

2020

## Big Data Marketing Strategies for Improving Sales Revenues

Angela M. Welbaum  
*Walden University*

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Big Data Marketing Strategies for Improving Sales Revenues

by

Angela M. Welbaum

MBA, Walden University, 2014

BS, University of Cincinnati, 1986

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Marketing

Walden University

October 2020

## Abstract

Marketing leaders often lack strategies to increase sales revenues using big data (BD) analytics and technology. Marketing leaders who better understand the strategies that influence BD-based sales revenues may benefit from BD market opportunities to be economic catalysts in the markets they serve. Grounded by change theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore BD-based marketing strategies used by marketing leaders to increase sales revenues. Data collection included semistructured interviews with 3 marketing leaders from organizations headquartered in Ohio and online sales documents. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis and coded to identify 5 themes: customer experience, BD marketing analytics, collaboration across business units, marketing sales alignment, and key performance indicators. A key recommendation is for marketing leaders to refine marketing mix activities leading to increased sales revenues. The implications for positive social change include the potential for BD-based marketing managers to increase sales, create jobs, and support regional communities' economic development.

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## Dedication

This doctoral journey has been long, but worthwhile. I thank God for the strength, determination, and dedication to pursue my doctoral degree. Without Him, I am nothing. I dedicate my research study and the resulting degree to my mother, Rosa Lee Welbaum, for never giving up on me and my dreams, and believing that I can be or achieve anything I put my mind to at any age. Thank you, Rose Vogt-Bowling, my dearest, best friend of over 30 years, for your unwavering support, patience, and prayers during my countless hours of writing, and for keeping my hair looking wonderful. A special dedication to you and your faithfulness, Rose. To Jay Thomas, my brother, my peer, my business associate, and more importantly my friend, without your encouragement to achieve the next level of professionalism, mentality, and completion of this journey, I do not think I could have finished. A debt of gratitude and much more dedicated to you, Dr. Thomas. I pray that I can be a light of encouragement to others to be a better version of themselves and to help them achieve their dreams. Fearlessly be yourselves.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Big data (BD) is emerging as a phenomenon with significant impact across many industries resulting in transformations of businesses into data-driven organizations (Lee, 2017). The International Data Corporation (2018) predicted that worldwide revenues for BD and business analytics will likely increase to more than \$260 billion by the end of 2022. Central to marketing success in business is the BD category of consumer data from numerous sources and its use for gain in customers and sales (Vaughan, 2017). Marketing leaders use BD technologies to attain customer insight, make decisions, and create strategies across the marketing mix to improve customer relationships and sales (Erevelles, Fukawa, & Swayne, 2016). In this era of information, marketing is essential in taking the lead for managing BD, optimizing marketing strategies, and improving sales revenues.

### **Background of the Problem**

Power (2014) characterized BD as a marketing term that describes how organizations are adapting to data capture, storage, and uses. Business leaders are seeking better capacities that drive data insights, strategies, and decisions despite BD challenges (Vriens & Kidd, 2014). Also, marketers are struggling to harness BD into relevant and useful customer information that produces positive outcomes for the firm and the market (Moorthy et al., 2015). Researchers have explored current BD disruption, adoption, and uses within organizations (Kwon, Lee, & Shin, 2014; Schildt, 2017; Xu, Frankwick, & Ramirez, 2016). However, research on BD strategies to improve financial performances and quantify marketing challenges is scarce (Leeflang, Verhoel, Dahlstrom, & Freundt,

2014; Xu et al., 2016). Organizations are evolving beyond BD adoption to managing decision-making practices enabled by BD to positively change business performance and marketing strategies.

Marketing leaders are creating new business strategies to improve organizational growth of customers and sales revenues from BD (Erevelles et al., 2016). As BD technologies emerge, marketers must translate digital data into useful insights about customers across marketing mix activities to improve financial performances (Weinberg, Davis, & Berger, 2013; Erevelles et al., 2016). Woerner and Wixom (2015) argued for more research regarding how firms use BD for improving decisions and expanding strategy. Miller (2014) stressed collaborations including critical liaisons between marketing, sales, and data experts in making better decisions and deployment of BD strategies. Minimal information regarding BD strategies for marketing activities tied to revenues exists in the literature (Erevelles et al., 2016). In the current study, I explored what BD-based strategies marketing leaders within large corporations utilized to increase sales revenues.

### **Problem Statement**

More than 98% of business information is stored digitally, challenging firms to use and transform BD assets for decisions that enhance consumer value and increase sales (Xu et al., 2016). In 2016, over 80% of organizations leveraged BD analytics, yet more than 60% of chief marketing officers (CMOs) surveyed were unprepared for overcoming BD challenges, which resulted in the loss of financial opportunities for their firms (Grandhi, Patwa, & Saleem, 2017). The general business problem that I addressed

in this study was some marketing leaders face challenges translating BD returns for an organization. The specific business problem was some marketing leaders lack strategies to increase sales revenues using BD.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies successful marketing leaders used to increase BD-based sales revenues. The targeted population comprised marketing leaders including CMOs from three Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio who used BD to increase revenues for their firms. The implications for social change include the potential to increase local community spending and tax revenues while improving local employment opportunities.

### **Nature of the Study**

Qualitative methodology was appropriate for the study because the objective was to gain an in-depth understanding of a current phenomenon. Qualitative methodology allowed me to explore the phenomenon of BD in a specific context rather than quantifying the marketing leader's experience or examining relationships among variables (see Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012b; Yin, 2014). Quantitative methodology was not the best choice for addressing this business problem because the quantitative approach involves statistical testing of hypotheses (see Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012a). I did not use the mixed-methods approach due to the limitations of time and resources for this study and the lack of need for numerical data (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). The qualitative method was appropriate for this study to explore strategies marketing

leaders used to improve sales revenues from BD because my purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of this business issue.

A multiple case study design was appropriate for addressing the business problem. Case studies are appropriate to focus on the process in a group, such as marketing leaders, while exploring one or more organizations in a bounded environment resulting in detailed, holistic findings from different data sources (Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). Neither ethnographic nor phenomenological designs were suitable for the study because I was not exploring a specific culture or the lived experiences of the participants (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014). The narrative design involves on the researcher's descriptions of the phenomenon from the stories of the participants, introducing the potential for overlooking critical details and themes essential to the research problem (Wolgemuth, 2014). The multiple case study design was the best choice to facilitate a current, holistic, comprehensive understanding of decisions and activities (see Wahyuni, 2012) by marketing leaders using BD-based strategies that increased sales revenues.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do some marketing leaders use to generate increased sales revenues from BD?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies have you used to increase sales revenues using big data?
2. Based on your experience, what strategy has worked best by marketing leadership to increase sales revenues from big data for the firm?



3. What were the key barriers to developing your marketing strategies using big data in your company?
4. How did you address these key barriers to develop and use big-data-based marketing strategies to increase sales revenues?
5. What were the unique capabilities of marketing in implementing big-data-based strategies to increase sales revenues?
6. How have you assessed the effectiveness of the strategies for using big data to increase sales revenues?
7. What additional information would you like to share about this topic?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Organizational change theory grounded in Lewin's (1947) theory of change (TOC) was the conceptual framework used in this study. Using a three-step process, Lewin attempted to explain how driving forces, both internal and external, upset the equilibrium of groups, resulting in change. Zand and Sorensen (1975) emphasized the many forces that affect change success in an organization, including the measurability of results, the involvement of top management, and a recognition of the need for change. Change theory was relevant as the conceptual framework for this study addressing the use of BD strategies by marketing leaders to change organizational structure, processes, and technological adoption to achieve marketing goals and generate revenues (see Bartunek & Woodman, 2015; Morabito, 2015). Lewin's TOC aligned with this study by providing a framework for understanding strategies for effecting organizational changes essential to using BD by marketing leaders to achieve improved sales revenues.

Marketing leaders need to understand the change processes necessary to integrate BD innovations and successful strategies for optimal financial performance (Parnell & Brady, 2019).

As BD continues to challenge and change the role of marketers, leaders will implement organizational changes to capitalize on technological opportunities for improved decision-making for increased sales revenues (Wamba, Akter, Edwards, Chopin, & Gnanzou, 2015). Effective leaders of organizational change are those who sell the vision of change while serving as role models of change agents in language and actions (Jacobs, van Witteloostuijn, & Christe-Zeyse, 2013). Strategic change by organizations integrating BD affords the potential for new products and markets, as well as better marketing practices resulting in improved financial performance (Markus, 2015). The findings of the current study may provide a better understanding of how some marketing leaders influence organizational changes to capitalize on technological innovations. Additional knowledge gained from this study may provide insights into the strategies used by marketing leaders to champion marketing capabilities using BD for improved financial performance.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following definitions of terms and phrases were relevant to this study:

*Analytic culture:* Analytical culture refers to an organization's ability to build an overall approach across all departments and activities where data analysis is daily strategy and part of information sharing for strategy implementation and business success (Holsapple, Lee-Post, & Pakath, 2014).

*Big data:* Big data is massive data sets of behavioral data characterized by volume, velocity, and variety, resulting in the transformation of marketing analytics, decision-making, and strategies (Erevelles et al., 2016; Lycett, 2013).

*Big data analytics:* Big data analytics is the process used to analyze large sets of data to uncover hidden patterns, marketing trends, customer preferences, optimal price points, and other pertinent business information to drive decision-making (Gandomi & Haider, 2015).

*Big-data-driven business models:* Big-data-driven business models characterize the design for successful or profitable operations of a business that relies on BD as an important resource in driving business decisions and activities as well as improve value propositions (Morabito, 2015; Sagioglu & Sinanc, 2013).

*Data-driven marketing:* Data-driven marketing is the process of using data analysis to inform and optimize marketing insights, activities, and decisions about the consumer, products, and services (V. Kumar et al., 2013).

*Marketing accountability:* Marketing accountability refers to the marketing activities and expenditures of any business that result in financial and nonfinancial performance metrics or the process of marketing performance measurements (Strandvik, Holmlund, & Grönroos, 2014).

*Marketing mix activities:* Mix marketing activities include the four P's known as product, price, placement, and promotion as the tools and strategic actions that executives use to elicit the desired response from a targeted marketing segment (Khan, 2014).

*Traditional marketing analytics:* Traditional marketing analytics refers to the measurement of marketing efforts including descriptive, predictive, and prescriptive activities via analysis of small data sets, most often local, limited, and with reduced implementation capacities (Xu et al., 2016).

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

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are realistic expectations that a researcher holds as true though no adequate evidence exists to support them as true, and can serve as a basis for research questions (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). For this study, I assumed the participants would be enthusiastic to participate and committed to authenticity and honesty during the interview process. Next, I assumed that the marketing leaders had used BD analytics in conjunction with marketing strategies to increase sales revenues. Also, I assumed the data collected during the interviews would represent an accurate view of the participants' experiences regarding the phenomenon of BD strategies for increasing the firm's sales revenues. The final assumption was that the participants would provide data I could use to answer the research question. The risk was that participants would not focus on strategies relevant to BD insights related to increasing sales revenues, which I mitigated through proper interviewing techniques and probing questions related to BD-based marketing strategies.

#### **Limitations**

Limitations are the weaknesses in research most often due to theoretical or methodological factors, which may diminish the validity of the study (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). In acknowledging limitations of a study, researchers enable other

researchers to address the weaknesses through further study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). There were several limitations in my study. One limitation was that case study design relies on the descriptions of participants' experiences via interviews. Participants' descriptions could introduce potential bias or lack of accuracy in the details, thereby affecting internal validity. Second, it was possible that BD-based strategies described in this study might exist in unique and unreplicable settings, which could adversely affect external validity. BD strategies used to increased sales revenues in one location may not be applicable in other locations. Also, the case study design limited the transferability of findings to other marketing leaders, firms, and locations.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are the boundaries of a study that reflect the choices of the researcher regarding the context in which data are collected (Kromidha & Kristo, 2014). Researchers define boundaries or delimitations in making the study focused, realistic, and feasible (Snelson, 2016). Marketing leaders who used BD-based strategies to increase sales revenues were the focus of this study because increased revenues are fundamental to a marketer's goals in realizing ROI from BD for an organization. Interview questions focused on BD strategies used by three marketing leaders to increase their firms' revenues. Business management, information technology and leadership, and finance strategies were excluded from this study because the emphasis was on marketing, BD, and sales. The study included marketing leaders of Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio who had demonstrated increased sales revenues as a result of BD-based strategies.

Lastly, the study did not include direct observations of strategic use of BD by marketing leaders and the corresponding sales teams in their organizations.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

This study may be of value to the practice of business because the findings may be of value to leaders for creating and implementing BD-based marketing strategies for increasing sales revenues. As digital technology and metrics continue to evolve, organizations seek to utilize BD technology and traditional marketing analytics to improve marketing activities, decision-making, and financial outcomes (Brinker & McLellan, 2014). This study may be of value to business practice because the results may identify practical approaches for marketing leaders to realize rewards in achieving marketing goals and improving sales revenues (see Maklan, Peppard, & Klaus, 2015). The results may support executives in using BD-based marketing strategies for analyzing marketing trends, identifying customer needs, and increasing sales.

#### **Implications for Social Change**

The implications for positive social change include improved decision-making practices and use of BD that contribute to enhancing economic growth for businesses and local communities. Results may contribute to positive social change by improving business revenues leading to increased tax revenues, employment creation, and consumer spending in local communities. A direct contribution to positive social change includes the potential integration of BD tools linking businesses and communities together for improved learning, decisions, and economies (see Markus, 2015; F. Wilson & Post,

2013). Also, the findings from this study may add to existing marketing strategies that promote capabilities, skills, and collaboration among leaders in different sectors by using BD to drive business success for catalyzing social improvements.

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

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how marketing leaders employ BD to increase sales revenues in their businesses. The research question of the study was as follows: What strategies do some marketing leaders use to generate increased sales revenues from BD? The question was appropriate for the study because financial strategies made by marketing leaders impact the sales revenues of companies (see Moorman & Day, 2016). I used an exploratory qualitative multiple case study design to identify successful strategies. My in-depth exploration of marketing leaders' use of BD-based strategies that improved sales revenues may lead to increased knowledge for other marketing leaders and researchers to apply.

The purpose of this literature review was to identify gaps in the literature by exploring the history of marketing managers' strategies for increasing BD-based sales revenues. The review addresses relevant and current writings from marketing and business regarding BD. The review includes a synthesis of the current, seminal, and peer-reviewed literature regarding BD, marketing, marketing strategies, and leadership within the context of the TOC. The literature review themes are change theory, TOC, BD's disruptive impact on marketing, fundamentals of marketing strategies, contemporary marketing leadership, marketing and BD, and sales and profitability resulting from BD. My literature review supported and aligned with the study's purpose. The review

confirmed that BD-based marketing strategies go beyond simple innovation adoptions and that BD change initiatives can lead to increased sales.

My literature review search effort involved online research databases, including those provided by Walden University's library system. Databases used to locate peer-reviewed articles published within 5 years of my expected 2020 graduation include ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Management Journals, Google Scholar, Science Direct, The ACM Digital Library, Dissertation's and Theses at Walden University, and ProQuest Central. I used 132 total references, 130 (98%) of which were peer reviewed and 112 (85%) of which were published in or after 2015. Table 1 contains the number and percentage of references by type: books, dissertations, and peer-reviewed articles.

Table 1

*Types and Counts of References*

	Recent (within 5 years of 2020)	Before 2015	Total	% of total references
Books	2	0	2	1.5%
Dissertations	0	0	0	
Peer-reviewed articles	110	20	130	98.5%
Total	114	20	132	85% ( $\leq 5$ years)

The phrases and keywords used in my searches included *big data marketing*, *big data*, *big data business change*, *organizational change*, *marketing analytics*, *data collaboration*, *big data-based sales*, *change management*, *change leadership*, *marketing and sales*, *decision-making marketing*, *marketing leadership*, and *marketing strategies*.



