of the high-performance culture of their team. Lack of trust and safety in an organization may create more than performance-related problems. A culture that lacks safety and trust was a reason for the Chernobyl disaster (Antonsen, 2017). By creating an atmosphere of trust and safety, the managers established a workplace where everyone felt they belonged, had the courage to take risks, and felt secure enough to ask for help. Midlevel managers of the company invested significant effort in creating a culture of safety and trust. The team succeeded in improving its employee engagement index by an average of 11% over the last 3 years, as demonstrated by the annual employee's satisfaction survey. Studying human service employees in Canada, Shier et al. (2019) concluded that a safe workplace is one that creates belonging, encourages openness, promotes cooperation, and inspires a desire to excel. The need in the environment of safety and trust (Theme 1) for high-performance organizational culture resonates with an existing body of knowledge and the BEM, which was the conceptual framework of this study.

Theme 2: Way of Doing Things Matters

Schein (2010) embraced norms, values, accepted behaviors, shared understanding of "how the things are done here" under the overarching definition of organizational culture. Fusch et al. (2016) called corporate culture the all-in holistic environment of the organization. Jim (pseudonym) elaborated on personal accountability by setting norms and being an example of how he wants people to treat each other within a team, as well as those outside of the group. Luis echoed him, stating that while the *what* is necessary, the *how* is just as crucial. He feels personally accountable for setting how he wants things to be done. William (pseudonym) and Luis clarified through member checking on the process of performance evaluation. William pointed out,

> Goals and KPI's are a bit stretched, but not impossible . . . Adjust over time. Evaluation is not only what they achieved, but also *how* [behaviours, displayed values, efficiency] . . . Especially in difficult situations, how did they behave to achieve the objectives, bringing the value to the company.

Luis added,

> Of course everyone has his own KPIs. But for me, it is about proactiveness, initiatives, and closing the loop [follow up]. If these three are in place the individual and the team will be high-performing. The goals should be achieved, but *how* is crucial.

Participants of my study proved with their answers and behaviors all of the definitions of organizational culture.

Ali Taha et al. (2016) mentioned that organizations with high-performance organizational culture cultivate high level of collaboration, transparency, and creativity. Subthemes (Table 3) of transparency, teamwork, proactiveness, and professionalism emerged from the interviews and observations of the participants' behavior. Participants stressed importance of collaboration and creativity, and they constantly encourage it in their teams. Fusch and Gillespie (2012) and Cravens et al. (2015) discussed that crafting organizational culture is a continues effort, especially when the aim is to execute to the full potential. Participants of the study constantly repeated that the culture-building process never stops. They insisted on continuous effort. The motive of "walking the talk" came through in several themes, including leadership style, trust, and ways of doing things.

Sam, Luis, and Darren defined professionalism as one of the critical characteristics of their organization. By professionalism they meant a value-creating approach to processes and problems. The company documents contain job description and professional skills requirements. Managers encourage employees to focus on value-adding actions only. They set expectations and define the goals in a way that supports this approach. From reviewing the company's policy documents, I learned that achieving customer satisfaction is the company's number one priority. In Lee's team, the manager set the goal for zero missing deliveries, while Sam's group were more influential in the product quality area. This process of setting goals and objectives for the team resonates with the BEM recommendations for high-performance: each goal represents a worthy accomplishment, the process is under full control and responsibility of the employee, the individual goals are reconciled with the team goal and the company's objectives.

