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## Leadership Strategies for Implementing Organizational Change

Aljanal Hamer Carroll  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Aljanal H. Carroll

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Walden University  
2020

Abstract

Leadership Strategies for Implementing Organizational Change

by

Aljanal H. Carroll

MBA, Strayer University, 2017

BS, Fayetteville State University, 1994

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

November 2020

## Abstract

Change initiatives within the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) industry fail because business leaders are not successful in implementing change readiness strategies. Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies use to implement change initiatives successfully. The participants consisted of 4 business leaders from 4 HVAC companies who successfully implemented change initiatives within their organization. The 4 businesses have fewer than 100 employees located in Charlotte, North Carolina. Data collection procedures included semistructured interviews and a collection of organizational documents. Validating the study consisted of using member checking and methodological triangulation. From the collected and analyzed data, 4 themes emerged: improving leadership support, enhancing stakeholders' involvement, improving communication, and strengthening organizational culture. A key recommendation includes open communication that allows stakeholder involvement. Implications for social change include the potential effect on individual growth, communities, organizations, and culture. The implementation of successful organizational change initiatives could lead to creating jobs, increasing incomes, and stabilizing the economy.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Diamond Alea Carroll and Cardiá Anthony Carroll, and to my mother, Bettye Gillespie Hamer. I appreciate their prayers, love, and support throughout my DBA journey. Their encouragement catapulted my determination to finish and complete my studies. I thank you and love you all dearly.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Influence, innovation, and growth relies on strategic leadership and positive participation from followers. In a heating, ventilation, and air condition (HVAC) industry with fewer than 100 employees, business leaders must recognize the importance of creating a culture that involves innovation, empowering others to believe in the change process, and maintaining a competitive advantage for achieving long-term success. How leaders govern organizational performance and change initiatives may determine whether the company will be successful (Cesario & Chambel, 2017). In this study, I explored strategies that business leaders use to successfully implement change initiatives. This section includes the background of the problem, problem statement, and purpose of implementing change initiatives in the HVAC sector. Research and interview questions, significance of the study, social impact, qualitative nature, and review of professional academic literature was a further investigation of leadership strategies for organizational change.

### **Background of the Problem**

Change is a requirement for any business leader who desires to compete in the 21st century. Good leaders are the key to shaping communities and organizations for innovation (Bărbînta & Mureşan, 2017). Implementing change or any new strategy within an organization requires an effort from leadership to shift individuals' interests, mindsets, and behaviors, and recognize how and when to be supportive during the change process (Shaban, Al-Zubi, Ali, & Alqotaish, 2017). Some leaders do not have the understanding to foster leadership strategies that may enhance their ability to influence

initiatives and improve employee and organizational performances (Bărbînta & Mureşan, 2017; Ospina, 2017). The 70% failure rate of all change initiatives indicates the need for further research for business leaders, which will provide a deeper understanding of successful organizational change strategies (Foss & Saebi, 2017). The findings of this study may provide HVAC business leaders with a deeper understanding of leadership strategies, which they may use to successfully implement change initiatives within their organization.

### **Problem Statement**

Change initiatives within the HVAC industry fail because business leaders are not successful implementing strategies for establishing change readiness (Zhao, Seibert, Taylor, Lee, & Lam, 2016). Seventy percent of organizational change initiatives fail to accomplish their objectives because of employee resistance and lack of leadership support (Foss & Saebi, 2017). The general problem is that some HVAC business leaders' inability to manage change negatively affects organizational performance and financial outcomes. The specific business problem is that some business leaders in HVAC companies lack strategies to successfully implement change initiatives.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives. The targeted population consisted of four business leaders from four HVAC companies with fewer than 100 employees located in the Charlotte, North Carolina area who have successfully implemented change initiatives. This study may contribute to positive social

change by providing HVAC business leaders with strategies to successfully implement change initiatives that might lead to new business opportunities and promote prosperity for the local economy and families of the Charlotte, North Carolina area.

### **Nature of the Study**

The three primary research approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. For the qualitative method, researchers explore a phenomenon, develop ideas, and use dialogue to gain insight and collect data by asking open-ended questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Thiem, 2016). In this study, I used the qualitative method by conducting video conference semistructured interviews and delved into the experiences of HVAC business leaders to understand how they successfully implement change initiatives within their organizations. Researchers use the quantitative methodology when collecting numerical data for testing the scientific theories, examining relationships between variables, and measuring using scientifically-based methods (Beach, 2018; Rendle-Short, 2019). The quantitative approach was not relevant for this study because I did not test hypotheses, nor did I analyze the significance of variables' relationships and differences numerically. Researchers use the mixed-methods approach to answer questions from a quantitative perspective deriving from qualitative data (Etikan, 2016; Thiem, 2016). The mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for this study because the intent was not to collect statistical evidence for inferential testing.

The four qualitative research designs I considered for my study were (a) case study, (b) ethnography, (c) narrative, and (d) phenomenology. I used a multiple case study design for this study by conducting interviews because I investigated strategic tools

that business leaders could use across other similar companies, without collecting data over an extended period. The multiple case study design was appropriate when conducting interviews because I researched phenomena existing within various organizations and focused in-depth on the real-life problems and contexts of business owners (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the ethnography design to evaluate people and cultural phenomena over an extended period of observation (Lee, 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). An ethnographic study was not appropriate because the practices of individuals, groups, and communities in their natural environment were not the focal point of this study. For the narrative design, researchers collect data on individual experiences and discuss the meaning of those experiences (Feely, 2019; Khwaja & Mahoney, 2019; Thiem, 2016). Narrative design was not relevant for this study because sharing stories, such as autobiographies and oral histories, was not significant. The phenomenological approach is a representation of an individual's perception, rather than freely sharing their experience (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). A phenomenological study was not appropriate because I did not collect data on an individual's awareness, perspectives, and understanding of a particular situation. A multiple case study was suitable for this study because I compared and contrasted data from one case to another.

### **Research Question**

The overarching question to guide this study was: What strategies do leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What does success mean for your organization?
2. What are the strategies for implementing change initiatives?
3. How do you determine when to execute change initiatives?
4. What are some of the benefits of implementing change initiatives?
5. What obstacles keep you from implementing change initiatives?
6. How do you determine if an implemented change initiative is successful?
7. What additional information would you like to share regarding your experience with change initiatives within the organization?

### **Conceptual Framework**

I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Burns (1978) asserted that a leader employing the transformational approach empowers followers to change, build relationships, and influence productive performance. In business, employees expect leaders to perform various functions, have a vision, execute organizational strategies, and provide direction. The constructs of the transformational leadership theory include (a) idealized attributes, such as behaviors and influences, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) individualized consideration (Bărbînta & Mureşan, 2017).

Transformational leaders with idealized attributes exhibit pride, a sense of power, and confidence, which they also instill in their followers (Alrowwad, Obeidat, Tarhini, & Aqqad, 2017). Intellectual stimulation implies that transformational leaders seek to solve problems and get their followers to look at different ways to resolve the issues.

Inspirational motivation incorporates leadership that articulates a compelling and optimistic vision for the future. Burns (1978) suggested that transformational leaders offer inspiration to their followers, which involves motivating them to achieve personal and organizational objectives. Those transformational leaders with individualized consideration attributes also spend time coaching, teaching, and promoting self-development to their followers (Bărbînta & Mureşan, 2017). Using the transformational leadership theory for this study will provide a lens for leaders to describe their perceptions and experiences regarding transformational leadership attributes as they relate to strategies for implementing organizational change. I also want to understand how leadership strategies have a positive influence on employee performance in terms of organizational change.

### **Operational Definitions**

The following key terms operationally represented in the study:

*Change initiative:* A change initiative is a project designed to improve operational performance within an organization (Varney, 2017).

*Leadership strategies:* Leadership strategies are various ways leaders use their position to cultivate change and achieve organizational goals (Tegor, 2017).

*Organizational change:* Organizational change is a process by which organizations alter their structure, strategies, operational methods, technologies, or culture for continual growth (Mo & Shi, 2017).

*Transformational leadership:* Transformational leadership is a leadership style where leaders work with, motivate, and encourage subordinates through challenging



tasks, maximizing their subordinates' capability and capacity (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018).

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

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are non-testable factors or objectives assumed to be true (Zhuge, Chen, & Manica, 2016). My first assumption was that business leaders would be transparent and honest by providing information about their experiences regarding the implementation of strategies for organizational change. My second assumption was that the selection of a multiple case study design would permit me to gather solid and reliable data concerning strategies leaders used for organizational change. My third assumption was that, because I worked in and am familiar with the HVAC industry, the business leaders may not be forthcoming with their answers for implementing strategies for organizational change.

#### **Limitations**

Limitations in research are factors which are out of the researcher's control (Almeida, Faria, & Queirós, 2017). One limitation is that the findings were reliant on the responses of a few business leaders through video conference interviews and reviewing documents from the organizations. Business leaders lack partiality regarding the topic in order to appear competent. Secondly, the results of the study could vary among other organizations in the HVAC industry.

#### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are the scope or boundaries of a study (Qiu & Gullett, 2017). The first delimitation of the study was that only business leaders residing in the Charlotte, North Carolina area could participate in the study. The second delimitation was that the scope of the study was only business leaders from the HVAC industry. The third delimitation was that only business leaders who worked in the HVAC industry with fewer than 100 employees would participate in the research.

### **Significance of the Study**

Leaders must recognize that taking initiative and implementing innovation to foster operational improvements was essential in advancing organizational performance. The successes of change initiatives are achievable with purposeful participation from employees as well as strategic planning and support from leaders (Jesuthasan, 2017). This study was of value because leaders in the HVAC industry may use the findings to develop effective leadership strategies for improving employees' performances, fulfilling organizational goals, and enhancing productivity and growth.

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Experience of successful business leaders may lead to HVAC business leaders having a better understanding of leadership strategies to improve organizational performances. Unsuccessful leadership strategies are a byproduct of failed change initiatives, which waste time and cost businesses more money (Santana, Valle, & Galan, 2017). The findings from this study may assist leaders in the HVAC industry in terms of gaining new perspectives on developing strategies that may improve performance, profitability, growth, and competitive advantage.

## **Implications for Social Change**

There is an opportunity to provide business leaders with effective leadership strategies to meet organizational goals and sustainability within their company. Leaders influence business operations, and if businesses continue to fail due to ineffective change initiatives, investors and entrepreneurs may be unwilling to take risks to open new establishments (Stephan et al., 2016). Business leaders may assist in creating jobs and use their businesses to help sustain the economy. Improving leadership strategies for change initiatives has the potential to increase the improvement of human conditions by contributing to the value, dignity, and growth of individuals, communities, organizations, and cultures.

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

The purpose of this literature review was to explore various sources regarding the transformational leadership theory. Conducting a literature search to review documentation in the subject field helps with identifying future research questions. This section consists of seminal scholarly books, articles, and journals related to the primary research question for this study: What strategies do leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives? The targeted population for this study consisted of four business leaders from four HVAC companies with fewer than 100 employees located in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, who had successfully implemented change initiatives. The implications for social change involves opportunities in providing business leaders with effective leadership strategies for creating jobs and

using their organization to help sustain the economy. An in-depth review was necessary for the HVAC industry and other business sectors.

I organized the review by themes to improve the structure of the research. The first section of the literature review is a discussion of the conceptual framework, which is the transformational leadership theory. Within this section, I covered individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. A discussion of supporting and contrasting theories, including leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and transactional leadership theory follows next. Third is an evaluation of leadership strategies for organizational change in the HVAC industry and recent studies in which researchers explored the effect of not implementing change initiatives. There is evidence regarding the impact of leadership strategies on business performance. I discussed organizational change and leadership strategies.

The review of the professional and academic literature contains a description of the search strategy used to find relevant research on how leadership strategies affect organizational change. An evaluation of peer-reviewed articles from journals, books, dissertations, and any other applicable documentation from the Walden University Library governed this literature review. Business, leadership, and leadership databases allowed for the identification of relevant documentation. The three databases used for this study were EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. The search criteria for this study contains of words and terms such as *business success*, *change initiatives*, *LMX theory*, *leadership*, *leadership strategies*, *organizational change*, *transactional leadership*, and *transformational leadership*. The entire study consists of 223 references. The majority of

the references are from peer-reviewed sources, 221 (98%) peer-reviewed, and 2 (2%) seminal scholarly books. Out of the 148 references used for the literature review, 146 (97%) are peer-reviewed and have a publication dates between 2016 and 2020, which meets the percentage requirement for this doctoral study.

The business phenomenon for this study is that some business leader's inability to manage change negatively affects organizational performance and financial outcomes. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore the strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies used to successfully implement change initiatives. Analyzing strategies used by business leaders to promote successful change permitted a discussion regarding the different approaches used by other business leaders to implement innovation and sustainability for their organization. This literature review is an introduction to and exploration of the transformational leadership theory. The review also includes an evaluation of different types of leadership theories researchers used to explore strategies for implementing innovation for improving organizational performance. The next section is an in-depth analysis of the transformational leadership theory and the four constructs supporting the theory.