These keywords were used within the time frame of my anticipated graduation date (2020). The literature review aligned with Walden University's 5-year research currency parameter by containing fewer than 15% of articles, books, and seminal works published before 2015.

### **Conceptual Framework**

While exploring BD-based marketing strategies, I investigated several aspects of marketing, technological adaptation, and organizational transformation. I considered several theories or models for the conceptual framework for the study, including Lewin's (1947) TOC, the McKinsey 7-S model (Waterman, Peters, & Phillips, 1980), Kotter's (1996) 8 step change model, and change management theory (Zand & Sorensen, 1975). My choice for the conceptual framework was Lewin's TOC, which is a seminal work. TOC addresses change initiatives within management and organizations. TOC fit with my topic of BD applications for improved sales revenues within corporate marketing's need to meet the changing needs of customers.

**Theory of organizational change.** Change, both planned and unexpected at operational and strategic levels, is regularly experienced in businesses (Burnes, Hughes, & By, 2018). The assumption of TOC is that organizational change can be achieved using a simplified four-step process of assessment, preparing for change, transitioning, and stabilizing the behavior or change toward a norm (Lewin, 1947; Schein, 1996). Lewin's original TOC model has been criticized for being too simplistic regarding today's context of complex business cultures and global environments (Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016). Organizational change may not be at the core of the original TOC process

proposed by Lewin because the theoretical focus addresses levels of group performance (Bartunek & Woodman, 2015). Also, it is common knowledge that the subject of organizational change, within the context of corporate business and marketing strategies, has over time become more complex, less continuous, and therefore riskier (Morabito, 2015). This reality tends to drive business leaders toward change processes that minimize the risks while producing greater results toward profitability (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Smits & Bowden, 2015). Within the context of my literature review, I found that the complexity of today's global knowledge economy and markets leaves many business leaders in need of scholarly support and practical experiences to utilize BD and optimize results. TOC-based efforts can support marketing and corporate leaders' needs to build cultures, strategies, and systems that optimize customer and profitability potentials (Gupta, Bridgman, & Kaur Sahi, 2015).

The fact that TOC delineates the need for a best change strategy, one that most closely aligns with the organizational change type, is a firmly established perspective within the realms of marketing and IT leadership research (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Therefore, applying TOC to an organization's need for BD-based marketing and cultural changes was appropriate. Although some business scholars and practitioners view TOC as prescriptive in nature and thus, incapable of producing desired successful rates of change (Cummings et al., 2016), change leaders who build organizations capable of embracing change, the change processes, and using change to optimize outcomes are more likely to have a positive result for their efforts (Celik & Ozsoy, 2016; Chawla & Lenka, 2015).

Bakari, Hunjra, and Niazi, (2017) conducted a quantitative study to analyze the interrelationship between authentic leadership, planned organizational change, Lewin's TOC, and employee's perceptions of change. Bakari et al. concluded that for organizations that were successful in change, leadership had a positive and significant influence on change readiness, commitment, and appropriate behavioral support, representing all three stages of Lewin's model. Bakari et al. also concluded that leaders should consider preparing employees for change before securing a commitment to a change initiative. Lewin's (1947) TOC states that the first step in any change initiative is to prepare the employees for change. When addressing a response to BD demands, corporate leadership can prepare cross-functional teams to prepare for and embrace future change to plan and execute for optimizing BD-based strategies (Shah, Irani, & Sharif, 2017).

**McKinsey 7-S model of change.** McKinsey's change model stemmed from the Lewin's TOC model and was created by McKinsey consultants Robert Waterman and Tom Peters in the early 1980s (Waterman et al., 1980). The framework of seven steps for a holistic change process in organizations includes shared values, strategy, structure, systems, style, staff, and skills (Waterman et al., 1980). Researchers and practitioners used the interconnectedness and influence of the variables of the model to assess an organization's ability to change and the proper direction of change (Mitchell, Fredendall, & Cantrell, 2015). McKinsey advocates contended that an organization's successful change is dependent on the alignment and realignment of the seven variables for optimizing success (Thomas, George, & Rose, 2016). Horne (2016) used the McKinsey

change model to examine organizational inefficiencies in helping management to reduce such inefficiencies with fewer resources while meeting customers' needs and expectations. The McKinsey 7-S model of change is a useful tool for some organizations seeking change.

**Kotter's eight steps.** Change at an organizational level may be more about how leaders institute fundamental changes rather than addressing transformation focused on businesses conduct and management practices (Kotter, 1996). Kotter (1995) offered an eight step approach to the process for leading change in organizations that included (a) creating urgency, (b) forming a powerful coalition, (c) creating a vision, (d) communicating the vision, (e) removing obstacles and empowering others to act on vision, (f) creating short-term wins, (g) building on changes, and (h) incorporating new approaches into the organizational culture. These eight steps to transform a business toward optimal change are an extension of the original TOC and could have been applied as the conceptual framework for my study. BD could have represented an expedited change for many firms and their management teams, within the context and issues associated with a data deluge. Kotter's change management process can be quite complex for organizations and research into the practice of Kotter's steps yielding information regarding failure and success (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015; Chappell et al., 2016; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Some form of transformational change is necessary for firms to capitalize on innovation such as BD's technology to improve marketing and profitability (Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015; Kumar Basu, 2015). Various change models and processes used by business leaders have been addressed throughout the literature.

Various case studies exist in which researchers illustrate Kotter's eight steps model of change for successful leaders to use as a guide in the change process (Chowthi-Williams, Curzio, & Lerman, 2016; Oetl et al., 2018; Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2016). The studies serve as examples of how leaders can apply the change theory to achieving levels of success or failure. Research and practice suggest leaders are being pressed to change with better strategies, faster decisions, and fewer resources and talent (Holten & Brenner, 2015; Sivarajah, Kamal, Irani, & Weerakkody, 2017). Appelbaum, Degbe, MacDonald, and Nguyen-Quang (2015) revisited Kotter's method of change citing the importance of transformational leadership to block resistance to change within organizations. An emphasis on forming strong coalitions and implementing new approaches within the organization's culture to close talent gaps, implement assessment strategies, and anchoring change can produce the desired behavioral and performances using change management (Holten & Brenner, 2015; McElheran, 2015). Leadership that builds an analytical culture along with talent capacities for BD initiatives and opportunities might consider applying Kotter's (1996) change leadership model to manage and facilitate successful organizational change initiatives.

Grossman and Siegel (2014) offered a similar conceptual framework of organizational design in response to BD by integrating analytical skills, business knowledge, and information technology through greater collaboration and strategies. Grossman and Siegel concluded that organizations that were most successful in capitalizing on BD opportunities and driving profits were those in which senior leadership (especially marketing) valued the importance of analytics, built BD

capabilities, and used interdepartmental collaborations to increase BD-based profitability. These examples of collaboration and coalitions regarding transforming businesses through change leadership supported my case study design and methodology addressing CMOs' and marketing directors' successful use of BD-based sales strategies.

**Change management theory.** Change management theory and models are based on Lewin's TOC and build on works identifying approaches processes leaders can use to manage change (Hornstein, 2015; Pollack, 2015). By understanding change management theory, researchers and practitioners have a viable, reliable tool to evaluate techniques that promote strategic decisions regarding products, processes, and customers (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Business leaders utilizing innovative technologies such as BD can often identify change initiatives and methods to improve business modeling and managerial decisions by applying Lewin's model (Warren, Moffitt, & Byrnes, 2015). Kotter, along with other researchers since Lewin, pointed out that change initiatives with a high rate of failure are often due to organizational leaders not generating a complete overview of needed change management strategies and modeling (Hossan, 2015). However, as presented throughout my research of the literature, researchers and practitioners often have differing viewpoints about the root causes of success and failure of many change management theory-based initiatives.

Rosenbaum, More, and Steane (2018) emphasized the importance of Lewin's change process as being iterative and interrelated with other processes such as planned organizational change models including change management for greater success. Heckmann, Steger, and Dowling (2016) conducted a quantitative study to investigate

why some organizations are more capable of change than others. Organizations that gained agility regarding coping reactions to changing business needs and environments, including new technologies, were capable of building dynamic management cultures that embrace continuous change (Heckmann et al., 2016). Because BD is a technological phenomenon resulting in some form of business disruption, organizational leaders capable of adapting to this threat, or opportunity, may do so with improved understanding and practices of change management (Altamony, Al-Salti, Gharaibeh, & Elyas, 2016). Leaders may best cope with change by assessing a business's needs and applying the steps and processes of the appropriate change theory and model.

Business academics consider it common knowledge and understand that organizational leaders with a healthy approach toward change need to serve as role models to their employees (Abrell-Vogel & Rowold, 2014; Al-Ali, Singh, Al-Nahyan, & Sohal, 2017). This approach to leadership can often generate a culture with great potential for corporate success in today's global environment (Abrell-Vogel & Rowold, 2014; Al-Ali et al., 2017). Leadership and employee adaptability toward change initiatives is a significant competitive advantage for businesses and their leaders to consider and generate within their organizations (Coccia, 2017; Rivero & von Feigenblatt, 2016). These findings also served as support for my understanding that organizational leaders use well-modeled change initiatives that can optimize BD technology potentials.

## **Big Data Disruption**

Researchers have used various definitions of BD. For my study, BD referred to an analytical category addressing multiple forms of data mined for useful information and characterized by their key traits of volume, velocity, and variety (see Kitchin, 2014; Kitchin & McArdle, 2016). I considered several other definitions of BD before adopting this definition. Power (2014) referred to BD as a marketing term, not a technical term. As the size of data sets from online and traditional transactions increase, more scholars and practitioners are focusing on the use, management, and outcomes for BD in everyday decisions (George, Haas, & Pentland, 2014). On the other hand, Del Vecchio, Di Minin, Petruzzelli, Panniello, and Pirri (2018) regarded BD as a disruptive technology that is generating more attention from enterprises, governments, academia, and society.

No BD discussion would be complete without the inclusion of the White House Big Data Project initiated by President Barack Obama in 2014. Although this 90-day study emphasized privacy concerns, many stakeholders across academia, business, civil society, and government, provided briefings on various BD topics (Executive Office of the President, 2014). Some of the BD challenges of talent gaps, data management, and responsible use of data for protection of people were common points from the White House Big Data Project (Executive Office of the President, 2014). Research on most of these points are beyond the focus of this literature review or study, but it does illustrate the attention that BD is generating on many fronts and supports the need for further BD research.



With the explosive growth of the Internet and online information impacting almost all industries and businesses, BD is of interest to academia, governments, and businesses alike (Jin, Wah, Cheng, & Wang, 2015). The focus of much research concerning BD is that of BD's impact, information technology, and methods of disrupting business and society (De Mauro, Greco, & Grimaldi, 2015). Gaps in the literature exist regarding specific results of BD's disruption in various sectors.

Emerging BD research, which addresses business processes and outcomes, are contributing to the success of some leading organizations (Fosso Wamba, & Mishra, 2017). The scarcity of BD research to assess the impact of BD on capturing business value in organizations is evident (Wamba et al., 2015). Morabito (2015) outlined BD's enhancement of business models regarding some industries use of BD to improve performance. Financial services, pharmaceutical research, healthcare sciences, and customer relationship management (CRM) are examples of BD transformations of both business models and industries (Morabito, 2015). There is ample evidence in business and data analytical research to warrant interest on the part of organizations to incorporate BD and related changes for improved insights, differentiation, and performances.

Some uncertainty and challenges exist when it comes to organizations incorporating BD for better business decisions, strategies, and planning. Like other disruptive technologies, BD adoption and execution can be complex, costly, and risky in predicting outcomes of value (Balachandran, & Prasad, 2017; Li, Porter, & Suominen, 2018; Obal, 2017). Also, available data for most organizations, regardless of size, can be massive and an overwhelming challenge to manage and process (Géczy, 2015). Some

cases such as supply chain management are a research focus on using BD in collaboration with marketing to deliver fast decisions, predictive tools, user-friendly data, and improved performances (Stefanovic, 2015). Business leaders should consider the use of BD and its impact on the organization.

Krajicek (2015) cautioned that real people would be needed to understand and predict the behavior of real people, and not to rely fully on BD and predictive analytics to replace the resourcefulness of humans, especially that of the qualitative researcher. Power (2014) called upon various academic researchers to research specific cases of the BD phenomenon concerning how data are collected and analyzed for decision supports. BD is the new capital in today's competitive marketplace and converting BD into a sustainable competitive advantage is a complex transformation at best (Erevelles, Fukawa, & Swayne, 2016).

My literature review effort reflects that businesses are starting to contribute more resources and incorporate changes to embrace the data revolution resulting from BD. Some organizations are well-known for BD evolution and foundations such as Amazon, Facebook, eBay, Google, and Apple (Yaqoob et al., 2016). Other business sectors are continuing to evolve as BD technologies develop into better decision-making approaches, predictive analytics, and collaborations.

Davenport, Barth, and Bean (2012) found three key activities organizations using BD that differentiated them from other companies including (a) more attention paid to data flows than stocks, (b) relying on data scientists and product developers as opposed to data analysts, and (c) shifting analytics away from IT functions and more into core

business, operational, and production functions. Kiron, Prentice, and Ferguson (2014) found those organizations that were most successful in capitalizing upon BD were those that committed to building an analytics culture within, investing in talent and technology, and evolving into a modern, data-driven firm.

Those organizations that had a specific plan for building analytical talent benefitted the most from BD strategies, both for insight and organizational performance (Ransbotham, Kiron, & Prentice, 2015). Perrons and Jensen (2015) discussed how BD is changing business landscapes such as new business models, job descriptions, and future strategic advantages by building a collaborative, analytic culture of BD integrators as well as high-level data analysts. Positive organizational change resulting from BD technologies, strategies, and adoption are present in the field. My discoveries from the review of the literature support my conclusions that additional research and information are needed in the area of BD-based marketing strategies.

### **Modern Marketing Strategies and Big Data**

Modern marketing strategies in today's firms build upon traditional business strategies for the long-term direction of organizations using both traditional and newer approaches to gaining customers and increasing sales (Grewal, Roggeveen, & Nordfält, 2017; Johnson, Whittington, Scholes, Angwin, & Regnér, 2017). The main goals of marketing strategies for business leaders are to fill market needs, market share penetration and growth, increase sales revenues, and improve customer loyalty and shareholder value (Mujanovic, & Damjanovic, 2018). BD aids marketers in customer-facing organizations further by providing a more diverse data bank of information

regarding customers and their offline and online buying behaviors (Pappas, 2016).

Improved knowledge about customers provides opportunities for marketers to create both offensive and defensive strategies using BD across the marketing mix activities (Bozkurt, & Ergen, 2016).

Firms use offensive marketing strategies to stimulate intensive growth, market share, sales, and both new product and market development (Bozkurt, & Ergen).

Defensive marketing strategies are part of the marketing and business planning to retain customers, repeat sales, and improve brand loyalty (Bozkurt, & Ergen). BD improves the marketer's abilities to identify, anticipate, satisfy, and ultimately, providing improved sales and profitability for the organization (Anshari, Almunawar, Lim, & Al-mudimigh, 2018). Marketing is evolving into a technology-powered discipline using BD innovation, and BD-based marketing strategies are essential to customer experiences driving sales.

Marketing leaders are adjusting marketing strategies to capitalize on BD disruption in the organization and marketplace (Grover, Chiang, Liang, & Zhang, 2018). From traditional to digital marketing, using social media to interact with and engage customers, outbound to influencer marketing and messaging, and the use of specific analytics to define sales activities to grow sales are all part of the modern marketing landscape (Jackson, & Ahuja, 2016). As BD continues to disrupt marketing in both function and activities, expect organizations to change in response (Whyte, Stasis, & Lindkvist, 2016). Changes in organizations to stimulate a data-driven culture, adopt BD-based marketing strategies, and use specific analytics to drive growth and sales are under study (Günther, Mehrizi, Huysman, & Feldberg, 2017). Researchers are starting to

expand studies into BD value for organizations across the marketing mix, for improved customer relationship management (CRM), and boosting revenues (Segarra et al., 2016). In-house marketing and technology are converging to build organizations capable of optimizing BD knowledge and strategies for increased sales and profitability (Grover et al.). Digital, social media, influencer marketing along with predictive analytics are driving modern marketing strategies to increase sales revenues.