Over decades Benjamin Ruark worked with more than a dozen manufacturing and service providing organizations exploring and addressing performance challenges and the phenomenon of mediocrity. Ruark (2017) learned that midlevel manager in big organizations often resist to change. In longitudinal and qualitative research, D'Souza's (2018) exposed loopholes in an educational system that keep mediocre and ordinary teachers in the system. The midlevel managers I engaged in my research were not ordinary. The teams they manage demonstrated consistent overachievement in the three most important parameters–financial results, customer satisfaction, and employee's engagement. They also continuously invested in developing their leadership skills taking classes offered by the Company or taking their initiative. The Company, as part of the employee's development investment, offer various skills development classes every quarter to all employees. The list and the schedule of the courses are available to all employees. Participation is subject to the direct manager's approval and availability. Darren stepped beyond the regular. Feeling a personal need, he took a leadership development class in one of the leading Business School's. Darren said,

> I paid for it, I felt I need it for myself. This class gave me a boost, confidence. I started feeling more equal with my peers and more confident with my team. I also feel comfortable to encourage self–development in my team, I did it myself his team about self-development afterwards.

The midlevel managers I met constantly look for new information and keep themselves relevant.

In all my observations, I witnessed strong encouragement for teamwork. Luis deliberately told me that he would support more collective team effort rather than one-man heroic save: "I try to highlight the strength, strength of individuals and strength of the team. I encourage teamwork. Positive encouragement and teamwork." I observed the manager asking his staff to work together on technical problem: “Guys, you have to figure it out together.” There are times and situations when having a mutually agreed decision slows down the decision making process. Lee explained: “ When I make my own decision, it is always a test for the atmosphere of trust.”

Lack of in-depth explanations of motives and intentional focus on accomplishments over performance are areas of the main criticism of BEM (Winiecki, 2015). Gilbert (2007) admitted that BEM is not addressing aspects of personal motives. However, in the BEM Gilbert (2007) and Gilbert (2019) explained that individual might evaluate accomplishment always in a broader organizational context. The Company’s way of doing things, or corporate culture, provides this context for every achievement. The findings from Theme 2 support the existing body of knowledge and complement principles of the conceptual framework (BEM).

Theme 3: Embracing Leadership Style

There is a dyadic influence between leadership style and organizational culture. Leaders impose personal values on the group. On the other hand, corporate culture might have an impact on the leadership style (Schein, 2010). In global MNCs, the leaders face a challenge of interacting with different personalities coming from different cultural foundations. Cooperation between high-effort employees at management levels interact with any of the types of employees' effort behaviors forms positive cultural foundations (Curry et al., 2018). Regarding the role of the leader, Lee said,

> Then new leader came and changed the culture. He introduced his beliefs and shared them with entire organization. That helped a lot , that also connected my

> team with business as well. The change of the culture was driven by the new leader.

To encourage a democratic way of leadership, the Company promotes the values of integrity, diversity, and equality. There are many ways for employees to evaluate the manager, but the most official and the most sound on the corporate level is the annual employee's satisfaction survey. In this survey, each employee marks a manager's performance in terms of equality, fairness, and unbiased approach. All participants unanimously and independently mentioned that treating equally the team members is their utmost goal. William (pseudonym) told me that he is extremally proud to get the highest score from this team on this topic. From the Company's perspective, these are foundations of the culture, and this is the way managers should do things.

Ruark (2017) assigned midlevel manager with responsibility to reverse the Pygmalion effect – to expect the unexpected. This approach is aligned with BEM, where managers are totally responsible with employees performance. Midlevel managers that participated in my research see themselves fully accountable. Sam, Luis, Darren almost word to word said that in such a big organization they could not control the behavior of everyone. Sam said,

> I can’t be responsible for what big boss is saying or doing. However, I am responsible for what I do and for my team results and well-being. So I explain and when needed protect them from the storms from above.

Luis said,

> My strategy is to be a buffer, to hold all transactions that might be counterproductive for the team. I am trying to make sure that the team is united towards day to day work. We do things because we know what we do and why; not because the big boss asked for.

According to Darren, “I can’t control everyone. But everyone should stand up for everyone in the team. This is what I expect from the team. Everybody have to be on the same page.” However, they see their role in creating the most productive environment for their teams, even if it means to protect them from outside messages or actions. They find no good in blaming top management and see the utmost value in showing examples of taking measures to change.