### **Transformational Leadership Theory**

Success for an organization requires a deep understanding of the fundamental involvement of the business and knowing how to lead individuals. The conceptual framework supporting this study is Burns' transformational leadership theory. Leadership may alter the character and behavior of an individual and cultivate the workplace for change. Mäkikangas (2018) asserted that transformational leaders provide opportunities

for personal and organizational development for their employees, and assist their employees in starting new projects.

Being able to lead individuals during a change process is vital to the success of an organization. The survival of a business is dependent on knowing how to navigate through potential disasters and systemic economic collapse (Asadi, 2019). The transformational leadership theory is an inclusive leadership approach known for analyzing organizational phenomena and motivating innovation (Rezvani, Dong, & Khosravi, 2017). A transformational leadership style may also enable leaders to implement change initiatives and inspire others to believe in the change as well (Phaneuf, Boudrias, Rousseau, & Brunelle, 2016).

Leaders may guide individuals by evaluating their needs for performing a task. Leadership styles and strategies vary in terms of cultures and social groups, which may be helpful or harmful during change implementation efforts. Breevaart and Bakker (2018) determined that transformational leaders are visionaries who offer clear direction, provide strategy during the implementation process, and give their followers with the support they need to accomplish goals. Wang, Demerouti, and LeBlanc (2017) found that the transformational leadership approach is a growing interest in various organizations in terms of innovation, building employee job satisfaction, work performance, and business-unit production. Such leaders who bring about change to their employees and the organization exhibits the following four characteristics: (a) individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence.

**Individualized consideration.** Leadership may have a deep influence on

individuals, stimulating them to achieve personal and organizational goals. Individualized consideration refers to the amount of time leaders are willing to devote to the developmental needs of individuals, including leading them as mentors or coaches or listening to their concerns (Klaic, Burtscher, & Jonas, 2018). By using individualized consideration, leaders may assist their followers in developing their strengths and identifying their deficiencies, and determining how their followers respond to change initiatives asserted that leaders could use individualized consideration as a coaching tool assisting employees to achieve effective work performance. Transformational leaders use individualized consideration for mentoring, educating, and encouraging their followers, which is vital in helping their followers reach their potential. Beach (2018) suggested that leaders must seek to comprehend the perceptions and emotions of their employees, and then promote change that would enable organizations to survive and succeed. Other scholars explored the relationship between professional growth, commitment to organizational change, and transformational leadership and suggested leaders assign tasks to employees based on their knowledge and experience

**Intellectual stimulation.** Leaders who challenge their followers to be innovative may enhance creativity and problem solving skills. Leaders also have a form of stimulation or encouragement when their followers push and challenge one other to reach their full potential (Haleem, Jehangier, & Khalil-Ur-Rahman, 2018; Ogola, Sikalieh, & Lingle, 2017). Intellectual stimulation involves leaders' ability to inspire their followers to be innovative and creative by enhancing their desire to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Samanta, & Lamprakis, 2018). Suifan, Abdallah, and Al Janin

(2018) suggested that intellectual stimulation involves evoking followers' ideas and talents, as well as stimulating their ability to identify and inventively solve problems. Transformational leaders are not only fond of awarding incentives to their followers for skill improvement; they also advocate change among those they lead (Ogola, Sikalieh, & Lingle, 2017). Leaders who can inspire their employees may foster an operational environment in which leaders can convey a vision and stimulate the minds of their employees for organizational change. When leading employees using intellectual stimulation, leaders provide opportunities for future advancements, which instill pride and trust for employees when implementing strategies for change.

**Inspirational motivation.** Employees may not rationally understand the need for change, or they fear to change. Inspirational motivation refers to how leaders may influence their followers to reach a state of inspiration that increases their creativity, innovation, and willingness to do their best to help their organization accomplish goals (Vuković, Damnjanović, Papić-Blagojević, Jošanov-Vrgović, & Gagić, 2018). By using inspirational motivation, it is imperative that leaders remove doubts and concerns for their followers and encourage them to believe in change for the implementation of a successful change initiative. Leaders who effectively inspire employees may align the employees' values with the organization's values. Inspirational leaders communicate and reinforce values, articulate and implement strategies, and increase support of organizational change for continuous improvement. Sinnicks (2018) suggested that leaders who display behaviors linked with inspirational motivation understand the



importance of influencing, supporting, and building relationships with their employees to achieve the goals of the organization.

**Idealized influence.** Transformational leadership is effective when organizational changes occur. During the change process, leaders may form high expectations from their employees to perform their job while gaining loyalty from them as well.

Transformational leaders may restructure or influence employees' perception of change and have them view innovation as an opportunity rather than a threat (Wang et al., 2017).

Transformational leaders are visionaries who offer clear objectives, and provide their followers the support they need to accomplish goals (Suifan et al., 2018). The behavior connected to idealized influence involves employees in the implementation process, makes employees feel like their opinions matter, allows employees to display self-determination, and makes employees feel confident about their work (Rezvani et al., 2017). When influencing followers to achieve their aspirations, transformational leaders become trainers for helping their followers accomplish their goal. The next section includes information about how the transformational leadership theory compares to other leadership approaches.

### **Supporting and Opposing Theories**

Leaders may be the pioneer within an organization, and collaboration can be the form that depicts a leader's style for effectively guiding individuals and maximizing organizational performance. The supporting and opposing theories I considered for this study are the LMX theory and the transactional leadership theory. The result of LMX can either contribute to or hinder the growth of employees and organization. A transactional

leader rewards their followers for compliance and penalizes them for not complying with assigned duties (Jacobs & Mafini, 2019).

The LMX approach is a representation of relationships between leadership and subordinates, which consist of three phases: role-taking, role-making, and routinization (Wong & Berntzen, 2019). The role-taking relationship is when a leader understands the emotions and attitudes of their subordinates, and allow them to express their different points of view (Shao, Feng, & Hu, 2017). Role-making consist of leaders having knowledge of how their subordinates live, and how he or she alter their expectations behavior (Gilbert & Kelloway, 2018). Khan (2017) found that the movement that Max Weber called routinization is knowing how to respond to the negative reactions subordinates demonstrate towards leadership.

Studies of leadership effectiveness governed the unfolding of various styles and trends, thus influencing the leadership process. To obtain a better understanding of strategies for organizational change, I reviewed supporting and opposing theories, such as the LMX theory and the transactional leadership theory. After reviewing recent studies on the LMX theory and the transactional leadership theory for supporting and opposing the transformational approach, the concepts rendered a foundation for comprehending how other researchers explored strategies for organizational change.

**The leader-member exchange (LMX) theory.** When employees recognize their value to the company, they accept their role, and they take ownership of their responsibilities. The LMX theory is one of the trademarks of organizational efficiency and effectiveness in the workforce. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) determined that the LMX

theory is the interaction between both leaders and followers. Sharifirad and Hajhoseiny (2018) asserted that the LMX theory is a dyadic work relationship between leader and follower, empowering both to goal achievements within the organization. When followers have trust in their leaders, they are willing to comply with the ideas and visions. The central unit of the LMX theory is the leader-follower relationship, which the follower perform their duties, and the leader is reliable, supportive, and provide aid to the individual or group. Comparing viewpoints from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), and Sharifirad and Hajhoseiny (2018), the LMX theory encompasses an operationalization of an interrelationship-based approach to leadership rather than emphasizing a leader or follower's behavior, style, or trait.

While the LMX and transformational leaders both contribute to engaging with their followers, LMX leaders do not treat all of their subordinates the same. LMX differentiation may affect an employees' work outcomes, and ultimately influencing organizational performance (Martin, Thomas, Legood, & Russo, 2018). The quality of the LMX theory depends on how the leader perceives the follower. Liao, Liu, Li, and Song (2019) suggested that the relationships could range from low LMX quality to high LMX quality. The low LMX quality relationships consist of leaders providing their followers with what they need to complete a task, and the followers only fulfill the required job assignment (Naktiyok & Kula, 2018). The success of the organization derives from teamwork through low LMX relationships, whereas transformational leaders may use individual consideration to develop and motivate followers to achieve organizational goals.

The response between a leader and employees may directly or indirectly determine the organization's culture, climate, and success. Martin et al. (2018) characterized the high LMX quality relationships by mutual appreciation, trust, respect, zeal, and correlative influence between leaders and followers. For the high LMX quality relationships, employees have shared commitments, and they believe in the organization's purpose and culture. The high LMX quality relationships have similar values as the transformational leaders, and they use intellectual stimulation to propel employees to be creative in fulfilling mutual goals (Liao et al., 2019). Wang and Li (2018) further determined that both high LMX quality relationships and transformational leaders use intellectual stimulation for creating obstacles to ensure followers have an in-depth understanding of their duties, able to solve problems and become strategic thinkers.

To determine strategies leaders use to implement organizational change, Wong and Berntzen (2019) examined the impact of LMX in Oslo, Norway. In a quantitative study, 100 business leaders completed a questionnaire, which rated the roles of electronic dependence, team task interdependence, transformational leadership, and LMX. In the results, the authors noted that LMX positively associates with job satisfaction, employee performance, and organizational change. The authors also proposed that LMX firmly affects role clarity for employees. The findings are consistent with a prior study by Ulrich and Bro (2018), who indicated that a positive relationship between leaders and followers are a result of less resistance to change initiatives when clear directives of goals exist.

The relationship between leaders and employees may affect employee performance, which can also alter the achievement of the organization. Pan and Lin

(2018) indicated that a leader's behavior during the implementation process of change can determine the way a follower regard their responsibilities. During innovation, LMX leaders formulate teams, arranging individuals by their knowledge and capability of completing the task. In comparison to developing groups, transformational leaders motivate and encourage their employees throughout the implementation process, and get the maximum effort from everyone to fulfill organization change (Lee, Thomas, Martin, & Guillaume, 2019). The inconclusiveness of a transformational leader and a LMX leader during innovation can provoke followers to idealize or emulate their leader's behavior and stimulate followers in becoming leaders.

**The transactional leadership theory.** Although Burns determined that a leader can be both transforming and transactional, there is a clear difference between the two approaches. A transactional leader encompasses supervision, organization, and promoting work performance, whereas a transformational leader fosters confidence in their followers to complete a task. Transactional leadership also embodies operative approaches, which consist of incorporating managerial duties (Sayyadi, 2019). Another difference is that the interaction of a transactional leader with employees concludes the purpose of exchange, both rewards and punishments, while transformational leaders use individualized consideration to motivate followers (Besieux, Baillien, Verbeke, & Euwema, 2018). The rewarding and punishing principle adopted by transactional leaders is the motivating factor for their employees.

The basis of the transformational leadership approach is on the commitment to the organization's goals while the transactional leadership is determining the needs of the

employees. Transactional leaders are not looking to alter or modify the future for their organization, but they are willing to maintain the same workflow. Some researchers found that employees prefer to follow transactional leaders because they offer directives, reward for completing a task, and their responsibilities do not change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019; Jacobs & Mafini, 2019; Russell, Steffensen, Ellen, Zhang, Bishoff, & Ferris, 2018). In contrast, other researchers discovered that the transformational leadership approach is useful, most effective when investigating strategies, and their behavior improves employees' performance for organizational change (Ewell, 2018; Kuruppuge and Gregar, 2017; Militaru & Zanfir, 2016; Sayyadi, 2019). Transactional leaders' behavior varies day-to-day, but transformational leaders are consistent in encouraging their followers to complete their task. Transformational leaders also validate their followers in feeling self-efficacious during a change process (Asadi, 2019).

The style of a transactional leader does not individualize the needs of subordinates or hone in on their personal development. Edi and Wardhani (2019) asserted that a transactional leader's interest is on the structure, operation, and accomplishing goals for an organization rather than showing concern for the employees executing those goals. Xie (2019) noted that in a transactional leadership style, leaders are under the assumption that their subordinates understand the concept of following the rules and getting rewarded for performance. There are flexibilities with rigid rules and expectations, and all parties must adhere to the organizational standard. In comparing the findings of Edi and Wardhani (2019) and Xie (2019), Berraies and El Abidine (2019) determined that there is no specific leadership style that could appeal to all organizational structures and systems.

Berraies and El Abidine (2019) further argued that leaders behave differently depending on the situation, which could also affect the performance of an employee. With various conditions or events occurring at a workplace, a leader must be adaptable. A transactional leader is most effective in supervising different assignments for improving employees' performance (Jing, 2018).