**Digital marketing.** Marketers use digital technologies to facilitate processes via digital channels of reaching customers, engaging customers, making sales, and retaining customers (Kannan, 2017). Digital marketing is the collective of activities using such digital technologies to deliver value to customers on the Internet, mobile devices, social media, and other digital media sources (Kannan, 2017). A recent analysis and review of the literature yield some emerging research linking digital marketing strategies using BD to improved firm performance in market share, sales, and customer retention (Ducange, Pecori, & Mezzina, 2018).

Rani and Rani (2017) found that BD can optimize digital marketing strategies by improving customer engagement, customer loyalty, and marketing performance beyond providing more data, but by building better relationships, testing campaigns, better product offerings, and increased profitability. Challenges do exist for organizations in achieving a comprehensive understanding of the customer from BD digital capture and translating such knowledge into increased value or financial gains (Kunz et al., 2017). Chong, Ch'ng, Liu, and Li (2017) concluded that online reviews and online promotional marketing activities are reliable predictors of product demands. Marketers use BD then to

understand, predict, strategize, and create product offerings in response to online reviews and digital engagements (Chong et al.). In response, marketing leaders can implement big-data based strategies to optimize customer experiences that improve sales. Businesses are changing to incorporate digital marketing strategies to improve CRM, modernize marketing approaches, and increase sales. Social media marketing is also part of the digital marketing landscape.

**Social media marketing.** Social media marketing use by marketers across social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are integral to promoting products or services, marketing communications, and strategic content contributions (Wang & Kim, 2017). Gandomi and Haider (2015) presented a current and foundational assessment of BD concepts and processes from the literature finding that marketing applications using social media analytics (BD) are common. Marketers use social analytic metrics to once again create strategies across the marketing mix for lead generation, customer engagements, advertising, and providing value while improving sales revenues via social and digital media platforms (Xu et al., 2016). Using BD to capture real-time analysis of customers' behaviors on social media and adjusting marketing mix strategies in response changes marketing from a costly department to a profit maker for the organization (Xu et al., 2016).

Gaps do exist in the literature in directly correlating key metrics of attitudinal, behavioral, and financial outcomes resulting from modern marketing strategies in the social media sphere (Kumar, Keller, & Lemon, 2016). LeeFlang et al. (2014) found that over 80% of organizations from a large sampling of marketing executives did not have

detailed customer data and could not link such data to sales. Firms adopting BD-based marketing strategies using social or digital platforms are prevalent throughout the literature, but there is a lack of substantive discourse about financial outcomes. A few case studies present findings that support organizations use of social media to interact with potential and current customers to build brands, offer discounts, and survey customers for reviews (Armstrong, Delia, & Giardina, 2016; Felix, Rauschnabel, & Hinsch, 2017). Organizations and academia will require more research linking social media and digital marketing efforts directly to BD-based marketing strategies and increased sales for ease of BD use and plans.

**Influencer marketing.** Influencer marketing online is another modern marketing strategy where marketers use influential content creators on various social media platforms to reach potential customers and gain sales (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). An abundance of research regarding digital, social media, and mobile marketing and effects of online word-of-mouth (WOM) are present in the marketing literature. With over 2.7 billion social network users worldwide estimated in 2019 and marketers expanding online activities, influencer marketing is gaining in strategic use by marketers, other business practitioners, and research focus (Hu, Milner, & Wu, 2015; Jaakonmäki, Müller, & von Brocke, 2017). Scholars are continuing to explore the marketing activities involving chosen influencers and the resulting impact for firms, customers, and sales (Kumar, Bezawada, Rishika, Janakiraman, & Kannan, 2016).

The strategy of using influencers on social media platforms involves extending a firm's content regarding products and company beyond usual or traditional avenues of

promotion and sales while connecting data knowledge to marketing mix activities (Du, Hu, & Damangir, 2015). Research into using BD to examine influencers becoming thought leaders and trusted brand ambassadors to both business and customers is part of the literature as well (Sharma, Ahuja, & Alavi, 2018). The use of influencers to drive messaging and ultimately, sales is a part of the current literature discussion and research as well as practitioner interest.

**Predictive big data analytics in modern marketing.** Marketers create strategies using predictive BD analytics to expand on traditional data and key performance indicators (KPIs) to make better decisions across the marketing mix today for optimal results tomorrow (Gandomi & Haider, 2015). Predictive analytics is the use of BD to assess the likelihood of what might happen in the future for improving current planning and decisions to grow, compete, and act (Rajni & Malaya, 2015). Extensive published research into BD predictive analytics and outcomes are numerous and include areas of supply chain management, healthcare organizations, manufacturing, accounting, and of course, marketing (Dubey, Gunasekaran, Childe, Wamba, & Papadopoulos, 2016; Erevelles, Fukawa, & Swayne, 2016; Schoenherr & Speier, 2015; Wang, Kung, & Byrd, 2018). Though gaps in the literature exist for specific practices used by business leaders to achieve performance goals, more research is emerging regarding the struggle leaders are facing in pinpointing specific BD-based strategies that can effectively anticipate the future.



## **Marketing Leadership**

My literature review effort contains a wealth of information regarding leadership behavior, innovation, and change with some regards towards the issues of BD. As digital technologies, new software, and BD converge to change marketing into an advanced technological-driven function of business; modern marketing leadership is evolving as well to keep pace with BD initiatives (Kumar, 2015). Ozsahin and Sudak (2015) utilizing a quantitative study examined the relationships among leadership behavior, organizational citizenship behavior, and innovativeness in 237 Turkish industrial firms. Those leaders that communicated in high-quality exchanges with employees, promoted creativity and learning, and embraced change and ongoing innovation in both products and processes increased innovation adoption and performance of both employees and the organization (Ozsahin & Sudak, 2015).

There is emerging research regarding collaboration between marketing leaders and other firm's leaders for optimal strategy formation and implementation. Ozuem, O'Keefe, and Lancaster (2015) examined the concept of leadership marketing where the collaboration of marketing with organizational leaders can drive the entire organization towards future sustainability and at a rapid pace. However, I found in the literature that marketing and leadership are often viewed by corporate leadership as two separate fields within their respective organizations. This separation indicates that marketing's role regarding change is often understated at the board level and undervalued in driving organizational change for improved performance (Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou, & Hult, 2016). Within my review of the literature, I found research shows collaboration and

organization between marketing and upper management leaders can yield transformative results (Kumar, 2018).

Resonant leaders mobilize the dynamic capabilities of employees to adapt and learn faster (Chawla & Lenka, 2015). By leveraging newly found competencies for innovation adoption and improved performances, a company culture of change can thrive (Ravichandran, 2018). Strategic management choices and IT governance alignment did significantly affect company performance, especially in technology-intensive companies (Wu, Straub, & Liang, 2015). Ayranci and Ayranci (2015) examined the relationship between leadership and innovativeness among Turkish entrepreneurs from 91 small to medium size enterprises (SME) located in Istanbul. SME owners connected leadership attributes and attitudes towards positive change and innovativeness (Ayranci & Ayranci, 2015). Leaders, whether transactional or transformational, can move an organization towards healthy change faster by building internal trust, cooperation, knowledge sharing practices, and improving harmony between teams (Chawla & Lenka, 2015).

Historically, marketing has used analytics in organizations to build strategies and drive decisions that capture value, build a brand, and enhance customer connections for improved performance (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). The importance of the marketing department along with the role of the chief marketing officer in a firm for innovation adoption is understated in the literature. Gök, Peker, and Hacıoglu (2015) conducted a quantitative study of both manufacturing and services companies in Istanbul to investigate the antecedents as well as consequences of the marketing department's (MD) reputation within an organization. Gök et al. concluded that customer-connection

capability, accountability, and status of the marketing department have a positive relationship to the MD's reputation in the firm. Also, a reputable MD is associated with outstanding market performance for the company regardless of marketing strategies (Gök et al., 2015).

The CMO or marketing director of an organization is becoming a change leader in the adoption of BD-based initiatives that drive business strategy and growth (Simon, Van Den Driest, & Wilms, 2016). Germann, Ebbes, and Grewal (2015) conducted an extensive literature review followed by a simple simulation study exploring the relevance of the CMO. Germann et al. concluded that most organizations benefit from having a CMO among the top management team. Though a lack of significant correlation between organization size and a CMO presence existed in their study sample, those organizations with a CMO did perform 15% better than those organizations lacking one (Germann et al., 2015). It is important to consider that a 15% return on investment or gain in customers, significantly improves overall market share and revenues. The root cause of that competitive advantage is the marketing expertise and strategy of a CMO. Therefore, Germann et al. (2015) concluded with confidence that the CMO can have a significant performance impact upon a management team and the firm.

Marketing's role in business is evolving, and essential leadership for exploiting the opportunities of BD while managing inevitable challenges are present topics in the current research. Wirtz, Tuzovic, and Kuppelwieser (2014) used a large, cross-sectional survey targeting almost 3,000 MBA and EMBA alumni in three continents, North America, Europe, and Asia, to support the idea of a strong and influential marketing

department on positive firm performance. Leeflang et al. (2014) presented the results of a quantitative research survey of a sampling of 777 marketing executives from around the world. The emphasis for the researchers was to identify the major challenges facing marketing in organizations due to the explosion of digital marketing and generation of large datasets known as BD (Leeflang et al., 2014). The critical finding that only 4% of the respondents believed they had the required capabilities to manage their businesses effectively is noteworthy (Leeflang et al., 2014). Jin et al. (2015) conducted a comprehensive overview of BD including definitions, uses, and value to businesses. One key takeaway is that a top-down management approach was recommended for managing the challenges as well as exploiting BD insights (Jin et al., 2015).

Bock, Eisengerich, Sharapov, and George (2015) conducted a quantitative exploratory analysis of archival interviews of 587 global CEOs to explore the link between CMO leadership and improved performance from innovation. The authors did demonstrate a link between increased company revenues from innovation and CMO leadership only when the business exhibited customer-focus capabilities (Bock et al., 2015). Bock et al. found one critical aspect was that when collaboration and cooperation with customers were needed, the CMO emerged as the logical and apparent leader. Also, in those firms without customer-centric capabilities, the CMO was dependent upon others to exploit innovation into profitable realms (Bock et al., 2015). Further research into the CMO's role in top management teams, implementation of innovation and strategies, as well as creating value for customers and organizations profits were recommended (Bock et al., 2015).

In alignment with coordinated leadership for BD innovation and adoption, Jin et al. (2015) studied technology valuation as an important aspect of management technology. Their study involved marketing leadership and management within various places technology valuation leads to transformative strategic planning. Data complexity and its relationships to processes and planning for improved performances often were beyond the scope of understanding and use within organizations (Jin et al.). This important topic is deemed by business academics as necessary for further management, leadership, and organizational silo alignments leading to overall organizational performance improvements (Kumar, 2018). Transformative marketing strategies from BD-based innovation are current, research topics throughout the literature. Since marketing leaders and the marketing department have been historically the handlers and strategic use of customer and business information, it seems logical to explore how marketing leaders are using BD strategies to improve the firm's sales revenues.

### **Marketing and Big Data**

Marketing is the connection to the customer and making better decisions from the deluge of BD is essential for organizations' competitive advantage (Suoniemi, Meyer-Waarden, & Munzel, 2018). Kumar (2015) discussed the need for marketing's role in decision-making, but also the complete integration of marketing's activities and functions into all other business functions, including data, financial, strategy, and leadership. Kiron et al. (2014) found those organizations that were most successful in capitalizing upon BD and analytics were those that committed to building an analytics culture within, investing

in talent and technology, and more importantly, open to changing not only thinking, but also ways of doing business.

Supporting this research line of thought, Wamba et al. (2015) discussed first, how managers must align the existing organizational culture and capabilities across the entire organization to best exploit BD opportunities (Wamba et al.). Second, managers need to hire, train, and retain data scientists while teaching them the language and skills of business for optimal performance results (Wamba et al.). Third, managers must also teach all employees to embrace a BD and analytical culture to capture business value by simplifying and engaging employees in these processes (Wamba et al.). The literature strongly supports the need for various departments and skillsets across organizations to converge and collaborate in optimizing BD for gains.

Nicita and Scarlet (2015) presented the need for marketing insights to converge with analytics, creating a new partnership in most organizations where separate departments of marketing and IT with separate resources still exist. The example of a convergent mindset can be used to unlock BD opportunities by primarily unlocking the problem solver of the market researchers, the data scientists, and managers (Nicita & Scarlet). Ekman, Erixon, and Thilenius (2015) investigated how information technology can support companies with internal marketing and purchasing transactions, and the results of gaps in IT systems and marketing practices. The case study was designed to assess a deeper understanding of how IT systems are used in an industrial firm's everyday marketing practices (Ekman et al.). Ekman et al. argued that marketers are not currently exploiting the maximum potential from IT systems, and proposed IT systems

should be better aligned with a company's marketing practices to improve the company's marketing functionality. Collaboration between marketing and IT is a common theme throughout the literature when researching marketing and BD.

Buckley (2015) used an exploratory case study of 11 manufacturers to explore the problems presented when lack of collaboration occurred between marketing and IT, demonstrably impacting IT-enabled innovations for the firms, such as BD value. All 11 firms acknowledged interpretive barriers to collaboration with different departments. Buckley emphasized strategic collaboration between marketing and IT to enhance innovation use for productivity. Grossman and Siegel (2014) offered a similar conceptual framework of organizational design in response to BD by integrating analytical skills, business knowledge, and information technology through greater collaboration and strategies. Carley and Babb (2015) conducted a narrative overview of the opportunities digital marketing offers for a relationship between marketing and IT, particularly when it comes to new ideas and methodology in business and academia. These studies indicate and conclude that those organizations willing to build an analytical culture where marketing and IT work closely together are the ones that will be differentiators in improving customer experiences.

### **Transformative Marketing**

Marketing, customer analytics, and decision-making as BD transformations were prevalent discussions and research support throughout the literature. Khan, Mushtaq, and Kanth (2015) alluded to the power data mining affords marketers in retaining customers and building competitive advantage for those with advanced data mining capabilities.

Kumar, Dixit, Javalgi, and Dass (2016) proposed a conceptual framework to aid marketing in adopting intelligent agent technologies using BD and improving insight into both the attitudes and behaviors of consumers. Customer insight and value creation is dependent upon both marketing and business intelligence (BI) units for optimal BD solutions and improved revenues (Stone & Woodcock, 2014). Unfortunately, some marketers are not using BD to their advantage when it comes to digital and online marketing activities, instead choosing traditional marketing mix strategies (Stone & Woodcock). Traditional analytics will not be good enough for any business; BD represents a transformative innovation that will not only change business models but impact the decision-making of both management and leadership (Ziora, 2015).

BD-based strategies in the literature can supply decision makers the best knowledge to make better decisions and strategies for better firm performance. Wayne Fleenor, a senior marketing manager and data scientist in Consumer Insights at General Mills, granted an interview that assessed why a data scientist was critical to the marketing arm of General Mills (Fitzgerald, 2015). Fleenor gave several key takeaways from his experience in transforming the analytical culture at General Mills, which included building relationships with BD champions across the entire organization and tying analytic decisions to incremental profits (Fitzgerald, 2015). Fitzgerald found collaboration and relationships with IT, marketing, management, and core business functions were essential to the successful use of BD for profitability at General Mills.