Almost every one of the participants manage has team members in remote locations. To maintain a personal relationship, managers willing to extend their trips and to take long drives for meeting team members in person while travelling in the country. Giving attention to everyone, establishing a personal connection–these are the elements came up from the interviews and observations of the one on one meetings - the culture of respect to an individual, open-door policy, support and empathy. I observed William spending one and half hour on one of one with his employee in Thailand, an hour longer than scheduled, listening to the concerns and fears of the latter, clearing uncertainties during turbulent times of global pandemic. Successful leadership in volatile times and high level of uncertainty is more about testing different hypothesis and assumptions looking for a market reaction, rather than investing in detailed plans (Schoemaker et al., 2018). I witnessed this approach by observing Darren's staff meeting. The manager presented a real business challenge to the team – how to deliver hands-on training under COVID–19 restriction, where the customer would not allow any external staff to visit the premises and the Company wouldn't allow any employee to travel. The team, empowered by the manager, came up with the revolutionary idea of delivering the training remotely by using advanced video and audio platforms. All participants mentioned empowerment as one of the key ingredients of their leadership approach.

Another exciting element of the leadership style and the way of encouraging individuals to execute on their full potential is an element of competition within the team. Sam told me that he found internal competition useful in solving a few challenging problems with channel partners. Sam said,

> When objectives are clean from personal agendas and clear for everyone the competition help. I had one employee doing better job than others on partner's inventory reduction. After talking and understanding the method, I asked him to share it with the rest of the team . . . He did, and I called for a challenge–who can do it better? Guess what, the teacher came the last on the half a year run. As a team we have got the regional award.

In William's view, when the rules are clear, transparent and fixed along with the entire contest, the competition within the team is healthy. However, this is the role of the leader to prevent it from going fierce by keeping it clear of personal preferences and changing targets.

Organizational culture and leadership influence each other. Schoemaker et al. (2018) examined how intertwined qualities of dynamic capabilities, leadership strategies, and innovations support leaders in dealing with challenges of VUCA world. Schoemaker et al.'s findings stressed that the leaders should develop dynamic capabilities to lead their organization through turbulences of the modern business. The Company's midlevel managers demonstrated qualities of transformations leaders: coaching, inspiration, engaging, empowering, and driving change. The participants of my study showed their strive for self and team development, ability to assume accountability, and the ability to challenge the status quo continuously. In third leisure theorem of BEM, Gilbert (2007) defined manager's responsibility for creating an environment and influencing individual's behaviour to support execution at full potential. The findings from Theme 3 of my study support this theorem and the existing body of knowledge.

Theme 4: Enforcing a Culture of Work-related, Immediate, Specific, and Educative Feedback

Developing a process and encouraging feedback is part of the organizational culture (Ross & Stefaniak, 2018). In BEM, Gilbert (2007) defined feedback as one of the most prominent tools to indicate worthiness and accomplishment. In my research, the theme of giving and getting feedback appeared in every interaction with the participants. When the feedback is genuine and honest, free of judgment, and aiming towards a better future, it becomes a driver of shaping culture and overall performance of the team (Ramani et al., 2018).

The Company insists on once a year annual review process between the manager and the employee. The Company also provides guidelines to both sides on how to prepare for this session. From the policy documents, I learned the ultimate objectives of this review – to summarize last year performance and align on development plan and expectations for the next year. That said, none of the participants thought that this once year feedback is enough. All of them told me that they see in feedback the most critical mechanism for sustaining trust and shaping the performance of the team. While characterizing team's culture, all of the participants called for a culture of feedback, meaning that the reaction to events, regardless of their positive or negative nature, is a built-in part of the behavioral norms of their organizations.

Observing Sam’s one on one with one of his team leaders, I observed him using his records from the previous conversation and making notes fresh notes on the spot. As an observer, I felt that this conversation was a continuous discussion where both sides have equal rights to express thoughts and opinions. Concluding the research of 25 years, Drago-Severson and Blum-DeStefano (2018) stated that striving for growth and improvement organizations invest in creating a culture of feedback.