Transactional leaders may be more responsive to their followers because the intent is to maintain the state of affairs and make sure everything goes as planned. Ma and Jiang (2018) found that transactional leaders are influential in conveying directives to subordinates by clarifying roles, task requirements, and expectations. Decker (2016) suggested that transactional leaders perform better under the degrees of reliability, routine assignments, and less compelling circumstances. Kuruppuge and Gregar (2017) concluded that transactional leaders have an understanding with their subordinates by reciprocating exchange, rewarding for good deeds or achievements, and punishing for unsatisfactory performances or inability to complete required goals. In agreement with Ma and Jiang's findings, Tziner and Shkoler (2018) determined that the result of the transactional leadership theory is providing roles and responsibilities and expectations, with a reward system based on contributions and performances. Transactional leaders convey performance objectives, review employee's fulfillment of their goals, and reward or penalize employees based on their progress regarding accomplishing set objectives (Cheung, Yeung, & Wu, 2018). When comparing transactional and transformational, the transactional leadership theory is supportive of the adherence to practice standards,

whereas the transformational leadership theory renders creating a vision and inspiring subordinates to aim beyond required expectations.

### **Strategies for Implementing Organizational Change Initiatives**

Change is a word that may foster apprehension in most employees and businesses. Brown (2018) pointed-out that organizational innovation can be a struggle. A successful company has an understanding that doing business the same way all the time does not equal growth. Change is essential for business leaders in the HVAC industry because of the demand to boost sales and to increase profits. Researchers use the transformational leadership theory for various business practices, such as implementing organizational change initiatives, productivity, and profitability (Hentschel, Braun, Peus, & Frey, 2018; Svendsen, Unterrainer, & Jønsson, 2018). There are multiple factors to consider during the implementation phase for change. Key strategies to evaluate when executing innovation are leadership support, stakeholders' involvement and participation, and constant communication and dialog.

**Leadership support.** Vision, innovation, and strategy must be the essence of the company's culture, and leaders can build on success, improve morale, and remove all obstacles that causes fear of change. In stressful situations, supportive leaders establish a strong foundation that fosters cohesion by rendering employees with guidance and continuous inspirational support (Brody, 2018). Some researchers realized that the attributes of a supportive leader parallel with one of the transformational leadership theory's construct, the inspirational motivation (Qiu & Gullett, 2017; Sawitri & Wahyuni, 2018; Vuković et al., 2018). Supportive leadership or inspirational motivation is the



foundation for the collaboration between leaders and employees for increasing strategies and promoting innovation for organizational change.

Leaders may play a significant role in how employees and stakeholders respond to change. In a conducive and positive working atmosphere, employees develop trust in leadership, and they have confidence in the direction the organization (Page & Schoder, 2019). Ling and Guo (2018) found that supportive leaders can create a healthy environment for change that can inspire employees to improve performance and stay competitive in an ever-changing economy. When implementing innovation and maintaining a competitive advantage, the behaviors of a supportive leader are active concentration, leadership involvement, determination, and contributory leadership (Sinnicks 2018).

Leaders may positively affect employees' performance and the organization's financial outcome. In a 2018 study, Jahn and Koller focused on the transformational leadership theory as a means for leadership support in the HVAC industry. The authors discovered that the transformational leadership approach is most effective when investigating leadership strategies, increasing sales, and improving employees' performance for organizational change. Bărbînta and Mureşan (2017) further discovered that the business leaders of the HVAC industry focused on succeeding in the marketplace. When supportive leaders promote creativity, innovation, self-sufficiency, and strong work ethics, their followers' confidence escalates in leadership and in the market.

**Stakeholders' involvement and participation.** While leader support is critical during the change process, stakeholders' engagement and participation are equally significant. Knight, Patterson, and Dawson (2019) determined that the collaboration of HVAC stakeholders is vital for pursuing growth, initiating change, and generating new products. The stakeholders consist of individuals who has a critical interest in the business, such as owners, business leaders, employees, customers, and investors (Han, Liao, Taylor, & Kim, 2017). Leadership has a choice of excluding stakeholders except for a selected few or give stakeholders a voice in developing strategies for organizational change. O'Connor and Crowley-Henry (2019) found that involving and addressing concerns of all parties can yield clarity to the implementation strategy.

All stakeholders bring different aspects of themselves to an organization. The employees are the primary consideration during change efforts because they are the driving force for sustaining the operation of the business (Febriani & Yancey, 2019). Customers and employees share the same value to an organization. Without customers purchasing the product, goods, or services, the organization could not survive. Companies must have an emphasis on building long-term relationships with their customers to remain profitable (Corrales-Garay, Ortiz-de-Urbina-Criado, & Mora-Valentin, 2019). Investors own the company, and when there is a financial return, the investors obtain benefits as well. Incorporating investors to the change process enhances the organization's capability to advance in the global market (Nath, Kirca, Kim, & Andras, 2019).

To stimulate meaningful change, leaders can take advantage of a range of tools and techniques that stakeholders can offer. Researchers suggested that strategies used by various global organizational leaders maintained a competitive advantage (Felix, Aparicio, & Urbano, 2019; Mao, Chiang, Zhang, & Gao, 2017; Torres & Augusto, 2019). Other researchers discovered that transformational leaders engage all parties who have an interest in the company to be a part of the change process (Abas, Sawitri, & Puspawati, 2019; Nguyen & Luu, 2019; Xie, 2019). Being sensitive to the stakeholders and allowing them to convey their ideas can yield a change in a transformative way, rather than an unprogressive one.

**Constant communication and dialog.** When change initiatives fail, lack of communication from leadership is often the culprit. Why is the company changing? Why is the change necessary? Can we take a different approach? These are legitimate questions that leaders must answer without reservation. The initial conversation with stakeholders concerning change must yield mechanisms to uncover potential resistance (Rupcic, 2019). Leaders can recognize and address the negative responses by being a constant and active communicator.

When designing a communication platform, leaders could equip the organization for the change implementation by defining the process and plan of action. Page and Schoder (2019) found that by having a written plan and continuously reviewing and communicating strategies, employees could feel empowered to complete their task and take ownership of their assignment. Because of the intense competition in the HVAC industry, business leaders must understand the market. Business leaders need to know

when to lower prices and attract customers, and when to inflate the cost and monopolize on the market (Banu-Rekha, Somasundaram, Ashok-Kumar, & Balekai, 2018). Constant and effective communication could allow an organization to solidify a strategic position against the competitors and offer services in the marketplace (Veje, Jradi, Lund, Hansen, Kamuk, Kieseritzky, Nicolaisen, 2019).

Continual collaboration and dialog in the workplace can have a positive effect on employees' performance. In a 2019 study, Muthusamy suggested that the power of positive words and leaders interacting with employees can transform an organization into being profitable and sustainable. The author affirmed that positive and constant communication concerning organizational transformation can bring about trust, retention from employees, and increased overall productivity. Zappe, Yoder, and Hylton, (2018) further determined that the transformational leadership approach can connect leader and employees through effective communication to achieve higher productivity and performance. When there are inclusiveness and an understanding of change initiatives, the work process becomes effortless, and the organization becomes more profitable.

### **Factors Affecting Organizational Change Initiatives**

Multiple components can affect the implementation of organizational change initiatives, such as cultural environment, resistance to change, readiness to change, and trust in organizational leadership. These components might positively execute change or negatively serve as barriers. Business leaders are capable of developing strategies to decrease resistance to change and increase organizational change initiatives (Fuioaga & Rusu, 2018). Selzer and Foley (2018) further determined that overcoming resistance to

change can generate a cooperative organization where all employees work together to bring about change.

**Cultural environment.** A productive working environment is one of the contributing factors to implementing innovation. Change is successful when it accomplishes what leaders design to execute. Lynch and Mors (2019) pointed-out the pivotal components responsible for successful organizational changes: awareness, comprehension, determination, and support. Without a shared understanding for change, uncertainty and challenges of cultural restrictions may occur in the working environment. Selzer and Foley (2018) discovered that leaders who expressed positive change in the workplace were transparent to the employees about organizational change initiatives. Those leaders encountered frequent contact with their employees and central management; easy availability of instructions; and allowed administration or human resource to determine the communication factors for the organizational change initiatives. Leaders who did not experience organizational change have doubts in their employees or determine that they cannot carry out the plan for the implementation phase (Haneda & Ito, 2018). Mitigating and dealing with challenges starts with an increased need for communication between leaders and employees.

Awareness in the workplace is vital for cultivating change. When employees have an understanding of the requirements and expectations of the change process, it is unchallenging for leaders to bring to fruition organizational change (McGahan, 2019). Waeger and Weber (2019) determined that having a corporate administrator assisting with the communication aspect of change can foster positive behaviors regarding the

implementation process. Villaluz and Hechanova (2019) emphasized that leaders may delve more-in-depth in the affairs of the organization and assure that both the firm and stakeholders do not have unsolved issues. Villaluz, Hechanova, Waeger and Weber (2019) concluded that when incorporating awareness to organizational change, leadership must first have a positive attitude and be proactive in all affairs of innovation.

When building a productive cultural environment, leaders must comprehend how to survive competition and have the ability to change at any given time. In an ever-changing economy in terms of technology, leaders can also educate employees concerning the benefits to system changes, thus building acceptance of the change (Mäkikangas, Mauno, Selenko, Kinnunen, 2019). Only having knowledge relating to transformation is not sufficient; employees need the assurance that the implementation process could cause the change to materialize (McGahan, 2019). Selzer and Foley (2018) further exclaimed that when employees have a comprehensive guide of the change process, they adapt to the work culture by actively participating and getting involved with the changes. Understanding and transforming a business strategy can bring about change in the culture of an organization and promote positive social change through new business opportunities.

An organization's determination to succeed in the market is an incentive for change. Innovation consists of all areas and levels within the company, including employees, the work culture, organizational structure, work performance, and the use of technology (Haneda & Ito, 2018). The determination to change may not be the same for all staff due to the learning styles. Because of the various abilities of each employee,

Ybema, Kamsteeg, and Veldhuizen (2019) found that stress and uncertainty of the change process can lessen the determination and productivity for a successful organizational transformation. Doroshuk (2019) asserted that setbacks, such as doubt and resistance, can also hinder an organization's ability to implement new policies and procedures, technology, and different roles and responsibilities. By leaders resolving potential threats early in the implementation process, the organization can maintain a determination to change and promote prosperity.

Cultural preferences and diversities are in consideration when framing change initiatives (Lee, 2019). When it comes to supporting organizational change, the feeling of not mastering the process lessens the enthusiasm in the workplace. Leaders must be supportive to all and strategically examine change management and organizational structure for the advancement of business operations. Smollan and Morrison (2019) suggested that leaders may encompass strategies and processes that are supportive of the organization's goals, plans, mission, and direction. Anxiety is common for employees and staff during extensive changes. For example, new leadership, technologies, assignments, or any new changes that are not in the realm of a routine day-to-day operation can cause employees to feel anxious or overwhelmed about innovation. Villaluz and Hechanova (2019) posed that encouraging culture-building systems, which involves everyone, could reinforce desired behaviors toward organizational change.

**Resistance to change.** Organizational change is a modification of the routine job duties, which can enhance work performance and promote advancement in the market. An employees' attitude or behavior towards change initiatives can be a significant

hindrance to the desired improvements. At the same time, the employees' disposition regarding innovation is an indication of how he or she view and respect leadership's decision for organizational change (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018). Change initiatives not supportive by those affected by the change process often fail. A positive mind-set is needful for a successful implementation of the change process.

With all of the various transformations happening in the world, change is unavoidable and continuous. Vodonick (2018) found that resistance to change is a natural response of humans because they fear the unknown, and they become doubtful of a positive outcome. Aside from being apprehensive towards improving, Fuioga and Rusu (2018) determined that employees use their issues as a means to resist change, indicating that they may not do the job well, or they might not meet the requirements. Personal issues leaking in the workplace might affect job performance, availability to work, productivity, and behaviors (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018).

Resistance to change is virtually unpreventable as it relates to implementing change initiatives. Employees resisting change can often foster objection to moving forward with the implementation process (Ferreira, Cardoso, & Braun, 2018). When leaders compromises to satisfy employees by not changing, the negative effect is that an organization impairs growth and jeopardize remaining competitive. Before there is an implementation of change initiatives, leaders need to strategize all possible setbacks and address the situations. Cinite and Duxbury (2018) recommended that an organization must do an internal investigation, such as interviewing employees who are resisting the



change process. The interviews can be the means for leaders understanding how they need to facilitate the change process and reduce opposition.

**Readiness to change.** The implementation of change is a representation of solving problems and challenges that opposes an organization. The willingness to change is a critical factor when discovering the results of change, approving the difference, or resisting the change (Seggewiss, Straatmann, Hattrup, & Mueller, 2019). Ahmed, Qin, and Martinez (2019) implied that readiness assist with shaping or redirecting the employee's perception, causing them to be supportive of the change initiatives. Having a prepared staff can alter apprehension, emotional behavior towards the change process, and dissociate from the status quo. Hensley and Cutshall (2018) found that effective leadership and communication determines the success of employees adapting and believing in the organization's change programs.