There is evidence that BD-based strategies in transforming organizations' analytical efforts, cultures, and marketing approaches are improving decisions and



capabilities linked to better business performances (Gunasekaran et al., 2017; Ji-fan Ren, Fosso Wamba, Akter, Dubey, & Childe, 2017; Wamba et al., 2015). Griffin et al. (2013) acknowledged that marketing serves as a *vital conduit* for market intelligence due to marketing's representation of the customer to business and leaders. Future research of marketing's role in leading innovation, disseminating research findings, and using emerging BD-based practices to innovate and inform towards sustainability and profitability are recommendations (Griffin et al.). A recurring theme in the literature linked marketing's data activities and strategies using BD to improve the customer experience and marketing's BD influences for the data-driven organization.

Aside from several gaps, there is research about BD influences on marketing management and leaders, marketing mix strategies, as well as potential investments in new predictive information technologies. Some researchers are showing that organizations are unlocking the potential of BD for improving operational processes and decision-making choices to improve sustainable competitive advantage (Matthias, Fouweather, Gregory, & Vernon, 2017; Sumbal, Tsui, & See-to, 2017). These studies provide researchers with new insights into how organizations and marketers can use BD to improve meeting consumers' wants and needs in real time. Chong et al. (2017) demonstrated how BD could be used to efficiently gather and analyze large data-sets to predict customer demands in an online environment. Marketing managers are advised to pay attention to online promotional strategies and online reviews since such reviews are predictors of online electronic sales (Chong et al.). Consequently, manufacturers might use BD to predict future customer demands via online marketplaces (Chong et al.).

Research on how organizations are innovating and using BD to evolve into data-driven organizations was evident throughout the literature.

Large successful companies that understand the capabilities of technology improving an understanding of marketplaces through innovation have a competitive advantage, especially for predicting and meeting customer needs (Marshall, Mueck, & Shockley, 2015). Marshall et al. investigated how leading organizations use BD and analytics to innovate using information from the 2014 IBM Innovation Survey in collaboration with the Economist Intelligence Unit. Before this work, Vriens and Kidd (2014) recommended marketers map out highly advanced analytical projects, be proactive in adopting an analytical mindset, and help build a necessary analytical culture within organizations. They found marketers that can advance BD-based strategies sooner rather than later are companies that can reach significant financial rewards from BD change based projects (Vriens & Kidd, 2014). Research into how firms can use BD to help reduce operational costs, price products, and services, and understand the customer better to tailor product offers and designs accordingly for improved sales is present.

### **Big Data and Data-Driven Transformations**

Businesses are beginning to recognize BD opportunities and evolve into data-driven organizations. Data generated from corporate systems, websites, existing customer data stores, social network platforms, consumer transactions, the internet of things, as well as a multitude of mobile devices are all part of BD (Kache & Seuring, 2017; Morabito, 2015). Some business leaders are leveraging the convergence of technological innovations with the availability of a continuous data stream to extract economic value

from new and existing customer data stores (Segarra et al., 2016). A recurring theme in the literature is the overarching goal of enhancing decision-making, business insights, as well as improved strategies and financial outcomes from BD. Although large corporations such as Amazon and Google are at the forefront of BD adoption and use, other companies are still in the early stages of BD adoption, strategy formation, transformation, and reaping BD financial results (Gandomi & Haider, 2015). In adopting BD and extracting value, organizations face changes in culture, management, and strategies to realize the potential of BD.

### **Big Data Organizational Culture**

The evolution of an organization's culture is only one aspect of a firm's transformation into a BD capable business (Mikalef, Pappas, Krogstie, & Giannakos, 2017). Organizational culture is the social and psychological environment of an organization comprised of shared beliefs, norms, and values that impacts the way individuals and groups interact with each other within the organization as well as those outside of the organization (Schein, 1996; Schneider, González-Romá, Ostroff, & West, 2017). Gupta and George (2016) concluded that cooperation of resources from across the entire firm, including financial, human, physical, and organization is necessary for the firm to create BD capabilities that lend to firm performance and competitive advantage.

Using BD to improve decisions and strategies while changing organizational culture are not easy tasks for most organizations and their management (Cao, Huo, Li, & Zhao, 2015). Alharthi, Krotov, and Bowman (2017) found successful adoption and use of BD in a firm was a result of successful organizational culture change by management.

Firms that develop and embed BD strategies into everyday decision-making processes experience transformative behaviors that benefit change management approaches and ensure adoption into the overall culture (Troilo, De Luca, & Guenzi, 2017).

Organizational culture changes are only one facet of BD transformations as data-driven marketing strategies become the norm in data-driven organizations.

### **Data-Driven Marketing**

Data-driven marketing is the process of marketers using BD to create and implement actionable strategies across the marketing mix to better understand the customer, cater to the customers' needs, and optimize the return on investments (ROI) for an organization (Lam, Sleep, Hennig-Thurau, Sridhar, & Saboo, 2017; Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Gaps exist in the peer-reviewed literature linking data-driven marketing strategies with organizational change, change management, and value or economic gains. Though there is emerging research on the evolution of marketing as well as business model innovations, much remains to be studied from the marketing perspective, strategic use of BD, and financial outcomes (Kumar, 2015; Massa, Tucci, & Afuah, 2017; Wirtz, Pistoia, Ullrich, & Göttel, 2016). However, there are a few studies in the literature containing research surrounding better decision-making and data-driven marketing strategies.

### **Collaboration**

Marketing need not be the greatest influencer or leader in knowledge dissemination, but a more balanced culture of collaborative strategies for quality decision-making across all departments can improve desired results for organizations (Hattula, Schmitz, Schmidt, & Reinecke, 2015). Danciu (2013) predicted marketing

would be the driver of transformations in response to environmental trends, and dependent upon flexible, coordinated strategies within businesses and globally. Marketing, with an emphasis on innovation and collaborative BD solutions, can better anticipate the needs of current and potential customers, and respond strategically within the marketing mix (Witkowski, 2017). Those organizations that successfully implement BD-based marketing strategies are those with marketers that are skilled analysts, able to automate marketing processes, have business strategy knowledge, and can manage the business and technological units or teams (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). Collaborative efforts between marketing and IT within organizations wanting to evolve into data-driven firms are common themes in the literature.

Collaborative strategies between marketing and IT to drive BD success for the organization are starting to emerge from current research. Nicita and Scarlet (2015) presented the need for marketing insights to converge with analytics, creating a new partnership in most organizations where separate departments of marketing and IT with separate resources still exist. This example of a convergent mindset can be used to unlock BD opportunities by primarily, unlocking the problem solver in everyone, the market researcher, the data scientist, and managers from all directions (Nicita & Scarlet). The tenets of the proposed convergence mindset include the adoption of a relentless focus on solving business challenges, extracting maximum value from investments, and using a multilayered portrayal of the consumer from both analytics and insights. Meijer and Kapoor (2014) proposed companies that embrace the ways and techniques of software and software development companies are the ones most agile and capable of change and

innovation, leading in profitability and management techniques. These techniques drive collaborative efforts across all departments of software companies, including their marketing departments (Meijer & Kapoor). Additional research regarding collaborative efforts between marketing and IT are part of the research landscape.

Collaboration and successful use of BD strategies were themes throughout the literature review. Carley and Babb (2015) conducted a narrative overview of the opportunities digital marketing present for a relationship between marketing and IT, particularly when it comes to new ideas and methodology in business and academia. Successful technological leaders in the future will not only be marketing savvy but have specific knowledge and predictive BD tools about customers that provides competitive advantage (Carley & Babb, 2015). Morabito (2015) did caution that BD use does not necessarily translate into a competitive advantage, which is a separate strategy in the face of competition. Roche and Blaine (2015) studied how multinational enterprises (MNE) could learn from government and military intelligence organizations to adopt a better intelligence mindset. Building an internal analytical culture of collaboration was extremely important for organizations to become agiler in information processing, analytical capabilities, and decision-making using advanced analytics, including BD (Roche & Blaine). In addition to collaboration, outsourcing is another strategy used by both marketing and organizations in utilizing BD for better decisions and actionable insights.

## **Outsourcing**

Outsourcing BD projects is one emerging strategy some firms are using to gain useful, timely insights for better decisions about products, services, and marketing. The results of a quantitative research survey of 777 marketing executives from around the world indicated that only 4% of the respondents believed they had the required BD-capabilities internally with over 50% frequently outsourcing complex analytical tasks (Leeflang et al., 2014). Those organizations that tracked BD initiatives' knowledge and processes were better positioned to outsource BD activities to gain long-term capabilities and results (Braganza, Brooks, Nepelski, Ali, & Moro, 2017). With many firms realizing the potential value of BD and associated strategies, some firms utilize outside companies such as Cloudera, Palantir, and Pivotal to enhance their BD analytical activities (Mazzei, & Noble, 2017). Whether collaboration within or procuring outside BD services, most firms use BD strategically for data mining of customer intelligence (Brock & Khan, 2017; Mazzei & Noble, 2017). As more businesses rely on outsourcing BD strategies while changing internal cultures towards data-driven firms, there is emerging research linking marketing strategies to the economic benefits of mining customer intelligence (Gatibu, & Kilika, 2017; Mazzei & Noble, 2017).

## **Marketing and Big Data Strategies for Sales**

The subject of adopting BD into organizations is prevalent in the literature, yet specific prescriptives that link BD-based marketing strategies to financial benefits remain scarce (Voeth, Poelzl, & Eidhoff, 2018). The potentials of BD-based strategies and resulting financial opportunities are a strong focus with few direct links between

marketing, key performance indicators, and sales strategies (Clarke, 2016). Prior research linking positive firm performance to the deployment of customer analytics' strategies using BD does exist (Chen, Preston, & Swink, 2015; Germann, Lilien, Fiedler, & Kraus, 2014). Acknowledgments of positive impact using BD-based strategies in supply chains and business systems on firm performance are emerging from current research (Gunasekaran et al., 2017; Ji-fan Ren et al., 2017). In general, both business and academia are researching how to take BD innovations to new levels of enhanced decision-making, effective strategies, and positive performance outcomes such as sales and profitability (Constantiou & Kallinikos, 2015; Sharma, Mithas, & Kankanhalli, 2014). BD-based marketing strategies to drive sales represents changes in an organization allowing me to explore how marketing leaders are using such strategies to positively impact sales revenues.

In a large proportion of businesses, marketing and sales are two separate departments as well as philosophies, but both are essential to customer engagement, improved firm performance, and sales (Wang & Miao, 2015). BD uses are being employed to link marketing strategies to the prescriptive actions of sales to improve sales revenues (Orenga-Roglá, & Chalmeta, 2016). According to Opreana and Vinerean (2015), BD uses improved marketing's outbound messaging but made marketing's activities more interactive within the organization and with the customer. Homburg, Vomberg, Enke, and Grimm (2015) found that marketing was the most influential on a firm's performance in comparison to all other departments, including sales. In other words, if marketing's influence is declining in organizations, firm performance will



suffer as well, and no amount of sales influence can counterbalance this occurrence (Homburg et al., 2015). Thus, linking marketing and BD-based strategies to sales revenues are essential to reaping the financial benefits of BD. On the other hand, practitioners are also struggling to link marketing activities and BD spending to improved sales revenues (He, Wang, Chen, & Zha, 2017). The challenges for leaders are for better linking of BD-based marketing strategies to the activities of sales forces which increase the firm's sales revenues, and often, this represents change within organizations.

### **Summary and Transition**

Big data-based marketing strategies can transform companies and improve performance including sales revenues (Erevelles, Fukawa, & Swayne, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what strategies successful marketing leaders used to increase BD-based sales revenues. With the proliferation of BD analytics into almost every organization, many marketing leaders find it necessary to understand how to capitalize on BD potential, implement effective strategies, and translate that into increased sales (Chong, Li, Ngai, Ch'ng, & Lee, 2016). Section 1 included a discussion of my study's problem, purpose, nature, research question, and the interview questions. I aligned the research question with the study purpose for exploring the strategies used by marketing leaders to increase sales revenues using BD.

Also, I explained the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. In the literature review, I explored and synthesized existing literature on modern marketing strategies, current BD topics, marketing use of BD, and sales. Within the conceptual framework, I discussed

change theory, which I selected for the current study. According to Günther et al. (2017), researchers use change management theories to explore *how* and *why* organizations practice and change to optimize the use of BD and its benefits. Thus, the theory of change was appropriate for investigating multiple elements of BD adoption, strategies, and use by marketing leaders. I provided relevant definitions regarding both marketing and BD to ensure a proper understanding of the study. I also explained the significance of the study for both business application and potential social benefit. Also, I outlined the benefits for practical business use for marketing leaders using BD-based strategies, and the potential to use increased sales revenues and gains from those strategies for contributions to the community along with increased employment within those communities.

Section 2 included the details of my research, including the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, methodological decisions, such as the study population and sampling strategy, and ethical considerations. I also included a discussion of the strategies for data collection, organization, and analysis, along with reliability and validity analyses for the study. In Section 3, I presented the detailed findings of the study and their potential applications to professional practice. Also, Section 3 included the implications for social change resulting from such findings and recommendations for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

The focus of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what BD-based strategies some marketing leaders use to improve sales revenues for their organizations. With much of the research on BD yielding information about technical issues, organizations need to understand strategic impacts of BD analytics (Wamba et al., 2015). Marketing leaders use data insights to make decisions leading to positive financial consequences that can fully leverage the benefits of BD-based strategies (Wang & Hajli, 2017; Xu et al., 2016). I studied marketing leaders from Ohio-based Fortune 1000 companies who have a proven track record in sales as a result of BD-based marketing strategies. In Section 2, I include the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data organization, data analysis, and techniques for ensuring the study's reliability and validity.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies successful marketing leaders used to increase sales revenues using BD. The targeted population comprised marketing leaders including CMOs of three Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio who used BD successfully to increase revenues for their firms. The implications for social change include the potential to increase local community spending and tax revenues while improving local employment opportunities.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The researcher's primary role in the qualitative case study involves data collection and ensuring the analysis and organization of the data (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and is responsible for interacting with the participants while maintaining responsible and professional standards throughout the study (Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon, Bandiera, & Martimianakis, 2016). When using a multiple case study design, I interacted with the participants to gather data from semistructured face-to-face interviews and secondary data sources that addressed BD-based marketing strategies for increased sales.

Researchers use interview protocols to engage study participants, build rapport, and provide persistent observations with rich descriptions. The protocols also support member checking and triangulation, thereby ensuring validity and understanding (Morgan, Pullon, Macdonald, McKinlay, & Gray, 2017; Morse, 2015). To preserve transparency for the study, researchers must follow prescribed ethical standards from the university's review board, as well as obtain participants' consent to participate (Moravcsik, 2014; O'Brien, Harris, Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014). I adhered to the protocols of the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979) throughout the project in compliance with ethical standards and protection of human research participants (see Califf & Sugarman, 2015; Chwang, 2014). While addressing the research question, I was aware of and proactive toward managing bias and engaging in a scholarly and transparent routine. To mitigate bias in my research, I used several techniques including member checking, data bracketing, and a reflexive journal.

A researcher's personal views, experiences, and values might create a bias that contributes to ethical issues with the validity, reliability, and authenticity of the study (Bernard, 2013; Morse, 2015). Strategies to minimize bias include the maintenance of a reflexive journal and member checking (Cope, 2014). A written account of the researcher's feelings, observations, and research processes in a reflexive journal can be used for confirmability and to reduce potential bias that may influence interpretations of the data (Anney, 2014). Member checking is the process of participant feedback, corrections, and validation of the interview transcript to ensure authenticity and veracity of the study (Reilly, 2013).

To maintain a high level of transparency and mitigate bias, I disclosed my experience and relationship with the topic of BD-based marketing strategies with the participants prior to interviewing. My professional experience includes over 30 years of work in sales, marketing, entrepreneurial and family-owned small businesses, and business consulting in various fields. To mitigate researcher bias and comply with ethical standards of academic research, I disclosed that I had not previously worked with nor was I currently working with any of the marketing leaders or their organizations participating in this study.