Luis told me that he uses any possible opportunity for feedback – in person, email, phone message, etc. When asked why he explained that providing feedback as close as possible to the event is crucial, he also mentioned that the longer you delay the input, the fewer details you remember and the less relevant the content becomes. Jim was passioned on the same elements – work-related and immediate – talking about feedback. He also added a few qualitative details: never judgemental or cynical, always empathetic and genuine. Darren spoke a lot about feedback. We met during the period when he had to come to his boss with the plan of significant cost reduction in his budget plan. Talking about feedback, Darren put special attention on honesty and transparency. "Be transparent when and honest even when the news is bad," – were his words.

I saw Jim providing positive feedback on a failed initiative to his employee. He praised the effort and indicated his opinion on the reason for failure, which was the wrong call by the employee. The outcome of the conversation was surprising – the employee left the room encouraged to take more initiatives and to be more focused on the details and consequences while making decisions. Ross and Stefaniak (2018) surveyed 61 managers to learn the influence of the feedback on culture. Sam opined that high-quality genuine feedback sharpens the culture and makes it grows and achievements oriented. Lee told me the best way to support the flow of feedback in the team is to give everyone time, namely weekly one-on-one meetings are the platforms for such conversations. Other participants were less conservative; while they supported the idea of the one-on-one, they also emphasized that there is no need to wait, that close to event input is more effective. William and Luis elaborated that the feedback should do either way. William said,

> I am trying to make my feedback immediate as possible and constructive as possible. Usually it takes the form of questions, encouraging self-reflection. Frequent discussions about performance do help. The feedback is situational, where possible and where relevant, plus, of cause, on regular meetings.
>
> I measure myself via employees engagement score and voice of the workforce survey (annual employees satisfaction survey)…We build long term plan, assessing our capabilities today and those we will need for tomorrow. But

> it's not enough, so I set up bi-weekly feedback survey. I reflect on myself and discuss it with my team…

According to Luis, "Positive feedback on every opportunity. I launched employee PULSE survey helps to get feedback on myself. It helps to see and adjust the course and the progress of the change." For them, to achieve a certain level of trust and a high score on my manager section of the employees' satisfaction survey, they used the web-based platform of collecting bi-weekly anonymous feedback from the team and openly discussed it on their staff meeting. Both made this process a permanent part of their staff meeting. I observed these conversations: the depth and quality of the feedback that I heard manifested high level of trust, safety, and culture of feedback in these teams.

In BEM, Gilbert (2007) wrote that organization leaders should evaluate worthy accomplishment in the context of the culture (purpose, goals) the performance occurred. Gilbert (2019) discussed four essential characteristics of feedback: (a) work-related – not personal or judgemental, but related to a specific event at the workplace, (b) immediate – as close as possible to the event, (c) specific and selective – focused on details, not vague, and, (d) educative – carrying the massage of information that individual could use in the future. Mannevuo (2018) stressed that timely and accurate feedback can significantly influence individual's performance in his recent revision on Hawthorne effect. D'Souza (2018) and Ruark (2017) in their studies referred to feedback as a vital tool for setting expectations. Properly set expectations and timely information on the progress can change performance of the individual or the entire team.

Participants of my study demonstrated the strong support to the culture of feedback along with a deep understanding of all four key characteristics of good feedback. However, they all lacked the practice and experience in providing educative feedback. They also mentioned, that giving positive feedback they usually less conscious of specifics and keep it more generic. The findings from Theme 4 aligned with the existing body of knowledge and conceptual framework of my study – the BEM.