When people change their behavior regarding innovation, they can compel others to change. Sawitri and Wahyuni (2018) found that there is a relationship between readiness and transformational leadership, as well as effective communication. Employees respond better to change when their leader stimulate innovative thinking, clarify the advantage of change, and evoke change (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019). From previous findings in this literature review, transformational leaders encourage their followers to become better individuals through moral values. A transformational leader also guides their followers to change by way of inspiration and motivation (Nguyen & Luu, 2019). Sawitri and Wahynui (2018) concluded that transformational leadership has a

readiness correlation to organizational change through positive communication and support.

Presenting successes and benefits of organizational change from other companies is a strategic plan leader must adopt (O'Conner & Crowley-Henry, 2019). Being visual or having something to relate to, employees' perception often alters and adjust to the change process. Organizational change readiness requires a multi-level design with a multi-faceted form, such as a change in responsibilities, workflow, staff, and compensation. Having collective shared behaviors and values between employees could foster confidence in the change process and faith in leadership (Gigliotti, Vardaman, Marshall, & Gonzalez, 2019). Seggewiss et al. (2019) found that employees who have an eagerness for professional growth are more likely to initiate change, set appropriate goals for themselves, and administer the best strategies for organizational success.

**Trust in leadership.** Employees are the organization's most beneficial asset, but frequently overlooked. With the increasing emphasis on ethics in leadership, there must be transparency from the leaders, and employees need be a part of the implementation phase during the earliest stages of the change process. Involving employees in the initial set up for change can initiate showing the worth of the employee, promote effective communication, and foster confidence in the change process. Trust is a driving force that determines an employee's decision to accept change (Cui & Jiao, 2019). Change initiatives may be unsuccessful if the trust is lacking. Yue, Men, and Ferguson (2019) suggested that business leaders can eliminate all barriers between themselves and employees when implementing change initiatives. Ulrich and Bro (2018) asserted that

when transformational leaders promote organizational trust employees adapt quicker to the change process. The power of transformational leaders lies in its ability to stimulate employee's confidence in adapting to a new way of doing business.

An effective leader understands that real transformation begins with developing credibility with others, which ultimately inspires trust (Brown, 2018). A leader's reputation encompasses character, influence, respectability, and trustworthiness (Black & La Venture, 2018). Yue et al. (2019) pointed-out that the advantage of being credible and having an organizational alignment with the change system results in a working environment of trustworthiness. The level of trust between leaders and employees affects change initiatives and the implementation process. Black and La Venture (2018) studied the trust relationship between salespersons and general managers and found the effectiveness of an organizational change initiative when there is trust. Brown (2018) found in both qualitative and quantitative studies that there are high levels of commitment to the change process when there is trust. Black and La Venture (2018) concluded that the level of trust has a significant role in a successful change implementation with all types of businesses.

### **Implementing Change in the HVAC Industry**

The HVAC industry often experiences a considerable amount of pressure to improve the value of their products and services all throughout the year. Various challenges can affect their efforts for improvement, such as servicing or providing service in disaster areas, supplying proper equipment for buildings and houses, and contractors finding quality technicians to install machinery (Manjourides, Sparer, Okechukwu, &

Dennerlein, 2018). Some situations require change implementation in the HVAC industry so they can align the available resources and expectations of different stakeholders (Glor, 2019). In the same respect, business leaders in the HVAC industry are under pressure for implementing improvements and staff qualified individuals to complete the job.

Factors hindering change initiatives in the HVAC industry, such as resistance to change, can affect innovation in other sectors. Nath et al. (2019) found that HVAC technicians and staff who worked in the industry over 20 years can act as barriers for other employees because of their resistance to technology is a factor. The flexible alternating current transmission (FACTS) is the latest system that helps technicians and staff in the HVAC industry with obtaining new customers and products and assist with invoicing. Acceptance of change is dependent on the HVAC technicians and the staff's attitudes toward the latest technology because of the competitiveness in the HVAC industry. A positive attitude concerning change can increase readiness for using different types of machinery, and a negative perception can cause technicians and staff to fall prey to fear of modern technologies (Ioannou, Harris, & Dahlstrom, 2017).

To better serve customers and provide quality customer service, there must be a clear definition of the expectations from leadership to their subordinates. In a 2019 study, Liu, Tessler, Murphy, Chang, and Dennerlein studied the effects of expectations of HVAC employees committed to change by examining the relationship between change-related communication, the interaction of managers and staff, and the ramifications of such expectations on change initiatives. The authors determined that a positive expectation affects commitment to change initiatives, and manager's interaction and

communication with staff forms an adaptation to change or shape their perception regarding the possibility of change. Jahn and Koller (2018) concluded that HVAC technicians, construction workers, and staffs' expectation towards innovation are significant when considering their commitment to organizational change.

HVAC companies must take the time to explore their challenges in the implementation of change initiatives. During the time of exploring change and possible obstacles, employees must feel as ease leaders must communicate why transformation is needful. The existence of uncertainty compels individuals to negatively respond to the change process because they lack understanding the new method (Jesuthasun, 2017). One approach that leaders can use while implementing change is to process resources and conditions with clear objectives (Diab, Safan, & Bakeer, 2018). The view of change can be more attractive and subsequently avoid resistance. Another approach leaders can use to implement change is have a leadership team among employees who can test the change implementations first, and then assist leaders with teaching the other employees (Manjourides et al., 2018). Ioannou et al. (2017) further exclaimed that by understanding why change is transpiring, individuals might endure the various adjustments in the change process and the culture of the organization.

The business environment is changing, and individuals need to adapt and find their role in contributing to a smooth and efficient process. The purpose of HVAC business leaders during change embodies effectively communicating new procedures, new systems, and future expectations of all stakeholders. Leaders must mentally prepare to be flexible, supportive, and ready to answer when asked (Manjourides et al., 2018).

Because the HVAC staff service various vendors, leadership engagement is essential for promoting organizational change. Employees must express their concerns and fears to their leader and ask for help when needed during the change process. Employees must also remain positive and open to change while meeting the required expectations. Diab et al. (2018) asserted that leadership allowing insight from employees can help make sure the implementation process successful.

### **Transition**

Section 1 of this study consist of an explanation of the problem and purpose statement, nature of the study, research and interview questions, and conceptual framework. In Section 1, I determined the operational definitions, and I addressed the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and significance of the study. I explained the contribution to business practice, implications for social change, and professional and academic literature. The purpose of the research is to present an overview of transformational leadership, strategies for implementing organizational change and implementing change in the HVAC industry.

Section 2 contains the purpose statement, a description of my role in the research, and the eligibility guidelines for the participants. I will discuss the research method and design, populations and sampling, and how I maintained ethical standards of the study. In Section 3, I will address the findings and results of the research in application to professional practice. I will reflect, make recommendations, and conclude with suggestions for future research.

## Section 2: The Project

This study is a qualitative multiple case study in which I explored strategies business leaders in the HVAC industry use to successfully implement change initiatives. The focal point of Section 1 was gaining a better understanding of the transformational leadership theory and the possible effects of leadership strategies for organizational change. In Section 2, I will describe the research methodology and design of the study. Reiteration of the purpose statement is to emphasize the need for alignment of the method with the study objective. This section contains an overview of my role as a researcher and reveals ways of avoiding potential biases. I will disclose the participants of the study and detail the relevance of the research method and design. This section also encompasses explanations of the population and sampling and ethical requirements for protecting data from the interviews. I will conclude Section 2 with a discussion of reliability and validity to assure the quality of my study. The data collected may be suitable for improving organizational performances in small-sized firms by comprehending leadership strategies.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies used by business leaders in HVAC companies to implement organizational change initiatives successfully. I collected data using semistructured interviews of four business leaders who successfully implemented organizational change initiatives and have fewer than 100 employees located in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. This results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing HVAC business leaders with strategies to successfully implement change initiatives that might lead to new business

opportunities and promote prosperity for the local economy and families in the Charlotte, North Carolina area.

### **Role of the Researcher**

The role of the researcher in the data collection process is to render in-depth experiences of the participants through the interviews and document findings from peer-reviewed or relevant sources. Researchers may also have other roles in a study, such as observing, recording data, and analyzing information while remaining unbiased (Grey, Bolland, Gamble, & Avenell, 2019; Gruber, 2018). In qualitative methodology, researchers adopt the role of the primary data collection engine (Hjelle, Skutle, Alvsvag, & Førland, 2018; Rahman, 2017). I operated as the underlying research instrument for data collection and served as an interviewer and analyst conducting open-ended interview questions. I solicited participants (Appendix A) for my study with the approval of Walden University's Institution Review Board (IRB).

The connection I have with the HVAC industry is my current working experience assisting business leaders during the implementation process for change within their organization. My observation of the phenomenon exposed me to the demands and obstacles other business leaders may experience. I have a working relationship with the participants, and I accessed their knowledge on the business phenomenon. A researcher for a qualitative methodology must collaborate with participants when collecting data for a study (Yin, 2018). Because I communicate with participants through telephone conversations, meetings, and emails, I built a new trust for the interview process.



As the researcher, I complied with the Belmont Report protocol by protecting the participants from harm, safeguarding the participants' confidentiality, and securing the consent for the interview from the participant. The Belmont Report is a representation of ethical principles and guidelines for protecting individuals during research. There are three moral principles in the Belmont Report that researchers must regard while conducting a study: respect each participant, value the contribution that participant brings to the study, and treat each participant the same (Hottenstein, 2018). Researchers must treat the participants as independent agents, and they cannot take advantage of the participant's vulnerability (Adashi, Walters, Menikoff, 2018; Bracken-Roche, Bell, Macdonald, & Racine, 2017). I ensured ethical protection for each by administering consent forms with the terms of participation of the study, and I provided the confidentiality of all persons' identities and their organization.

Life experiences can shape a person's beliefs and values. The fundamental disposition of humans is that everyone is capable of errors, and they project personal bias (Tamblyn, Girard, Qian, & Hanley, 2018). During the interview process, I abstained from bias and avoided viewing data through a personal lens. Researchers must accurately record data to eliminate partiality (Hjelle et al., 2018; Yin, 2018). I paid attention to the participants' feedback to establish intentional meanings to avoid bias. By conducting multiple interviews for data collection, I mitigated bias in my study.

The rationale of an interview protocol (Appendix B) offered a detailed presentation of my topic and served as a guide for conducting interviews. The interview protocol frames the process of controlling the interviews and focusing on recording

accurate information (Sivarajah, Kamal, Irani, & Weerakkody, 2017). Researchers also use the interview protocol to enhance the reliability of the study (Abdel Latif, 2019; Yeong, Ismail, Ismail, & Hamzah, 2018). The interview protocol allowed me to follow-up and cross-examine. With the aid of the interview protocol, I also ensured that I did not overlook the original interview questions and made sure the participants' information did not change.

### **Participants**

The participants' eligibility criteria for this study were four business leaders from four HVAC companies who successfully implemented change initiatives within their organization. The four businesses had fewer than 100 employees located in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. Researchers must consider the participants' experience and knowledge of the phenomenon when selecting for the interview process (Liu & Lawrenz, 2018; Yin, 2018). After receiving approval from the IRB, my strategy for gaining participants was contacting them by phone and email. The first four business leaders who responded to my phone call or email and agreed to engage in the study was the method I employed to determine the participants. Because of my current working relationship with potential participants, I used an interview protocol to avoid personal biases and made sure I asked the same questions to all participants.

A strategy for establishing a deeper working relationship with the participants was explaining my intentions and expectations for the study. Another strategic approach was to continuously communicate with the participants once they agreed to engage in the research. Creating a working relationship with the participants and making them

comfortable during the interview process is useful in receiving valid information for the study (Kravets, 2019). Intimidating or forcing individuals to participate in the research was not ethical. I informed the participants that at any time, they could withdraw from the study.

## **Research Method and Design**

### **Research Method**

I used a qualitative approach for this study. Qualitative research aligned with the investigation of implementing strategies for organizational change in the HVAC industry. A qualitative researcher explores the business problem, develops recommendations, and uses interaction to gain insight from the participants (Rendle-Short, 2019; Thiem, 2016). A qualitative researcher also delves deeper into the business problem by conducting an in-depth analysis with people, groups, or organizations and explores their experiences (Yin, 2018). Participants in this study could freely express their experiences through video conference interviews, which are more intimate with open-ended questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The use of a qualitative approach is beneficial, providing a data-rich and in-depth understanding of the topic.

A quantitative methodology is not appropriate for this study. Researchers use a quantitative approach when collecting numerical data for testing the scientific theory, examining the relationship between variables, and measuring with scientifically based methods (King & Jackson, 2019; Beach, 2018). A quantitative approach is not relevant for this study because I did not test hypotheses, nor did I analyze the significance of variables' relationships and differences numerically. Baur (2019) found that quantitative

methods allow researchers to use randomization of participants to assure the validity of the study. The nature of this study does not validate the use of randomization as it pivots on business leaders who had success in implementing strategies and addressing organizational change initiatives that affect the HVAC industry.