At the core of an exploratory qualitative case study is a semistructured interview that can provide evidence about participants' experiences regarding the study topic (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014), interview protocol is an important tool for the researcher to collect data that answers the research question. Semistructured interviews provide a guide for the researcher and opportunities

for participants' insights and other emerging data (O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozović, & Sinha, 2016). I used a semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix A) to interview the study's participants and investigate the BD marketing strategy phenomenon. The focus of this study was aligned with my academic and professional interests in BD-based marketing strategies and was conducive to learning about this current and important business phenomenon.

### **Participants**

The participants in this exploratory multiple case study were marketing leaders of Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio. The selection criteria consisted of marketing leaders from three Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio who had success in BD-based marketing strategies linked to increased sales. Purposeful sampling techniques are used by researchers to choose participants who are knowledgeable and experienced with the phenomenon under study. These techniques form the basis for including or excluding participants from a project (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2015; Robinson, 2014). My participant sampling followed an academic history of investigating marketing leaders in large corporations who are connecting strategies, technological innovation, and marketing insights derived from BD to financial performance (see Angulo-Ruiz, Donthu, Prior, & Rialp, 2014; V. Kumar, 2015). My participants needed to be experienced corporate marketing leaders who engaged in different disciplines including strategy, marketing, BD technology, marketing metrics, and sales.

I adhered to all ethical standards of Walden University and the National Institutes of Health when recruiting participants for this study. To obtain access to potential

participants, I sent an invitation letter (see Appendix B) describing the study via postal mail, email, or LinkedIn based on the contact information provided by the company online. I also addressed potential concerns and questions regarding the study such as time commitments and confidentiality within the letter. After an initial contact, I followed up via LinkedIn messaging, phone calls, and emails, depending on the participant's preferred method of communication, to obtain permission to conduct the necessary interviews. After I received approval to proceed with the project from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), I emailed a letter of consent to the participants outlining the purpose of the study, participation requirements, and a request for voluntary participation before beginning the study.

During the data collection phase of the study, I followed up the invites and interviews with emails and phone calls to foster a working and transparent relationship with participants. When adhering to a case study protocol, an investigator must establish a working relationship with the participants to acquire objective knowledge (Yin, 2014). Regarding the recruiting and researching process, McDermid, Peters, Jackson, and Daly (2014) offered several recommendations to researchers for building trust, rapport, confidence, and transparency with the participants. The protection of information and identity along with self-disclosure by researchers are foundational in building a working relationship with the participants (McDermid et al., 2014). To maintain the highest level of transparency, I disclosed my experience with the participants regarding the research topic and personal marketing experiences. Godwin (2014) cautioned researchers to maintain an active and objective observer viewpoint with participants to enhance trust in

the relationship and be protective of participants and the data. Transparency starts with informed consent and continues through the member checking process emphasizing confidentiality for a better working relationship with the participants (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Khoshnava Fomani, Shoghi, & Ali Cheraghi, 2014). I perceived participant willingness to be open and forthright throughout the semistructured interviews to address their experiences and answer the research question.

### **Research Method and Design**

I chose a qualitative method and multiple case study design based on the research question and the contemporary nature of the phenomenon under study. A researcher will choose the qualitative method to understand the experiences and attitudes of the participants by asking *how*, *what*, or *why* questions about the phenomenon under study (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). According to Yin (2014), a qualitative case study allows the researcher to capture rich descriptions of contexts of the business problem to answer the research questions and satisfy the purpose of the study. Researchers use case studies to investigate complex cases within bounded contexts using multiple sources of data (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). I concluded that the qualitative multiple case study design was appropriate for investigating marketing leaders BD-based strategies for improving sales revenues.

### **Research Method**

A researcher selects one of three approaches to answer a research question: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. The qualitative approach is used to engage in real-time inquiry of participants' experiences to answer a research question (O'Brien et



al., 2014; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). The qualitative method also allows the researcher to ask participants about their experiences and perspectives for greater understanding of the phenomenon studied (Morse & McEvoy, 2014; Venkatesh et al., 2013). I chose the qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of BD-based marketing strategies used by marketing leaders to increase their firm's sales revenues.

A quantitative method is used to examine correlations and statistical significance and to test theories (Antwi & Hamza, 2015; Landrum & Garza, 2015). The mixed-methods approach is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research problem or phenomenon (Snelson, 2016). The quantitative and mixed-methods approaches involve multiple variables and hypotheses for research testing in contrast to uncovering insights and details regarding a specific problem in a qualitative approach (Tewksbury, 2013). Because I was not investigating quantitative-based parameters, a quantitative or mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for my study.

I chose a qualitative method to gain an in-depth understanding of a current phenomenon. Using the qualitative method allowed me to discover themes that might emerge by interviewing people and looking for explanations and experiences while searching for patterns in the data (see C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My chosen method allowed me to learn about the lived experiences of the participants, discover themes, and provide real-life descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because I interacted with participants to gain knowledge and understanding of the business problem and to answer the research question. In this

multiple case study, I explored the BD-based marketing strategies marketing leaders used to increase sales revenues in a few organizations.

### **Research Design**

The multiple case study design was the most appropriate for this study. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore what strategies marketing leaders use to increase sales using BD. Researchers conduct case studies to examine a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life bounded case with in-depth, detailed data collection to capture complex perspectives in a specific context (Hyett et al., 2014). According to Yin (2014), researchers use case studies to understand complex situations, analyze specific processes, and explore activities of one or more individuals. R. Marshall, Pattinson, and Woodside (2014) described case studies as optimal for business managers by relating the case to their own circumstances and decisions because of vivid imagery and rich descriptions of the findings. In the current study, I explored the BD-based strategies marketing leaders use to increase sales revenues using a multiple case study design.

Case studies, ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology are the research designs that researchers most often choose for their qualitative studies (Petty et al., 2012a). The case study design was the most appropriate for exploring and understanding BD-based marketing strategies. Researchers use the case study design when exploring real-life experiences to better understand or explain decisions, processes, and motives involved in the phenomenon under study (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Yin, 2014). Researchers use ethnography to understand the culture of a group, as well as activities (Baskerville &

Myers, 2015), but I did not choose this design because culture was not the phenomenon being explored. Narrative research is characterized by the researcher retelling the participants' stories as an account of life events (Campbell, 2014; Wolgemuth, 2014). With the potential for the omission of essential themes or relevance to the current phenomenon, this design was not appropriate for my study. A phenomenological design is employed when researchers aim to understand the nature and meaning of the lived experiences of participants through extensive engagement (Chan, Walker, & Gleaves, 2015). I explored the BD-based marketing strategies of marketing leaders in learning about BD use for improving sales revenues. A multiple case study was the most suitable design for this study given my timing and budget, the flexibility of the case study, and the focus on a current phenomenon.

Data saturation is critical to the quality of research and essential for credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of a qualitative study (Cope, 2014; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Scholars reach data saturation when there are no additional insights, themes, or issues emerging from the data in the research process (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017). Researchers use semistructured interviews to reach data saturation (Robinson, 2014). While exploring the experiences of marketing leaders using BD-based strategies, I conducted interviews until no new information was collected from the participants. Along with semistructured interviews, I conducted document analysis, data coding, and member checking with the participants to ensure data saturation (see Grosseohme, 2014). Given the importance of understanding BD-based strategies used to

increase sales revenues by marketing leaders, the qualitative multiple case study design was most appropriate for this study.

### **Population and Sampling**

With qualitative methodology, researchers determine who and how many participants to include in the study, and whether those participants can give insight into the research phenomenon (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Boddy (2016) argued that researchers can justify any sample size in qualitative research from a single case to multiple cases depending on the relevance, representation, and meaning to the phenomenon. I used a multiple case study design with a sample of three individuals from Fortune 1000 companies in Ohio who met the selection criteria. The population included marketing leaders of Fortune 1000 companies located in Ohio that have well-established marketing departments within their firms. For this multiple case study, the targeted population consisted of marketing leaders in different organizations who are using BD-based marketing strategies to increase sales revenues.

### **Sampling Method**

Sampling methods are a framework for the researcher to explore the population and reach the targeted group or individual (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). Three main types of qualitative research sampling include purposeful sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Researchers often use purposeful sampling with qualitative exploratory case studies to choose the most relevant cases or participants to the phenomenon under study (Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2015). Quota sampling is analogous to a subset or representative sampling

where individuals, traits, or phenomena are representative of a larger group (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). Researchers use snowball sampling when existing study participants recruit additional participants within their network for the study (Gyarmathy, Johnston, Caplinskiene, Caplinskas, & Latkin, 2014). Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) described purposeful sampling as a technique ideal for the qualitative researcher with limited resources looking for the most knowledgeable participants willing to share their experiences about the specific phenomenon of interest. A researcher uses purposeful sampling to concentrate on information-rich cases and identify important, common themes across the cases, which is not always afforded by other sampling methods (Duan et al., 2015). Purposeful sampling was most appropriate for this study in choosing a small number of marketing leaders most proficient in BD-based marketing strategies to answer the research question.

### **Data Saturation**

Data saturation is attained when no new information, codes, themes, or enough information is gained for study replication (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). I interviewed all participants as well as utilized member checking to confirm the accuracy of the participants' viewpoints. I conducted a follow-up phone interview with the chosen marketing leaders along with member checking to ensure I reached data saturation. The iterative process of data collection from interviewing, member checking confirmations, and subsequent data analysis provide rich descriptions and information necessary to maximize the study's validity (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, &

LaRossa, 2015). Once data saturation was reached, interviewing ceased, and I compiled the data to facilitate the reporting of the study findings and data storage.

### **Interview Setting**

I began the interviewing process with the chosen participants after receiving IRB approval to commence with the study by obtaining a signed consent form from each participant. Semistructured, open-ended interviews with the selected marketing leaders can provide important evidence for the multiple case study and research problem (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2014). The initial phone interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes with each participant. Member checking and follow-through interviews involved a shorter time commitment from the participants. I conducted all interviews and subsequent member checking confirmations by telephone per each participants' wishes. The interview setting was a quiet home office with a closed door separate from the living quarters to assure confidentiality and avoid disturbances. Participants' interview settings was their natural environment of choice to foster comfort and engagement during the interview process.

### **Ethical Research**

Conducting ethical research and following strict procedures for ethical treatment of participants are the obligations of a good researcher (Dempsey, Dowling, Larkin, & Murphy, 2016). Before conducting this study, I adhered to the requirements of Walden University's IRB and obtained permission from both the IRB and study participants to ensure ethical compliance. The IRB is responsible for guaranteeing researcher compliance with regulations and requirements for ethical treatment of study participants

(Stryjewski, Kalish, Silverman, & Lehmann, 2015). Prior to conducting interviews and data collection, I obtained a signed informed consent from each participant. Informed consent is another requirement for ethical treatment of participants and the data resulting from their participation (Christen, Domingo-Ferrer, Draganski, Spranger, & Walter, 2016). This informed consent included an overview of the research topic along with any risks and benefits associated with participation in the study. I informed each person who participated in the study that participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from participating in the study at any time without any negative consequences by contacting me by phone or e-mail. Participants did not receive incentives or compensations for participating in this study.

Principles and ethical procedures for protecting human participants are important aspects of ethical research (Gallagher et al., 2016; Yin, 2014). After receiving IRB approval, I contacted the participants by telephone and e-mails to recruit and further schedule dates for conducting initial interviews. Also, I scheduled additional interviews and member checking follow-ups with the participants via the participants' preferred methods of contact, some texts and others via e-mails. I identified each participant throughout the study using a generic name such as P1, P2, etc., as well as generic naming of participants' organizations to ensure and protect participant confidentiality (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Limiting participants' risks and adhering to ethical requirements in knowledge generation from research are vital to confidentiality and participant protection (Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2016). Also, I am securely storing the study information and data in a password-protected computer and locked filing system to further protect

participants' privacy and confidentiality. I will securely maintain the interview data and keep any other data sources confidential for 5 years to protect participant confidentiality in adherence to Walden University's requirements. After five years, I will destroy all electronic files and shred physical documents associated with this study. If any participant withdraws from this study before the study is completed, I will immediately destroy all documents, notes, recordings, and electronic files associated with that individual. The Walden IRB approved number for this doctoral study is 06-27-19-0399394.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher is the data collection instrument for this study stemming from the nature of the qualitative research approach (Bourke, 2014). In this qualitative multiple case study, I was the data collection instrument. As the instrument, I recognized the participants' worldviews and potential impacts on the research, along with proper use of judgment in gathering and analyzing the research data (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I adhered to ethical and proven data collection requirements for obtaining and interpreting the data. Sources of case study evidence collected by researchers include interviews, documents, both participant and direct observations, physical artifacts, surveys, and archival records (Houghton, Casey, & Smyth, 2017; Yin, 2014). Employing Yin's (2014) recommendations for triangulation and improving validity, I used two sources of evidence that included interviews and public sales documents. I obtained IRB approval and a signed consent from each participant before collecting any data. Detailed field notes, a reflexive journal, audio recordings of the interviews, along with requested



documents from participants regarding BD-based marketing strategies and resulting sales revenues were inclusive in the data collection for this study.

Researchers conduct interviews to gather data and explore study topics in qualitative research (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Yin, 2014). The use of semistructured interviews by the researcher incorporates flexibility for obtaining answers to the prescribed interview questions in addition to exploring topics of interest closely aligned to the study topic and conceptual framework (Wilson, 2016). I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions (see Appendix A) to collect the data via phone interviews with marketing leaders. Also, I used the same interview protocol (see Appendix A) with each participant to ensure consistency and structure throughout the data collection. As the primary data collection instrument, I used the Trint app on my iPhone for recording the phone calls and afterwards downloading the audio file for transcription. Researchers define and use interview protocols to ensure reliability and validity of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Although interviews were the primary source of data for this study, I did collect and analyze additional online, public documents regarding the study topic.

Yin (2014) referred to documentation and their reviews as common sources of evidence used in case studies. Documents can include plans, letters, emails, agendas, meeting minutes, corporate strategies, and archival records (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2014). Multiple sources of data collected are used by researchers to achieve data triangulation leading to data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). For this study, I collected documents from the participants and performed documentation reviews of public files associated

with BD-based marketing strategies and sales revenues, including final sales, financial reports, market analyses, and executive summaries. In addition to using multiple sources of data to reach method triangulation, researchers utilize member checking to enhance reliability and validity of the study.

Researchers use member checking as a tool to enhance a study's credibility and trustworthiness in the qualitative method (Cope, 2014). Essentially, member checking is a follow up with the participants to confirm if the researcher's interpretations accurately depict the participants' answers to the interview questions (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). In using member checking, researchers allow participants to review and confirm a researcher's interpretations in the efforts to collect accurate information that can improve the validity and reliability of the data (Milosevic, Bass, & Combs, 2015). After each interview, I synthesized and summarized the interview data into a concise format and emailed a copy to each participant. I conducted a follow-up phone call or e-mail with each participant to review the interview summary and gain additional comments and revisions. I continued this process until each participant agreed that I had captured their interview answers correctly and they had no new information to contribute.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Interviews are a common data collection technique utilized by researchers in the qualitative approach (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). Researchers compose interview questions in the case study design to seek to understand the study's participants (Yin, 2014). I will use semistructured interviews for data collection, reviewed marketing materials from the marketing leaders relative to BD-based strategies, and published sales

reports for supporting documentation. I did not conduct a pilot study or pre-interviews for my research. A disadvantage of interviewing includes the need for skilled interviewers to adhere to interview and research protocols while obtaining crucial data from participants which might be a challenge for the novice researcher (Choy, 2014). Also, the lack of nonverbal clues or other distractions from the participant in a telephone interview might impact the flow of information and building of rapport (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). In contrast, telephone interviews are advantageous in flexibility and privacy for the participant to confidentially address issues that matter most to them regarding the research topic (Choy, 2014). Three marketing leaders from *Fortune* 1000 companies located in Ohio participated in semistructured interviews by telephone in this study.

Researchers follow an interview protocol for step-by-step interviewing to assist in the consistent planning, structure, and process of research (Arsel, 2017). I followed a prescribed interview protocol for this study (see Appendix A). Before the data collection phase, I emailed potential participants to introduce myself, the study topic, and explore their knowledge and eligibility. Upon receiving IRB approval and selecting the eligible participants, I emailed a consent form to each participant. Once I received consent to participate back from each participant, I scheduled a time to conduct a telephone interview. Before each interview, I sent a list of the interview questions to each participant for review and to address potential concerns.

Researchers record interviews during the data collection process in order to achieve more efficient and successful data for both collection and analysis in the study

(Jamshed, 2014). I used the Trint software app on my iPhone to record the telephone interviews with each participant. In conjunction with Trint, I used the Trint software to transcribe the interview recordings in addition to my field notes from each interview. Tellado, Lopez-Calvo, and Alonso-Olea (2014) recommended researchers transcribe interview recordings before member checking and sharing of interview interpretations with the participants. Verbatim transcription of the recorded interviews is essential to both member checking and data analysis (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Member checking is the process of validating the researcher's interpretations of a participant's responses during the interview for accuracy and credibility (Birt et al., 2016). After each interview, I emailed a one-page transcript of the interview to each participant as well as a follow-up phone call or email to review my interpretations of their responses. Researchers engage member checking to validate, verify, and establish credibility (Anderson, 2017). I used follow-up phone calls and e-mails to verify that I had accurately depicted the participants' feelings, experiences, and intended messages concerning the research topic and interview questions. Also, I revised only one response and input accordingly to reflect an updated summary from one participant. I had one additional five minute telephone interview to clarify one answer with one participant resulting in no new information added to the data. In conjunction with the semistructured interviews, I requested and reviewed documentation of sales revenues associated with BD-based marketing strategies as offered by the participants to achieve triangulation.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Researchers increase the reliability of research and maintain confidentiality using data organization techniques including the management of data sources, field notes, interview transcripts, audio files, and assigning generic identities to participants (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; McDermid et al., 2014). I used Mendeley, an online and desktop tool for organizing and storing research articles, as well as a Microsoft Excel datasheet to track and categorize articles throughout the research process. Petty et al. (2012b) recommended that researchers maintain consistency and organization after each interview with participants to better manage the data and categorize accordingly. I assigned a number to each participant such as P1, P2, and so forth, to conceal personal identities and organize all files by the participant's number (Saunders, Kitzinger, & Kitzinger, 2015).

Also, I used an electronic file system and a hard copy file for each participant to store and organize interview transcripts, documents, and field notes. After each interview, I uploaded the transcribed audio files to Nvivo for further categorization, coding, and data analysis. I am storing the Nvivo files for data coding and organization in addition to other participants' data on an external hard drive locked in a safe in the home office. Also, I have field notes, a reflexive journal, and copies of online documents with the external hard drive. In compliance with Walden University requirements, I will safely and securely store all research data in a password protected or locked environment for five years. After the five years, I will destroy and permanently delete all data files.

## **Data Analysis**

Triangulation is a method used by researchers to validate the study's findings by using multiple sources of data (Carter et al., 2014). Methodological triangulation is a choice many researchers use to increase the internal credibility of the findings, improve data analysis, and ensure data saturation (Charalampid & Hammond, 2016; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Hussein, 2015). Methodological triangulation improves the credibility of a researcher's thesis and its underlying construct while expanding opportunities for cultivation of new theories (Lodhi, 2016). In this multiple case study, I used methodological triangulation in the data analysis of two sources: interviews with marketing leaders and documentation associated with BD-based marketing strategies.

Yin (2014) outlined data analysis as categorizing, examination of collected data, testing the evidence, and determining the conclusion of the findings. Marshall and Rossman (2015) described the data analysis process as seven phases including data organization, reading and rereading of the data, identifying themes, coding the data, using analytic memos for interpretations, exploring alternative interpretations, and writing the findings. Before the data analysis process, I revisited the audio recordings, reread the interview transcripts, and reviewed the documentation to improve my understanding of the data. I used the software tool, NVivo12 Pro, a software tool widely used by researchers for qualitative data analysis, to import and organize the data, assist in coding, and coding comparisons between data sources (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2016). I categorized the data and analyzed both the interviews and acquired documentation to identify recurring themes.

Coding is the process of organizing and categorizing the collected data into themes applicable to the phenomenon under study (De Massis, & Kotlar, 2014). I coded and categorized the data relating to the ToC framework and key themes from the literature using Nvivo first, and second, my own data analysis. I continued to review the data for new themes or alternative interpretations as well as examining for bias. Marshall and Rossman (2015) emphasized the use of analytical memos referred to as thematic, methodological, and theoretical memos throughout the data analysis. I did have a few analytical memos in brackets from each interview as well as notes in my reflexive journal used throughout the data analysis. Next, I assessed each category, theme, and framework analysis for meaning and importance based on the ToC framework and research question. Lastly, I critically assessed what I had learned about BD-based marketing strategies and prepared for the presentation of the findings. Gehman et al. (2017) asserted the importance of linking the data analysis to the underlying theoretical framework and literature to logically address the emerging answers to the research question. Throughout the data analysis process and continued into the writing of the findings, I assessed the data through the lens of the ToC framework and key themes from the literature to substantiate the findings.

### **Reliability and Validity**

#### **Reliability**

Reliability is a strategy that researchers utilize to attain credibility, dependability, and data consistency (Morse, 2015). Researchers link the findings of the research to reality or multiple social realities to establish the truth or credibility of the study (Kaivo-

oja, 2017). In qualitative research, dependability is when another researcher can produce similar results following the exact research process with similar participants and conditions (Cope, 2015). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) for all semistructured interviews in the study along with a reflexive journal, bracketing to minimize bias, member checking, and additional documentation review to support the participants' input to achieve reliability of the study. Meticulous record keeping with a reflexive journal, member checking, semistructured interview recordings, and data triangulation are examples of means to strengthen the reliability of the study (Noble & Smith, 2015). Researchers can use reflexive methods to maintain transparency, demonstrate engagement, and establish a well-documented decision trail for other researchers to follow in establishing credibility, dependability, and data consistency (Elo et al., 2014).

I applied methodological triangulation to achieve dependability and credibility for this study. Methodological triangulation is the use of multiple methods at the level of research design or data sources such as semistructured interviews, document analysis, participant observations, and public data to enhance dependability of the study (Hussein, 2015). To ensure reliability, I followed a clear and transparent interview protocol (see Appendix A) for each participant. Interview protocols aid researchers in achieving consistency and reliability in qualitative research (Morse, 2015). I also used a reflexive journal to document the research process including the interviewing process, data analysis, and potential personal bias influences. A researcher uses bracketing to identify different perspectives other than their own for bias as well as track coding and recoding



decisions for a dependable process (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017; Bengtsson, 2016). Also, I followed through with each participant post interview with member checking. Member checking is defined as the process of follow-through with participants to confirm their ideas and views from the interview process (Harvey, 2015). The processes of member checking are valuable for developing trust between researchers and the participants towards ensuring both reliability and validity in research (Milosevic et al., 2015). I also reviewed public sales documents pertaining to BD-based marketing strategies and associated sales revenues in support of dependability and credibility.

### **Validity**

Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are the components researchers scrutinize to ensure a study's validity (Anney, 2014; Cope, 2014). Validity addresses the credibility of the study's findings or the matters of believability and *truth* in the research (Borsboom & Wijsen, 2016). A researcher can enhance credibility by demonstrating engagement, using audit trails and member checking (Cope, 2014). Transferability is the applicability of the findings to other groups or settings when used by other readers or researchers (Morse, 2015). Leung (2015) referred to validity as the appropriateness of qualitative research regarding the tools, processes, and data for confirming the study's findings. To ensure the validity of my qualitative multiple case study, I employed specific methods to achieve credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

By utilizing member checking, triangulation, and data saturation, qualitative researchers can establish the trustworthiness of a study's findings (Anney, 2014). I used

member checking to validate my interpretations of the participants' interview responses and confirm their ideas. A researcher can use member checking to reaffirm topics and the participant's perspectives relevant to the research question (Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). I documented the data collection and analysis processes to ensure a proper audit trail as well as employed NVivo 12 to develop transferability and confirmability components. Birt et al. (2016) recommended that researchers utilize the reported outcomes of the member checking interview to enhance the credibility of the results. Though the reader ultimately determines transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), I provided rich, detailed descriptions of the data collection, analysis processes, and the subsequent results to improve transferability of the research. Confirmability is characterized as the degree of authenticity of the participants' views to the findings without interference from the researcher's biases, interests, or motivations (Hays et al., 2016). In keeping a reflective journal to record my thoughts, beliefs, values, and assumptions throughout the research process, I identified preconceptions or misconceptions throughout the research process that might taint the study's findings and impact confirmability. In addition to member checking, data saturation and triangulation are used to enhance quality and study validity.

Reaching data saturation is an essential step to not only answer a qualitative research question but increase the study's validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015). My investigation achieved data saturation by continuing to interview all qualified participants until no new information, themes, or additional data for analysis emerged from follow-up emails, telephone contacts, and texts. In conjunction with member

checking, I used triangulation to reach data saturation by analyzing public sales documents associated with BD-based marketing strategies. Triangulation is the use of multiple methods of data collection to further strengthen research validity by confirming the consistency of the interview responses with document reviews and other observations (Lub, 2015). The advantages for researchers employing triangulation include a complete picture of the studied phenomenon, revelation of trends and inconsistencies, and the improvement of both reliability and validity (Weyers, Strydom, & Huisamen, 2014). In this qualitative multiple case study, I interviewed three marketing leaders as well as analyzed documents related to marketing strategies and sale revenues to reach data saturation.

### **Transition and Summary**

In Sections 2 and 3, I provided a detailed account of my qualitative research project and its results. In addition, I provided a justification of the selection of the qualitative multiple case study as well as the use of ethical standards in this research process. I began with a restatement of the purpose statement, explanations of my role as researcher, data collection, methodology, instrumentation use, and the processes regarding the selection of participants. I provided justifications and used details for both qualitative method and the case study design as well as the use of ethical standards in this research process. Furthermore, I defined data collection protocols, analysis, and my application of study organization techniques. In Section 2, I also addressed reliability and validity in conjunction with triangulation and data saturation. The topics of rigor and ethics applied to maintaining the qualitative studies credibility, transferability,

dependability, and confirmability are covered. Finally, in Section 3, I include the presentation of the research findings, applications to professional practice, the implications for social change, and recommendations for future study.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore BD-based marketing strategies used by marketing leaders to increase sales revenues. Marketing leaders from three Fortune 1000 organizations headquartered in Ohio served as participants in this study. Data included marketing leaders' semistructured interviews, my field notes, and the organizations' public sales from 2018 regarding BD-based marketing. I reviewed the interview responses along with my bracketed notes taken during each interview, and the public documents offered by each participant. I also included my additional questions and notes in clarifying participants' answers to support the data collected.

I used NVivo 12 software to code the semistructured interview transcripts after compiling, organizing, and reviewing them and my field notes in Word. After completing the data analysis, I identified five themes that surfaced from the cases: a holistic view of customer experience, the use and improvement of BD marketing analytics, collaboration across business units, marketing and sales alignment, and use of KPIs. Results indicated that marketing leaders could focus their efforts on four strategic areas to engage customers, tailor customer experiences, use BD intelligently across the organization, and link sales activities to influence customer decisions and improve sales revenues.

Section 3 includes a thematic presentation of the findings. I discuss BD-based marketing strategies that organization leaders can use to increase sales based on my study's findings. Also, I discuss the application of my findings to professional marketing

and business practices, present implications for social change, and provide recommendations for action and future research. I close Section 3 with my final reflections and conclusions.

### **Presentation of the Findings**

The research question for this study was the following: What strategies do some marketing leaders use to generate increased sales revenues from BD? I conducted semistructured interviews with three participants from three organizations. Each participant answered seven open-ended questions concerning BD-based strategies to increase sales. I also reviewed public online information regarding annual sales or digital sales as an indicator of BD-based marketing results for 2018 for each organization. Also, I recorded my observations using bracketed notes throughout the interviews and included those as additional notes in NVivo 12 for data analysis. Participant 1 is the vice president of marketing strategy with over 3 years in that role and another 20 years of marketing experience. Participant 2 is a marketing director and brand manager with 20 years of industry experience. Participant 3 is a vice president of information strategy and marketing with over 10 years of industry experience. All three participants are lead marketing strategists in their firms with proven experience in BD, marketing initiatives, and sales. Each participant indicated that BD-based marketing plays an important role in increasing sales revenues for their companies.

The conceptual framework in this study was the TOC (Lewin, 1947), which has been a foundation for various change management models and theories. Organizations using BD and digital marketing channels are transforming to provide solution-selling

approaches and consultative human connections with customers to improve sales (Arli, Bauer, & Palmatier, 2018). Business leaders can use BD-based marketing strategies to develop brand awareness, build customer loyalty, and customize marketing decisions, which could lead to increased sales (Anshari et al., 2018). Big data has not only changed businesses, but leaders have also transformed their companies into data-driven entities to make better decisions about products, stakeholders, customers, and finances (Nasim, Sidek, Mobidin, & Adam, 2018). The constructs of Lewin's change management model stemming from TOC serve as a guide for marketing and business leaders to develop a systemic approach for adapting BD-based technology to gain a better view of the customer, improve the customer experience, build long-term customer relationships, make effective decisions, and increase sales (Naveed, Jantan, Saidu, & Bhatti, 2017; Pugna, Duțescu, & Stănilă, 2019).

The findings of the current study support Krishnan's (2018) assertions that BD is changing how marketing leaders make decisions and implement strategies about customers, products, and business processes to affect performance. These changes, in turn, can benefit marketing leaders in aligning with chief information officers and chief analytical officers to make better decisions regarding resource allocations, use of predictive analytics, and linking financial performance such as improved sales revenues as a result of BD-based marketing strategies (Orenga-Roglá & Chalmeta, 2016). The participants' responses from the current study as well as the themes identified from the data analysis align with change management approaches from prior research and the underlying TOC framework. The following themes emerged from my data analysis of the

participants' semistructured interviews, my field notes, and document reviews of public information offered by the participants: a holistic view of the customer and customer experience, the use and improvement of BD marketing analytics, collaboration across business units, marketing and sales alignment, and use of KPIs. Table 2 shows participants' responses by theme.

Table 2

*Participants' Responses by Theme NVivo 12*

Participant	Theme				
	A holistic view of customer & experience	BD marketing analytics	Collaboration across business units	Marketing and sales alignment	Key performance indicators
Participant 1	X	X	x	x	x
Participant 2	X	x	x	x	X
Participant 3	X	x		x	x

**Theme 1: The Customer—A Holistic View and Customer Experience**

All participants conveyed that developing effective BD-based marketing strategies started with the customer, the customer experience, and engagement regarding their customers, both past and present, online and offline. This customer-centricity goes well beyond the typical marketing information regarding customer segmentation and demographics by including the customer's past and present experiences with online engagements, digital transactions, brand awareness, social media, email campaigns, and online sales. According to Participant 1, one marketing strategy using BD "would be leveraging BD to ensure that we have an increased holistic understanding of our targeted



customers whether that be a B to C (business to consumer) customer or a B to B (business to business) customer.” Participant 2 recommended that BD be used for competitor analysis as well to recognize trends, other brand strategies, and effective marketing approaches that help convert customer engagements to sales. Participant 3 considered it important that a customer’s experiences both online and offline “be part of the strategies across the marketing mix linking to the sales teams.”

Marketing leaders’ use of BD analytics is enhancing the knowledge about customers and their experiences with brands and firms, transcending traditional marketing strategies to help inform marketers regarding effective, modern strategies for targeting, customer reach and engagements, and sales (Lovett, 2019). Participant 2 referred to reaching the customer utilizing BD analytics:

that can accelerate the maturation period of a particular sales campaign or particular segment that we target by using innovative methods, the newest, latest methods identified which allow us to stay on the cutting edge of marketing tools to reach those customer segments.