Performance, Alignment on Purpose, and Other Themes that Emerged from the Data Analysis

Other themes that emerged from my data collection process included Alignment on Purpose, Performance, Tools and Environment, and Training and Development (Table 3). The Alignment on Purpose included two subthemes: alignment on corporate objectives and customer focus. Alignment on purpose is vital for creating a cohesive team, where vectors of personal interests point in the same direction with the overarching objectives of the organization and the corporation. When introducing the concept of setting and alignment on personal goals with individuals Gilbert (2007) emphasized the importance of reconciling the goals of other team members for supporting an entire team or department goals and contribute to strategic objectives of the firm as a whole.

The Company consistently communicates at all levels promoting and explaining its strategy and objectives. I noticed, during my work with the participants, that they invest a fair amount of time in interpreting and translating these strategies and objectives to their teams. Moreover, they make an effort to show how individual goals contribute to the achievements of the Company. The regional organization focuses on delighting costumers in the Asia Pacific and Japan. Therefore, the pieces of evidence of a customer-focused culture of the organization were not surprising. Every participant mentioned customer needs as the highest priority. In practice, it means that in every consideration, the individual should prioritize the task that adds the highest value to the customer over the rest.

The themes of Tools and Environment and Training and Development appeared in my interactions with participants in the context that supports major themes. Providing necessary tools and creating an environment that makes doing the job as easy and as comfortable as possible seems to be trivial in the Company. The managers mentioned these factors as a given. The Company invest a lot in creating training sessions for professional and personal development. The managers also make an effort to assign their people to classes. Everyone has their own goal of attending a certain amount of development classes a year.

All secondary themes occurred to support four major themes that emerged in this research. Tools and Environment, along with Training and Development, reinforce the context of Creating an Environment of Trust and Safety and Embracing Leadership Style. There might be no safety without tools and comfortable environment to do the job, as well as a level of attention managers pay to train and development of team members is strong evidence of the care for people. Manager's investment in alignment on purpose is part of their leadership style and also their way of creating an environment of safety and trust.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings I discovered in my research show the strategies some Singapore midlevel managers used to create a high-performance organizational culture. Fareed et al. (2016), Kontoghiorghes (2016), O'Neill and Salas (2018), Saratun (2016), and others emphasized the role of high-performance culture in creating sustainable competitive advantage. Metheny (2013) and Ou et al. (2017) asserted that midlevel managers play a pivotal role in shaping the organizational culture of the organization and have a crucial influence on the company's success. Interviewing executives of leading U.S. equity market firms Graham et al. (2016) found that 92% of leaders acknowledge the importance of organizational culture and its influence on corporate performance. Still, most of them admitted to having no clear strategies of influencing the culture.

In my study, I learned that midlevel managers used different strategies for building a high-performance culture. The Company documents, including pieces of evidence of manager's feedback, company's norms, and employee's satisfaction survey also indicated on multiple approaches to strategies of developing and maintaining organizational culture. The findings of my study could fill in the lack of practical knowledge among midlevel managers on how to build and sustain the high-performance corporate culture and complement the gap in the literature on the subject. The four themes I uncovered in my study provide recommendations on the best business practises: (a) creating an environment of trust and safety, (b) way of doing things matters, (c) embracing leadership style, and, (d) enforcing a culture of work-related, immediate, specific, and educative feedback.

Current COVID–19 pandemic turned the world upside down for millions of people and thousands of businesses. Leaders of today might need special skills of developing and strategies of organizing dynamic capabilities of teams they lead to succeed in VUCA world (Schoemaker et al., 2018). In the times of uncertainty and crisis, there is a need for leaders with strategies of how to deliver the truth but unfortunate news and to keep things going at the same time (Grint, 2020). Findings of my research might help business leaders and managers to build an organizational culture that allows them to cope with the challenging trends effectively. At the same time, attract and retain a highly talented, motivated, and committed workforce (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Midlevel managers and business leaders might find the findings of my study useful for developing a high-performance culture in their organizations and fostering an environment for performance excellence.