The use of a mixed-method approach is inappropriate and not beneficial for this study. Mixed-method research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative. Researchers use mixed-method to answer questions from a quantitative perspective deriving from qualitative data, and using mixed methodology can yield supportive interpretations on a past theory (Etikan, 2016; Thiem, 2016). The mixed-method approach is not appropriate for this study because the intent is not to collect statistical evidence for inferential testing.

### **Research Design**

The four qualitative research designs I considered for my study were case study, ethnography, narrative, and phenomenology. For my qualitative research, I used a multiple case study design because I did not intend to investigate strategic tools that small-sized business leaders may use across other similar companies, without collecting data over an extended period. The multiple case study design is appropriate when researching phenomena existing within various organizations or focusing on in-depth, real-life problems, and contexts of business owners (Yin, 2018). The reason a multiple case study was appropriate for my research is that it allowed me to obtain comprehensive, in-depth reasoning of the successful implementation strategies for change initiatives, which business leaders of the HVAC industry use.

The ethnography design was not useful for this study. Researchers use the ethnography design to evaluate people, behaviors, and cultural phenomena, which is an extended period of observation (Lee, 2019; Scharp & Sanders, 2019). An ethnographic study was not appropriate because the practices of individuals, groups, and communities in their natural environment are not the focal point of this study. The narrative design was another consideration, yet did not compile with my research. For the narrative design, researchers collect data on an individual's experience and discuss the meaning of the experience (Feely, 2019; Hossain & Scott-Villiers, 2019; Thiem, 2016). Narrative design was not relevant for this study because exploring an individual's life experiences was not significant. The phenomenology approach is a representation of a lived experience, rather than participants freely sharing their experience (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2019). A phenomenological study was not appropriate because it encompasses the human experience from the perspective of those living the phenomenon. A multiple case study was suitable for this study because I conducted an in-depth exploration of the leadership strategies of business leaders from successful organizations.

In qualitative research, data saturation is typical as a methodological concept. Data saturation takes place when there is no new development in data collection or analysis (Saunders, Sim, Kingstone, Baker, Waterfield, Bartlam, Burroughs, & Jinks, 2018). To ensure data saturation, I requested participants to present answers to my questions until they had nothing else to add. After the participants answer all of the questions, I collected data from the interviews, documents, and notes. To further enhance accuracy, reliability, and validity from data collected, member checking was the next step

(Thomas, 2017). I read the information the participants presented during the video conference and saw if what they provided was correct. Saunders et al. (2018) stated that when the interviews are no longer contributing new details to the research questions or uncovering a current matter to the topic, I could confirm that data saturation occurred. The use of the multiple case study design was consistent with the intent and research questions for this research. From the data of the interviews, companies' documents, and literature, I compared and differentiated the information received.

### **Population and Sampling**

I used criterion sampling for my study, which was a purposeful form of evaluating data. Criterion sampling permits me, the researcher, to appoint participants based on the criteria outlined in my study (Larsen, 2018). The eligibility criteria and criterion sampling were assist with aligning my population. The population for this study consisted of four business leaders from four HVAC companies with fewer than 100 employees located in Charlotte, North Carolina area, who have successfully implemented change initiatives.

The experience of working in the HVAC industry was the qualification for participating in this study. In a qualitative methodology, too many participants can undermine the effectiveness of performing a thorough study (Ames, Glenton, & Lewin, 2019). Zhao, Xu, and Park (2019) further determined that a qualitative multiple case study is difficult to decide the number of participants because of the depth of information that the participant might present.

## Ethical Research

Demonstrating and applying ethical standards in research is essential for protecting participants in a study. Hamid and Widjaja (2019) pointed-out that ethics in research enhances ethical practices and behaviors, which safeguards compliance requirements and reliability. Researchers use the ethical methods and actions for improving the interview protocol process, encourage open dialogue, enhance awareness of the phenomenon, take down accurate responses from the interview question, and alleviate personal biases (Fish, 2019; Yin, 2018). As the researcher, I constructed processes that would not cause harm to participants and ensured confidentiality of the data provided by the participants. I emailed a recruitment letter (Appendix C) to participants who met the requirements for the study. The business leaders replied to the email by stating *I consent*. Once I received the consent email from the participant, I emailed an informed consent form (see Appendix E) and allowed the participant 24 hours to review the form. The informed consent form contained the risks and benefits of taking part in the study, and I answered any questions the participants may have about the study. If the participant understood the study well enough to make a decision, they replied to the email *I consent*. The participant could print or save the informed consent form for their record.

Participants in the study were voluntary, and they had the right to withdraw at any given time and for any reason. The informed consent form contained terms regarding the participants' rights to withdraw. Participants could verbally withdraw or state in writing without risk to them or their organization (Ibrahim, Alshogran, Khabour, & Alzoubi,

2019). Choosing not to engage in the study did not jeopardize the participants' rights. All data provided remained confidential up to the point of withdrawal. Meetei (2019) further stated that the informed consent form would indicate that participation in research would not include any monetary incentives. The ones participating in the study had an understanding that they would not receive financial compensation, as noted on the informed consent form.

To ensure the ethical standards and protection of all participants, I obtained the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number, #06-30-20-0743121, before contacting participants and collecting data. After the approval, I solicited the participants who meet the eligibility criteria for my doctoral study. I kept the identity of the business leaders private and guarded. Researchers suggested using de-identification as a means of preventing a person's identity from being associated with data (Grech, 2018; Mostert, Koomen, van Delden, & Bredenoord, 2018). I adhered to the participants' privacy by implementing a coding system containing a letter and a number combination. The letter-number synthesis that I used was P1, P2, P3, and P4, which covered the confidentiality of the four interviewees and their company. Zhang and Liu (2019) found that privacy and ethical protection prevents any risks and uncertainty of information provided by the participants. My objective is not to jeopardize the validity of this study. I will securely protect the confidentiality of the participant, their organization, and data for five years, as required by Walden University (see Appendix E). After five years, I will destroy all files by shredding all documents.



### Data Collection Instruments

I was the research instrument for collecting data. Scharp and Sanders (2019) pointed-out that a qualitative researcher is a primary instrument for collecting and examining data for the study. The researcher could respond and generate a thorough understanding of the phenomenon with the assistance of the participants. Yin (2018) determined six approaches for collecting data: (a) interviewing, (b) researching archived documents, (c) analyzing records, (d) administering surveys, (e) personal observation of participants, and (f) using physical objects. I conducted semistructured video conference interviews with each participant and ask seven open-ended questions (see Appendix B), which explored strategies that some HVAC business leaders use to implement change initiatives.

After receiving approval from the Walden IRB, I contacted participants by emailing them a recruitment letter (see Appendix C), and followed up with another email (see Appendix D) if I did not hear back from them within five business days. Once the participant agreed to participate in the study, they replied to the email by stating *I consent*. I then emailed an informed consent form (see Appendix E), and the participant had 24 hours to review the form. The informed consent form contained the risks and benefits of taking part in the study. I answered any questions the participants had about the study. If the participant understands the study well enough to make a decision, they replied to the email *I consent*. The participant could print or save the informed consent form for their record. The participant chose a date and time for the video conference interview to ensure privacy, trust, and comfort while collecting data. The video

conference interview process was approximately 45 minutes, but depending on the participant's responses, I allowed more or less time for the interview. All participants answered the same seven open-end interview questions (see Appendix B), which served in exploring the experiences of each participant. The data obtained was helpful in uncovering strategies HVAC business leaders may use to improve implementing change initiatives.

Upon completing the interview process, I enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collection by using member checking through video conference. I read the data the participant provided during the first video conference to see if what they provided was correct and if they needed to add to the data. Brear (2019) determined that member checking is the technique that the researcher uses to help improve accuracy, credibility, reliability, and validity of a study. Naidu and Prose (2018) further explained that member checking is a form of respondent validation, in which the participants confirm the data, interpretations, and conclusions of the research. The participants validated the truthfulness and authenticity of their interview. The data collected from the participants during the interview will be in a secured place for five years. After five years, I will destroy all data or documentation of the conversation and participants, along with the flash drive.

Data collection is essential for retrieving relevant information needed to answer the research question regarding what strategies leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives. Qualitative researchers use an interview protocol to ensure consistency and do not divert from the purpose of the study during the

data collection process (Chen, Yu, Hailey, & Cui, 2019; Yin, 2018). Researchers also use the interview protocol to develop a background for the study and maintain the structure of the interview. I followed the interview protocol with each participant (see Appendix A) and explored each question with the intent of coming up with new ideas for implementing organizational change. Complying with the interview protocol minimized the oversight of information given during the interview process and avoiding deviation from the outlined interview.

### **Data Collection Technique**

In the role of a researcher, I was the primary data collection agent for my study. This qualitative multiple case study consists of semistructured video conference interviews, analyzing company's documents, and audio recording. Researchers use a combination of data collection techniques to ensure the quality, reliability, and validity of the study (Silva, Campos-Silva, Gouvea, & Farina, 2019; Wiseman, Rossmann, & Harris, 2019). Organizations can benefit from the various data collection techniques in identifying the relative strengths of each factor that improve implementing change initiatives (Anselmi, Fabbris, Martini, & Robusto, 2018). I conducted 45-minute semistructured video conference interviews by asking seven open-ended questions (see Appendix B). I took notes from the participants' interview and ask the participants to email their company's documents, such as training manuals, employee handbooks, weekly meeting documentations, and user guides including step-by-steps instructions on job functions for exploring strategies use to implement change initiatives.

There are several advantages and disadvantages of data collection techniques. The benefits of data collection methods consist of (a) gaining insight on the research topic, (b) obtaining knowledge on the study from participants' experiences, and (c) accessing useful data for the research study (Zhang, Calabrese, Ding, Liu, & Zhang, 2018). In addition to the advantages of the data collection approaches, the disadvantages include (a) time-consuming for both researcher and participant, (b) researcher being forward with the participant, (c) costly data collection, and (d) may be vulnerable to bias (Maya-Jariego & Cachia, 2019).

A pilot study was not relevant to this study. I tested data before the research to determine if the information was feasible or valid. With IRB approval, I captured every response of my participants by audio recording, and the multiple case study also consisted of analyzing company's documentation beyond the interview process. Yin (2018) determined that open-ended interview questions, along with a qualitative multiple case study, has the advantage of providing in-depth, reliable, and valid data and that a pilot study is not necessary.

Before completing the data collection process, I contacted the participants for a follow-up video conference interview to verify the validity of the responses through member checking. I read the participants responses and authenticate their responses. Naidu and Prose (2018) concluded that member checking is confirming and validating that the participants' data from the interview is correct. I notated on the original transcription if the participant decided to change or add to the data collected from the initial interview. The data progressed through the evaluation suggested by Yin (2018),

which included (a) obtaining the data (b) analyzing the data, (c) reorganizing the data, (d) comprehending the information received, and (e) finalizing the data. I used the member checking data and imported the data collected into a software.

### **Data Organization Technique**

Keeping track of an organization's data was a critical aspect of exploring and understanding this study. Researchers found that constant organizing and inspecting data is necessary in a qualitative multiple case study (Jahangiri & Jahangiri, 2019; Todorov, Bogdanova, Noev, & Sabev, 2019). Yin (2018) also determined that the use of the data organization method enhances the readers' understanding of how the researcher concluded the findings. I was the primary collector of data for each participant in my study. I used the letter-number synthesis, P1, P2, P3, and P4, which protected the privacy of the four interviewees and their company. I used the iPhone voice memo app to collect the data, and then I transcribed the data in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. I converted the responses from the participants by using the text-to-speech command. I added each response to the speak cells command to generate the themes, which coded and measured the same or familiar responses of each participants (see Appendix E). After transcribing the data and forming themes, for confidentiality, I deleted all recordings of the interviews from the iPhone.

I recorded the video conference interviews for each participant, examined the information, documented each statement, and maintained the collected data on a flash drive. Yuan, Zhao, and Wang (2018) recommended that researchers safeguard the collected data from the participants for up to five years. Todorov et al. (2019) discovered

that securing participants' information for five years is a fundamental principle of research ethics. I will adhere to the research ethics, and I will obtain the participants' identity and information for five years. To avoid unauthorized access to the data provided by the participants during the interview process, I was the only one who can gain or retrieve the information. I will be the only one with exclusive rights to the password-protected flash drive. Five years after this study, I will delete the participants' data and identity from my computer, destroy the flash drive and shred all documents from the interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

The appropriate data analysis process for this multiple case study was methodological triangulation. Fischer and Hester (2019) found that a methodological triangulation involves the use of a qualitative multiple case study, which requires validation of data received. A qualitative analysis encompasses (a) gathering data, (b) evaluating data, (c) understanding data, (d) identifying data for usage, and (e) concluding the data (Yin, 2018). The data analysis for this study consisted of obtaining the company's documents, compiling and transcribing data, using the letter-number codes, cross-examining multiple data sources, which included in-depth interviews and analyzing company's documents.

A logical and sequential process for the data analysis was to implement a manual exploration of the information after noting the participants' interviews and collecting relevant documentation from the company's files and external websites. I assembled and exported all data into Microsoft Excel, such as (a) the participants' video conference

interviews, (b) companies documentation, (c) content from external websites, and (d) the member checking results. Next, I explored all of the compiled data in Microsoft Excel and performed a manual analysis. I then organized and manually evaluated themes. The themes was a representation of the manual analysis. I imported the information into a data analysis software after exploring, organizing, and understanding the data received. By comprehending the data, the themes was in alignment with and supportive of the manual review. The topics yielded strategies business leaders may use to successfully implement change initiatives.

Electronic spreadsheet programs can be helpful for coding, mind-mapping, and identifying themes. Excel is a form of a qualitative data analysis software that is easy to store, evaluate, sort, filter, search, and recovery data (Becker & Gould, 2019).

Researchers use software like Excel to generate themes and patterns (Briones & Escola, 2019; Lee, Shifflett, & Downen, 2019). The strengths of using Excel are sorting, filtering, and searching for information, which was suitable for semistructured interviews and storing different types of data (Collins, 2019). I used Excel to authenticate the themes and patterns discovered through the manual analysis of the data and the sections depicted in the literature review.

The purpose of the data analysis was to discover themes that answered the overarching research question of this qualitative multiple case study. Roberts, Dowell, and Nie (2019) found that the performance of data analysis in qualitative research is significant for the direction and organization of the study. Cheng and Yin (2019) further determined that researchers need to explore data to reveal themes and patterns, resulting

in answering the underlying research question. I synthesized the collected data into sections, comparable to the ones in the literature review. The topics of each section that I implemented were leadership support, stakeholders' involvement and participation, constant communication and dialog, as well as subtopics that include the cultural environment, resistance to change, readiness to change, and trust in leadership. I analyzed the data suggested by Yin (2018) and followed the procedure of (a) gathering data, (b) evaluating data, (c) comprehending the data, (d) identifying data usage, and (e) concluding the data.

The focus of the data analysis was to address and answer the overarching research question for this study. Interviews are the most standard forms of data collection, which targets gaining knowledge of the phenomenon (Jin, Vandenplas, & Loosveldt, 2019). As the researcher, my objective was to identify themes and patterns based on the participants' experiences and knowledge of the phenomenon. For this qualitative multiple case study, the origination of themes and patterns will be the content of the data analysis process.

The conceptual framework for this study is the transformational leadership theory. McFarland (2019) found that the conceptual framework has a connection with the findings, the method, and the literature review in a study. I evaluated the data considering the transformational leadership, which included implementing strategies for organizational change. Analyzing leadership strategies through a transformational leader may assist with determining themes and patterns that are supportive of the phenomenon. I explored strategies through the lens of the transformational leadership by supporting and



opposing themes and patterns in the literature review. I confirmed the authenticity of the collected data through member checking. Next, I evaluated data by consistency from the themes and patterns in the literature review and differentiate the findings of the study to newly available studies.

### **Reliability and Validity**

As a researcher, I used reliable and valid instruments to warrant the findings of the research. Reliability involves the accuracy of a research study, and validity consists of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation (Ertugrul-Akyol, 2019). Qualitative researchers implement the use of trustworthy and sustainable approaches to ensure both the reliability and validity of a research study (Yin, 2018; Violato & King, 2019).

#### **Reliability**

The quality of a study reflects the consistency and reliability of the findings. Qualitative researchers use audit trail and strategic notes to obtain the dependability of the research study (Atilgan, 2019; Komarov, 2018). Dependability consists of authenticating the findings of the research, which may yield consistency conducted in similar conditions for future studies. Researchers also use reliable documents as tools to institute dependability to reduce fabrication in their study (Akbiyik & Senturk, 2019; Violato & King, 2019).

To ensure dependability as part of reliability in this study, I adopted member checking. Iivari (2018) found that member checking confirms the accuracy and trustworthiness of the collected data. Member checking consists of validating the data

collected, evaluating the interpretations, and forming conclusions from the participants' interviews (Madill & Sullivan, 2018). Member checking is a means of certifying the authenticity and truthfulness of a study. I engaged participants in member checking to ensure dependability by validating data collected and evaluating interpretation of interview responses. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A as a way to eliminate bias and establish consistency during the interview process.

### **Validity**

**Credibility.** Validity in research must have credible findings. After evaluating the data collected, I administered member checking for reliability. Engelberg and Gouzoules (2019) suggested that qualitative researchers must ensure the validity of a study through credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation. Research experts discovered that purposeful sampling, peer-viewed findings, methodological triangulation, member checking, and using an interview protocol aids in the credibility of a study (Akbiyik & Senturk, 2019; Dunn, O'Mahen, Wright, & Brown, 2019).

For this study, I used purposeful sampling and employ an interview protocol to eliminate bias by staying on track during the interview process. Quinlan-Cutler, Doherty, and Carmichael (2018) found that the use of purposeful sampling enhances credibility, and the adoption of an interview protocol augments partiality. I used peer-reviewed literature to increase validity and promote transparency, which yielded to other points of view. After evaluating the data collected, I conducted member checking for credibility. Member checking is one form of ensuring that qualitative research is credible (Naidu & Prose, 2018). Researchers use member checking to (a) assess their information collected,

(b) achieve feedback, (c) validate responses, and (d) confirm dependability (Iivari, 2018; Madill & Sullivan, 2018). As part of member checking, I setup another video conference and I read the participants their responses to see if they needed to add to the data. I also implemented methodological triangulation to assist with the accuracy of the study and improved the understanding of the findings.

**Transferability.** A researcher's role is to provide accurate information to readers and for future research on relative studies. Transferability consists of offering readers evidence that the study's findings could be relevant to other contexts, situations, and populations (Essa, Sayed, & Reyad, 2019). The researcher's responsibility is to be able to transfer the outcomes of the study to various contexts, situations, and populations (Ferrando, Hoogerwerf, & Kadyrbaeva, 2019). To increase transferability, I used the data collection and data organization techniques by complying with the interview protocol, for remaining consistent and staying focus on the purpose of the study (see Appendix A). I also employed methodological triangulation, member checking, and attain data saturation. By reaching data saturation, I certified the findings for transfer or use for future research.

**Confirmability.** Participants in a research study may shape the findings by their narratives and words rather than researcher biases. Confirmability involves relevant instruments, processes, and collected data in qualitative research (Haven & Van Grootel, 2019). Korstjens and Moser (2018) further determined that confirmability consists of eliminating all personal viewpoints from the study and contains neutral and direct data collected. To ensure confirmability, I retained multiple sources of evidence, such as a

journal and an audit trail, to provide a high level of confidence in the findings. I used the participants' responses during the interview process and obtained the company's documents. The documents from various companies could aid in exploring strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives.

**Data saturation.** Data saturation implies that a researcher concluded the transferability and confirmability of the study. Yin (2018) asserted that data saturation is the stage at which no additional data materializes from the information collected. Obtaining data saturation involves processing the information evaluated and assisting with confirming dependability in the study (Hennink, Kaiser, & Weber, 2019). To fulfill data saturation, I incorporated multiple data collection techniques, such as semistructured video conference interviews, taking notes from the participants' interviews, member checking through video conference, and reviewing the company's documents that the participants emailed. After the interview process, I transcribed the responses and authenticated the participants' answers through video conference for member checking to validate the interpretations. I confirmed that no new information was necessary and ensured the accuracy of the explanations for data saturation once I received 100% of the participants' acknowledgments.

### **Transition and Summary**

The objective of this study was to explore strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives. In Section 2, I restated my purpose statement, presented the role of a researcher, and described the participants for the interview process. I depicted the research method, research design, and the population

and sampling method. I detailed how I would maintain ethical protection through data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, and data analysis. I concluded Section 2 with an explanation of reliability and validity in a research study.

In Section 3, I will include findings on strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives. I will start with the purpose of this study, the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, and the implications for social change. I will discuss recommendations for further research and present reflections on the experiences as a researcher for this study. Last, I will issue a summary and conclusion of the research study.

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

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some leaders in HVAC companies used to successfully implement change initiatives. I focused on the successful implementation of change initiatives in the HVAC industry. I conducted video conference semistructured interviews with four business leaders from four different organizations in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, to collect data. The themes that emerged from the conversation were improving leadership support, enhancing stakeholder's involvement, improving communication, and strengthening organizational culture.

The four business leaders interviewed in the HVAC industry used strategies to meet organizational goals and to lead the successful implementation of change initiatives. The findings may prove useful in other sectors because of the leadership approach to innovation. Business leaders using the conclusions of this study might contribute to positive social change by aligning the goal of change to the culture of the organization. Enhancing stakeholders' involvement and improving communication might also generate beneficial outcomes for the business, leading to creating jobs and sustaining the local economy.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

In this study, I conducted video conference semistructured interviews with four business leaders from four different organizations in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. The participants answered the overarching research question: What strategies do leaders

in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives? The interviews allowed the participants to share their knowledge and experience of strategies used for implementing change so that their organization could remain viable. I reviewed the emailed company documents, including training manuals, employee handbooks, user guides, and notes from meetings used to convey innovation.

Before the interviews, I reminded each participant that the process was voluntary, and that they had the right to withdraw at any time and for any reason. I also informed the participants that the interview process would not cause harm, and I would not relinquish their identity nor that of their organization. I assured participants of my commitment to secure the data received as confidential. The information collected consisted of interview audio recordings, my notes, and company documents. For each interview, I used the interview protocol. Using the interview protocol, I asked each participant the same questions in the same order, which helped me stay on track and mitigate bias.

After collecting data, I transcribed the information using the letter-number codes, and I interpreted the audio interview recordings. I uploaded the transcribed interviews in Microsoft Excel. To authenticate my interpretation of the data from participants, I conducted a follow-up video conference for each participant for member checking. Based on the overarching research question, and after gathering and analyzing the interview responses, I identified four themes: improving leadership support, enhancing stakeholder involvement, improving communication, and strengthening organizational culture. The identified themes aligned with the conceptual framework of Burn's transformational

leadership theory. The findings also aligned with some of the peer-reviewed studies from the literature review.

### **Theme 1: Improving Leadership Support**

The first theme that emerged was improving leadership support. Each participant stated that leadership support is not a significant problem, but they emphasized the importance of encouraging and inspiring employees during change initiatives. The participants also disclosed that employees demonstrated a positive attitude towards innovation when there is a supportive leadership. P1 explained that “change is hard for everyone to accept. It is a natural human reaction to resist the unknown. However, when leaders support employees, resistance to change decreases.” P4 stated,

There were times we accepted the resistance from employees because we wanted to keep everyone happy and the workflow going. Looking back at various situations, that was not necessarily a good idea. We looked at the philosophy of what is behind innovation and made changes for the betterment of our customers and organization. Through trial and error, we learned that successful change initiatives start with leadership supporting and having a training and coaching plan. The training and coaching plan encompasses methods of how to transfer knowledge and sustain the change.

P3 explained that “support from leadership requires maintaining a new way of doing things by educating and mentoring employees on the organization’s expectations and constantly updating training new information.” P1 asserted that “we implemented and facilitated hands-on training until employees became familiar with the change.” P2



related an experience where there was an implementation of new software, and the leaders supported and coached the employees, which boosted the success of the change initiative.

With the implementation of a new system, employees experienced one-on-one support from leaders and hands-on training. By having the support and training, employees had a better understanding of the job expectations, and they appreciated the benefits of using the new software. Employees also conveyed that they felt comfortable with the changes because we took the time to encourage and support them through the change process.

Each participant maintained that support through hands-on and one-on-one training helped with a smooth transition. P1 explained that “being supportive is great, but we also have to be vigilant and know when to make the necessary adjustments for innovation.” P3 indicated that leaders must conduct evaluations of the change implementations and determine the need for additional training and support. P3 further explained that feedback from the employees is useful for any new process.

Leaders must continue to measure the implementation process for improvement because employees are usually scared of change or do not want to change.

Leaders cannot allow employees to get comfortable in their position. So when executing change, leaders must understand the employees involved and encourage them to think outside the box. Support is a representation of motivating, inspiring, encouraging, and influencing employees to go above and beyond.

P2 discovered that “learning is a win/win situation for both employers and employees. A learning-driven organization tends to be more efficient and more valuable in the market.” P3 recommended leaders appoint a committee to provide training for employees, which could build a learning culture. The committee could enhance morale and loyalty and improve overall efficiency. The committee could also be internal or external. Leaders are supposed to be supportive, but there might be times when they could miss critical change elements or miss an employee not comprehending the change process. The selected committee could also bring about new ideas about improving the change process.

The methodological triangulation included the company’s training manuals, employee handbooks, weekly meeting documentation, and user guides, including step-by-step instructions on job functions. Through the interviews and documents received from each participant, I discovered that weekly meetings play a significant role in training, and leaders taking the opportunity to show their support. The business leaders explained that the strategy to improve support is to combine training and mentoring through the change process. The participants also recommended that all business leaders use training and mentorship to successfully implement change initiatives, enhance productivity, and remain operable.

**Correlation to the literature.** The findings noted in Theme 1, consisting of improving leadership support, are in alignment with the findings of Breevaart and Bakker (2018) in that leadership support is a significant strategy during a change implementation process and for accomplishing organizational goals. All participants indicated that

supporting employees through innovation provided opportunities for employees to embrace the change. Although leadership styles vary as they relate to supporting, leaders find ways to adapt to their working culture to meet the needs of the employees (Groves, 2020). The business leaders pointed out that the ease of adapting to change resulted in the successful implementation of change initiatives. Supportive leadership is the foundation for decreasing resistance to change and increasing innovation (Jing, Nan, & Yuan, 2020). In a positive working atmosphere, employees develop trust in leadership, and they have confidence in the direction of the organization (Nguyen & Phan, 2020).

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 1, consisting of improving leadership support, relates to Jahn and Koller's (2018) study in that after executing a transformational leadership approach as a framework, the organization became more effective in implementing change initiatives, leading to success in the market and employees' confidence in the organization. Supportive leadership is a strategy that aligned with the conceptual framework. The findings from Bărbînta and Mureşan (2017) indicated that leaders who support and motivate employees commit to the implementation process for change. The business leaders stated that supporting was vital for all employees to comprehend the change and for change to form in the organization. Even in a pandemic, the business leaders indicated the need to be more available, vigilant, and supportive. The pandemic rendered a different type of change and fear, but remaining supportive and encouraging helped the employees adjust to the change.

## **Theme 2: Enhancing Stakeholder Involvement**

The second theme that came about during the interviews was enhancing stakeholder involvement. The participants identified the stakeholders as employees, management, and stockholders. The participants also indicated that involving stakeholders and getting feedback about innovation was significant when implementing change initiatives. Two participants discovered that promoting a culture of participation and feedback may be a game-changer for innovation and growth. P2 explained that “stakeholders can offer actionable and potentially life-changing insights about innovation. Feedback is good for the organization and beneficial for all involved.” P4 asserted that “it takes effect, a high-functioning team of people to change and solve complex challenges.”

The business leaders agreed that the change initiative success means involving the stakeholders and keeping them engaged. P1 explained,

For better or worse, we spend a significant amount of time with our colleagues.

To make the working atmosphere better, business leaders must be transparent about the change process and allow them to have some input. Involvement tends to be more productive, healthy, and less stressful. Acceptance of all suggestions is not logical, but everyone needs to have a voice. The stakeholders are humans, and humans need to feel that there are appreciation and belonging.

P3 claimed that involving the stakeholders can be tough because of the difference of options, and everyone does not work onsite. To get everyone on the same page, P3 explained,

We conduct virtual team meetings to share different ideas, projects, and how the organization can profit from the change. We give opportunities for everyone to provide feedback and express their concerns about innovation. We also allow specific staff meetings to discuss the challenges or concerns about the change.

P2 shared,

We empower the employees to think like leaders. We invite them to some leadership discussions because we want to hear the criticism, concerns, and possible solutions to the problems. We know that employees talk among themselves, but we believe that if we cultivate the conversation, all stakeholders could benefit. The ultimate goal for involvement is to retain stakeholders, become more profitable, and continue to grow as an organization.

P4 stated that “when stakeholders are part of the process, involved in the decision making of change initiatives, and part of the strategy, they become owners of the change and more engaged to see the plan work.”

P1 explained that after introducing the change initiative in a leadership meeting with key stakeholders, one stakeholder’s strategy was to develop a poster or chart to encourage a desire to participate in the change initiatives. The stakeholders attended brainstorming meetings and volunteered their expertise in the change initiative. P3 had a similar situation by “creating a flow chart and emailing all stakeholders to ensure everyone had an opportunity to be a part of the change process.” The business leaders coalesced on involvement and suggested that when stakeholders understood the process, the change initiative became more comfortable to implement.

**Correlation to the literature.** Theme 2, which consists of enhancing stakeholder involvement, aligns Knight et al.'s (2019) findings in that collaboration with HVAC stakeholders is vital for pursuing growth, initiating change, and generating new products. Stakeholder involvement was a viable engagement strategy used by all participants. The approach used by the business leaders aligned with the study from Nguyen and Phan (2020), which indicated support of change when stakeholders are a part of the decisionmaking process. The business leaders insisted that they not only rely on the opinions and conclusions of those in top management but also involve all stakeholders and provide opportunities for them to contribute to the change process.

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 2, comprising of enhancing stakeholder involvement, is in alignment with the transformational leadership theory. Business leaders who can motivate, encourage, and involve all stakeholders in the change process stand a better chance of implementing change initiatives (Burns, 1978). Stakeholders' participation benefits both the business leaders and the organization. Business leaders' advantage to stakeholders' involvement is that they do not have all the stress of figuring out the entire change initiative process (Nordberg & Andreassen, 2020). The benefits of stakeholders' involvement in an organization are a commitment to the company and improvement in the market (Johari & Yahya, 2019). Even though a leader may effectively convey the vision, the adoption of change requires buy-in from all stakeholders (Al-Romeedy, 2019). Burns (1978) asserted that most organizational changes failed because stakeholders did not have the opportunity to propose ideas and execute creative solutions.

### **Theme 3: Improving Communication**

The third theme that emerged from the interviews was communication. All the business leaders indicated that they esteemed communication as a strategy used to develop and implement successful change initiatives to remain operable—the theme communication derived from interview questions 2, 5, 6, and 7. The business leaders further expressed that communicating with employees offers critical business insights and enhance employees' experience to change initiatives.

The business leaders commenced the change process by communicating the purpose and the importance of change initiatives. P1 explained,

We informed the employees of the change and the five-year plan for the organization. The change meant assistance from each employee. The message to the employees further explained the reason for the change. Buy-in to the change starts with communicating the need, the possible impact, and discussing how the change may be a positive outcome to a challenging situation. We are transparent about what we are going to achieve from the change and why it is the best fit for the organization.

P2 echoed P1 on the importance of explaining the change to the employees, and understanding the message for change must coincide with its mission. P2 stated,

We placed change initiatives on a pedestal, which generated conversation between the employees. Every employee must comprehend the change initiative in their language, and each leader and employee must have shared perspective that

the change will make things better. That level of commitment to the change process only occurs with effective communication.

All the participants agreed that the communication of change and the actual change initiative go hand-and-hand. Staff meetings and face-to-face conversations helped the business leaders directly share information. The business leaders further explained that they embedded communication in all of their strategies. P3 pointed out that “without communication, there is no successful change.” P4 added that using various forms of communication, such as emails, weekly correspondence, and weekly TEAM meetings, allows the employee to have an ongoing clarity of the purpose for the change and how the implementation process is progressing. P4 offered an experience of using communication as a strategy for change initiatives.

We disclosed everything about the change to employees in a manner that they could comprehend. We also gave them an overview of the change needed.

Feedback and open dialog from the employees allowed us as leaders to be open to suggestions and have an in-depth understanding of how to achieve the change.

Explaining the employee’s role and how the change would not affect the current position caused them to be more comfortable and willing to make the change successful. Communication was fundamental to the involvement of the employees and the success of the change.

**Correlation to the literature.** Theme 3, improving communication, was consistent with the findings of Page and Schoder (2019) in that employees may feel empowered to complete their tasks and take ownership of their assignments when there



are communication and transparency. The business leaders' statements align with Rupcic (2019) article about the importance of communication between leaders and employees during a change process. Leaders must communicate timely and valid information to contribute to employee motivation and involvement during the implementation of change initiatives. In this study, the business leaders' adaptation of emails, weekly correspondences, and weekly TEAM meetings with an open forum proven a success rate of change and may have the same results for other HVAC companies and organizations.

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Theme 3, improving communication, is a critical strategy that aligns with the transformational leadership theory. According to Burns (1978) and confirmed by Muthusamy (2019), leaders must maintain open dialog while encouraging employees to change. In this study, the business leaders shared their goals for change with employees in various forms, such as weekly emails, letters, face-to-face meetings, and telephone calls. Rupcic (2019) positive and constant communication concerning organizational change can bring about trust, retention from employees, and increased overall productivity. The transformational leadership theory is a leadership tool that leaders use to inspire change initiatives and encourage employees to accept ownership of the change.

#### **Theme 4: Strengthening Organizational Culture**

The business leaders in this study pointed out that the culture of the organization influenced the change initiatives. An outline of the vision for change interlinked with the organization's mission and values, which helped the employees understand the need and purpose of the change. P1 explained that "the strategy used to help employees

comprehend the context of the change initiative was linking the need for change and explaining the direction of the organization.” P2 indicated that “when employees had a clear understanding of the mission and values, the strategy yielded transparency on how the organization would change.” P3 stated,

Business leaders implementing change must recognize the organizational culture and commit to assisting the employees in strengthening the culture. Everyone is on different levels of learning or comprehending the need for change. Business leaders must exercise caution because failure to align organizational policies with the mission, values, and culture can bring about resistance to change.

P4 explained,

An understanding of the mission and values are fundamental to supporting organizational change. The organizational culture encompasses the way employees interact, the resistance to specific changes, and how they share their knowledge. We made sure that we explained the change initiatives, and it turned out to be beneficial to both the organization and employees. By employees regarding the change, we are continually building an influential culture and maintaining the organization’s direction.

**Correlation to the literature.** Theme 4, strengthening organizational culture, is in alignment with the findings from Lynch and Mors (2019) in that leaders provided clarity of the direction and purpose of the change initiative, which minimized resistance. All of the business leaders in this study disclosed that understanding the organization’s mission and values were vital to organizational change and strengthening the culture. The

planned change initiative with the mission of the organization aligns with McGahan (2019) findings, which indicates that leaders and employees must work simultaneously to strengthen their culture.

**Correlation to the conceptual framework.** Leaders may stimulate organizational change by nourishing the work environment for employees to think outside the box. Theme 4 is an aspect of the transformational leadership framework, as supported by Berraies and El Abidine (2019). Employees are the backbone of the company, and leaders must ensure a positive culture to retain them. When using the transformational leadership approach, Edi and Wardhani (2019) declared that leaders are engaging, supportive, and they demonstrate the mission and values of the organization for growth. Asadi (2019) affirmed that adopting the transformational leadership framework with the business strategy confirms that leaders go beyond their self-interest to enhance their culture.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

This subsection aims to bring about a comprehensive analysis of why and how the findings are relevant to successfully implementing change initiatives. I presented the results from this study as effective strategies that successful HVAC business leaders used to implement change initiatives. This study may be beneficial to other business leaders in the public and private sector who seek to develop strategies, reduce implementation costs, retain employees, and improve the change process by discovering strategies some business leaders used to successfully implement change initiatives. Nguyen and Phan

(2020) indicated that when leaders discovered what makes some leaders' strategies successful, the lessons-learned could foster other business leaders to form their plan.

The themes that emerged in this study from the video conference semistructured interviews and the reviewing company's documents may assist business leaders with obtaining a better knowledge of what it would take to enhance the effectiveness of the change process implementation. Theme 1, improving leadership support, was significant to all of the business leaders. All four participants recognized the importance of enhancing their leadership skills for an effective change. Theme 2, enhancing stakeholder's involvement, indicated the importance of obtaining feedback to cultivate an effective change. For theme 3, improving communication, the participants were emphatic that effective communication during the change process was pivotal for conveying the whys behind the changes.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on the successful implementation of change initiatives. Theme 4, strengthening organizational culture, fostered the need for leaders to clarify the direction and purpose of the change. By understanding the organization's mission, values, and processes, the employees are more optimistic and willing to strengthen the culture and support the organizational change (Berraies & El Abidine, 2019). Continual inspection of processes assists in identifying employees that may need further guidance and motivation. The business leaders indicated to the employees that strengthening the culture is a benefit, and support from leadership is always accessible.

During the research of implementing successful change initiatives, I found that communication with employees by leaders was the primary reason for continued achievement. Even in a pandemic, the leaders found alternative methods to communicate with the employees, such as video conferencing through TEAMS. The leaders still have a visual connection for inspiring and motivating employees during an immediate change. Continued research and studies of other HVAC companies allowed the business leaders in this evaluation to develop positive change that resulted in satisfied stakeholders. Leaders of other HVAC companies who desire to have a high success rate of implementing strategies for organizational change should follow the example set by the business leaders in this study.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Understanding the strategies that successful business leaders used to sustain business continuity is paramount for change initiatives. Successful change initiatives are dependent upon stakeholders' acceptance and are mitigation of resistance (Nguyen & Phan, 2020). Stabilized businesses could help individuals, communities, organizations, institutions, and cultures develop local and national growth, increase profitability, enhance the standard of living, boost employment, and improve living conditions for everyone in the community (Sayyadi, 2019).

The study's results may positively impact social change by allowing business leaders to contribute more money into their communities, increase productivity, and reduce financial losses. The implications of this study could foster more stable employment, which could improve the communities' local economies. A successful

change process could sustain a business, become more competitive and attractive, decrease the cycle of poverty, and improve the standards of living for people in communities. A successful change initiative could also positively increase employees' involvement and contribution to the greater good.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The study's findings may assist current and future business leaders from HVAC companies in using strategies to successfully implement change initiatives. My recommendations are for the public sector, the private sector, employees, and community members. My specific recommendations for current and future business leaders are improving leadership support, enhancing stakeholder's involvement, improving communication, and strengthening organizational culture to develop successful change initiatives. Business leaders need to evaluate the market and determine the type of change required.

The first recommendation is that business leaders improve their support to employees during the change process. Leaders incapable of implementing strategies for change should obtain training and mentoring to better the success of change initiatives. As such, employees should receive training to ensure they understand the expectations of the change. The second recommendation from this research is for leaders to actively involve stakeholders in the change initiative. Leaders need to provide employees, management, and stockholders opportunities for feedback in implementing change. The assessment from the stakeholders could also determine the type of change required. The third recommendation is that business leaders effectively communicate the purpose,

intent, and value of the change. Leaders must be clear in communicating the change process and allow the employees to fully engage. Fourth, business leaders need to strengthen the organizational culture to ensure a successful change and growth. Change initiatives influence organizational culture, and leaders should make sure that the change is suitable. In this study, the business leaders proved that a new paradigm of support, involvement, and communication sets the tone for a new culture in the organization.

Business leaders of HVAC companies should pay attention to the results of this study. Improving leadership support, employee input, instituting weekly meetings to keep the lines of communication open, and strengthening the culture are ways to sustain change initiatives. Once initiated, resistance to change may decrease, and more employees may trust their leaders in future change initiatives. Page and Schoder (2019) determined that open communication fosters a close-knit working environment, which reduces resistance and acceptance to change.

Leadership support and communication was the topic discussed most during the video conference interviews. Business leaders could distribute the findings of this study to HVAC industries and business publications regarding implementing organizational change. I will disseminate the findings to the four participants in this study by emailing a summary of the results. I will also share my findings with HVAC business leaders, organizations, other professionals, and researchers through training sessions.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

The aim of this qualitative multiple case was to explore strategies that business leaders may use to implement organizational change. When using the transformational

leadership theory in organizations, leaders' influence for change is by promoting intellectual stimulation, inspiring motivation, and considering individual needs (Burns, 1978). I used a qualitative multiple case study to explore the strategies that successful business leaders used to implement organizational change. There are limitations that I identified and recommend further research to enhance the knowledge of business leaders of HVAC companies for implementing strategies for organizational change.

A limitation of this study is that only four business leaders of the HVAC industry participated in this research. Another limitation is that the results of the study could vary among other organizations in the HVAC industry. Almeida et al. (2017) determined that limitations are factors in research normally out of the researcher's control. Future researchers can investigate a larger population in other industries to explore whether other organizations have the same strategies to improve businesses' sustainability. I propose four recommendations for future research.

My first recommendation to future researchers is to expand research to a more in-depth study in the United States since change initiatives occur in various industries and organizations. Zhuge et al. (2016) encouraged researchers to include a broader scope of participants to prevent a narrow population analysis. Expanding the study could result in different data due to various industries and social interactions in different regions in the United States. Second, researchers could consider business leaders from other industries to explore strategies for leadership support, stakeholders' involvement and communication.



Third, future researchers could incorporate employee views on strategies for change initiatives to have a broader scope of participation in the study. Fourth, future researchers could investigate a workforce that is predominantly millennials and multigenerational. Views from different generations and cultures can bring about a balance or an exact need for change (Zhang et al., 2018).

### **Reflections**

Making a significant life change from my daily routine was unnerving; however, I did not want to live with regrets by not trying to receive a terminal degree. When I started DBA program journey, I did not know what to expect, which caused some uneasiness. After my first residency, I started to feel comfortable and excited about the journey. I began this study with earnest anticipation that experienced and established business leaders would emerge. My role as a researcher in this qualitative multiple case study was to collect data without bias. I met business leaders who were willing to devote their time and eager to share so other business leaders could benefit. The four business leaders together have more than 60 years' experience and continued success with change initiatives. While the business leaders were from different organizations, they generously contributed to a common goal: business sustainability.

After conducting this study, I developed a tremendous appreciation for supporting and facilitating change. Obtaining a terminal degree emerged from a personal and professional need to encourage and lead successful change initiatives. In a personal manner, I believe that the support of a leader can set the foundation for others to succeed.

As a professional, I am proud of my academic accomplishment and the opportunity to enhance my knowledge of successful change initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

This qualitative multiple case study aimed to explore strategies successful business leaders used to implement organizational change. The research findings may be relevant to current business leaders in the HVAC industry and the private and public sectors. In this study, I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework. I found strategies for business leaders to assess the effectiveness of implementing change initiatives. I used the research method and design to delve deeper into the business problem of implementing change initiatives by conducting an in-depth analysis with people and organizations. The video conference interviews consisted of four experienced and successful leaders from four different organizations in the Charlotte, North Carolina area. In addition to the interviews, I reviewed the company's documents and websites and triangulated the data to validate the evidence obtained from the different sources. I also conducted member checking, and I used the interview protocol to give credibility to this research. The data analysis emerged four themes: improving leadership support, enhancing stakeholders' involvement, improving communication, and strengthening organizational culture.

This study's findings align with current literature and the transformational leadership theory. All business leaders agreed that change is not easy, but it should have a chance to better business performance and broaden career opportunities. The key to implementing a successful change initiative is comprehending and communicating the

effect of the change, supporting and leading by example, involving individuals, and embedding the change in the organization's culture. By following the transformational leadership approach, business leaders could encourage change, and improve the probability of success.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Title of Doctoral Study: Leadership Strategies for Implementing Organizational Change

Interview purpose: Data collection on strategies that business leaders use to successfully implement change initiatives.

1. I will be on time to administer the video conference interview.
2. I will greet the participants, and thank him/her for agreeing to take part in the study.
3. I will reiterate to the participants that their contribution to the study is voluntary, and they can withdraw at any time.
4. I will disclose the terms and conditions with participants and answer any questions they may have before the video conference interview begins.
5. I will reiterate to the participants that I will be audio recording the video conference interview. I will explain that I want to capture every response, including stating their name, date, time, and their location.
6. I will comply with a 45-minute timeline for all video conference interviews, allowing the participants to respond to seven open-ended questions.
7. I will commence by asking the participants the interview questions and follow-up questions if needed.
8. I will take notes while they are responding to the questions, and request the participants to email any relevant company documents.
9. At the close of the video conference interview, I will extend gratitude to the participants for their contribution and time for the study.

10. Before ending the video conference, I will provide my contact information to the participants if they have any questions and schedule a follow-up video conference interview for member checking. For member checking, I will read the data the participant provided during the first video conference, and see if what they provided is correct and if they need to add to the data. The member checking process will be approximately 10 minutes.

## Appendix B: Interview Questions for HVAC Business Leaders

1. What does success mean for your organization?  
Response:

Follow-up question: \_\_\_\_\_

Response:

2. What are the strategies for implementing change initiatives?  
Response:

Follow-up question: \_\_\_\_\_

Response:

3. How do you determine when to execute change initiatives?  
Response:

Follow-up question: \_\_\_\_\_

Response:

4. What are some of the benefits of implementing change initiatives?  
Response:

Follow-up question:\_\_\_\_\_

Response:

5. What obstacles keep you from implementing change initiatives?  
Response:

Follow-up question:\_\_\_\_\_

Response:

6. How do you determine if an implemented change initiative is successful?  
Response:

Follow-up question:\_\_\_\_\_

Response:

7. What additional information would you like to share regarding your experience with change initiatives within the organization?

Response:

Follow-up question: \_\_\_\_\_

Response:

## Appendix C: Recruitment Letter to Participate in Study

[Date]

Re: A Research Study That May Interest You

Dear [Name]:

My name is Aljanal Carroll, and I am currently a graduate student at Walden University, seeking a doctor of business administration (DBA) degree. I am conducting a doctoral study on exploring strategies for influencing organizational change entitled: "Leadership Strategies for Implementing Organizational Change." I am interested in administering a video conference interview with small HVAC business leaders in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, who has over five years' experience in the industry and who successfully implemented change initiatives.

I believe business leaders' who fit the criteria for this study could propose a different perspective and understanding of this study. During my research for business leaders and companies, your organization came up as having success in implementing change initiatives. I would like to conduct a video conference interview with you. Please know that your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. The video conference interview will be approximately 45 minutes, which contain responses to seven open-ended questions.

You can choose the day and time for the video conference interview. As a researcher, I will ensure that the aspects of this study are transparent to participants before complying with the interview. Please contact me with any question that you may have concerning your involvement at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Aljanal Carroll

Walden University DBA Student

## Appendix D: Reminder E-mail for Recruitment to Participate in Study

[Date]

Re: Reminder E-mail for Recruitment to Participate in Study

Dear [Name]:

I previously sent a request for your participation in my study that I am conducting on exploring strategies for influencing organizational change in a small business. If you are interested in participating, please contact me as soon as possible at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Thank you for your consideration in participating.

Sincerely,

Aljanal Carroll

Walden University DBA Student

## Appendix E: Themes

**Research Question:** What strategies do leaders in HVAC companies use to successfully implement change initiatives?

Answers		Themes	Code	Proportion
You have to educate and mentor employees constantly.	ST	Leadership Support/Training (ST)	15	0.31
You have to be transparent, responsive, and apt to change at any given moment.	C	Stakeholders Involvement (S)	6	0.12
Involvement from all parties, including the higher ups, employees, investors, stockholders, everyone.	S	Communication (C)	13	0.27
We have to be transparent, no hidden agenda and no surprises.	C	Organizational Culture (OC)	15	0.31
We conduct virtual team meetings to share different ideas, projects, and how the organization can profit from the change.	ST		<b>Total 49</b>	
We give opportunities for everyone to provide feedback and express their concerns about innovation.	C			
We also allow specific staff meetings to discuss the challenges or concerns about the change.	C			
The training and support from leadership is paramount	ST			
Leaders must understand the employees involved and encourage them to think outside the box.	S			
Creating a flow chart and emailing all stakeholders this ensures everyone have an opportunity to be a part of the change process.	S			
This is why training, training manuals, and weekly meetings are so important.	ST			
We learned that successful change initiatives start with leadership supporting.	ST			
Having a training and coaching plan.	ST			



The training and coaching plan, which is quarterly, encompasses methods of how to transfer knowledge and sustain the change.	ST			
Support from leadership requires maintaining a new way of doing things by educating and mentoring employees.	ST			
Constantly updating training new information.	ST			
Must recognize the organizational culture and commit to assisting the employees in strengthening the culture.	O C			
Business leaders must exercise caution because failure to align organizational policies with the mission, values, and culture can bring about resistance to change.	O C			
Major success is being open and honest.	C			
We implemented and facilitated hands-on training until employees became familiar with the change.	ST			
Buy-in to the change starts with communicating the need.	C			
We are transparent about what we are going to achieve from the change	C			
Being supportive is great, but we also have to be vigilant.	ST			
Know when to make the necessary adjustments for innovation.	O C			
Stakeholders having the full conversation of change because at the end of the day, they are the backbone of an organization.	S			
Vigilant, vigilant, vigilant to what's new exciting and changing.	O C			
Having the mission and purpose forever in front of the employees,	O C			
We determine our change based on the economy and the needs of the people.	O C			
Leaders must depend and train others to recognize change	ST			
Generated conversation between the employees.	C			

Employee must have shared perceptive that the change will make things better.	C			
That level of commitment to the change process only occurs with effective communication.	C			
Without communication, there is no successful change.	C			
Acceptance of all suggestions is not logical, but everyone needs to have a voice.	ST			
Supporting and encouraging others, especially your teammates.	ST			
Promoting a culture of participation and feedback may be a game-changer for innovation and growth.	O C			
The leadership team like to start off first and then get the feedback.	ST			
Learning from past mistakes or preventing losses in higher risk scenarios.	O C			
Revolve the negative mentality.	O C			
The determination of success is centered on result of how your employee react	S			
The determination of success is how the atmosphere or culture of the organization is.	O C			
An understanding of the mission and values are fundamental to supporting organizational change.	O C			
Organizational culture encompasses the way employees interact, the resistance to specific changes, and how they share their knowledge.	O C			
We are continually building an influential culture and maintaining the organization's direction.	O C			
Stakeholders are part of the process, involved in the decision making of change initiatives, and part of the strategy, they become owners of the	S			

change and more engaged to see the plan work.				
Feedback and open dialog from the employees allowed us as leaders to be open to suggestions	C			
Have an in-depth understanding of how to achieve the change.	O C			
Communication will always be fundamental to the involvement of the employees and the success of the change.	C			
Explaining the employee's role and how the change would not affect the current position	C			