Participant 1 stated “purchasing additional data that we can bring into our marketing warehouse to supplement what we know and understand of our customers allowing us a building out of customer experiences and further awareness, and a move to consideration and purchase.” For further clarification, I asked Participant 1 whether this an outsourcing strategy for marketing, and he answered “no because we basically leverage internal data science teams with the marketing teams to leverage the data regarding our existing and potential customers.”

Participant 3 emphasized the point of the buying experience of customers and utilizing collected data from past engagements to drive the firm's media messages both online and offline to increase customer engagements toward actions (clicks) resulting in sales. Participant 2 offered "big data gives us customer habits and buying patterns across a large spectrum from which we can store and retrieve that information to market to potential customers in the strongest, most effective way." All responses regarding BD-based marketing strategies were customer-centric and specific to growing customer knowledge, product, or brand awareness with an emphasis on improving customer engagements that leads to increased sales.

Organizations are transforming into data-driven, digital businesses impacting how business leaders make decisions about resources, processes, and customers (Carillo, 2017). Marketing leaders are challenged to initiate the right BD strategies for building human connections resulting in a highly engaged customer base willing to buy, which leads to increased sales revenues (Kunz et al., 2017). Social media platforms and mobile engagement offer the always-on digital experiences, nonstop promotional opportunities, and built-in analytical dashboards or apps informing marketers of both bad and good decisions across the marketing mix. All three participants touched on customer interactions and the results of marketing activities being tracked using internal software and BD analytics to drive decisions.

Participants 1 and 2 spoke about changing content, campaigns, and value-driven online activities that engaged customers while tracking clicks that led to sales. Participant 3 expanded on these responses by pointing to the data that captured online customer

buying and browsing patterns, which led to specific online product and pricing offerings to drive sales. All three participants use BD-identified opportunities regarding customers' motives, preferences, and engagement patterns to improve value for the customer before focusing on sales for their organizations. Customer-centricity was the most recurring response and theme when discussing BD-based marketing strategies with these participants. A review of the participants' marketing media online and resulting digital sales supported the participants' customer focus, digital engagements, targeted audiences, and increased digital sales.

### **Theme 2: BD Marketing Analytics**

According to Erevelles et al. (2016), organizations that can better leverage customer analytics for increased customer value while making bold strategic decisions using BD insights will experience a transformation of their marketing units, leaders, and efforts. Participant 1 described their CMO as more of a "leader of distribution," and the VP of marketing strategy was the BD marketing analytics leader and representative at the firm's strategy table. In light of BD marketing analytics, this change in strategy responsibility represents changes in their firm and sector. Also, the marketing strategy team included the instructors for all other teams in implementing BD innovation that drove sales in the firm. Participant 2 noted that the firm's technological leaders were invaluable in optimizing BD marketing analytics for the sales teams. Participant 3 explained how using BD marketing analytics has made marketing more accountable to the customer; linked marketing activities to results; and built a more agile organization in need of data scientists, creative marketing decisions, and instant feedback about customer

purchasing decisions. All three participants spoke about data quality as an ongoing challenge in BD-based marketing analytics and the resulting business decisions.

Predictive analytics from previous BD use regarding customers, buying patterns, and engagements were part of all three participants' responses for successful BD-based marketing strategies. Marketers use predictive analytics to deliver a more personalized customer experience and create improved customer interactions between marketing and sales across online channels to increase value and sales revenues (Bradlow, Gangwar, Kopalle, & Voleti, 2017). Marketing leaders will utilize these advanced analytics to drive company strategy across media buying, lead generation, upselling, marketing campaign optimization, customer acquisition costs, targeted content, marketing automation, and business decision-making (Copulsky, Richardson, & Simone, 2017; Grossberg, 2016). Participant 1 claimed predictive marketing analytics were the BD-based marketing strategies most used and successful in improving customer campaigns, experiences, and future media buying linked closely to marked increases in sales. Participant 3 remarked that "we could make decisions about upselling and delivering more value to the customer using predictive modeling from BD-based marketing experiences." Participant 2 discussed how predictive marketing analytics had helped shape content for online and digital experiences, product offerings, and refining marketing campaigns from past results to drive future sales. All three participants touched on how costly these apps or platforms were in rolling out predictive analytics for their firms, and even more costly if sales goals were not realized. My online review of their digital sales summaries for 2018 supported their use of BD-based analytics tied to increased sales.

### **Theme 3: Collaboration Across Business Units**

With BD changing how many sectors and industries integrate data decisions in their businesses, organizations are challenged to build decision-making capabilities across different functions, adopt adaptive technological innovations, and improve financial performances for the firms (Akter, Wamba, Gunasekaran, Dubey, & Childe, 2016). Marketing capabilities and strategic decisions have expanded as a result of businesses adopting BD innovations and initiatives (Heidrich, Trendowicz, & Ebert, 2016). Marketers are faced with utilizing BD to improve customer relationships, customer retention, and sales growth for organizations. The vastness of BD capabilities, information, and constant growth are daunting undertakings for marketing departments to exploit alone; therefore, collaboration across business units to adopt a data-driven, results-oriented culture are occurring in many firms (Akter et al., 2016).

These collaborations are what help marketers build effective strategies, implement BD-based marketing initiatives, and align marketing with sales. Participant 1 stated “there’s a lot of collaboration. You know I’m not sure I would call it massive here yet, but with IT, very heavy with my group actually, and then the marketing teams. But I think there’s still some opportunity.” Participant 2 asserted that when it came to BD decisions, a fair amount of collaboration, especially with the IT department, was evident to interpret customer buying habits along with developing apps that tracked sales results and return on investments. According to Participant 1, rolling out changes and implementing BD-based marketing strategies was a widespread effort across the organization and was closely aligned to change management perspectives. Also, each

participant observed many business units outside of marketing were dedicated to a cultural shift of using BD technology to improve the overall financial performance of the corporation.

Collaboration across different business units was a theme in making decisions regarding BD-based marketing strategies, implementing actions that engaged more customers, and keeping financial goals front and center. The participants in this study did not view BD or resulting BD-based strategies as new because all of them had witnessed the data evolution as the Internet expanded, more data were collected and stored, and digital transformations occurred. However, the breaking down of the silos within the corporations has slowly happened in response to BD growth and adoption, allowing an expansion of marketing capabilities and audience knowledge toward increased sales revenues. Participant 3 did not refer to this as collaboration but more as “a firm response, a cultural shift towards cooperation to fully realize BD potential and put in place as many people necessary to assure data quality, extract value, sell, and scale.” Participant 2 was the only one to assert that collaboration with internal and external partners to fully use and realize BD-based marketing represented a slow change across the company. Participant 1 emphasized the importance of internal teams for rolling out BD-based marketing strategies. Corporation-wide adoption of BD-based marketing strategies are being used to bring in sales, and align to change management characteristics, where marketing especially, are teaching others to become data-driven entities, brand ambassadors, and customer service agents to build lasting relationships that boost the bottom lines (Zahay, Sihi, Muzellec, & Johnson, 2019).

**Theme 4: Marketing and Sales Alignment**

In many corporations, the sales force or departments are separate from, and often, an extension of the marketing departments' efforts with separate performance metrics. Collaboration between marketing and sales to achieve performance goals for the entire organization is an essential element for successful BD-based marketing strategies. Participant 3 stated, "The teams of marketing and sales are in unity when it comes to using BD for success and decision-making; the two are not separate here." The marriage of marketing and sales with the focus on customer retention represents a change for organizations doing business in a BD world, unifying internal teams' company-wide to remain customer-centric and data-driven. Marketers are focusing on aligning with sales more closely to improve BD-based strategies that drive decisions for better lead generation, customer-centric offers, and use of predictive analytics to overcome objections, future upselling, and improvement of brand messaging (Larson & McClellan, 2017). Participant 2 supported the marketing and sales alignment strategically across operational units within the company and stated:

Once you have the proper information, you can then frame your sales offers to sustain and scale. It also sets a trust for a business to continuously duplicate the success of sales of one market or one market segment to another.

Participant 1 clearly defined using BD strategically for media buying and creating both online and offline messaging that increased sales, specifically business to consumer (B2C) sales.

Educating the sales teams for the product or service offerings based upon BD-based insights gathered is ongoing within organizations. The slow roll-out of BD-based strategies continues across the marketing mix to improve sales, provide customer value, and help each operational team better align with the customers and, thus, the sales teams (Akter et al., 2016). Participant 1 responded to expanding BD use and success:

It is one thing to have the data. Another thing to have the infrastructure that leverages the data in real-time to be able to make the next best offer. So we do a lot of work around how do we can integrate that technology environment on the front end of the business to be able to be prepared to do that.

The marketing teams using BD-based strategies are critical in analyzing customer behavior and buying decisions, and then putting this information together for the sales teams to bring the right product, service, offer, message at the right time to the right buyer. Participant 2 noticed when more teams aligned to use BD strategically to duplicate customer experiences and engagements, sales increased. Participant 3 found it challenging to align technology leaders with sales teams and educating how to use BD strategically to grow sales is slow, yet necessary. Similarities among the three participants include the focus on customer data that make the marketing and sales process seamless; involve the leadership teams; a dedicated team of marketing strategists to educate other teams; and duplication or retention of customer experiences and customers, respectively.



### **Theme 5: Key Performance Indicators**

Firms need to measure online and digital sales in gauging the success of their BD-based marketing strategies. Participant 2 stated, “Without clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and use of online sales dashboards, most leaders and their teams are lost, and unable to make good decisions much less make future sales.” For each customer-centric activity online, a resulting analytic that connects to sales are available as a result of BD and use within organizations. Participant 3 spoke at length about using BD to convert social media connections to funnels, online customer experiences, and sales. Participant 3 asserted:

If my teams are not engaging with our social media followers with the goals to gain a client and sales, and optimizing data tools to connect, provide value, and gain more followers, we are not marketing effectively in a data-driven world for maximum business performance.

Tracking customer attrition was part of the KPIs used by all three participants to gauge BD-based strategy successes. Participant 1 discussed keeping the customer, engaging current customers, and refining the sales messages as a result of customer attrition indicators, and the marketing strategy teams using these BD marketing efforts to better align with their sales teams. Marketing leaders and strategists are using specific KPIs to measure the impact of BD-based marketing strategies and efforts on sales as well as future strategic directions of organizations (Chongwatpol, 2017). Marketing leaders can test, compile results, and change BD-based strategies to achieve sales goals when using KPIs.

All participants in this study responded to changes as a result of BD-based marketing strategies and efforts on measuring firm performance. Participant 2 readily thought outsourcing and using other platforms to track BD-based efforts that drove online sales and customer experiences were essential to increased sales. Participant 2 found this to be “A change from the old ways of marketing, using customer data, and planning for future success.” Using outsourcing and outside dashboard apps have helped Participant 2 to measure campaigns, improve customer engagements, and redirect sales messages and activities to increase overall sales. KPIs that measure digital sales as a result of product upgrades, membership subscriptions, and the number of referrals directed to sales funnels are part of marketing’s appraisal of BD-based strategies and resulting failures and successes. Both Participants 1 and 3 recommended small changes be made across operational units to BD-based marketing strategies to gauge the result of these changes and allow others to replicate future successes while avoiding failures. Marketing leaders can use BD to assess whether their BD-based marketing strategies are achieving sales goals, and then make real-time decisions to change the strategies to improve sales.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

The findings of this study may contribute to a greater understanding of BD-based strategies that organizations’ marketing leaders could use to increase sales revenues. Sustainability, scalability, as well as survival, in general, are a result of businesses’ ability to generate sales (Jabłoński, 2016). The use of BD-based strategies by marketing contributes to firms aiming to enhance communications with customers, while improving the results of lead generation, targeting audiences, and collaboration with sales for better

decision-making across the marketing mix. The literature review on the topic of BD-based marketing strategies for increasing sales addressed various roles of BD and data-driven marketing in business.

According to Anshari, Alumunawar, Lim, and Al-mudimigh (2018), the marketing process in conjunction with BD is becoming a long-term strategic activity to gain and keep customers by improving the buyer-seller relationships as a result of more comprehensive customer data. The use of BD offers marketing leaders modeling tools that can provide additional insights into current marketing activities to attract, retain, and manage customer relationships and *nowcasting* for increased sales (See-To, & Ngai, 2018). As traditional marketing continues to evolve into more digital approaches, the findings of this study could serve as a guide to marketing leaders in developing effective BD-based strategies as a more efficient and productive marketing tool to increase sales.

Information gathered from the participants might reveal that although businesses are utilizing BD-based marketing strategies, some firms' marketing leaders lack the knowledge for effectively leveraging these strategies for increased sales revenues. The results most desired are increased sales and ultimately, business growth, without increasing the size of the IT departments and accrued data expenses. With the advent of BD improving the ability of organizations to gather customer data, the CMO and Chief Information Officer (CIO) are often working more closely together to impact top management decisions and strategies (Sleep & Hulland, 2018). Sorting through the data deluge, while simplifying data complexity, understanding the customer journey, and amplifying segmentation strategies for profitability are some of the struggle's

organizations face in the BD era of marketing (Bughin, & Macias-Lizaso, 2017).

Participants in the study expressed the continuing struggles of BD-based marketing strategies in aligning marketing with sales, slow adoption of BD and predictive analytics across the firm, and data quality. Marketing leaders might benefit from the results of this study by improving collaboration strategies to improve customer-centric activities, the customer experience, personalization in promotions and products, digital strategies, and customer relationship building. The knowledge gained from this study's findings could also help marketing leaders convert BD-based campaigns and customer experiences into sales, thus increasing return on BD investments into improved sales revenues.

The findings from this study align with change theory because BD-based marketing strategies represent a new tool in most firms where leaders must shift from a traditional marketing perspective to a digital approach in partnering with customers to engage, build online experiences and relationships, and capture online markets and sales. This shift represents a monumental change in many organizations where leaders and management must implement change rapidly and improve ROI for BD-based projects to garner future investments in BD technology. Often these changes are incremental, but with CMOs as well as CIOs struggling to be involved in top management decisions and strategy sessions, the ability to leverage BD for marketing programs and enhanced decisions concerning customers is a hurdle within some firms (Sleep & Hulland, 2018).

These types of changes or change management steps might be easily implementable within organizations upon further examination of results from firms capitalizing on BD investments. Collaboration within an organization while depending on

a trusting data outsourcer requires changes that might be feasible in organizations looking to improve cross-functional capabilities to capitalize on BD-based opportunities. With BD-based marketing strategies including CMO and IT collaboration, leaders could implement more effective ways of targeting the most valued customers, identify cross-selling opportunities, and determine optimal sales approaches with sales focusing on product, pricing, and promotional opportunities for their customers leading to increased sales revenues (Chong et al., 2016).

### **Implications for Social Change**

There are a few implications of social change as a result of the findings of this study. Increased BD-based sales revenues from marketing strategies may foster social change since organizations can further contribute increased monies back to individuals and local communities. By developing and implementing successful marketing strategies that increase BD-based sales revenues, firms can positively affect beneficial societal change by generating more tax revenues and jobs, and thus, enhancing both communities and local economies. Increased sales revenues lead to improved profits of organizations as well as a vibrant economy of the local communities and improved opportunities for the residents.

Marketing strategies utilizing BD analytics across the marketing mix improve relationships between the sales force and customers (Grewal et al., 2017). Those organizations that use BD analytics to develop better strategies and decisions for engaging customers and increasing sales revenues improve the firm's profitability (Grewal et al.). Also, there is a spillover effect on nontargeted customers by using BD-

based marketing strategies with targeted customers which improve sales and product usage from outside the campaign targets leading to additional profits for an organization (Ascarza, Ebbes, Netzer, & Danielson, 2017). As marketing leaders better understand the strategies that might influence BD-based sales revenues for both positive and negative results, organizations that capitalize on BD market opportunities have the potential to be economic catalysts in the markets they serve. These economic catalysts serve to boost economies, provide additional resources for societal and local issues, as well as improve the livelihoods of the residents.