Implications for Social Change

Large MNCs bear social responsibility for their immediate and more distant communities that difficult to underestimate (Kim & Thapa, 2018). Kim et al. (2017) noted an explicit dependency between the corporate approach to social responsibility and employees' behavior. Corporate leader's decisions and actions could greatly influence civic climate by promoting the worth, dignity, development of individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies (p. 1351). Striving for excellence in the business organization may create positive reciprocity in the closed social environment.

Organizations with positive workplace culture might have a positive effect on an individual’s self-esteem, confidence, job security, and well-being (Pedersen & Gwozdz, 2018). A society, where more individuals strive for excellence, generates more opportunities, enjoys from a better quality of life, and contributes more to others who need more. Working in a positive high-performance work environment might enable employees to experience enhanced job opportunities and steady financial security, which could benefit employees' families, friends, and communities. Corporations with high-performance organizational culture groom strong leaders who become role models for entire communities.

Recommendations for Action

Based on my study findings and existing literature on the subject, I recommend some actions that may address the specific business problem of creating strategies for building and maintaining high-performance organizational culture. Table 4 represents the strategies and specific actions for midlevel managers of global MNCs.

Table 4

Recommended Strategies and Actions

High–performance culture creating and maintaining strategies	Actions by midlevel managers
Create foundations of safety and trust	• Treat everyone equally with respect • Be clear on job requirements and expectations • Be transparent and provide knowledge and information to succeed
Strive for excellence, do not settle for mediocre	• Stay and keep the team on purpose • Encourage teamwork and collaboration
Be responsible and lead with an end state in mind	• Empower your people • Never stop investing in team's and personal development
Promote feedback – give and get	• Provide WISE feedback to your team • Encourage feedback on yourself and take actions to address the feedback

Managers have overall responsibility and accountability over the performance of the organization (Gilbert, 2007). The results of applying these strategies and actions could lead to exceptional performance and a high level of individual's satisfaction. Teams with high-performance organizational culture demonstrate creativity, initiatives, and a high level of collaboration (Ali Taha et al., 2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016).

Several methods are available for me to disseminate the findings of this study. As a practitioner and scholar, I will promote the results of this study via lectures and workshops in academic institutions as well as in different business forums. Along with the accomplishment of my doctoral research, I am planning to publish a series of articles in peer-reviewed journals to elaborate on my study results, implications, and possible ways to apply them in practice.

Recommendations for Further Research

Hancock and Algozzine (2017) defined limitations as uncontrollable factors that may affect the results of the research. The major limitations of my study are the facts that I focused on one company only and all participants of my study are employees of this company. Hence, future research should focus on some other companies in IT or any other industry. Singapore is a multinational hub for professionals all over the world (Yeung et al., 2001). However, it might not represent other similar hubs, such as Hong Kong, Luxemburg, and the Bay Area in California. Future researches should expand to different geographies.

In my research, I focused on qualitative characteristics of organizational culture and strategies that lead to building and maintaining the high-performance corporate culture. I used the purposeful sample for my qualitative study. Using a representative statistically valid sample for quantitative research might increase chances for generalizability of the results (see Yin, 2018). Future researchers might consider evaluating the correlation between applied strategies and cultural characteristics.

Reflections

I started my doctoral study 4 years ago to explore the strategies managers in a global MNC in Singapore apply to create and maintain high–performance organizational culture. When I began my research, I was working for the same MNC. Based on my own experience, I had my view on what high-performance team is how to build it. Using personal lenses instead of those of participants to comment and interpret the data is a common mistake of novice researchers (Fusch et al., 2018). I was well aware of this potential mistake. To avoid it, I used methodological triangulation during my data collection process. Methodological triangulation (within a method) is a process of using multiple data sources that fit specific research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In my research, I triangulated data from semistructured in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document review.

Another topic to reflect on is an evolution of my knowledge and understanding the subject of my study. I learned a lot preparing the literature review. I learned to understand better the strength and weakness of the BEM. The lack of attention to the soft motives and complexity in implementation make the BEM hard to apply (Gilbert, 2007; Winiecki, 2015). However, BEM's down to earth results-oriented approach makes it relevant today and provides a reliable foundation for performance engineering (Fusch & Gillespie, 2012).

Last, but not the least lesson for me, was almost hierarchical orders of strategies, presented by participants for creating and maintaining high-performance organizational culture. Although I never underestimated the importance of trust, I have not realized the importance of safety on the individual's performance. Dickens' Tales of Two Cities starts with: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness." In the worst of times and the age of foolishness, the importance of safety and resilient leadership might not be overestimated (Grint, 2020).

Conclusion

In the world where the VUCA environment becomes a new standard, the cultural resilience of the organization defines its competitive strength. An organizational culture that encourages and nurtures everyone continuously to perform to the full potential will serve organizations for more prolonged and more sustainable success. In the world where general information and technology become more frequent and available to all, the way of doing things might define the room for the next improvement or differentiation. Findings of this study shed light on the strategies leaders might apply for creating and maintaining high-performance organizational culture. Leaders might pay more attention to creating a culture of trust and safety, not settling for just enough, responsibility and purpose, a constant flow of feedback. Organizations with such culture will benefit from satisfied and engaged employees, happy customers, and competitive advantage.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The purpose of the interview protocol is to ensure consistency and quality in the interview process across all participants.

Interview Protocol

What you will do	What you will say—script
Introduce the interview and set the stage— often over a meal or coffee	**Introductory Statement and Signature of Papers** *Good morning/afternoon, my name is Alex Lapshun. Thank you very much for coming and helping with my study. This interview will last approximately one hour to 75 minutes during which I will be asking you about strategies you have used as a leader to build high-performance organizational culture in _______team .* *The purpose of my study is to explore strategies that midlevel managers of multinational corporations in Singapore apply for building high-performance organizational culture.*
Review aspects of consent form. Ensure the participant understands the content of the form and signs. Wait for the reply.	**Consent Forms** *Before we get started, I would like to discuss the informed participation consent form which I sent you via email.* *This form is a reminder that: (a) all information you provide is confidential, (b) your participation is voluntary, and you may stop participating in the study at any time, and (c) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Please let me know if you have any question related to this form. Thanks a lot sending me your confirmed consent to participate in my study. Or, if one hasn't replied to the form yet:* *If you elect to participate please reply to my email with statement "I consent".* *Thank you for your volunteering to participate and sharing your experiences.*

Interview Protocol

Ask to record the interview and ensure the participant states their approval.	**Recording Permission** *To facilitate my notetaking, I would like to use my phone for recording our conversation today. In this way I can get all of the details and at the same time actively focus on our conversation. Is that okay with you?* **If yes**: Thank you! Please let me know if at any point you would like me to turn off the recorder or keep something off record. **If no**: Thank you for letting me know. I will only take notes of our conversation.
Ensure participant understands they can ask questions at any time throughout the interview.	**Initial Questions** *Before we begin the interview, are there any questions you would like to ask?* **If yes**: discuss questions **If no**: If any questions arise at any point in the study, please feel free to ask them at any time. I am more than happy to answer your questions.
	1.What are the norms, values, and acceptable behaviors in your organization?
• Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in depth	2.What strategies do you use to encourage high performance in your organization?
	3.What strategies have you used to motivate your employees to improve their performance?
	4.What strategies have you implemented to change the organizational culture?
	5.What strategies did you find worked best to change the culture of your organization to one with high-performance?