### **Recommendations for Action**

Based on the five themes identified using the methodological triangulation of semistructured interviews, data analysis of the participants' responses, and document review of digital sales, I recommend that marketing leaders: employ marketing strategists, improve current managers' analytical skills, create marketing budget allowances for predictive analytics, and incorporate omnichannel customer engagements using marketing alignment with sales, which represents cultural changes in some organizations as part of comprehensive BD-based marketing strategies to increase sales revenues.

#### **Employ Marketing Strategists**

Developing BD-based marketing strategies and implementation beyond traditional marketing activities can be a full-time job. Firms that do not have resources for a dedicated marketing team to data analytics and strategy decisions might consider outsourcing their difficult analytical tasks or activities. Outsourcing provides a viable

option to marketers and marketing leaders to achieve sales goals as a result of better marketing and sales alignment while saving time and money invested in data analytical activities. A high level of BD-based analytical expertise is scarce in many smaller firms, and without adequate resources to invest in modern marketing technology in house, firms need to hire marketing experts to help develop effective BD-based marketing strategies. An outside digital marketing agency that specializes in both BD-based strategies and performance results could help marketing leaders to identify, develop, implement, and measure BD-based strategies so they can concentrate on marketing's core functions.

Leaders employing outside marketing strategists can improve the marketing team's influence and messaging with both customers and stakeholders because the organization can leverage the marketing specialist's expertise and knowledge about BD-based marketing strategies that increase sales revenues. Firms should hire an experienced agency of marketing strategists that can help avoid the costs of trial and error with BD. Also, marketing strategists with proven BD experiences will know what works and what does not for most firms. The best digital marketing agencies will employ marketing technologists capable of integrating a firm's BD efforts and activities with their overall marketing strategy to increase sales revenues. Many firms lack resources to hire dedicated marketing strategy employees or teams with BD experience; therefore, hiring outside strategists can be cost effective when considering fixed salaries, benefits, and other overhead costs. Marketing leaders in organizations can consider these types of cost savings as better resource management and improvements in firm performance.

### **Improve Current Management's Analytical Skills**

Firms should utilize developmental programs and curricula that teach and improve current managerial, analytical skills across all departments. BD represents a new era of data analysis, with an emphasis on management utilizing BD across many functions, to remain competitive, agile, and improve business performances (Lee, 2017). According to Ghasemaghaei, Ebrahimi, and Hassanein, (2018), improving analytical data competency within the firm positively impacted a firm's decision-making performance across several dimensions. Bughin (2017) found those organizations that not only invested in advanced analytics but also, improved managerial and organization-wide BD-based decisions, realized extraordinary profits. Also, Bughin (2016) found those organizations that expanded BD-based workforces to work closely with IT for BD projects emphasizing customer interfaces, experienced returns around 3% in comparison to only 0.3-0.5% from typical projects. Rialti, Marzi, Silic, and Ciappei, (2018) found those organizations that implemented strategies to improve their BD capabilities improved both reactivity and agility to organizational change as a result of BD-based disruption. Currently, there is a scarcity within the literature and research directly linking managerial BD-based analytical capabilities to specific performances such as marketing ROIs and sales revenues. In contrast, several research themes are available highlighting BD-based analytics, predictive analytics, and performance results.

### **Marketing Budget Allowances for Predictive Analytics**

Firms should reallocate marketing budgets from traditional media and marketing activities to the use of predictive analytics. A firm's use of predictive marketing analytics



has the potential to improve seamless business decisions, optimize the customer experience, and take performance for both marketing and sales to a better competitive level (Even, 2019). Predictive marketing analytics might be the key to better management of supply chains, digital promotions, and solutions for underperforming sales organizations (Mello & Martins, 2019). As organizations use BD innovations, marketing leaders will use predictive modeling to personalize the marketing mix for optimal customer engagements and experiences, *nowcasting* for increased sales revenues, along with enhanced decision-making about business intelligence, resource allocations, and data privacy actions (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

Past interactions between customers, both online and offline, with sales forces, marketing campaigns, media, and even competitors, are part of marketing's strategies of predictive BD-based innovations and automation to improve leads, customer engagements, and customer retention (Ylijoki, 2018). Marketers can use predictive analytics to harness social media, influencers, and user-generated content online to improve sales forecasts, marketing campaigns, and sales execution processes that increase future sales revenues (Boone, Ganeshan, Jain, & Sanders, 2019). Predictive analytics are part of the BD-based marketing strategies mentioned by all participants in this study as worthwhile for investments towards improving business intelligence, customer resource management, improved decision-making, and better sales forecasting for improved sales revenues. Marketing leaders that allocate resources to predictive analytics will benefit from increased visibility to a wider customer base, better alignment

of marketing strategies with sales forecasting, and a step beyond prescriptive analytics towards possible increased sales revenues.

### **Omnichannel Customer Engagement and Cultural Changes**

Creating an analytical, organizational culture, which embraces digital and mobile channels, social media platforms, and customer-centric engagements and experiences, provides a collaborative climate in which firms can execute BD innovations.

Organizations that want to fully realize the value and increases for sales and profitability from BD will face an internal cultural change or shift from the status quo to data-driven decisions across the entire firm (Lam, Sleep, Hennig-Thurau, Sridhar, & Saboo, 2017).

Digital transformation to seamless customer experiences with companies, brands, and governments is essential to improved customer engagements, ordering, payments, inquiries, and further customer service (Sebastian et al., 2017; Vial, 2019). Though many organizations are still struggling to link increased sales and profits to digital transformations and BD innovations, larger organizations that are aggressively adopting, implementing, and making real-time data decisions using BD are starting to see increased sales, profitability, and market shares (Huang, Wang, & Huang, 2018).

A move from intuition experiences to data-driven decisions is in the best interest for any firm looking to create and execute customer-centric strategies as a result of BD disruption. Marketers can use Google Analytics as well as BD-based innovative platforms such as HootSuite, Salesforce, and HubSpot for improved alignment of BD-based marketing strategies with sales results. Marketing then can determine which BD-based activities will yield the highest returns, adjust sales campaigns, and marketing mix

decisions while using real-time omnichannel customer engagements that produce results. BD-based marketing strategies can impact how businesses engage customers across many channels, improve the selling process, and gain as well as retain customers for overall increased sales revenues.

The recommendation for action will help organizations acquire much-needed knowledge to develop effective BD-based marketing strategies for increasing sales revenues. I plan to share the findings of my study by publishing in peer-reviewed scholarly journals, including marketing, business, and BD-centered business and research journals. I also plan to publish on various social media channels, including LinkedIn publishing, Google Scholar, Twitter, Facebook, ScienceDirect, and international business and research sites. I plan to present the findings at various marketing and BD-forum conferences and seminars throughout the U.S. I will also use the findings to enhance my consulting and marketing agency to help other organizations with BD-based marketing strategies.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The results from this multiple case study indicate recommendations for future research. For example, participants in the current study discussed current marketing strategies leaders utilized to increase BD-based sales revenues. However, there is little research on the topic of internal organizational change that directly drives the success of BD-based marketing strategies for sales and firm performance. Future researchers might explore specific marketing strategies and BD-based sales outcomes as well as specific processes occurring within companies. Researchers might want to focus on specific BD

marketing strategies that drive sales as well as empower people within organizations to adapt to technological progress relating to BD and the marketing mix.

Study participants also discussed the importance of using BD consistently across the marketing mix. Multiple modern marketing strategies using BD are increasingly salient to marketers as technology grows to reach new and current customers while improving sales revenues. Future researchers could examine how marketing leaders are collaborating with other organizational leaders to utilize BD optimally and consistently to increase sales.

One limitation of this multiple case study was that only a small number of marketing leaders from various organizations in a limited geographical area were part of this case study. Thus, future researchers might want to repeat or expand this study with other organizations, marketing leaders, and geographical locations to assess for differences in strategies marketing leaders utilize to increase BD-based sales revenues. Also, this study might be replicated looking at smaller firms to assess similarities and differences in BD marketing strategies and smaller marketing departments with varying marketing budgets and changes as a result of BD use. Likewise, future researchers might recreate this study with similar industries in other markets to explore how marketing leaders employ marketing strategies to increase BD-based sales revenues.

Considering this multiple case study is a small, qualitative investigation, future researchers might consider building upon the findings by expanding into a qualitative or mixed methods approach for examination of a larger study group. Researchers conducting future larger empirical studies might utilize questionnaires or anonymous

surveys to gain additional knowledge limited by semistructured interviews used in this multiple case study. Finally, future researchers might compare the marketing strategies for BD-based sales used in the organizations in this study to those employed in other sectors, such as manufacturing and healthcare. Such research may elucidate how strategies differ in failure or success, and whether marketing leaders in different sectors may be able to learn from one another.

### **Reflections**

The journey of learning about and working on my doctoral study was both challenging and rewarding. Accomplishing qualitative case study research has enhanced my life both professionally and academically, and this invaluable experience should benefit my future business endeavors. Though I am a professional in the marketing and sales fields, this study provided me the opportunity to explore BD-based marketing strategies used by marketing leaders outside of my small marketing consultancy. I had the chance to investigate *how* and *why* marketing leaders employed certain strategies to improve sales revenues for their organizations using a current phenomenon known as BD-based marketing. Because of my professional experience in both marketing and sales, I had to be particularly aware of my personal opinions, biases, and pre-conceptions going into the study as well as during data collection and analysis.

As described in Section 2 of the project, I used specific tools including member checking, bracketing, and a reflexive journal to aid in preventing personal bias from influencing the data. The process of data bracketing was critical to identifying emerging themes while exercising my objectivity and neutrality towards the data and writing the

findings. Throughout the entire research process, I worked at remaining as neutral and objective as possible with an attitude towards always being the learner instead of the researcher or business leader. This research challenged me to become a business scholar with the ability to wear the hat of both scholar and business researcher in this world.

My knowledge of BD-based marketing strategies increased as a result of conducting this study. Overall, the results of my investigation are strongly in alignment with the scholarly research discussed in the literature review in Section 1. I relied on the participants' responses to identify themes and strategies in the data as well as guide the results of my study's findings. My data collection included semistructured telephone interviews and sales documents linking BD-based marketing strategies to increased sales revenues. Overall, results from this exploratory study also illustrate how much change is occurring within organizations to utilize BD-based marketing strategies to drive financial results, especially sales, which is in alignment with this study's conceptual framework of ToC. A decade ago, traditional marketing strategies reigned, even though e-commerce was alive and well. However, with today's digital environments and customer engagements leaning more towards a connected online experience, coupled with BD approaches, marketing leaders can utilize more contemporary BD-based analytics and strategies to gain customers, enhance the customer experience, and capture sales. I am extremely grateful for the marketing leaders who participated in this study and their willingness to share information that formed the research findings as well as furthered my marketing education.

## Conclusion

Big data (BD) is the large data sets of information characterized by volume, veracity, variety, variability, and complexity that is collected, stored, and analyzed by businesses every day. BD offers the opportunity for marketing and business leaders to reach more customers, create better strategies that improve a firm's financial performance and enhance decision-making impacting both customers and organizations. Applying the theory of change, the purpose of this study was to explore what BD-based marketing strategies marketing leaders utilized to increase sales revenues. The knowledge gained from this study's findings could help marketing leaders strategically use BD across the marketing mix, transform a firm into a data-driven environment, convert more customer engagements into sales, and increase return on predictive analytics investments. The implication for social change includes the opportunity for local organizations to increase sales revenues, which could lead to more jobs and tax revenues, and as a result, improving economies and opportunities in local communities.

The findings from interviewing three participants who successfully use BD-based marketing strategies for increasing sales revenues revealed five themes: gaining a holistic view of the customer and customer experience, the use and improvement of BD marketing analytics firm-wide, collaboration across business units, marketing and sales alignment, and use of key performance indicators (KPIs) to track the effect of BD-based marketing strategies on increasing sales revenues for the firm. With ongoing use of BD analytics for modern marketing, the digital transformation of businesses, and a competitive landscape for customer engagement, marketing leaders should reallocate

marketing resources to predictive analytics, omnichannel customer experiences with brands and the sales process, employ marketing strategists, and closely monitor KPIs to improve decisions about the marketing mix, sales messages, customer relationships, and data quality. The findings from this study reinforce that BD-based marketing strategies provide companies with innovative practices to market their product offerings and gain customers to increase sales.



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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

The goal of this study is to examine big data-based marketing strategies that marketing leaders use to increase sales revenues. The following composes the Interview Protocol for this study. An Interview Protocol as used by researchers informs participants of the steps within the interview process.

Before the interview, the researcher will:

- Provide potential participants with an emailed invitation letter to participate in the study.
- A copy of the interview protocol, a consent form, and the list of interview questions are provided to each participant upon indication of participation in the study.
- Confirm receipt and understanding of the provided documents via email.
- Schedule the time for the interview as a telephone conference.
- Answer any concerns and questions from each participant.

During the interview, the researcher will:

- First, obtain the signed consent form via email, if not already received from the participant.
- Confirm participant's agreement for the interview to be recorded.
- Confirm participant's understanding of the right to withdraw voluntarily from the interview and study at any time, for any reason, no questions asked.
- Remind the participant that identifiable interview responses of company and participant identities are kept strictly confidential. Aggregated responses, themes, and selected quotes

from the interviews will be within the concluding research report, once again, with no specific identity to either participant or company.

- Answer any concerns and questions from each participant.

After the interview, the researcher will:

- Thank the participant for their contribution to the study.
- Answer any concerns and questions from each participant.
- Transcribe the interview responses into a written document.
- Conduct a transcription review and write a member checking summary. I will then send the member checking summary or analysis to the participant via email.
- After the analysis is sent, I will email the participants to discuss the analysis summary back to each participant interviewed and ask each participant to make sure the data was captured accurately.
- Receive confirmation of accuracy of meaning interpretation of responses from all participants via telephone and/or email.
- Convert all received paper documents for additional support to digital format and destroy paper documents.
- Save all files to dedicated USB drive and maintain in the cloud for 5 years, then destroyed.

After publication, the researcher will:

- Send the summary of findings and an electronic copy of the completed study, if requested, to each participant.



- Inform the participant via email of study publication if the participant did not request a copy.
- Send the summary of findings and an electronic copy of the completed study to selected marketing leadership and big-data researchers in the United States.

## Appendix B: Invitation Letter

**Angela Welbaum**

Date: //2019

Dear ,

I am currently a graduate student at Walden University pursuing a doctoral degree in Business Administration with a Marketing specialization. I am interested in conducting research on big data strategies used by marketing leaders to improve sales revenues for their firms. My study is entitled: “Big Data Marketing Strategies for Improving Sales Revenues”.

I am seeking to interview marketing leaders/executives who fit the following criteria:

- Working in a Fortune 1000 company in Ohio, Indiana, or Kentucky, preferably a healthcare or health-oriented business, but it is not necessary.
- Employed in a full-time, marketing leadership position with a minimum of 1-year experience working with successful big data strategies.
- Working directly with the implementation of big data-based marketing strategies to increase sales revenues.

Please, if you have any questions or would like to be a participant, I can be reached by email at [angela.welbaum@waldenu.edu](mailto:angela.welbaum@waldenu.edu), text or call, 8AM-8PM ET, or message me via email. I will respond promptly to set up a date, and time to conduct a phone interview. Please note that the interview is expected to last between 30-40 minutes

and will be audio recorded with your permission. The interview responses will be transcribed and summarized by me as well as kept confidential, your personal information will not be revealed. The information gathered from the interview will be summarized and then forwarded via email for your review and confirmation of completeness and accuracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Angela Welbaum