	6. What method did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies on for effecting a high–performance organizational culture?
	7.What methods did you use to measure employee performance?
	8.What additional information would you like to share on the strategies your organization employs to achieve a high-performance organizational culture in your organization?
Bridge all learning after the initial interview questions and reflect on questions that you have unanswered after probing. Wrap up interview thanking participant	**Reflection** You said earlier that ____ or Can you clarify ____
	Conclude Interview Thank you for your time. You have given me a very clear explanation of how you increased employee productivity at _____________.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	**Follow up Interview Request** If possible, I would appreciate the opportunity to verify that I understood your responses correctly by scheduling a follow-up interview. By then, I will have a succinct synopsis of your responses for you to review. **If yes**: Is there a specific time you prefer? Again, thank you very much for your time and help. **If no**: Thank you again for your time and help.

Follow Up Interview Protocol

Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	**Follow Up Interview** Thank you for agreeing to another interview with me. This follow-up interview is to ensure I understand your responses from our initial interview. I have prepared a synopsis of your responses for you to view and provide feedback.
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question	Below is the synopsis of your responses from our last interview. *Or, if the conversation is not face-to-face:* I have sent you the synopsis of your responses from our last interview. Please verify they are correct and please let me know if anything needs editing.

Interview Protocol

Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found—note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval. Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, What would you like to add?	1. What are the norms, values, and acceptable behaviors in your organization? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	2. What strategies do you use to encourage high-performance in your organization? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	3. What strategies have you used to motivate your employees to improve their performance? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*

	4. What strategies have you implemented to change the organizational culture? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	5. What strategies did you find worked best to change the culture of your organization to one with high-performance? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	6. What method did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies on for effecting a high–performance organizational culture? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	7. What methods did you use to measure employee performance? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*
	8. What additional information would you like to share on the strategies your organization employs to achieve a high-performance organizational culture in your organization? *Add a succinct synthesis of the interpretation- perhaps one paragraph.*

Appendix B: Observation Protocol

Directions: I will spend 3 hours a day, three days a week over three weeks to collect ample field notes of my observations of interactions between midlevel managers of the Fortune 500 IT Company with their peers and subordinates. In my observation, I will focus on three key areas to include: the background, the participants – midlevel managers participating in my study, and the actions of my study participants. The table below represents the structure and context of my observation. After the observation process, I will review my notes for potential concepts and ideas and start making sense of the data towards the data analysis stage.

It is possible, that due to constrains imposed by COVID–19 virus, I will conduct my observation by participating in virtual meetings along with participants of my study. In this situation, I will observe each participant in at least two different virtual meetings: staff meeting and one-on-one conversation with the team member.

Tentative Schedule **Date: 00/XX/2019**	**(Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9:00am-11:00am & 01:00pm – 02:00pm) for 3 weeks** **In case of virtual observations, participants will invite me to join virtual meetings based on their schedule.**
The Background: Physical setting (Describe in thick rich detail what it looks like, sounds like, and any other details. Record what you know about the	I will carry out observations of the work environment settings and note down non-verbal clues and body language whiles I keep taking journal notes alongside the nonintrusive close observation. I will observe the internal arrangements and furnishings within the meeting rooms and the informants' offices during the interviewing. I will participate in the weekly planning meetings, where all participants are in attendance, between 01:00 to 02:00pm

participants and their roles, if known). Who is there? What are participants doing?	weekly for three weeks. I will also participate in staff meetings of everyone my study participants. I will observe at least one one-on-one meeting and one staff meeting per participant to get sense of how they interact with their staff. I will pay close attention to the participants and their respective roles as the meeting progress to the end. In case of video or audio observation, I will pay close attention to the intonation of participants and their listening. My ability to observe body language might be limited.
The People: How do they interact? What are they saying? What does their body language tell you?	I intend to observe how midlevel managers interact with each other, their staff and with the rest of the workforce; while noting body language. In case of video or audio observation, I will pay close attention to the intonation of participants and their listening. My ability to observe body language might be limited.
The Action: What happens? What is the sequence? Is there a cause and effect? If so, provide details.	I will capture patterns of behavior and within the period of the observation and seek to interpret those patterns with the hope of making sense out of the observed actions. I will pay attention to how participants of my study conduct their meetings and the effect of their behavior and actions.
Time:	Observation: