2020

Information Technology Infrastructure Library: Postimplementation Experiences of Small Business IT Support Employees.

Imoovberame Darren Obazu
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Imoovberame Darren Obazu

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Robert Haussmann, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. Danielle Wright-Babb, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Aridaman Jain, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2020

Abstract

Information Technology Infrastructure Library: Postimplementation Experiences of Small Business IT Support Employees

by

Imoovberame Darren Obazu

MPhil, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2020

MSc, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI, USA, 2004

BSc, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2020

Abstract

Information technology (IT) employees of small business organizations have been the driving force for the implementation of innovative standardized IT service management and process improvement initiatives. Competitiveness amongst small business IT organizations in the market for quality IT service delivery led small business IT leaders toward the implementation of an information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) as an IT service management framework. The problem addressed in this research encompassed the needs of small business IT leaders and ITIL designers to understand the perceptions of IT operation employees following ITIL implementation. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL operation implementation. The conceptual framework for this study was job performance theory. Data were collected from interviews and documents provided by 13 small business IT employees working in 6 companies in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Findings from the content analysis of data included job performance and job-related experiences of small business IT operations support employees following the implementation of ITIL. The 4 major emergent themes pertained to leadership support, preparation and training, a patient ITIL-oriented culture, and focus on embracing continuous process improvements initiatives. Results of this study can be useful to small business IT leaders and ITIL designers to enhance small business value and performance, which can lead to greater employee and customer satisfaction thereby positive social change by improving the quality of life in general of employees and consumers.

Information Technology Infrastructure Library: Postimplementation Experiences of Small Business IT Support Employees

by

Imoovberame Darren Obazu

MPhil, Walden University, Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2020

MSc, Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, MI, USA, 2004

BSc, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2020

Dedication

I want to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude and unwavering thanks to my Chair, Dr. Robert Haussmann, for his guidance, exceptional advice, and recommendations right from when I requested him to be my Chair. Dr. Haussmann, thanks for accepting my request to be my Chair. I am forever grateful. Special thanks to my Committee Member, Dr. Danielle Wright-Babb, and my URR Committee Member, Dr. Aridaman Jain. Thanks to both of you for your extraordinary and supportive contributions to my success. I also want to acknowledge my wife, Eghosa Obazu, and my two boys, Theodore and Tobiah, Obazu for your sacrifices and support all through this journey. I will not have been able to accomplish this without you all. I am forever grateful to all my family members, friends, work colleagues, and participants who took out time to share their IT experiences. I will not have been able to accomplish this without you. Thanks, and May God Almighty bless each one of you.

Acknowledgments

I dedicate this dissertation to God Almighty for His grace, unmerited favor, and mercy throughout the dissertation journey. I want to dedicate this to my late Father Benjamin Sunday Obazu, who died as a teacher on his trip to acquiring additional education. Dad, thanks for giving me the gene and hunger for quality and higher education. I also dedicate this to my Mother, Ruth Isaac, and my Uncle, Rufus Ohiowere, for adopting me into his family at age 5 after my father passed away in 1976. Uncle, thank you for raising me in the Lord's way and giving me all the educational foundations that have led to what I am today. May Almighty God bless you all.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Small business owners continue implementing more cost-effective and high-quality information technology (IT) services, more frequently adopting the information technology infrastructure library (ITIL) that has previously benefitted larger businessses (El-Yamami, Mansouri, Qbadou, & Illoussamen, 2019). ITIL can positively impact productivity of IT operations, yet there is a gap in knowledge about how small business leaders can implement quality improvement projects to maximize benefits and minimize potential drawbacks that small business ITIL project leaders might encounter (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). This study has the potential to fill a gap in knowledge about ITIL experiences and perceptions of small business IT staff and users following ITIL implementation. Research about ITIL practices and experiences can help IT leaders and ITIL designers better implement ITIL and optimally align small business IT service practices with ITIL users (El-Yamami et al., 2019).

Chapter 1 includes the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study with three overarching research questions and 10 interview questions. The main conceptual framework of this study was the job performance theory, developed by Campbell in 1990, with an emphasis on task and contextual performance experiences associated with implementing ITIL service management processes among small business IT operation employees. This chapter includes the context of the study, definitions of key terms, identification of underlying assumptions, and explanations about limitations and delimitations of the study. Discussions encompass the significance of the study to management practice, theory, and positive social change complete the chapter.

Background of the Study

Operating under increasing global competitive pressures, small business owners continue searching for ways to deliver and implement more cost-effective and high-quality IT services, including ITIL (El-Yamami et al., 2019). The ITIL service operation is the standardized IT service operation best practices, defined in the ITIL 2011 information technology service management (ITSM) framework. ITIL service operation processes are recommendations for adopters of ITIL and IT operation employees for managing and providing effective IT service delivery (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017).

Implementing best practices of ITIL can positively impact productivity of IT operations. Bartlett, Oehrlich, and Mai (2014) reported that 73% of service management practitioners surveyed agreed that implementing best practices of the ITIL had a significant impact in improving the productivity of their IT operations.

Implementation of the ITIL as a quality improvement tool and technique can standardize IT services, help small businesses achieve customer satisfaction goals, and maximize information service processes to increase IT service quality. ITIL helps IT departments reduce downtime of IT operations, enhance productivity, heighten efficiency, and improve service quality, project deliverables, timeliness, and resource use (Berntsen, 2017).

The majority of prior studies revolved around ITIL implementation mechanisms and business-level outcomes in large organizations, rather than the user-level experiences, perceptions, and work-related changes from ITIL implementation among small business IT employees (Hinojosa & Gutiérrez-de-Mesa, 2016). Although there are

existing concerns about the potential downsides of ITIL (Marrone & Hammerle, 2017), there is sparse related empirical evidence or research-based explanations about barriers, change processes, and employee perceptions, especially in small business settings (Holt, 2017). The tailoring of ITSM practices for smaller businesses continues, along with the call for additional research to help understand ITIL in small business setting and overcome any ITIL drawbacks that may be unique to small business IT employees (El-Yamami et al., 2019). With that gap in knowledge, it is difficult for small business leaders to make decisions about ITIL resources to help implement quality improvement projects in ways that maximize benefits and minimize potential drawbacks that small business ITIL project leaders might encounter.

Research into ITIL implementations rarely encompassed the experiences and perceptions of IT staff and users involved in and following implementation of ITIL. Information technology workers in small businesses are integral to the success of many modern businesses (Lamichhane, 2019). More small business IT operation employees are tasked with managing and negotiating ITIL implementation, which might lead to changes in job performance following the implementation of ITIL service operation. The goal of this research was to explore the perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following the ITIL service operations implementation.

Problem Statement

Information technology is increasingly service-oriented, necessitating effective IT processes and support in all types of organizations (Neziraj & Berisha-Shaqiri, 2018).

While greater than 84% of customers and American small businesses interface with each other through technology, the figure continues to grow with the ITIL framework recognized as the predominant best practices framework for IT processes (Holt, 2017). Widely used in large organizations, ITIL tailoring for small business applications can support quality IT services for employees internally and clients externally (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). The general management problem addressed in this research was that there is little understanding of ITIL experiences and perceptions of small business IT staff and users following ITIL implementation. The specific management problem addressed in this research was that small business IT leaders and ITIL designers are unable to critically consider the perceptions of small business IT support employees' performance following ITIL implementation. Research involving ITIL practices and experiences may help IT leaders and ITIL designers to better implement ITIL in ways that optimally align small business IT service practices with ITIL users (El-Yamami et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation. The recruitment of participants for the sample was from a population of small business IT operation employees who work in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Findings from this study may support the development of more effective ITIL implementation practices for small businesses. Implications for social change include the opportunity to identify and

tailor ITIL practices that can improve experiences of small business IT operation employees who contribute to small business success.

Research Questions

Three overarching research questions for this study pertained to small business IT support employees' experiences following the implementation of ITIL service operations.

RQ1: What are the job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experience during implementation of ITIL service operations?

RQ2: How do small business IT operation employees describe their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operations?

RQ3: How do small business IT operation employees describe any changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operations?

Interview Questions

1. How successful has ITIL been in your business?
2. What changes in your workplace have you encountered after the implementation of the ITIL service operation within your organization?
3. How has implementation of ITIL service operation changed your knowledge and skills, if at all?
4. Why or why not has the implementation of the ITIL service operation changed the level of motivation among IT employees?
5. How would you describe your own IT service operation performance before and after ITIL service operation implementation?

6. How has the implementation of the ITIL service operation changed your workplace behaviors, if at all?
7. How would you describe your overall work experiences since the implementation of the ITIL service operation?
8. What are the differences (if any) in your overall work experiences before and after ITIL service operation implementation?
9. How would you sum up your experiences with ITIL before and after implementation?
10. What advice would you give to other small business IT service operation employees who are preparing for ITIL service operation implementation?

Conceptual Framework

The main conceptual framework of this study was job performance theory, developed by Campbell in 1990. Job performance theory evolved from the fields of industrial and organizational psychology, thereafter, used to study the job performance of individuals in organizations (Campbell, Gasser, & Oswald, 1996). Campbell (1990) identified significant predictors or determinants of an individual's job performance: motivation, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and skills. Campbell, McCloy, Oppler, and Sager (1993) noted how individual differences in job performance could be viewed as a function of the major performance determinants. According to Campbell et al., declarative knowledge is knowledge about facts and things; specifically, it represents an understanding of a given task's requirements. Procedural knowledge and skills are what an individual acquires when they combine their declarative knowledge (knowing

what to do) with knowing how to do it; motivation influences choices to perform assigned tasks (Campbell et al., 1993).

Theorists and scholars continued to try to understand, define, and differentiate job performance from other related constructs. For example, performance is different from effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency; effectiveness is based on an evaluation of performance results and productivity is the ratio of effectiveness to costs of outcomes (Campbell et al., 1993). Behavior and results are related to performance; however, behaviors are actions, results are changes that stem from behaviors, and performance is the organizational value of behaviors that remains an ongoing concern of modern businesses (Adjali, 2017).

Additional distinctions of job performance theorists can be found between task and contextual performance (Motowidlo & Van Scatter, 1994). Task performance is job specific, predicted largely by abilities, whereas main predictors of contextual performance are motivation and personality (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997). In this study, I focused on job performance (as conceptualized by Campbell, 1990), with an emphasis on task and contextual performance experiences associated with implementing ITIL service management processes among small business IT operation employees

Nature of the Study

This study involved a qualitative research method. The qualitative research method is one of the three research methods (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed) and is an acceptable means of studying detailed experiences, perceptions, thoughts, cultures, and motivations of individuals or groups of people (Longfield et al., 2016). Because this

study was about unknown experiences and perceptions of small business employees who work in IT, qualitative methods were appropriate for collecting in-depth information that may not have been as meaningful in quantitative terms. The quantitative research method requires the collection and analysis of numerical data from a sufficiently large sample to test hypotheses and make generalizations to the larger population (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). This study did not involve hypotheses testing or the analysis of numerical data linked to known variables. Therefore, a quantitative method was not a suitable means for answering the research questions in this study. In mixed methods research, there is extensive formal analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from sufficiently sized samples (Noyes et al., 2019). Because there was no intention in this study to make inferences based on findings from statistical tests performed on data from a relatively large sample, both quantitative and mixed methods research were not ideal methods.

A qualitative multiple case study was the appropriate design for this research. Case study research is one of many qualitative research designs (for example, phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative designs) which address *how* and *why* research questions leading to a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and contexts (Cleland, 2017). Case studies help to answer questions to understand human experience and represents a comprehensive way to explore the phenomenon of interest, such as business employees' experiences and perceptions (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). Exploring employees' experiences though the use of a case study to successfully solve business problems and to understand perceptions about the meaning of those experiences can help fill gaps in the research (Aithal, 2017). Accordingly, a case study

design led to the answers to the research questions of this study in a more thorough and direct way than other qualitative research designs.

Phenomenology is a design involving explorations of meanings of lived experiences and the essence of uniquely lived or narrowly shared experiences (Neubauer, Witkop, & Varpio, 2019). Phenomenology was not an ideal design for this study because the context of experiences and the nature of the business setting was more relevant to the research than were the essence and meanings of experiences. Ethnographic researchers immerse, observe, and study subjects in natural group, cultural, and most recently technological settings (Franz, Marsh, Chen, & Teo, 2019). Immersion in and observation of participants' settings with a focus on culture and environment was not the design for the most direct answers to the research questions in this study. Narrative designs revolve around chronologies and stories of participants as the anchor of analysis (Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn, & Schick-Makaroff, 2016), which was not the most direct approach to exploring ITIL perceptions and experiences. Case studies requires the collection of multiple sources of data (incorporating a process called triangulation) that can lead to trustworthy and meaningful insights derived from the data (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Accordingly, a case study design was an appropriate approach to gain insights from the detailed reports of the lived experiences of the small business employees who participated in this study.

Definitions

Definitions provide readers the opportunity to appreciate unique terms and key words that are the foundation of this qualitative study. The purpose of the following

section is to clarify meanings of key words, phrases, and acronyms central to the research.

Information Technology (IT): Information technology is the use of computer hardware infrastructure and software applications to solve and automate Information systems problems requested or encountered by end users of business and organizations (Sun, Gregor, & Keating, 2016).

Information Technology Infrastructure Library (*ITIL):* The ITIL service operation are the five standardized IT processes (service strategy, service design, service transition and service operation and continual service improvement) for managing and providing quality and effective IT services (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017; Mahy et al., 2016).

ITIL Implementation: ITIL implementation is a process involving planning and management of ITIL tools and system changes; practitioner literature is often concerned with *physical* implementation and practical applications while academic literature more often revolves around *ideas* of implementation (Marrone & Hammerle, 2017).

Information Technology Service Management (ITSM): A subset of service science pertaining to the management, delivery, and support of IT services to achieve organizational goals, benefitting organizations by enhancing adaptive, flexible, cost effective, service orientation through process-oriented IT services (Shahsavarani & Ji, 2014).

Performance: The organizational value of behaviors arising from a combination of task and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997); task performance is

job specific, predicted largely by abilities, whereas main predictors of contextual performance are motivation and personality (Motowidlo et al., 1997).

ITIL Service operation: ITIL service operations are the processes used by IT service providers and support employees for managing, coordinating, and executing the IT activities and processes to deliver effective IT services. IT service operation services include technical support, computer, telecommunications, and network support services (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017; Steinberg, Rudd, Lacy & Hanna, 2011). ITIL V3 service operations management processes consist of five processes. These are (1) event management process, (2) incident management process, (3) problem management process, (4) access management process, and (5) request fulfilment.

Small business: Small businesses include for profit companies with limited income and relatively few employees, collectively representing the majority of businesses operating within all sectors of the national economy to provide consumers with goods and services (Keightley & Hughes, 2018).

Assumptions

It is important to understand the underlying assumptions of qualitative research, such as how one objectively views reality and defines facts (Sutton & Austin 2015). In this research, there was an assumption that the accounts of experiences provided by participants were truthful reflections of their actual experiences, although there was no opportunity to prove those truths. Similar to the assumptions described by Wolgemuth, Hicks, and Agosto (2017), the assumptions in this research were that there was interest in the problem, the problem was correctly framed, and solutions could emerge for my

research efforts. My assumption in this research was that small business leaders and ITIL designers had interests in the problem and research-driven solutions. Assumptions in qualitative research can also surround recruitment and sampling (Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015). For example, I assumed I would be able to reach and recruit participants to form a sample appropriate for qualitative case studies and the members of the sample would be willing to provide the data necessary for data saturation and for answering the research questions.

Scope and Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries of the case study that narrow the scope of the research, according to the goals of the research and the research design (Dean, 2014). For example, delimitations of this research pertained to the research location, population, and sample. As a multiple case study of small business IT employees, the findings of this study are not readily applicable to other IT employees in other types of businesses. The geographic location of the study was Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. The transferability of the results of the study may not be appropriate outside of the geographic region and other small businesses IT employees working in other areas. Leung (2015) noted that judgements about transferability of findings depend on the prudence of readers who rely upon the descriptions of the researcher. To aid readers in appropriate transferability determinations, there were thick descriptions of the population, sample, and the design steps. The selection of the conceptual framework of the study was also pertinent to the interpretation of findings; for example, use of theories in qualitative research limits interpretations of the emergent findings from the data (Collins &

Stockton, 2018). The identification and selection of the conceptual underpinnings followed a comprehensive review of the related research revealing how the conceptual framework applied in previous research efforts with similar study interests.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses in the research that are beyond a researcher's control (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). Recognizing limitations helps researchers and readers critically reflect on findings and acknowledge the potential inadequacies of the methods that prevent more broad generalization of findings (Morgado, Meireles, Neves, Amaral, & Ferreira, 2017). A limitation in this study included the inability to broaden the scope of the study due to time, financial, and geographic restrictions. A limitation noted by Collins and Stocketon (2018), that applied to this research, was the quality and amount of data that participants were able to provide, analyzed in light of the conceptual underpinnings of the study, which limited the ability to see other emergent findings from the data. If there were participants wanting to withdraw or insufficient data from an existing sample, I planned to try to overcome the limitation by additional recruitment efforts to achieve adequate data saturation. No participants asked to withdraw, and data saturation was evident. A limitation of qualitative research also pertains to potential biases that may emerge during the data collection and analysis process, due to the subjective nature and smaller samples of qualitative research, in comparison to quantitative or mixed methods (Morgado et al., 2017). A focus on the steps to enhance the trustworthiness of findings helped to mitigate the impact of these limitations.

Significance of the Study

Significance to Practice

The significance of the study to management practice was that it potentially assists and informs adopters and management practitioners of the ITIL, IT leaders, and implementers of business process re-engineering projects, to improve practices. Bernsten (2017) also claimed that businesses need to focus more on continuous improvements of ITIL processes and experiences following implementation. The specific significance to practice was the opportunity to help improve technology and implementing standardized IT processes, along with IT professional's job performance. The results from the study inform IT leaders of additional performance considerations pertaining to IT support employees' measures and appraisals, instead of measuring their performance based on generic IT job descriptions (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016; Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

Additional significance of the study to management practice was that the results from this investigation are potentially useful to the design of appropriate performance compensation, attainable performance goals, and appropriate career path programs to alleviate turnover by IT operation employees and other employees in general (Chakrabarti & Guha, 2016). Finally, the significance to management practice is that the results from this investigation draw the attention of senior management and executives to be more attentive to and prioritize the needs and well-being of their IT operation and support employees directly impacted with the additional roles and responsibilities associated with implementing ITIL service operation processes.

Significance to Theory

The significance of the study to theory was that results can be of use to IT leaders to potentially build upon the understanding of job performance in a modern technological context. The findings further inform ITIL designers, adopters, and management practitioners about the need to consider and address the implications of the job performance surrounding ITIL service operation implementation among small business IT operation employees. Interests in both technology and employee performance revolve around the potential consequences for small businesses and their employees, to enable optimal functioning and maximum performance in the pursuit of valued outcomes (Wingerden, Stoep, & Poell, 2018). Scholars and practitioners seek to increase understanding of the roles of information technology and job performance, which are both known to be significant factors in the successes of contemporary organizations (Obwegeser et al., 2019).

Significance to Social Change

The significance of the study to positive social change was that the results are potentially useful in informing senior management, changing their behaviors and perceptions on their involvement in the implementation of the ITIL initiatives. Implementing IT process improvements may change the performance of small business IT operations employees and other employees in general (Huang, Lee, Chiu, & Yen, 2015). The findings from the study could be applied to alleviate ongoing challenges amongst small business IT leaders and adopters of the ITIL which can enhance value of the small business and performance of IT operation employees, given the increasing

importance of technology in small business performance (Neziraj & Berisha-Shaqiri, 2018).

Understanding of the experiences and perceptions of performance of small business IT operation employees equips designers of ITIL with the necessary information to optimally tailor ITIL processes for small businesses. Understanding the experiences of small business IT service operation employees following ITIL implementation can lead to changes that enhance the overall contribution of their IT operation employees to the overall performance of their IT organizations (Groen, Wilderom, & Wouters, 2017; Hickman, & Akdere, 2018). IT leaders of organizations are striving to manage IT to improve services, reduce the costs, enhance business agility, and maximize return on investments which supports business success that fuels the economy, provides employment, and further innovations (Lamichhane, 2019).

Summary and Transition

Small business owners must address human resource concerns, employee morale, and the diversity and rapidly changing nature of technology (Forth & Bryson, 2018). Small business success stems from a combination of commitment, employee knowledge and skills, and abilities to promote the company and sustain innovation (Sivam, Dieguez, Ferreira, & Silva, 2019). Small business employees' experiences, performance, motivations, and abilities are often affected by the strategies used to sustain and improve businesses (Lorincová, Štarcho, Weberová, Hitka, & Lipoldová, 2019).

In this chapter, I included the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study and identified the three overarching research questions and 10 interview questions. The main

conceptual framework of this study was job performance theory, developed by Campbell in 1990. Clarification of the context of the study occurred through the provision of definitions of key terms, identification of underlying assumptions, and explanations about the limitations and delimitations of the study. The chapter also included the significance of the study to management practice, theory, and positive social change.

Chapter 2 includes a description of the literature search strategy used to generate the literature review. The literature review includes the identification of the origin of the job performance theory and how this theory has been applied previously. Included in the literature review is information regarding how ITIL implementation concepts have been articulated in previous research and how the qualitative case study methodology is consistent with the scope of the study. The review and synthesis of studies related to key concepts under investigation illustrate gaps in knowledge requiring further study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation. The sample consisted of 13 small business IT operation employees who worked in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Findings from this study can be useful to support the development of more effective ITIL implementation practices for small businesses. The implications for social change include the opportunity to tailor ITIL practices that can improve the experiences of small business operation employees who contribute to small business success.

IT is increasingly service-oriented, necessitating effective IT processes and support in all types of organizations (Neziraj & Berisha-Shaqiri, 2018). While greater than 84% of customers and American small businesses interface with each other through technology, the figure continues to grow with the ITIL framework recognized as the predominant best practices framework for IT processes (Holt, 2017). Widely used in large organizations, ITIL tailoring for small business applications can support quality IT services for employees internally and clients externally. The general problem was limited understanding of ITIL experiences and perceptions of small business IT staff and users following ITIL implementation. The specific management problem was that small business IT leaders and ITIL designers are unable to critically consider the perceptions of small business IT support employees' performance following ITIL implementation. Research involving employees' perspectives about ITIL practices and experiences can

help IT leaders and ITIL designers better implement ITIL in ways that optimally align small business IT service practices with ITIL users (El-Yamami et al., 2019).

Chapter 2 includes an explanation of the literature search strategy that generated the literature explored in support of this study. The review of the literature includes the identification of theory related to job performance, applied previously in ways similar to this study. Included in the review of the literature is how ITIL implementation concepts have been examined and articulated in previous research and how the qualitative case study methodology was consistent with the goals and purpose of this research. The review and synthesis of research findings pertaining to the key concepts investigated illustrated gaps in knowledge that needed further study.

Literature Search Strategy

The search process involved using key words, search engines and databases to identify peer-reviewed recently published literature. Focus of the search was on literature appropriate to support this research, explain the problem, describe the conceptual framework, demonstrate a gap in the related body of knowledge, and justify the appropriateness of the research method and design. Steps in the search process included identifying peer-reviewed publications and resources that could provide meaningful historical context to improve an understanding of the problem, methodology, theory, and purpose of this research.

Identifying peer-reviewed literature pertaining to the topic of this research involved using the Internet to access collegiate and publicly available libraries and databases. Key word combinations were *information technology infrastructure library*,

ITIL, *implementation*, *ITSM*, *service operation*, *job performance*, *perceptions*, *qualitative research*, *surveys*, *case studies*, *small business*, *employees*, and *experiences*. Research databases accessed and searched were ProQuest, ABI/Inform, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, and Business Knowledge Research. Books, government documents, and thesis reports also informed the research process with historical, germinal, and contextual views. Ulrich's Serials Analysis Systems was a means for confirming peer-reviewed status of published work. This led to the identification and inclusion of 90 peer-reviewed articles; 85 were published between 2016 and 2020. 78.3% of sources were peer-reviewed and 83.3% had publication dates between 2016 and 2020.

Conceptual Framework

The job performance theory, first developed by Campbell in 1990, was the central conceptual framework of this study. The job performance theory evolved from the fields of industrial and organizational psychology. Campbell's job performance theory originated from a psychological standpoint which was based on two significant points of reference. The first involves understanding performance requirements of the organization in which the employee will be making contributions. The second involves analyzing and understanding the behavior and actions of individuals in their working environments in addition to different variables that an individual engages with while performing their daily work activities. Campbell et al. (1996) defined job performance as specific actions or behaviors of employees that are in alignment with the organization's goals and are measurable and achievable in terms of employee capability levels and capacity to contribute to the organization. Campbell et al. (1993) said that individual differences in

job performance are viewed as a function of major performance determinants. Significant predictors or determinants of an individual's job performance include motivation, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and skills.

Declarative knowledge is knowledge about facts and things; specifically, it represents an understanding of a given task's requirements. Declarative knowledge pertains to facts, principles, goals, and self-knowledge. Declarative knowledge entails that an individual has a clear and basic understanding of roles and responsibilities of their job duties and assigned tasks. With declarative knowledge, one is aware and well informed of requirements of assigned tasks. Employee negligence in terms of performance requirements can have negative consequences on job performance. At the very basic level, management and employees should communicate and have a mutual understanding of the requirements and expectations required from a job. Declarative knowledge includes understanding defined set goals, contractual agreements, and service level agreements (Campbell et al., 1996).

According to Campbell (1990), procedural knowledge is the ability of an employee to be able to apply their knowledge of their job requirements either through specified work processes and procedures or self- management. Campbell concluded that actualization of declared knowledge in combination with procedural knowledge and skills is a significant determinant of job performance. Procedural knowledge and skills can influence the job performance of employees.

Synthesizing the concepts, procedural knowledge and skills are what an individual acquires when they combine their declarative knowledge (knowing what to do)

with knowing how to do it; motivation influences choices to perform assigned tasks (Ramawickrama, Opatha, & Pushpakumari, 2017). Procedural knowledge and skills help individuals with their abilities to execute what is known about the assigned task. It is the actualization and putting into practical use declared knowledge. Campbell posited that procedural knowledge and skills are among the major determinants of job performance, and combine with declared knowledge. Knowing what to do and knowing how to do it are the results.

Other philosophical world views and perspectives have given rise to the numerous literature on performance theory from the individual differences perspectives. Theorists and scholars continued to try to understand, define, and differentiate job performance from other related constructs. For example, performance is different from effectiveness, productivity, and efficiency; effectiveness is based on an evaluation of performance results and productivity is the ratio of effectiveness to costs of outcomes (Campbell et al., 1993). Behavior, results and performance interrelate; however, behaviors are actions, results are changes that stem from behaviors, and performance is the organizational value of behaviors that remains an ongoing concern of modern businesses (Adjali, 2017).

Additional distinctions of job performance theorists can be found between task and contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Borman and Motowidlo (1993) extended Campbell's (1990) theory on job performance, and asserted that an individual's performance does not necessarily rely on the extent to which their implicit behaviors and actions are used towards their jobs to meet organizational goals and objectives. Borman and Motowidlo built on Campbell's performance theory by grouping

the Campbell predictors of job performance (declarative and procedural knowledge with skills and motivation) as task performance. Task performance is job specific, predicted largely by abilities, whereas main predictors of contextual performance are motivation and personality (Motowidlo et al., 1997).

Borman and Motowidlo (1997) further concluded that there exist other organizational enabling factors that also assist individual performance. These surrounding associative factors interact indirectly with the behaviors and actions of the individual to either enhance or hinder their performance. Borman and Motowidlo referred to these enabling associative factors that assist as contextual activities, which they termed contextual performance. Conway (1999) further distinguishing contextual performance from task performance for managerial jobs. Contextual activities are the organizational and social activities that indirectly aid individual performance. The authors argued that these additional criterions also referred to as organizational behavior ought to be included as predictors of job performance of an individual.

To further clarify their logical argument on the inclusion of contextual performance, Borman and Motowildo (1997) identified four unique differences between contextual performance and task performance based on how the performance activities in each category contribute to the organization. According to Borman and Motowildo, first, task activities are those activities that affect the technical core either directly or indirectly. Ziegler and Schlett (2016) highlighted the research stream concerning the relationship of job satisfaction with in-role behavior (or task performance). Contextual activities on the contrary aids task activities by providing the organizational, social and psychological

environments for the survivability of the technical core (Conway, 1999). Secondly, Borman and Motowildo noted how task activities differ across different fields and profession, while contextual activities are relatively constants across different job domains. Thirdly, variability in tasks activities are rooted in the behaviors and actions of the predefined set and level of skills sets required to perform these tasks; Ziegler and Schlett described this as in-role behaviors. Fourth, task activities are attributed to specific roles and responsibilities of the job or what is also known as job descriptions. Contextual activities are not role based, but organizational based rules that must have to be met by the individual (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997).

To extend insight into the scope of employee performance, Pradhan and Jena (2017) explored the concepts of task performance, adaptive performance, and contextual performance by interviewing 361 academic subject matter experts, researchers, and management practitioners. To document practical understanding of employee performance in the workplace and the applied meanings of employee performance, respondents completed a 38-item instrument. Similar to the efforts by Park and Park (2019), emphasis was on the individual, job, group, and organizational performance levels. The nine factors implicated in the three dimensions of job performance were job role behavior, conscientious initiative, disciplined effort, dealing with the uncertain and unpredictable work situation, interpersonal adaptability, handling emergencies and crises, proactivity, citizenship performance, and attitudes toward co-workers (Pradhan & Jena, 2017).

Finally, motivation is the ability of the individual to decide or choose which motivational factors encourages or improves their job performance (Campbell et al., 1996). Motivation stems from conditions and actions that encourage one toward optimally accomplishing a job or activity (Rasmi, Amrullah, & Sumardi, 2017). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within organizations can affect workforce stability, growth, productivity, and job satisfaction (Quesado, Aibar-Guzman, & Rodrigues, 2016). Motivation affects an employee's self-management which, in a contemporary or modern technological work environment includes self-adopted work behaviors and self-efficacy.

In the context of the implementation of IT processes or business process improvement initiatives, IT support employees and professionals implicitly and proactively engage in additional work behaviors to meet the ever-increasing demand of IT services (Hoerbst, Hackl, Blomer, & Ammenwerth, 2011). In most cases, these additional work arounds are not captured as part of their defined IT service roles, and depend on motivation toward job crafting behaviors. These proactive measures that Weseler and Niessen (2016) referred to as job crafting behaviors can lead to productive or counterproductive job performance in the delivery of IT services. According to Weseler and Niessen, job crafting is the method used by employees to reorganize their assigned work activities by changing tasks, and their relationships with other employees and cognition to suit their working style.

Using the self-determination theory, Weseler and Niessen (2016) studied 131 employees, and found those who extended their task boundaries were more productive based on senior management's observation. Conclusions drawn were that job

performance also depends on employee job crafting behaviors. Similar concepts studied by Groen, Wilderom, and Wouters (2017) were how employee participation in developing performance measures impacts job performance. Results from statistical analysis by Groen et al. indicated significant relations between employee participation in developing performance measures and perceived measurement quality, as well as perceived control over performing well and job performance.

In summary, performance is a widely applied term, but very difficult to define universally and precisely. Performance is a concept, measured and appreciated in different ways, thought to stem from an employee's effectiveness and productivity, traits, and behaviors. The job performance theory represents a cornerstone and framework upon which prior literature findings elucidated consistent practical and applied factors that influence an employee's job performance, from a task and contextual viewpoint. Publications in academic and management literature revolved around the psychological behaviors of employees in their work environments and how identified determinants and factors influence their behaviors and the outcome of their actions on the work productivity. In this study, I focused on job performance (as conceptualized by Campbell, 1990), with an emphasis on task and contextual performance in conjunction with knowledge, skills, and motivational experiences associated with implementing ITIL service management processes among small business IT operation employees.

Literature Review

This review of the literature begins with an address of small businesses and findings regarding employee performance. The focus shifts to the IT sector and ITIL

history and implementation. Emphasis continues toward the qualitative method of the study of ITIL implementation, with attention to case study research and small business study findings. The review concludes with descriptions of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the ways researchers in the discipline approached the problem and topic, along with recommendations for future research to fill the gap in the related body of published knowledge.

Small Business Employee Performance

Small businesses are the majority companies in most parts of the world, contributing significantly to innovation, employment, and the development and sustainability of local, regional, and national economies (Napitupulu, Syafrullah, Rahim, Adullah, & Setiawan, 2018; Rahayu & Day, 2017). Small businesses account for over 99% of businesses in the United States, 98% of exports, and contribute to over 70% to of the nation's GDP and over half of private sector employment (Elbeltagi, Hamad, Moizer, & Abou-Shouk, 2016; Zafar & Mustafa, 2017). Because small businesses are an important source of job creation and economic growth, concerns about productivity and performance continue to attract attention in an increasingly technologically dependent marketplace (Aradanaz-Badia et al., 2017).

Larger businesses typically benefit by many advantages, including more resources and leverage abilities than smaller businesses (Harness, Ranaweera, Karjaluoto, & Jayawardhena, 2018; Tob-Ogu Kumar, & Cullen, 2018). According to Gupta and Sharma (2016), key factors influencing both employee and organizational performance and outcomes are training and development, health and safety, pay and benefits, career

advancement, job satisfaction, work-life balance, performance appraisals, and effective communication with management, some of which may be easier to provide through the resources that larger businesses can offer. The increasing rate of turnover and willingness to change jobs by IT professionals in India led Chakrabarti and Guha (2016) to study 420 technical and managerial employees who changed their jobs at least once while working in 17 different and well-known IT organizations. The quantitative findings reported by Chakrabarti and Guha were that younger IT employees were more likely than older ones to change jobs but that upward mobility, which is more difficult for smaller businesses to provide, were key influencers of their decision to change jobs.

Factors that can impede small business success include lack of adequate capital, limited technological enhancement, inadequate infrastructure, sociopolitical policies, and an organizational culture affected by insufficient knowledge, abilities, skills, management, and employee turnover that affects performance, productivity, and growth (Okundaye et al., 2019). However, the advantages of small businesses are greater flexibility, less bureaucracy, more manageable organizational hierarchy, more communicative organizational cultures, greater market proximity, and innovative employees who are open to new ideas (Rahayu & Day, 2017; Tob-Ogu et al., 2018). Compared to leaders of larger companies, small business leaders may be able to adapt more readily to change (Napitupulu et al., 2018; Okundaye et al., 2019).

In the midst of a rapidly expanding dynamic global marketplace, scholars are attentive to the concepts related to high performance management practices (Cuéllar-Molina, García-Cabrera & Déniz-Déniz, 2019). The field of performance improvement

has transformed and enabled the performance inherent in humans, especially in the workplace (Gok & Law, 2017). Evidence emerged to support the ideas that small business leaders who are attentive to employee performance, data collection and analysis, target setting, and performance-related training and incentives are more performance-enhancing and productive than businesses with less attention to these management practices (Forth & Bryson, 2018). These findings have been consistent across various industries throughout the world, with a growing interest in studying service industries and how technology is impacting management practices (Bloom, Lemos, Sadun, Scur, & Van Reenen, 2016).

Leadership and human resource practices are influential on the performance of employees and businesses helped guide managers in optimally adopting business practices in various change contexts (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019). Research emphasis has been on employee encouragement, staff participation in process improvements, and motivating employees toward achieving organizational goals (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017). Consistent findings were that management practices and performance incentives, such as performance monitoring, target or goal setting, and people management, with optimal attention to the engagement of the workforce enhance performance and production (Bloom et al., 2016). Across international studies of manufacturing firms, researchers demonstrated associations between more formal attention of management to evidence-based workplace practices to enhance performance and higher labor productivity, lower probability of business closures, better financial performance, and more rapid sales growth than firms which lacked similar sets of practices (Bloom et al., 2016; Broszeit et

al., 2016; Brynjolfsson & McElheran, 2016). In the service sector, similar evidence from related studies included positive returns from more extensive formal management practices (Forth & Bryson, 2018).

Researchers have compared small and larger businesses on many metrics, including management practices in relation to employee performance (Nordlöf, Wijk, & Westergren, 2015). For example, to investigate the impact of small business management practices in Britain, Forth and Bryson (2018) used a nationally representative sample of over 1,000 small, medium, and large businesses to report on longitudinal business performance. Data analyzed by Forth and Bryson included answers to workplace employee relations surveys among other measurements derived from national databases accessed by the research team. After reporting descriptive statistics and performing regression analysis, Forth and Bryson found that small businesses were less likely to use formal management practices than larger companies, but that more extensive use of formal management practices helped small businesses grow and increases productivity from improved employee performance. As Nordlöf et al. (2015) concluded, it is not organizational size *per se* that is largely responsible for company differences because many mediating variables also change when companies grow, including organizational structure, resources, and management practices.

Evidence also suggests that, compared to larger businesses, small businesses have more difficulty identifying and adopting innovative technologies and working methods because of weaker internal resources, such as managerial and human capital resources (Forth & Bryson, 2018). Broszeit et al. (2016) investigated how formal management

practices impact small business performance, and reported a positive effect, that was weaker than similar effects on larger companies. Smaller business are often less involved with managerial networks and are more likely to serve smaller, localized markets than larger companies, which can undermine the pursuits of best practices (Bloom et al., 2016). The same can apply to the adoption of technology and data-driven management practices in IT that may otherwise help improve employee performance (Brynjolfsson & McEleheran, 2016).

In general, invested leadership influences employee performance (Mittal, 2016). For example, Choy, McCormack and Djurkovic (2016) quantitatively examined the impact of leadership on job performance and the mediator influence of delegation and participation on the relationship; bivariate tests revealed that delegation and participation had a significant mediating impact on the relationship between leadership and job performance. Muenjohn and McMurray (2016) found that employees who perceive support from their leaders and managers as useful show more loyalty and accomplish more on the job than those with lesser positive views of leadership and management support. Leaders who are people-oriented with emotions management abilities may increase employees' performance, well-being, satisfaction, and commitment more than task-oriented leaders (Choudhary, Naqshbandi, Philip & Kumar, 2017; Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursière, & Raymond, 2016).

Scholarly efforts included an emphasis on how transformational leadership styles more positively influence employee performance than other types of leadership approaches (Ogola, Sikalieh, & Linge, 2017; Salehianfard & Zohoori, 2017). Suk,

Kihwan, Ebrahim, and Seung-Wan (2016) correlated transformational leadership behaviors with successful innovations in small businesses in Korea. Studying employee performance in small businesses in Kenya, Ogola et al. (2017) concluded that when transformational leaders encourage employees toward intellectual stimulation, such as the application of innovative methods, employees' performance can improve.

Understanding how to influence concepts such as job satisfaction and motivation allows employers to tap into ways to retain talented, innovative, capable employees and devise means to improve performance (Wnuk, 2017). Focusing on the effects of employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction on employee performance in the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, Tampubolon (2016) established that employee engagement, motivation, and satisfaction had significant positive influences on employee performance. Rajak and Pandey (2017) and Ayranci and Ayranci (2017) also correlated higher motivation with greater job satisfaction, commitment, and performance of employees. Mendis (2017) reported similar findings from the study of job satisfaction and performance within Sri Lanka banks. Job satisfaction, influential on job performance is often affected by the nature and meaning of work and employee motivation (Akwuole, 2017). Ezam (2018) demonstrated a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee motivation in the banking sector, leaving questions about ideal motivators among different workers.

Understanding the motivational factors, employee dynamics, and workplace challenges enables employers, leaders, and managers to view employees as resources instead of tools to improve company productivity and performance. According to Obeid,

Salleh, and Nor (2017), improving employee performance requires that leaders seek to understand employees' attitudes about work, group processes, tasks, and their management and supervision. Attempting to understand these factors, Kramer, Maas, and Van Rinsum (2016) conducted a laboratory experiment to examine whether the disclosure of relative performance information to peers affects employee performance; results were that the disclosure of relative performance information increased employee performance. Findings implied that employees care about the views of others in the workplace and are motivated toward performance when compared publicly to others. Furthermore, higher employee skills and experiences correlated with greater expectations in the workplace (Block, Fisch, Lau, Obschonka, & Presse, 2016).

There have been efforts to predict employee work engagement levels, identify determinants, and shape performance outcomes in IT businesses. Gupta and Sharma (2016) reviewed selected literature from the academics and management practice to highlight employee engagement as a significant enabler for employee and organizational performance. Bhuvanaiah and Raya (2016) examined the relationship among organizational determinants, work engagement, and job performance of 100 employees in an IT organization. Bhuvanaiah and Raya reported that 25% of the respondents were less engaged with 75% very engaged, where engaged employees approached work duties enthusiastically and committedly. Organizational culture and leadership enhanced employee engagement, which could improve an employee’s performance. Humphries, Jamil, and Jordan (2016) similarly focused on engagement as a source of value to

organizations, which the authors explained requires attention to employees' needs, concerns, and experiences in their workplaces and daily tasks.

Change in itself can significantly affect job performance. Sununta and Patarakhuan (2016) quantitatively investigated the effect of job redesign on job satisfaction and employee performance, using a survey of 295 respondent managers in the Thai service industry. Findings reported by Sununta and Patarakhuan were that job redesign, as the first stage of change, significantly and inversely related to employee performance; conclusions were that implementing job redesign without employees experiencing job satisfaction can result in decreased performance. However, change processes that include adequate training can counter the negative effects of job redesign. For example, Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin and Kayode (2017) quantitatively studied training on employees' work performance with 1200 participants from 10 industries across Malaysia. Results reported by Ibrahim et al. indicated training leading to new skills acquisition positively influenced employees' work performance. Recommendations based on this and similar findings were that employers provide the necessary training that needed to improve employee job performance.

Acknowledging some of the factors that can contribute to the overall performance of an IT organization, including motivation, ability, perceived organizational support, and job satisfaction, Sastry-Akella and Venketeswara (2016) developed a model of performance enhancement, which included feedback, follow-up action and appreciation to motivate and demonstrate organizational support. Jantti and Kallinen (2017) conducted a qualitative case study, interviewing 25 service desk employees in Finland, to explore

the ways individual and team financial rewards and compliments can affect the motivation of IT service desk employees in the context of ITSM. Jantti and Kallinen concluded that reward structures can enhance a skilled, motivated, and inspired service personnel contribute to service excellence and motivating rewards affect the customer experience positively resulting in increased customer satisfaction leading further into increased service sales and organizational growth.

Accordingly, concepts such as motivation, engagement, and satisfaction in relation to performance are just part of leadership considerations in performance management, which is an ongoing process that focuses on employees' experiences (Ukko, Hildén, Saunila, & Tikkamäki, 2017). Kanyurhi and Akonkwa (2016) emphasized the strategic nature of performance management that can enhance employees' contributions to the company's goals. Attention to these known factors of employee performance by management involves learning about their employees' perceptions of their workplace experiences and how changes in their environments and duties impact those perceptions and experiences.

Small Business Technology Adoption

The expansion of IT options helped organizations of all sizes grow by becoming more efficient, effective, innovative, and globally competitive (Rahayu & Day, 2017). The implementation of IT in small businesses has become commonplace practices, and even considered vital for business and even economic development (Rahayu & Day, 2017; Yunis, El-Kassar, & Tarhini, 2017). Smaller organizations can become more formidable competitors through improvements in IT adoption and implementation that

create the competitive advantages of market leaders (Rahayu & Day, 2017). Organizations can use IT to facilitate strategic planning and for process efficiency and effectiveness, helping leaders who adopt and implement IT successfully to perform better in the market and with product and service differentiation (Okundaye et al., 2019). In light of the increased dependence of most businesses across the world on IT, small businesses in the IT sector have become an integral and indispensable part of innovation and growth in a dynamic global economy; thus, small business IT employees and leaders have vital roles in sustaining to economy and success of other companies (Niebel, 2018; Zafar & Mustafa, 2017).

Global competitiveness and the need to stimulate growth through innovation are compelling reasons why small business leaders continue to adopt and implement new IT solutions (Yunis et al., 2017). Significant has been the growth in IT adoption within both large and small businesses serving in IT and operating in other sectors (Rahayu & Day, 2017). Innovations in IT contributed to improved organizational performance and competitive advantages for many organizations across the world (Niebel, 2018). However, as the employees tasked with IT adoption continue to confront and manage IT changes, so does the need to understand the dynamics of the experiences of IT adoption within these business settings (Okundaye et al., 2019).

Small business leaders typically adopt IT incrementally to gain competitive advantages in the global marketplace (Tob-Ogu et al., 2018; Zafar & Mustafa, 2017). The use of IT enables small businesses to compete with larger businesses in the global market (Niebel, 2018). However, the rate of IT adoption within many small businesses remained

relatively low, compared to large organizations that have noticeably profited from IT adoption (Harness et al., 2018; Rahayu & Day, 2017).

Small business leaders adopted IT to enhance product and service innovations and create competitive advantages (Napitupulu et al., 2018; Zafar & Mustafa, 2017). IT can enable effective decision making that expands business opportunities and maximizes benefits (Rahayu & Day, 2017). The proper exploitation of IT represents a fundamental avenue for small businesses to compete and grow (Tob-Ogu et al., 2018). Adopting and implementing new technologies successfully in small businesses help to foster innovative global competition (Yunis et al., 2017).

Visible benefits of IT include simplifying work routines, promoting efficient communication and coordination between various value chain partners, increasing productivity, and improving customer service and satisfaction (Asongu & Le, 2017; Okundaye et al., 2019). The benefits of IT depend on how it is implemented and used, and in some cases can lead to realized disadvantages. Face-to-face communications is often displaced by online interactions which fails to address preferences and needs of some individuals (Steiner & Mendelovitch, 2017). Interested scholars also argued IT may impede communication, imagination, and creativity of people whose minds are not aligned with IT contexts (Okundaye et al., 2019).

Small business leaders may also fail to take advantage of the potential benefits of IT because of limited resources, technology-orientation, and capabilities (Rahayu & Day, 2017). Estimates in 2013 were that small businesses lost $83 billion due to unsuccessful or slow IT adoption and implementation (Taneja, Pryor, & Hayek, 2016). In

larger companies, Masli, Richardson, Watson, and Zmud (2016) studied serious IT deficiencies that lead to severe overhead cost and repairs which could hinder the financial performance of a business, leading to the turnover of senior executives. The barriers to smaller business IT adoption include internal and external barriers. The internal barriers include the owner, leader, employee, and organizational characteristics; costs of adoption and implementation; and limited returns on investments (Okundaye et al., 2019). Lack of skilled personnel and coherent IT strategies, financial and infrastructural limitations, and technological knowledge deficits are inhibiting factors (Rahayu & Day, 2017).

A governance reporting mechanism for communicating both success and failure helps identify services that need improvements and promptly fill deficiency gaps (Sural, 2016). Okundaye et al. (2019) used a qualitative research method to study four small businesses by interviewing five senior leaders from each business who made IT adoption decisions. Conceptually, the research framework was the technology acceptance model, whereby as explained by Abdullah and Ward (2016) perceived usefulness, ease, and intentions are causal antecedents in the adoption of new technology. Okundaye et al. focused on critical experiences in successful IT adoption, implementation, and concluded that leaders must ensure employees have the resources and support needed to succeed; factors that emerged as important to successfully IT adoption and implementation also include organizational culture and attitudes toward technology, as well as perceived benefits and usefulness. Conclusions drawn by Okundaye et al. was that small business leaders must identify the (a) appropriate technology to meet the company's strategic objectives, (b) costs and financial support for IT projects, (c) hiring and training needs of

skilled IT employees supporting IT projects, and (d) and determining the optimal leadership for IT, employee, and organizational success.

The increase in demand for IT services has placed high expectations on the performance in both IT departments and key IT stakeholders involved with providing IT services. In the process of meeting internal and external IT service demands, at the same time reducing the cost of IT, managers confront the various challenges of adopting appropriate IT processes that align with business processes while sustaining and improving employee performance and productivity throughout the change process (May et al., 2016). In small businesses, human capital represents the foundation for growth and survival. Purkayastha and Sharma (2016) likened resources such as human capital to cognitive social capital, influenced by both management and employees' own perceptions of the new IT introduced into the company and their daily tasks. Their perceptions of the new IT and innovation skills contribute significantly to the chances of successful IT adoption and implementation (Roach et al., 2016). IT change success relies upon IT abilities, capabilities, and capacities to garner new knowledge, adapt capabilities, generate and access resources, and hone strategies to adequately manage the change process (Laforet, 2016).

Organizational culture in addition to its technological requirements are vital pieces of information for IT service changes (Sural, 2016). Noneconomic factors that affect IT adoption decisions include the organizational and business culture (Deprez & Euwema, 2017; Niebel, 2018; Vodanovich & Urquhart, 2017). Culture encompasses the distinguishing values, beliefs, norms and overall patterns of behavior of groups of people

(Matzler et al., 2016). Adoption and implementation experiences vary based on the attitudes and characteristics of the people affected which comprise the organizational culture (Tob-Ogu et al., 2018).

Adequate conditions within the business, including management support, appropriate leadership style, and organizational culture favor successful change in the face of new IT implementation (Deprez & Euwema, 2017; Tseng, 2017). IT competencies important to the successful IT development as a part of change in small businesses include IT leadership, knowledge and skills, and planning to make the technology work (Yunis et al., 2017). Similar to the performance outcomes of employees, scholars demonstrated positive associations between small business leadership style and the outcomes of IT coordinators, the development of IT initiatives and other IT-related factors for successful IT implementation (Hassan et al., 2017; Hickman & Akdere, 2017; Yunis et al., 2017).

ITIL Historical Perspective

IT changed the way people conduct business. Intended to improve business, previously performed manual processes became technologically dependent, as the use of IT transformed the global economy (Dayal & Rana, 2019). The role of IT evolved from a support function in the value chain to serve in more complex and critical roles in business development, growth, and sustainability (Hejase et al., 2016). Significant investments in technology continue to support business improvements in customer service and decision making.

ITSM frameworks which evolved since the 1980s helped companies shift from a hardware and applications orientation to a service focus (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). Significant changes from the ITSM models and standards of the 1980s led to ITSM refinements that continue to transform work practices toward a dedicated service-oriented path (Bertsen, 2017). ITSM frameworks affect leadership and management, IT services, customers, and the daily experiences of IT department employees, and company staff (Alreemy, Chang, Walters, & Wills, 2016). A broad spectrum of ITSM models exist and there are differences between ITSM standards and frameworks. ITSM standards are the defined rules, followed to comply with the set standard of interest; ITSM frameworks are the best practices guidelines delineating what to do but not necessarily how to do something (Melendez, Dávila, & Pessoa, 2016).

There are various ITSM frameworks and standards, each with differences and similarities, strengths and weaknesses. The ITSM concept commonly applied is the ITIL, increasingly recognized as important in the IT and general business community (Berrahal & Marghoubi, 2016). Mahy, Ouzzif, and Bouragba (2016) emphasized ITIL as the best-known ITSM framework with Microsoft Operation Framework and IBM ITPM as its competitors. A strength of ITIL is that it offers detailed guidance on the implementation of processes, although it more weakly applies to governance, goal-setting, and controls, which are strengths of alternatives, such as COBIT (Berntsen, 2017). Knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of different ITSM application concepts is important for applying ITSM in successful ways that align with company needs (Berrahal & Marghoubi, 2016). Running a poorly selected or implemented ITSM project may offer

little value for an organization; however, service life-cycle processes with a focus on efficiency keeps ITIL at the center of ITSM, as other frameworks and standards become complements to ITIL within ITSM (Berntsen, 2017).

ITIL was established in the 1980s by the British government service provider known as the Central Computer and Telecommunication Agency (Imroz, 2019). ITIL represents a framework for quality management, business deliveries, operations, and support (Govindasamy, 2019). Over the decades, ITIL modifications and revisions ensured a more consolidated and straightforward framework (Berntsen, 2017). The ITIL since grew into a widely adopted best practice framework to manage IT services, adaptable across diverse business environments (Govindasamy, 2019). The most common reasons a company implements ITIL include improving operational efficiency, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Alsawadi, 2017).

Different ITIL versions included the 2001 release of ITIL version 2 and the ITIL version 3 in 2007, which eventually fully replaced earlier version by 2011 (Obwegeser et al., 2019). Changes included a shift from service management guidelines that emphasized functionality, to process-oriented approaches and service life-cycle models (Berntsen, 2017). With an emphasis on continuous improvement, the differences between editions included corrections of errors and inconsistencies and additions of more detailed processes (Obwegeser et al., 2019). Following revisions, expanding use, and evidence-based practice applications, ITIL became more popular in North America as it continued to emerge in diverse industries throughout the world.

ITIL includes life-cycles for service and process development, along with suggestions for service catalogues and work processes, roles, and functions (Bertsen, 2017). The most recent ITIL versions include a collection of five core publications providing detailed explanations of the stages of the service life-cycle (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). Mahy et al. (2016) described ITIL as process-oriented with 26 processes that spread out among the five books (service strategy, service design, service transition and service operation and continual service improvement). Of the five core processes, *service strategy* represents the foundation of the service life-cycle (Ranggadara & Prastiawan, 2018). It is in the service strategy stage that goals, choices, and plans can create value for a business (Govindasamy, 2019). Accordingly, service strategy involves decision-making about management, demands, finances, and portfolios.

Transforming service strategy into plans for service delivery, the *service design* stage pertains to new services or changes to existing services that can add business value. Objectives revolve around designing clear, straightforward, relevant IT plans to meet business goals (Berntsen, 2017). The *service transition* stage then involves the implementation of new and modified services for use along with the testing and evaluation of new or modified service designs to ensure that services meet expectations (Ranggadara & Prastiawan, 2018). The implementation phase has been a stage that received relatively greater researcher attention than the other stages (Rubio-Sánchez, Arcilla-Cobián, & San-Feliu, 2017).

The stage of monitoring and managing daily services and handling customer and user requests is *service operation*, which ultimately involves addressing issues in the IT

infrastructure (Ranggadara & Prastiawan, 2018). Processes include the management of requests, incidents, events, and problems in ways that help strengthen and ensure business value (AlShathry, 2016). Related research included the study of supporting ITIL processes implementation using business process management systems (Mahy et al., 2016). Service operation and ITIL process implementation are the stages that are of interest in this research study.

The IT service operations publications describe the five key service operation processes integrates all the support and delivery of quality IT services. These include incident management, focusing on returning users to normal state service operation as quickly as possible to minimize the impact of incidents on the business (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017). Problem management focuses on reducing or eliminating incidents altogether through proactive techniques for identifying their causes and removing those causes from the infrastructure (AlShathry, 2016). Request fulfillment emphasizes efficiently managing the lifecycle of service requests from users (Imroz, 2019). Event management processes focus on monitoring and deciphering the continuous flow of information about the status of service components to detect changes in their state or service performance, recognizing service events before they impact the business (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017). Access management processes protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of assets by ensuring that only authorized users can access or modify them (Obwegeser et al., 2019).

Small businesses, like other companies, typically succeed by continuously identifying opportunities for improvements and efforts. Goals including striving toward

IT service management excellence (Jäntti & Cater-Steel, 2017). The fifth ITIL stage involves continual service improvement (CSI) to maintain the added value attained through the design, implementation, and operation of services (Berntsen, 2017). CSI as a core part of the service life-cycle adds to an organizational culture revolving around continuous improvement and positive change management (Herath, Prabhashini, & Katepearachchi, 2016). Related research efforts add to the continuous improvement process.

Small Businesses ITIL Implementation

In an increasingly intense competitive business environment, small business leaders seek to improve their productivity and efficiency, satisfy their customers, fulfill commitments, manage costs optimally, maximize profits, and reduce risks (El-Yamami et al., 2019). To negotiate daily tasks and challenges, small business leaders increasingly rely on IT solutions for operations and management (Turner & Endres, 2017). Adopting and implementing appropriate technologies can provide a competitive market edge; small businesses that practice technology innovation show growth and sustainable performance compared to others without innovative product, process, market, and organizational technology (Rahmana, Yaacobb, & Radzi, 2016).

ITIL has become the most recognized effective structured framework to align services, improve quality, and reduce costs. Because ITIL is the most popular ITSM practice, access of companies of all sizes and purposes throughout the word increases continuously (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). Berntsen (2017) studied the ITIL framework in terms of how it continues to accommodate the increasing dependency of organizations on

IT (including small businesses) and how it aligns with various business goals. According to Cohn-Muroy (2016), the first step for small business leaders is to consider and understand implementation level processes and identify current and future needs, to apply adequate solutions to identified problems.

Although these are straight-forward concepts in theory ITIL implementation in small businesses is a lesser understood phenomenon, in comparison to large business applications. ITIL outlooks included its wider acceptance as appropriate for larger enterprises with a lesser recognized application in smaller companies (El-Yamami, Ahriz, Mansouri, Qbadou, & Illoussamen, 2018). For example, El-Yamami et al. (2019) presented the results of survey data from 64 small and medium sized businesses, which showed a lack of models, methodologies and strategies for ITIL adoption and an absence of ITIL processes implementation sequencing order. Reasons proposed for the findings of El-Yamami et al. were that the ITIL framework design applied typically to large businesses, and the adoption by small businesses is often confusing for leaders and staff. ITIL frameworks for optimal applications in small businesses should reflect the specific realities of smaller companies, which requires ongoing efforts to understand them (El-Yamami et al., 2019).

ITIL Research

Systematic reviews of the literature revealed that most primary ITIL implementation studies applied to IT areas from larger and some medium companies with fewer implementation and studies of small companies (Melendez et al., 2016). Growing interest in ITIL implementation in small business settings led to additional research

efforts of the phenomenon. ITIL implementation research with qualitative and quantitative research methodologies continue to emerge in the peer-reviewed literature, with various designs applied across diverse business settings.

For example, in Indonesia and in North Africa, the ITIL IT Infrastructure is considered a best common practice successfully implemented at a large number of organizations. Limanto et al. (2017) used the case study approach to explain the impact of the implementation of the framework across several types of Indonesian companies. In North Africa, Mahy et al. (2016) explored how IT department align IT processes with the business processes using ITIL, finding that, while IT organizations have widely adopted the ITIL framework, many have failed in implementing the framework.

Implementation failures or difficulties, as well as the benefits, are part of the research findings reported by other published scholars. For example, Melendez et al. (2016) conducted a systematic literature review of ITSM model application experiences in small companies. Reported in the literature reviewed by Melendez et al. were documented benefits, such as processes improvements, user satisfaction, and reduced service time and costs. Findings discussed by Melendez et al. were that principal small business difficulties included a lack of knowledge of personnel and consultants for adopting and implementing an ITIL model.

Attempts existed through the technological age to study IT implementation strategies using quantitative and qualitative methods, focusing on concepts such as how organizational culture and other characteristics of a business intertwine with successful IT adoption and implementation. Bertsen (2018), following the work of earlier authors,

discussed bureaucratic, innovative, and supportive cultures when applied to concepts such as ITIL implementation. Bureaucratic cultures have a clearly defined authority, roles, and work responsibilities, with slow adaptations and changes in customer needs or market innovations (Kuo, 2019). Innovative cultures offer more stimulating, creative work environments, adaptable to rapid changes, but assume more risks and challenges that can foster pressure and stress (Hendryadi, 2019). Supportive cultures are known as friendly, helpful and harmonious and emphasize trust, equity, relationships, and collaboration (Bernsten, 2018). There has been mixed research about ITIL implementation in light of these categories of organizational culture.

Mixed results included findings from Hauge (2011) who explored how ITIL implementations affected organizational culture and structure and like Bernsten (2018) later stressed, found that ITIL implementations led to more supportive cultures, although it increased business standardization, new roles, and decision makers along the company hierarchy. Hirth and Melander (2010) attempted determine how to best implement ITIL sensibly and reported that preparing and developing the employees and organization in parallel ITIL adoption helps reduce stress and change resistance, and that focus on continuous improvement of ITIL should be an ongoing process following implementation. Although the respondents consisted of project leaders and consultants with various experience with ITIL implementations. Lunde (2012) found that ITIL adoption introduced more bureaucracy into businesses, especially when bureaucratic structures were already prominent.

In most regions studied, two-thirds or more of the participating IT managers claimed to be familiar with the concepts of IT service management and of ITIL and had expectations of better IT services, increased productivity, and lower IT costs (Hoerbst et al., 2011). The early and widely expanding applications and expectations of ITSM and ITIL made it a topic of annual conferences, where authors such as Cater-Steel, Tan, and Toleman (2012) surveyed users annually the adoption and implementation of ITIL. Cater-Steel et al. studied several groups of Australian organizations, over the years of ITIL implementation, noting how businesses transformed their IT service management, and documenting significant benefits, including accountable system changes, predictable infrastructure, improved IT groups within the organizations, and consistent IT service management processes. Surveying users annually and disseminating findings at ITSM conferences helped uncover, follow, and share key success factors for ITIL implementation, such as effective engagement of staff, senior management support, and communication.

More recently, Shrestha, Cater-Steel, and Toleman (2016) turned their focus from implementation experiences to assessments and researched decision support to IT service managers to improve service management processes. Shrestha et al. noted problems such as a lack of transparency and need for improved efficiency in ITSM process assessments. Similar findings reported by Hoerbst et al. (2011) and from the study of German companies revolved around needs for a better client/service orientation, quality of IT services, efficiency, and transparency as the most important factors for introducing ITIL. Using a Design Science Research methodology with data collected from employees of

two IT providers, Shrestha et al. proposed a means for process selection and developed an online survey for assessments, along with measurements of process capability and specific recommendations for managers to improve their ITIL assessment efforts.

Hoerbst et al. (2011) observed that Switzerland and Bavaria shared the highest levels of knowledge, implementations or plans and ITIL certified staff members, followed by Austria and South Tyrol, with Slovakia having the majority of IT managers unfamiliar with ITIL and the associated knowledge and process thinking. Eikebrokk and Iden (2015) examined three major possible factors that could influence ITIL implementation outcomes in an organization: management's non-excusable participation in ITIL implementation efforts (senior management involvement), employees' engagement and dedication (organizational commitment), and team members acquired knowledge and process thinking competence (group efficacy). After surveying 446 ITIL experts and members of the Nordic itSMF (IT service management forum) chapters from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway (representing different companies with participants holding IT management positions or certification in ITIL from organizations that started implementing ITIL), the authors analyzed the data using correlational and partial least square statistics procedures. The results reported by Eikebrokk and Iden were that, of the three predictors, group efficacy had the most influence on ITIL outcomes and benefits.

ITIL Case Study Research

Case study research continues to demonstrate the diverse applications of ITIL. For example, Cardoso, Moreira, and Escudero (2018) used the case study research approach with interviews of company stakeholders to verify that ITIL could support the migration

to cloud computing and to learn how these processes helped employees improve their skills in knowledge accessibility. Recognizing the growth of modern and advanced governments of urban communities with technological support needs, Nur, Batmetan, and Manggopa (2019) applied the ITIL framework to the analysis of maturity level and smart city readiness by surveying 150 participants from Manado city. Although there have been many such diverse research studies of ITIL applications, most pertinent to this research are qualitative case study research efforts that showed how the flexible nature of the ITIL framework can enable leaders to overcome difficulties of ITIL implementation in small business environments (El-Yamami et al., 2019).

Case study research was useful to study ITIL practices and how small business leaders could more optimally implement ITIL components in ways that best align the business with the technology. For example, Berntsen (2017) conducted a mixed methods case study in Norway, with a focus on ITIL implementation in small businesses, gathering information from different organizations applying the ITIL framework and its processes. Data collection by Bernsten was from focus groups, interviews, and surveys, of 134 employees who were managing or working in IT departments and using ITIL on a daily basis. Findings were that ITIL improved the service-oriented focus for IT employees, but implementation barriers included lack of appropriate employee education and managerial time commitment that undermined employee motivation. Bernsten also reported that ITIL supported software often lacked adaptability and practical understanding by everyday users. Because many organizations may not have ITIL-

certified staff members, education and training are parts of good planning for smooth strategic alignment and continual improvement of IT services (Hoerbst et al., 2011).

While Bernsten (2017) focused on concepts related to motivation and organizational culture in small businesses, Blumberg, Cater-Steel, Rajaeian, and Soar (2019) studied organizational change strategies during ITIL implementation initiatives, and their potential effects on success. Using a multiple case study methodology, Blumberg et al. included eight Australian organizations and a socio-technical systems approach to study the attributes of effective organizational change strategies for successful ITIL implementation. ITIL implementation in the Blumberg et al. study required changes to all four components of the socio-technical work system: social processes, technology infrastructure, creativity, and conceptual mastery expertise. Changes to one component, when implementing ITIL, affected the other components; Blumberg et al. concluded that work system changes must be appropriate to the scope of the ITIL implementation within a particular business.

Qualitative research helped leaders propose ways that managers could tailor IT service practices to suit the characteristics of small businesses. For example, El-Yamami et al. (2019) conducted a case study in search of key factors that affect ITIL implementation success in small and medium sized businesses, with the objective to eliminate the misunderstandings of the IT service management during implementation. The case selected by El-Yamami et al. was an IT service provider in business for over 20 years, operating in Morocco, and the study included data collection from interviews of 23 people (of which 12 were responsible for IT service provision), which focused on ITIL

practices. Results reported by El-Yamami et al. were that management support was the most important success factor for ITIL implementation in the small IT business and the authors recommended approaches for determining ITIL processes implementation sequencing order. Similar research also revealed important success factors, including senior management commitment, a change management strategy training, and an ITIL-friendly culture (Hoerbst et al., 2011).

Ranggadara and Prastiawan (2018) studied ITIL stages in the IT sector serving the banking industry in Indonesia, relying on data derived from 10 IT service participants who answered questions about process, technology considerations, design, organization, implementation, service management, and related principles. Determinants of successful ITIL implementation reported by Ranggadara and Prastiawan included assured support and cooperation, clear guidance, execution in structured ways, and periodic reviews. Results of the study led to the recommendations by Ranggadara and Prastiawan for steps to improve implementation, including a process for continuous improvements. According to Hoerbst et al. (2011), continuous improvements should revolve around constantly maintaining and improving service quality leading to customer satisfaction, with a focus on quality management, change management, and process improvement.

Imroz (2019) conducted a qualitative case study to identify metrics for the quality and effectiveness of ITIL services with the purpose of proposing ways they could be better measured and managed. Emphasis of Imroz was on the request fulfillment process of an IT service provider group and the perceptions of eight participants from the single small business about the most important metrics of the process, which led to the

identification of 12 metrics perceived by participants as most important. Using the findings from the Imroz study, the group was able to develop dashboard pages to improve ITIL services; the author concluded that the case study approach represents a meaningful approach to support a growing number of IT practitioners aiming to improve IT processes. Consistent with the findings reported by El-Yamami et al. (2018), El-Yamami et al. (2019), and Bernsten (2017), Imroz added that the participants in the study advised that ITIL implementation is an initiative that top leaders should support and manage as a formal project.

To enhance ITIL implementation success, managers need to provide adequate training, communication, and rollout plans to support teams, tasks, and procedures applied by end users. Govindasamy (2019) described a multiple case study approach to the study of ITIL release management, which is the process of deploying new software and hardware components in live environments. Conducting the research in India, describing 11 cases, Govindasamy explored the ITIL release management process and the problems and challenges of the ITIL implementation processes. The research culminated in Govindasamy's identification of the roles and responsibilities of ITIL release management process that revolved mostly around change management, readiness, training, and support. Findings were consistent with the earlier reports by Hoerbst et al. (2011) that ITIL success requires quality management, change management, and process improvement by linking phases in the service lifecycle.

Additional qualitative research of ITIL focused on IT operations constraints and incident management, which are important to the continuity and proper handling of

systems. IT operations employees are tasked with resolving IT incidents on a daily basis. Salah, Maciá-Fernández, Díaz-Verdejo and Sánchez-Casado (2016) conducted a case study culminating in a proposed a model for the timely restoral of IT services (incident management) which is one of the most important processes in ITIL/ITSM and an important aspect of IT employee's performance. Berner, Dipl-Hdl, Augustine, and Maedche (2016) conducted a qualitative multiple case study focused on the practical effects of implementing ITSM event management process in monitoring performance of processes within the context of continuous process improvement of its IT operations. Berner et al. discovered process visibility increases situation awareness in process operation, which can impact the performance of a process. Palilingan and Batmetan (2018) combined case study and action research, using the ITIL service operations section of the ITIL framework, leading to the development of an incident management model to utilize resources appropriately to quickly and easily manage incidents. Wijaya, Sitokdana, and Hapsari (2019) applied a qualitative case study approach to the study of a single agency implementing IT for easier information management. Wijaya et al. studied IT operation constraints and identified lack of knowledge regarding the handling of problems that inhibited operations using the ITIL V3 domain service operation on SIMDA. Data collection occurred through interviews of users and revealed that both infrastructure issues and lack of user's knowledge affected operational management of related IT services.

ITIL Research Gaps

Organizations in the United States started adopting IT and more process improvement initiatives after the 1980s. The reason for the leap was to make their organizations more efficient in the delivery of their services for competitive advantage (Orta & Ruiz, 2014). Because IT is an integral part of most modern companies and a growing source of support for small business success, attention to IT employee experiences has the potential to improve employee performance, organizational culture, and create a better and new working environment through optimal IT implementation (Hoerbst et al., 2011). Imroz (2019) claimed that ongoing qualitative research involving ITIL applications is meaningful to a growing number of IT leaders, especially because there have been very little previous research efforts focused in related areas.

The isolative use of IT by itself does not necessarily influence the performance productivity of organizations. Found in the literature was the idea that IT does not improve productivity when lacking in leadership support, training, supportive infrastructure and attention to employee engagement and satisfaction (Hoerbst et al., 2011). Another set of scholars discovered that IT typically improves productivity, yet still requires appropriate internal and external resources for effective implementation and optional business process changes and redesigns (Orta & Ruiz, 2014). El-Yamami et al. (2019) claimed that, given the critical influence of technology on small business competitive success and survival, scholars must continue to investigate IT practices, training, and support.

The review of existing research on the implementation of ITSM and ITIL helped with developing an understanding of the inception of ITIL in the 1980's in large companies in Europe and other parts of the world through more recently expanded applications in North America and in small businesses. ITSM is the concept of operation while ITIL is the framework IT functions can embrace to adopt the management of IT services from an IT operations perspective. Distinguishing these two terms was appropriate because ITSM has to be implemented using other types of frameworks, which have used ITIL as a reference model. ITIL benefits highlighted included improvements in service quality, standardization of service, customer satisfaction, return on investments, reduction of downtime, benefits from best practice experience of others, financial contribution control, first-call resolution rate and morale of IT. More IT based companies of all sizes are looking to improve their ITIL implementation processes to be more efficient, which begins with evidence-based findings for continuous improvements (Dayal & Rana, 2019).

Scholars have raised the awareness of benefits that organizations received and experienced in adopting and implementing the ITIL. To successfully implement ITIL, it is imperative that adopting organizations pay close attention to defining their measure of success. Scholars investigated measures of success IT organizations/ departments, and practitioners can use benchmarks for measuring the successful implementation of ITIL. These measures of accomplishments are popularly referred to as critical success factors, but some organizations implement IT without adequate planning for it. Hence, businesses can fail to realize the benefits. The lack of awareness of not knowing how to measure

success is what led many authors to investigate the critical success factors that organizations can use to have a comprehensive understanding of what it takes before engaging in implementing ITIL. A consensus in the literature was that commitment and support from top management is the most recognized success factor that every organization seeking to adopt or implement ITIL must have. IT staff should be able to solve problems, apply their practical experience, and possess good communication skills to navigate successfully through the IT change process. To get the best results, scholars are attempting to generate a prioritized list of critical success factors, to which ongoing research can contribute.

There are different perspectives of performance improvement and how it is used across fields. Findings in the literature review included the term performance and relative terms such as performance improvement and performance management, highlighting the need for management and organizational leaders to reassess their definitions and levels of concerns for their IT service personnel performance measures. Doing so may help in re-evaluating education and training requirements, career path opportunities, compensation, and improving communication between the IT staff and management. Ongoing research can help inform leaders about how to best improve these processes.

A review of IT adoption literature and evidence-based findings in different contexts helps to improve the understanding of the challenges of IT adoption and changes, particularly those faced by IT businesses and leaders. Case study research showed how business and IT coexist to drive goals and objectives. IT supports and is an enabler of business objectives, but often business executives, either due to lack of

awareness or negligence on their parts, do not realize the potential impact of IT on actualizing their business goals. Leaders may fail to see the tangible and intangible effects of IT or how their own actions affect IT and ITIL implement success. While it is easier to recognize that IT investments are integral to operations at the functional level of the firm, they also serve a substantial (and largely under-theorized) role in business-level strategy— facilitating improved firm performance through enhancing current non-digital capabilities and enabling new digital capabilities to create and capture value. Continuous study of ITIL to solve problems, reduce costs, and improve quality is necessary for researchers and educators to be able to evaluate the benefits of ITIL implementation and help to inform software application designer and support services (Dayal & Rana, 2019).

Findings from the literature review also showed that the quality of job delivered by an employee is highly dependent on the well-being of the employee, perceived efficacy, and employee engagement. To get the best out of employees' performance, management must make sure that the working conditions and environment are very conducive to improved staff morale and productivity, reduction in sick leaves, absenteeism, and turnover. Research to contribute new in-depth insights into the actual experiences of IT employees working through ITIL changes can help to fill a gap in the literature related to employee well-being, morale, satisfaction, commitment and performance.

The literature reviewed indicated that employee engagement is a psychological state based on employees' positive traits and behavior towards the organization and its values; accordingly, management can reap the best from their employees by attending to

the needs and expectations of employees that scholars recognized can enhance employee contributions to organizations. Additionally, communication between management at the strategic level and employees at lower levels in the organizational hierarchy has been identified as a significant predictor of employee performance. Research focusing on lower level employees can help inform managers and leaders at the strategic levels, to optimally enhance employees' contributions to their businesses.

The literature review revealed collective findings about managements' roles and responsibilities required from the perspective of IT employees. Regarding IT employee performance, salary, career path, growth, and stress can affect their perceptions of work experiences. Furthermore, IT operations staff have to deal with the daily support services, and this includes dealing with all kinds of people with different technical problems; managing internal staff members and external client technical issues on a daily basis can weigh down the performance of an IT staff. Management may neglect to engage them in stress management which can have a significant impact on their overall performance. Accordingly, included in the address of IT employees' ITIL implementation should be their experiences with management and leaders, which previous scholars noted as highly influential on employee performance.

The literature review revealed attempts to propose measurement frameworks which organizations can use to appropriately measure the quality of their IT services. The major reasons that led to the development of these measurement frameworks were partly due to the inability of IT service providers to adequately clarify the relationship between the IT services they provide using IT service management processes and the effect on the

actual performance reference areas focusing on improvements. Although case study research helps to appreciate the depth and breadth of experiences, it is more difficult to generalize findings across the expansive range of geography and industries in which these studies occurred. Blumberg et al. (2019) noted a need for further research to develop insights into organizational change strategies and ITIL implementation that remain unexplored.

Use of IT performance measurement processes can lead to both employee performance and IT performance improvements, as a positive relationship exists between IT performance and company performance. The specific problem in my research highlighted the fact that ITIL adopters and organizations have paid less attention to the performance of their IT employees when measuring the impact of the performance of their framework. A synthesis of relevant finding did reveal common areas that emerged from the literature which most organizations use as their IT service quality measurement reference points. As previously stated, these six are IT service quality, information system quality, process performance, customer satisfaction, service behavior, and IT service value. This research addressed these common areas from the perspectives and experiences of IT employees.

Especially in times of uncertainty, organizations go through series of changes that can affect these common indicators of IT success. Change due to external and internal crises are inevitable. During periods of change, management owes updating and pre-informing its community of employees on decisions that are being made and strategic approach to alleviate the issues. In this informational age, there are leadership and

managerial styles, including communication strategies embraced to disseminate change in ways that are not be chaotic to their employees. Noted in the literature was the idea that the worst things management and leadership can do to its employees in times of change is being silent and inattentive to employees' experiences. Management and leadership impact the morale and sense of belonging on the part of the employee. A lack of transparency in communication and management neglect of the experiences of employees is one of the leading cause of decreasing the moral well-being of an employee. Regardless of the situation, the literature reviewed indicated collectively that leaders should be proactive in the time of uncertainty and change. In many organizations, leaders focus all their attention and resources in the change itself, not knowing how to move employees through the change process. This research helped to fill a gap in the literature about how to best move IT employees through significant change, such as the ITIL implementation process.

The strategic alignment of IT governance with its business processes helps organizations fully optimize their gains from the use of new IT. My study revealed sub-processes within the ITIL service operations that appeared to influence the performance of IT support employees. The results inform ITIL adopters, leaders, and organization on the strategic attention to sub-processes to potentially improve the performance of their IT support employees and organizational performance. The significance of these findings to my study was that it provided insight into specific skills, competencies, and knowledge that IT support employees and their leaders may need, to improve their performance while executing these processes.

Summary and Conclusions

This literature review revealed known factors involving small businesses and findings regarding employee performance. The literature pertaining to the IT sector and ITIL history and implementation included several quantitative studies based on survey data and a remarkable number of case studies that occurred within narrowly and uniquely bound research settings. Although lacking in generalizability, the qualitative method provides insight into the uniquely lived experiences of employees within their distinct organizational cultures. Compared to research involving larger organizations throughout the world, ITIL implementation in the American small business setting is a relatively new phenomenon, which makes it a topic of interest that fills a gap in the business and technology research literature. Although there are both strengths and weaknesses of the case study in terms of addressing small business IT research, the methodology can lead to insights supporting recommendations for leaders and additional research to positively impact IT small businesses, their employees, and the wider community affected by improvements to ITIL implementation and employee performance.

Chapter 3 includes details about the research method and design of this study. Included are descriptions of the research population and sampling technique, along with an address of the ethical steps applied to this research study. The explanations of the method for this study include the role of the researcher, how the researcher acted as a data collection instrument, and steps for data collection and qualitative analysis. As a qualitative research method with a case study design, the steps also included attention to ways to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 then follows with the applied

research process and report of findings from data analysis, subsequently presented in light of the conceptual framework and peer-reviewed previously published literature reviewed in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore perceptions involving job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operations employees following ITIL service operation implementation. Data were from a convenient sample from a population of small business IT operation employees who worked in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Findings support the development of more effective ITIL implementation practices for small businesses. Implications for social change include opportunities to tailor ITIL practices that can improve the experiences of small business operation employees, thereby enhancing workforce experiences and small business contributions that support innovation and economic prosperity.

Chapter 3 includes details about the research method and design of this study, as well the research population and sampling technique, along with ethical steps applied to this research study. This chapter includes include the role of the researcher, how I acted as a data collection instrument, and procedures used for data collection and qualitative analysis. Chapter 3 ends with a report of findings from data analysis.

Research Design and Rationale

Three overarching research questions for this study pertained to small business IT support employees' experiences following ITIL service operation.

RQ1: What are the job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experience during implementation of ITIL service operations?

RQ2: How do small business IT operation employees describe their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operations?

RQ3: How do small business IT operation employees describe any changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operations?

The method for this study was a qualitative method. The design selected from a qualitative methodology was the multiple case study. The qualitative method and case study design aligned with the purpose of the study and the nature of the data required to answer the research question.

Research Method

Use of a qualitative research method was appropriate for this study. Qualitative methodology is justified when the research interests encompass the development of an in-depth understanding of experiences and context of situations, organizational processes, perceptions, and motivations of people and groups (Longfield et al., 2016; Råheim, 2016). As this study pertained to the generation of in-depth descriptions of the experiences of participants to answer the research questions, a qualitative method aligned with the goals for this study.

Alternatively, quantitative methodology entails the collection and analysis of numerical data to test hypotheses (Eyisi, 2016). To answer the research questions, there was no need for hypotheses testing, and numerical data would likely have led to more limited and less complete answers. Thus, a quantitative method was not a suitable approach to this study. Mixed methods research combines both numerical and textual forms of data, to make broader generalizations and conclusions than might be drawn from

a single method (Chigbu, 2019). Because this study did not involve the aim to draw broader generalizations based on the analysis of numerical data, a mixed method was an unnecessary approach.

Research Design

A multiple case study design was an appropriate means to explore the in-depth descriptions of the experiences of small business IT operation employees. Qualitative case studies have become more applicable to business settings and are justifiable approaches to capturing diverse data about experiences, perceptions, and knowledge of business processes in organizational settings (Yin, 2017). Case study objectives typically include generating an enhanced understanding of the problem and answers to the research questions, derived from rich descriptions of the setting and data about participants' perceptions and experiences (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). The case study design involves data collection from multiple perspectives within a bounded context; for example, analysis of data from multiple informants, documents, records, and other qualitative data sources can lead to thick descriptions used to answer relevant research questions (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). Applying a case study design to this research led to answers to the research questions, derived from multiple data sources, within a bounded context, to fill a gap in knowledge about the experiences of small business IT operation employees.

Other qualitative designs were options but were not as justifiable for this research. The narrative design revolves around the stories of participants analyzed via a literary perspective (Chigbu, 2019), which was not the way to obtain answers to the research

questions in this study. Ethnographic researchers tend to become immersed in unique settings (Airoldi, 2018), which was not necessary to help solve the problem this research addresses. Phenomenologists' typical goals are to derive meaning from the appreciation of the essence of participants' experiences (Willis, Sullivan-Bolyai, Knafl, & Cohen, 2016). While the essence and meaning of participants' experiences are also of general interest, the problem this research addresses was less concerned with the essence and meaning of experiences and more oriented toward descriptions of perceptions and experiences.

Role of the Researcher

The roles of qualitative researchers include selecting an appropriate research method and design and collecting and analyzing data in a consistent and ethical manner (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In the process, researchers obtain IRB approval, recruit participants, and present findings in an unbiased report (Zschirnt, 2019). Accordingly, I selected and justified an appropriate method and design, developed an unbiased data collection protocol, and collected and analyzed data, while protecting the rights of participants and minimizing sources of bias.

Ethical research standards are typically enforced by institutional review boards (IRB) that align ethical guidelines with the tenets of the Belmont Report (Hokke et al., 2018). The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) emphasized that ethical actions maximize benefits and minimize risks through respectful, just, fair conduct with voluntary participants who can withdraw at any time. Informed consent processes help ensure that prospective

participants understand and consent to their voluntary roles as research participants after learning about the rights and the potential risks involved (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015). To adhere to these expectations for ethical research, I used an informed consent process so that each prospective research participant was able to read, discuss, and sign an informed consent form that conveyed the study purpose, contact information, risks and rights, and participants' roles and responsibilities. Also addressed by the informed consent process was confidentiality and my responsibility to protect and safeguard data. The informed consent process enhances the relationship between researcher and participant, to ensure a level of honesty and transparency that can result in trustworthy research findings (Guillemin et al., 2018).

As the qualitative researcher, my role was to collect data from interviews and the review of documents, thereby serving as the instrument for data collection. Thus, minimizing bias is an important step in the data collection process (Garbarski, Schaeffer, & Dykema, 2016). Identifying and documenting sources of biases throughout research leads to thorough research reports (Hargittai, 2015). Systematic data collection protocols when using semi-structured interviews help to minimize bias during data collection (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Ranney et al., 2015). Yin (2017) recommended the recording of interviews and member checking to reduce bias. Chan, Fung, and Chien (2013) discussed reflexivity and bracketing as ways to minimize bias. Using an interview protocol, exercising reflexivity, bracketing, engaging in member checking, and documenting sources of bias were the steps that helped me identify and reduce bias.

Participant Selection Logic

The recruitment of participants for the sample was from the population of small business IT operation employees who worked in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. In this qualitative case study, I interviewed 13 small business IT operation employees who experienced the implementation of technology infrastructure library service operation in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Researchers use a range of strategies to recruit (such as search engines for publically available contact information, association websites, and social media) to yield a low-cost desirable sample size (Hurwitz, Schmitt, & Olsen, 2017). Convenient sampling entails identifying the eligibility criteria and processes for recruiting and enlisting eligible, information-rich subjects to participate in the qualitative research effort (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The use of publically available contact information through the Internet to identify small business IT companies and employees in the state of Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia was the primary way of identifying and recruiting research subjects who were likely to meet the criteria established for being a part of the population and convenient sample. The Internet has become a widely used tool for identifying prospective research participants who serve in particular roles, work in specific types of companies or industries, and are located in a designated geographic area (Hirsch, Thompson, & Every, 2014).

Systematic procedures for eligibility determination can improve the quality of recruitment and participation in research efforts (Joseph, Keller, & Ainsworth, 2016). Researchers can motivate participation through attractive pre-established telephone and

email scripts and delivery of key messages through Internet-based communications efforts (Hurwitz et al., 2017). I sent scripted invitations to prospective participants via publically available email addresses, with the informed consent form that included my contact information for questions and procedures for opting into the study. Additional telephone calls and mailing out of flyers are methods that can improve response rate, if necessary (Brown, Murphy, Kelly, & Goldsmith, 2019). Initial contact with prospective participants included a description of eligibility criteria. Individuals who believed they met the requirements requested additional information and opted-in the study by signing the informed consent form, completing interviews and providing or suggesting related documents. Further review of the eligibility requirements with responders confirmed that they met the eligibility requirements as members of the population and were qualified to be in the sample. After confirming eligibility and willingness to sign and return the informed consent form, plans for interviews and data collection unfolded.

Recruitment continued until a sufficient number of participants opted in the study and data saturation was evident after 13 participants. Establishing and justifying qualitative research sample sizes involves the consideration of data saturation, or the point at which no new concepts emerge from additional data collection efforts (van Rijnsoever, 2017). While the anticipation was that 10 participants could represent a sample size that leads to data saturation, it was possible that there could have been more or less data collected to meet data saturation goals. Data saturation also depends on the quality of data which is more likely with informed and communicative participants (Malterud et al., 2018). Relationships between participants and researchers can enhance

the quality of data collected (Berner-Rodoreda et al., 2020). Dresser (2013) similarly explained how a supportive relationship can encourage openness, honesty, and dedication to the research process, which can lead to the collection of richer unbiased data. To establish a supportive relationship, I was attentive to maintaining a respectful, honest, accessible, approachable attitude and scheduled interviews at times and in places that were private, quiet, agreeable, and comfortable for participants.

Instrumentation

Case study research involves multiple forms of data collection with the purpose of triangulation (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2017). Relying on multiple informants from seven different small businesses, data encompassed answers from interview questions and annotations from document review. Associated instrumentation included the interview protocol, video-recordings of interviews, and transcriptions of recordings, with a protocol for review of documents. Because I asked questions, recorded, and transcribed data, I was an instrument for data collection.

Systematic interviews and document review often follow protocols for a consistent, unbiased approach to data collection (Ranney et al., 2015). The interview protocol developed for this study was an outline of the steps for conducting the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews begin with scripted open-ended interview questions which can then lead to the collection of relevant data from additional probative questions (Rohrer, Brümmer, Schmukle, Goebel, & Wagner, 2017). Castillo-Montoya (2016) emphasized preparations for interview research, including the interview protocol as a framework for semi-structured interviews to help researchers remain

focused and unbiased while providing the flexibility to achieve data saturation. Accurate and careful transcribing of recordings of interviews by directly typing the spoken words into a word processing file ensured that there was a verbatim textual record of the data collected from the interviews.

A similar approach to guide the review of documents ensured that, as an instrument, I followed a systematic plan for the collection of data. Yin (2017) considered documents meaningful qualitative data sources that can enhance findings. The provision of documents by participants as a form of data was voluntary for the purpose to clarifying, illustrating, and/or corroborating the descriptions of participants' experiences. Expectations for documents are that they are legible, current, unbiased, accessible, and ethically made available (Booth, 2016). Documents collected were largely publicly available through the World Wide Web, and included work processes and protocols, non-privileged company communications (such as newsletters, articles, internal studies, and process updates), handbooks and manuals, reports and reviews, ranking reports with evaluations and assessments, checklists, and performance standards, among other materials related to the ITIL implementation. Included in the document review protocol were descriptions of the details, relevance, and limitations of the document collection process, that Forsythe et al. (2016) claimed helps researchers judge and consider the evidentiary value of the data.

The additional questions were about the adoption of ITSM frameworks, developed by Cater-Steel, Tan, and Toleman (2012), administered annually to IT managers, consultants, and other IT employees from both public and private sector

companies. Answers to the questions (reworded as necessary and appropriate to apply to the ITIL small business employee setting) added to the case study sources and depths of data for the purposes of triangulation, without an intention to make inferences or draw statistical conclusions from that data. There were questions about organizational demographics, ITIL initiatives and progress, ITIL motivation, budget, progress, and training, perceptions of factors contributing to success, and perceptions of effectiveness. In this study, adapted questions were reviewed by three research and ITIL experts to ensure clarity and relevance to the small business IT service operation work setting.

Pilot Study

Research can be time consuming and often unsuccessfully completed; however, pilot studies help assess and refine the design and optimization of the study to help it succeed (Ikesaka, Langlois, Carrier, Kearon, & Le Gal, 2018). Pilot studies are a means to evaluating the integrity of a study protocol in preparation for the larger study, to test data collection questionnaires, and to more fully understand the processes and resources (including time) required for successful completion of the main study (Kaur, Figueiredo, Bouchard, Moriello, & Mayo, 2017). Pilot studies can greatly improve the chances of successfully completing a fuller-scale qualitative study; therefore, I conducted a pilot study to test the data collection protocols, refine the interview processes, and determine a reliable estimate of the time required to collect the data from each participant. Although steps such as informed consent plans, recruitment, and data analysis can be a part of a pilot study (Blatch-Jones, Pek, Kirkpatrick, & Ashton-Key, 2018), I did not include any

pilot study data in the analysis of the main study data. The pilot study and data collection occurred after IRB approval. The IRB approval number is 05-19-20-0533749.

A report of the findings from the pilot study is in Chapter 4. The report includes changes to the data collection instruments, including wording, question order, recording techniques, protocols, or transcription processes. Notations included the time required to complete data collection with a research subject, along with adjustments to interview style deemed necessary to improve data collection efforts. Testing of the recording equipment and attentive listening to recordings occurred during the pilot study to ensure an effective process was in place for high quality recordings of interview sessions. Descriptions of the data collection protocol included the means for obtaining the recordings and Chapter 4 includes a report on the volume of data generated collectively from the contributions of each participant.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Techniques to collect data from small business IT operation employees in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia included following a protocol for conducting semi-structured interviews and the review of related documents. Yin (2017) emphasized multiple sources of data for case studies, including interviews and document reviews, with each offering advantages and some drawbacks. Semi-structured interviews and documents are among the most common forms of data collection in case study research (Cleland, 2017; Green et al., 2015).

Data collection was via videoconferencing, due to pandemic concerns for social distancing, scheduled at times convenient for participants. Benefits of semi-structured

face-to-face interviews are opportunities to observe participants' nonverbal language with the purpose of following up on cues and clarifying intent and meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015), which is also possible through many video-conferencing tools. Open-ended questions lead to greater insights from in-depth answers, compared to close-ended questions, and can foster a relational connection that improves the depth of data (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Drawbacks from semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions are that data collection and transcription can be time-consuming and lead to voluminous data that can be difficult to organize and analyze (Cleland, 2017; Garbarski et al., 2016). Using electronic data organization and analysis tools while planning for analysis helped me overcome such drawbacks. Each video-recorded interview lasted about an hour. Transcription of recordings, by listening to the words on the recordings and typing each audible word into a word processing program followed the interview sessions, leading to a verbatim textual record of the interview answers.

Reviewing documents provided by participants at the time of interviews, either in person or via email adds another data source for the purpose of triangulation, which Cleland (2017) and Yin (2017) noted as important to the case study process. Drawbacks of document reviews may stem from inadequate, illegible, outdated, biased, irrelevant, or inaccessible records (Booth, 2016). However, carefully and meticulously describing the documents offered for review can help to identify potential limitations to enable both researcher and readers to be able to adequately judge the evidentiary value of the documents (Forsythe et al., 2016). I sifted through related documents with the purpose of identifying those documents that related to the purpose of the research question in a

search for documents that appeared to offer additional insight, corroboration, or context to the participants' interview data.

The questions included demographic inquiry into a respondent's business profile including the job titles, size of business, and questions about implementation phases. In addition, participants shared different aspects of their perceptions and experiences with ITIL implementation and service operation processes. As recommended by research experts such as Varpio et al. (2017), although not generalizable in small scale qualitative studies, triangulation involves multiple inquiries derived from several data sources.

The interviews and documents provided by the 13 participants led to the data saturation required for this contextually bounded qualitative case study research. Data saturation (the point at which new information fails to emerge from ongoing data collection efforts) is an indicator of informational adequacy (Wu, Thompson, Aroian, McQuaid, & Deatrick, 2016). Larger sample sizes may enhance saturation; however, informational adequacy depends on data quality, influenced by informant characteristics (such as cognitive and communication abilities, depth of knowledge, and representativeness) as well as the researcher's data-collection skills and abilities to recognize saturation and analyze the data (Saunders et al., 2018). I remained cognizant of the concept of data saturation and if data saturation appeared to occur with fewer participants; additional data collection continued the first 10 participants, then I enlisted three additional research subjects and requested additional data from those already interviewed through a member checking process.

Member checking helped with the robustness of data and findings, as participants had opportunities to review initial interpretations and could add to, clarify, or correct data or the initial interpretations of the data. The member checking process helps to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, including its credibility and confirmability (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Wu et al., 2016). Varpio et al. (2017) related data saturation with member checking and thematic emergence, which may be mutually dependent. Booth (2016) also noted that member checking can help improve the transparency of analysis efforts and helps demonstrate thoroughness of data collection and analysis, enhancing the reasonableness of the analysis. Accordingly, I engaged participants in a member checking process following my initial review of the data, which helped me to confirm data saturation and prepare for the subsequent steps of thematic data analysis with a content analysis approach.

Data Analysis Plan

A widely acceptable systematic data analysis process can lead to accurate, verifiable findings, which with qualitative methodology involves the identification of emergent themes through a stepwise process (Stuckey, 2015). Whereas in quantitative studies, analysis leads to statistically drawn conclusions, qualitative researchers make conceptual and interpretative contributions (Booth, 2016). Toward that end, I applied triangulation with a content analysis approach, as described by Elo et al. (2014) to identify major themes used to answer the overarching research questions.

Triangulation is a strategic process of considering the contributions of multiple data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena based on

identified convergence of information derived from different sources (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014). Although it is impossible to uncover every possible answer to a research question, triangulation is a way to explore the different levels and perspectives that emerge from rich data; researchers make sense of the various findings from the data while explaining and demonstrating the richness of the information that emerges (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). Triangulation of data therefore required that I was attentive to and focused on the substance of the sources of data, their areas of convergence and divergence, and the contributions of the different forms of data to the answers for the research questions.

Qualitative content analysis is a reflective process that further involves identifying the frequencies of specific words, phrases, and concepts that lead to patterns that coalesce into themes (Booth, 2016). The process for content analysis started with organizing, reading, and studying data, which in this research endeavor were the transcriptions of the video-recorded interviews and notations derived from the protocol used to review documents. Reading and studying data enables progressive focus on emerging issues and facilitates an appreciation for the wholeness, breadth, and depth of data, as overarching concepts begin to surface and areas of divergence and convergence within and across cases become more obvious (Russell et al., 2016). Subsequent steps involve dividing texts into meaningful units, formulating codes and then grouping codes into categories that combine into themes (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). I combined, reflected on, tested, labeled, and reported themes and discrepant findings, while supporting and illustrating findings with specific examples from the data, including excerpts from texts,

such as relevant quotations derived from both documents and the answers to interview questions.

Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software is a tool that many researchers apply to their analytical efforts. Houghton et al. (2017) suggested that software such as NVivo can facilitate the qualitative data analysis and enhance transparency. As described by Zamawe (2015), software such as NVivo is a supportive tool that does not perform nor take the place of researcher in the data analysis process; rather, the tool is an aid in the analysis process, whereby the researcher remains in control of the reflective data analysis process. NVivo can be useful in data management, coding, storage, synthesis, and the identification of themes that emerge from large volume of data (Bufoni, de Sousa Ferreira, & Oliveira, 2017). I used software, such as NVivo, as well as Word and Excel functions, as necessary and appropriate to accomplish the goals of qualitative data analysis.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility stems from methodological integrity of qualitative studies, including case studies, to ensure rigor and to enhance trustworthiness of reported findings (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Providing methodological descriptions that are consistent with widely accepted design steps and reflexivity add credibility to the study (Saunders et al., 2018). Data saturation, member checking and triangulation also strengthens credibility (Noble & Smith, 2015; Wu et al., 2016). I utilized and documented widely acceptable case study design steps, enlisted participants in a member

checking process, and triangulated data to enhance credibility. The peer review process that is inherent to doctoral level research also enhanced the credibility of the study as well as researcher reflexivity.

Transferability

Transferability is similar in concept to the idea of quantitative generalizability (Saunders et al., 2018). It is inappropriate to assume that case study findings transfer readily or appropriately to other contexts, settings, or conditions (Cleland, 2017). Appropriate transferability of findings depends on the prudent judgments of readers, guided by the tick descriptions of the context, sample, steps, and other research details that researchers can provide (Hyett et al., 2014). Accordingly, reported details about this research assists readers in making appropriate judgments about transferability. I thoroughly documented design steps, explained sampling strategies, described the sample and population, and detailed the steps of the research design, data collection, and analysis. Recognition of the limitations, assumptions, and rationales for choices in qualitative research also clarifies details that can help others consider the appropriateness of transferability of the study results (O'Cathain et al., 2015), which was accomplished in this study by acknowledging limitations, recognizing assumptions, and identifying delimitations.

Dependability

Systematic and well-documented research enhances the dependability of qualitative studies; for example, dependability stems from stability of data collection and analysis protocols (Wu et al., 2016). Dependability leads to consistent repeatable research

steps and findings, which is a qualitative counterpart to reliability (Elo et al., 2014; Sutton & Austin, 2015). Repeating the research is beyond the scope of this study; however, I documented the choices and steps in ways that can enable others to apply them at different times and settings. Enhancing dependability in this study was the use of data collection protocols, explanations about the multiple data sources, and triangulation of data. Triangulation, protocols, member checking, and details about the sources of data improve trustworthiness, reduce bias, and increase the likelihood that repeat studies and their results would be consistent (Birt et al., 2016; Noble & Smith, 2015; Ranney et al., 2015). I collected data by adhering to protocols, triangulating data, engaging in member checking, and providing thorough reports about the sources of data to enhance the dependability of the study and improves trustworthiness of the results.

Confirmability

Consistent data analysis protocols, reflexivity, triangulation, and neutrality may strengthen confirmability of generated conclusions (Wu et al., 2016). Confirmability pertains to the idea that results are not made up, biased, or imaginary and can be corroborated (Leung, 2015). Confirmability is representative of verifiable conclusions drawn from the research, which stems from transparently describing steps throughout the research and maintaining records of the research path, thereby establishing an audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I maintained neutrality and provided an audit trail, transparently describing the steps and maintaining meticulous records of the research and data, to enhance confirmability and strengthen the trustworthiness of this study.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical research standards for this study were consistent with the guidelines established by the IRB and data collection did not commence until after IRB approval. The IRB process is typically consistent with the guidelines of the Belmont Report (Hokke et al., 2018), or the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) that emphasized ethical actions that maximize benefits and minimize risks to human research subjects. Respectful, just, fair conduct with voluntary participants involves an informed consent form process, whereby prospective human research subjects can understand their rights and responsibilities and can choose to participate voluntarily and withdraw at any time (Brédart, Marrel, Abetz-Webb, Lasch, & Acquadro, 2014; Bromley et al., 2015). I presented each prospective research participant with an informed consent form that participants were able to read and discuss, and that they each signed before data collection began.

Informed consent is a principal tenet of ethical research anchored by the individual autonomy of human subjects (Holden et al., 2018). The informed consent process enhances trust, honesty, and transparency that can result in cooperative processes that lead to trustworthy research findings (Manti & Licari, 2018). Voluntary participation means that prospective participants may choose to or not to sign the informed consent form (Gupta, 2018). However, only individuals who agreed to the informed consent terms and signed the form became participants of this study. The informed consent form conveyed the purpose of the study, including contact information, risks and rights, and participants' roles and responsibilities. Included was a statement about the recording of

interviews and the statements about confidentiality and the protection and safeguarding of data. Emphasized was the voluntary nature of participation, the absence of tangible incentives, the right to withdraw at any time (before, during or after data collection) and the lack of consequences or penalties for withdrawing or choosing not to participate at all. There were no risks other than the commitment of time and the minimal discomfort from the normal course of sitting, standing, talking, recalling, and conversing about experiences.

Reliance upon publically available contact information, including Internet-based association websites and social media, can yield an ethically recruited desirable sample without the need to secure permissions for access to privileged information (Hirsch et al., 2014; Hurwitz, Schmitt, & Olsen, 2017). To recruit a convenient sample, as described by Malterud et al. (2016), I used publically available contact information through the Internet to identify small business IT companies and employees in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Using freely published contact information to recruit participants for this study, I sent email invitations with attached informed consent forms for review.

Individuals interested in participating, who believed they met the eligibility criteria explained in the invitations and who are willing to sign the informed consent form, chose to voluntarily opt in the study. Confirmation of eligibility and receipt of a signed informed consent form (via participants' choice of fax or email) occurred before data collection began. Any participant could choose to withdraw by communicating such a request and any data collected to the point of the request to withdraw would be

immediately destroyed and thus excluded from the main study data analysis process. No participants requested withdrawal at any time during the study.

Data were confidential. Confidentiality and anonymity are ethical research practices that protect the privacy of human subjects; while confidentiality refers to separating identifying information from participants' data, anonymity refers to collecting data without knowing any personal identifying information (Allen, 2017). I knew the participants' names and other identifying information but kept that information separate from the data I collected, thereby exercising confidentiality procedures. The safeguarding of participants' identities encouraged honesty, shielded them from stress and embarrassment, and protected them from possible ramifications. Confidentiality minimizes risks (Surmiak, 2018). Pseudonyms were the means for referring to participants (P1, P2, and P3) in published reports and there were no names or other personally identifying marks on video recordings, transcriptions of data, or documents. To be able to exclude data from any participant who withdraws, there was a list that indicated which participant received a given pseudonym. The list remained in a locked cabinet in my home office along with hard copies of any signed informed consent forms. The list and informed consent forms remained separate from the actual data that were only identifiable through assigned pseudonyms.

Secure storage of data protects participants and the integrity of the data and research efforts (Filkins et al., 2016). Data security is critical to participants' privacy and confidentiality and is essential for complying with ethical research protocols (Gupta, 2018; O'Toole, Feeney, Heard, & Naimpally, 2018). Electronic forms of data (files with

recordings, word processing, analysis software, copies of documents, and transcribed interview answers) remained on a password-protected computer in my home office and I had sole knowledge of the password. Hard copies of documents collected and signed informed consent form will remain in a locked file cabinet in my home office and data downloaded to an external storage format will remain in a different locked file cabinet in my home office for 5 years following the study. I have sole possession of the keys to the cabinet drawers. After exporting data, I deleted electronic files from the computer. Five years after the study, I will destroy the externally-stored electronic data storage unit via permanent deletion and will burn any hard copies of papers, including documents and signed informed consent forms.

Summary

In this chapter, I included the details about the method and design selected for this study. Convenient sampling using publically available contact information to recruit participants was an ethically acceptable way to draw participants from the population of small business IT employees in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia who had experiences with ITIL service operation implementation. Instruments for data collection included protocols for video-recorded and transcribed semi-structured interviews and document review, along with demographic, contextual, and additional data pertaining to participants' perspectives about implementation experiences. A pilot study helped to refine the instruments and data collection protocols. Data collection continued with 13 participants, until data saturation. Data analysis involved the triangulation of data derived from these multiple sources. Further content analysis led to the four major emergent

themes reported in Chapter 4. Steps taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study included attention to credibility, transferability, confirmability, dependability, and ethical concerns. Data collection did not occur until after IRB approval and the informed consent process. The use of pseudonyms and secure storage of data helped to protect participant confidentiality and minimize risks to participants. Chapter 4 includes the results of the pilot study, data collection, and analysis that led to answers to the research questions based on the four major themes that emerged from the data.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation. Three research questions and the job performance theory as the conceptual framework were the foundations of this study. The first research question pertained to the job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experienced with the implementation of ITIL service operation. The second research question was about how small business IT operation employees described their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. The third question was an inquiry into how small business IT operation employees described any changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. Four major themes emerged from the data, culminating in answers to these research questions.

Chapter 4 includes the outcome of the data collection efforts and the analysis conducted with virtual interview data collected from 13 small business IT operation support employees in the state of Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Described in the chapter are the research setting, demographics of the sample, and outcomes of the data collection efforts. The procedures applied to the data analysis, the evidence of trustworthiness, and the study results complete the chapter.

Pilot Study

The field-testing process and pilot studies helped assess and refine the design. The field testing and pilot were means to evaluating the integrity of the study protocol in preparation for the larger study, to test data collection questionnaires, and to more fully

understand the processes and resources including time required for successful completion of the main study. The pilot study helped me practice and refine the interview process and determine reliable estimates of the time required to collect the data from each participant. Data and feedback collected from three individuals in a field testing and pilot study process were not part of the data analyzed in the main study. The pilot study and data collection occurred after IRB approval.

After the pilot study, changes to the data collection instruments included omitting some interview questions that were considered vague or difficult to answer, asking for more demographic information, changing question order, and changing plans from audio-recording to video-conferencing recording. Notations included the time required to complete data collection with a research subject, which averaged approximately 30 minutes. Adjustments to interview style to improve data collection efforts included the practice of follow-up and probative questioning techniques to clarify answers and add depth to the data. Testing of the computer conferencing and recording equipment occurred during the pilot study to ensure an effective process for high quality recordings of interview sessions.

Research Setting

Represented in the sample were 13 participants from seven companies, located across Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Each participant in the sample was a small business IT operations support employee, who was working to provide IT operation support services using and implementing ITIL service operations processes. The small businesses provided IT consulting services to federal and state government agencies. The

main variation in terms of companies under study was their organizational size, ranging from 20 to 150 employees, with corresponding differences in net income.

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic, I conducted all interviews from my home office using social media teleconferencing tools to comply with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) social distancing guidelines. Due to limitations of social distancing, document review involved reliance on online and web-based sources without collection of original paper documents through any face-to-face contact. Interviews occurred after office hours and at times and dates specified by participants as most convenient.

Demographics

Recruitment efforts initially resulted in the contact of 25 prospective participants (see Appendix A), contacted through their publicly available contact and email information on the itSMF USA LinkedIn group. Criteria were that each participant was a small business IT operations support employee who provided IT support services using and implementing ITIL service operations processes. Of the 25 prospective participants, 15 completed the informed consent form by responding to the informed consent email with the words “I consent.” Data saturation appeared to occur after interviews with 13 participants. Table 1 includes participants’ assigned pseudonyms, their IT support roles, and number of years of ITIL experiences.

Table 1

Sample Demographics

Participant	IT Support Role	Years of ITIL Experience
P1	AWS Support Officer	13 years
P2	Cybersecurity Incident Response Support Engineer	10 Years
P3	ITIL PMO Support Manager	15 Years
P4	IT PMO Support	12 years
P5	Archer Support Manager	10 Years
P6	Network Systems Support Engineer	12 years
P7	Network and Communications Support Engineer	12 years
P8	Splunk Support Engineer	10 Years
P 9	IT Service Request Analyst	2 years
P10	Network Administration Support Engineer	11 Years
P11	Network Administration Support Engineer	10 Years
P12	Incident Support Manager	11 Years
P13	Incident Support Manager	9 Years

Data Collection

Thirteen participants in a convenient sample completed semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B) through an online video conferencing format. Participants were small business IT operations support employees with experience providing IT services using ITIL service operations processes. Interviewing through video conferencing made computer-based recording of the interviews possible. The shortest interview was approximately 30 minutes and the longest interview was almost 45 minutes. Participants consented to the recording and transcription of interviews when they signed the informed consent forms. After each interview, transcriptions of the answers to the questions led to a written record of the interviews in a textual data format. The result was a written record of approximately 20 pages of typed double-spaced data.

Reviewed documents included mission, vision, and value statements; leadership, executive team, and staff job descriptions; company portfolio and rankings; competencies and certifications; and articles, internal case studies, and press releases, derived from Internet sources.

The member-checking process added to the data. Following the initial interpretations of the data collected from the interviews and review of documents, I emailed participants a summary of potential thematic findings, with the purpose of inviting their additional insight, in a member checking process (see Appendix C). Two participants immediately returned additional comments about the initial interpretations of data, which added to the findings. Other responses to the member checking process led to conclusions that there was a general agreement with the initial impressions of the data. The process of content analysis and triangulation led to four major thematic findings.

Data Analysis

A systematic data analysis process led to verifiable findings in the form of emergent themes. The stepwise process, involving triangulation with a content analysis approach, as described by Elo et al. (2014), resulted in the identification of four major themes, used to answer the overarching research questions. Triangulation in this study was the strategic process applied to the contributions of multiple data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena, based on identified convergence of information derived from different sources. Although it was impossible to uncover every possible answer to the research questions, triangulation was a way to explore the different levels and perspectives that emerged from rich dataset. In this study, I attempted to make

sense of the data by explaining and demonstrating the richness of the information that emerged. Triangulation of data required attentiveness to the substance of the data, their areas of convergence and divergence, and the contributions of the different sources to the answers for the research questions.

Applying triangulation in a qualitative content analysis required me to apply a reflective process that involved noting the frequencies of specific words, phrases, and concepts that led to patterns that coalesced into themes. The process for content analysis started with organizing, reading, and studying data, which included the transcriptions of the recorded interviews, notations from the review of documents, and answers to the additional questions. Reading and studying data enabled progressive focus on emerging issues and facilitated an appreciation for the wholeness, breadth, and depth of data, as overarching concepts began to surface. Notations of potential areas of divergence and convergence within and across cases helped reveal possible themes.

Subsequent steps involved dividing texts into meaningful coded units, and then grouping coded categories that led to major themes. Analysis continued with testing ideas, labelling thematic findings, and reporting discrepant findings, while supporting and illustrating findings with specific examples from the data. Verbatim excerpts from the textual data, such as relevant quotations from the answers to interview questions, were useful to illustrate context and meaning of the findings from the content analysis process.

Computer software was useful in data management, coding, storage, synthesis, and the identification of themes that emerged from large volume of data. Computer-aided qualitative data analysis software, along with Excel functions, and Word file

compilations were tools used to organize and analyze data. While the supportive functions of software such as NVivo did not replace my role as research analyst, the tools were aids in my reflective data analysis process.

Four major themes emerged from the data through moving inductively from coded units to larger representations including categories. For example, the first thematic finding pertained to leadership understanding, which was referenced by the majority of participants, and coded into management support and employee perceptions. As shown in Table 2, subcategorization and data coding stemmed from participants' words and phrases offered in the answers to the interview questions.

Table 2

First Major Categorical Findings

Theme	Subcategory	Coded Data
Leadership Understanding	Management Support	• ITIL implementation needs to be top down in order to be effective. • Need for a top-down approach and it importance of being embraced by leadership • It can't start in the middle. • Management support is required for ITIL to succeed • Management understood the requirements and importance • Management commitment was obtained • Getting management and non-IT departments buying • Upper management visibility
	Employee Perceptions	• ITIL implementation needs to be top down in order to be effective. • At first employee's resistance to change • Increased collaboration between the various business units and IT • Increased the efficiency of IT's ability to deliver to our customer base • Performance has increased since ITIL improved project flows *(table continues)*

	• After ITIL implementation operational savings expenses reduced

Additional coding and categorization of data led to the second major theme, pertaining to preparation and training. All of the participants in the study discussed preparation, training, skills acquisition, and certifications, coded into job readiness, knowledge and skill acquisition. As shown in Table 3, subcategories stemmed from participant's words and phrases offered in the answers to the interview questions.

Table 3

Second Major Categorical Findings

Theme	Subcategories	Coded Data
Preparation and Training	Job Readiness	• A means of providing training • Better understanding often through training • ITIL implementation lead to recognizing IT training requirements for IT staff • Ensure each team member be trained in ITIL practices • Enforced established best practices and processes • Helped to understand value in defining tasks and checklist • Learn new processes and meet identified requirements • Taught our team many new processes
	Knowledge and Skill Acquisition	• Attained knowledge, skills, and experience • Learn the ITIL service operation knowledge base Acquired new IT process knowledge to improve IT service resolution • Knowledge transfer due to improved documentation • Knowledge in IT service gaps and prioritization. • Knowledge to fulfill operations solutions • Repeatable processes to record and measure tasks and activities. • Better understanding of how to make requests and the service overall • Acquire and maintain ITIL certifications

Further coding and categorization of data led to findings that pertained to the third major theme, revolving around establishing and embracing an ITIL culture. This ITIL culture stemmed from corresponding changes in workplace behaviors, experiences, and motivation, and time and patience. As shown in Table 4, subcategories stemmed from participant's words and phrases offered in the answers to the interview questions.

Table 4

Third Major Categorical Findings

Theme	Subcategories	Coded Data
Establish a Patient ITIL Culture	Time and Patience	• We took the time to implement our processes so they were consistent with the organization's overall ITIL approach • Initial acceptance may be difficult but over time the effectiveness of ITIL implementation will ultimately be seen and welcomed. • It took some time to see benefits • After some time, it becomes a second nature • Time, money, understanding, and true adoption
	Workplace Behavior	• Communication amongst IT personnel • IT changes are now discussed and approved before implementation. • By having a defined and documented process, workplace behaviors have become more seamless and concise • Partner relationship with customer base
	Motivation	• Motivation to work base on documented processes • Motivated by additional task on workflow • ITIL has raised level of motivation based on employee accountability • Implementation generated other areas • Improved user/It support relationship • Positive and encouraging
	Workplace Experience	• Enforced documentation. • Better understanding of defined and documented processes • Establishing operational rules/guidelines • Following standardized processes changed workplace • Reduced conflict between the various Business units and IT

Continued coding and categorization of data led to findings that formed the fourth major theme, pertaining to the need to embrace an emphasis on continuous improvements. Such improvements surrounded process improvements, customer satisfaction improvements, and workplace experience improvements, including enhanced employee satisfaction and performance. As shown in Table 5, subcategories stemmed from participant's words and phrases offered in the answers to the interview questions.

Table 5

Fourth Major Categorical Findings

Theme	Subcategories	Coded Data
Embracing Continuous Improvements	IT Process Improvements	• ITIL process had improved IT service • ITIL improved the performance level • Implementation has become smoother and more efficient than prior to ITIL service operation • Continuous focus on ITIL implementation improvement areas • Implementation improvements to become smoother and more efficient
	IT Business Process Alignment	• Improve structured work and business processes • Improve processes of project management • Critical improvements in process and standardization of IT services. • Productivity increase with process improvements
	Customer Satisfaction	• Continued focus on service delivery to meet customer needs • Improvements in service delivery can continue to lead to positive customer satisfaction • Better execution and productivity so employees' performance continue to greatly improve
	Employee Performance	• Job satisfaction improvements with recognition

Discrepant findings were also obvious in the data and through the analysis process. Discrepant findings stemmed from within cases, such as one participant in

particular who claimed, “Behavior has not changed” yet later explained that employees were more “motivated because of increase in workflow… [and] performance has increased since ITIL improved project flows.” Conclusions drawn were that the employees were more motivated with higher performance, although their actual behaviors remained unchanged as a result of ITIL implementation. These discrepant findings may stem from different interpretations of the questions asked.

One participant offered markedly different answers that the majority of the participants. For example, while most considered ITIL implementation to be a mostly good and successful experience, one participant reported “minimal success” with ITIL implementation, as shown in Figure 1. As would be expected, most of their answers regarding ITIL were similarly ambivalent, in comparison to the majority of data collected from other participants. For example, when asked if the participant (P8) noticed any change in motivation after ITIL implementation, their answer was, “There has been no change in motivation. We all still want a vacation.” Reasons for the lack of success included that idea that the new processes, “confused the other people who were too proud to ask questions.” When further questioned, P8 explained that, “implementation was poor so I didn’t gain much I didn’t already have, except an understanding that for ITIL to work it needs to start at the top to gain the traction necessary for success.” Conclusions drawn from the discrepant data supported the major thematic findings, that ITIL success involves leadership support and understanding, as well as adequate preparation and training.

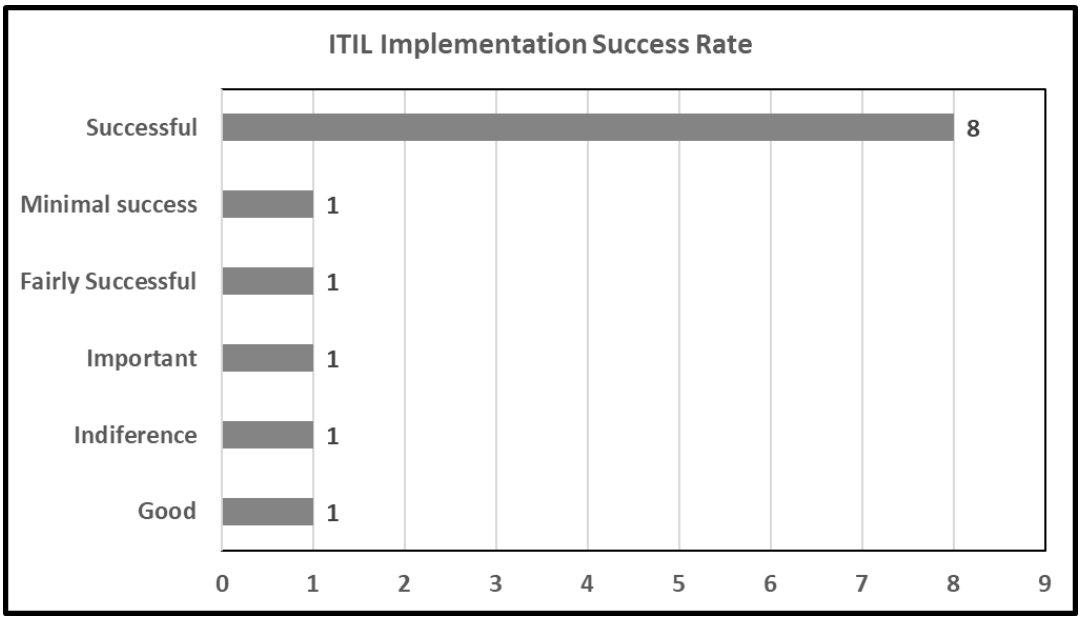

Figure 1. Perceptions of ITIL implementation success.

Reported in the study results are the details about the four major emergent thematic findings. The first theme is that successful ITIL implementation, leading to positive changes in job performance, begins with the development of ITIL understanding and support of leaders. The second theme is that successful ITIL implementation, which can lead to positive perceptions of employee job performance, begins with ample preparation and training. The third theme revolves around the ideas expressed by participants that successful ITIL implementation involves the creation of an ITIL oriented organizational culture, which requires and encompasses time and patience. The fourth major theme pertains the concept that successful ITIL implementation involves embracing the idea that continuous improvements are necessary to support positive changes in processes and performance. Detailed report of the findings, with exemplary

participant quotations, are in the section of study results that follows the discussion of the trustworthiness of the methodological elements and findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility in this study stemmed from adherence to the steps that build methodological integrity of qualitative studies. The detailed methodological steps and descriptions of those steps are consistent with widely accepted design elements, adding reflexivity and credibility to the study. The peer review process inherent to doctoral-level research, which encouraged reflexivity and adherence to rigorous research protocols, also enhanced the credibility of the study. Data saturation, member checking, and triangulation, as proposed in Chapter 3, and as implemented in this study, also strengthened credibility. I enlisted participants in a member checking process and collected data from a convenient sample through multiple sources, making it possible to achieve data saturation and triangulate data to enhance credibility.

Transferability

Transferability may be appropriate, depending on the other contexts, settings, or conditions. Appropriate transferability of findings will depend on the prudent judgments of readers. To enhance the likelihood of appropriate transferability, I provided thick descriptions of the context, research setting, sample, steps, and related research details. Throughout the research process, I thoroughly documented design steps, explained sampling strategies, described the sample and population, and detailed the steps of the research design, data collection, and analysis. Recognition of the limitations,

assumptions, and rationales for choices in qualitative research also clarified details, to help others consider the appropriateness of transferability of the study results.

Dependability

Systematic and well-documented research steps enhanced the dependability of this qualitative study. Although dependability encompasses the idea of achieving consistent repeatable research results, repeating the research is beyond the scope of this study. However, I documented the rationales for the choices and the sequence of steps to enable others to apply them at different times and settings. The reliance on a convenient sample and achieving data saturation also increased the dependability on findings, in addition to the use of data collection protocols, explanations about the multiple data sources, and triangulation of data. Increasing the likelihood that repeat studies and their results would be consistent, I relied on triangulation, protocols, and member checking, which according to research experts, such as Birt et al. (2016), Noble and Smith (2015), and Ranney et al. (2015), can improve trustworthiness and reduce bias.

Confirmability

Confirmability is representative of verifiable conclusions drawn from the research, which also stems from transparently describing steps throughout the research and maintaining records of the data and research path, thereby establishing an audit trail (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I maintained neutrality and provided an audit trail, transparently describing the steps and maintaining meticulous records of the research and data, to enhance confirmability and strengthen the trustworthiness of this study. Consultations with doctoral committee members and defense of the research steps and

findings, along with continuous scholarly and professional scrutiny of the research steps and results, enhanced confirmability of the findings from this research. The use of consistent data analysis protocols, reflexivity, triangulation, and neutrality, along with the audit trail, strengthened the confirmability in this study. Confirmability also pertains to the idea that results were not conjured, biased, or imaginary (Leung, 2015); hence, data saturation stemming from multiple informants, followed by the member checking process, helped to ensure that the interpretations of data analysis findings aligned with the realities of participants' experiences.

Study Results

Three research questions and the job performance theory as the conceptual framework were the foundations of this study. The first research question pertained to the job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experienced with the implementation of ITIL service operation. The second research question was about how small business IT operation employees described their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. The third question was an inquiry into how small business IT operation employees described any changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. Findings from this study were that positive perceptions of job-related changes, job performance, and ITIL experiences depended largely on leadership understanding and support, preparation and training, a patient ITIL culture, and continuous improvement efforts. The details of these thematic findings follow, within the context of the participants' interview answers, and as evidenced by the review of documents, that supported the findings.

Theme 1: Leadership Understanding

The sentiments expressed by participants were that successful ITIL implementation, leading to positive changes in job performance, begins with the development of ITIL understanding and support of leaders. Related documents reviewed had references to leaders' need to "empower" and "encourage" teams and to "get the service management team actively engaged." Leaders, according to one company document, help to "unlock creative juices" and to link "know-how with the right technology and tools" to become "more efficient" in the quest to "accomplish their goals and objectives." Additional finding from the review of documents was the notation that "extensive experience and guidance of our leaders" is "instrumental" to "continued success."

Participants in the study further explained the role of leadership in their ITIL implementation experiences. For example, P8 said, "ITIL implementation needs to be top down in order to be effective. It can't start in the middle… for ITIL to work, it needs to start at the top to gain the traction necessary for success." P2 claimed that leaders must "understand ITIL service and what it means" and "understand your priority and where to start." P11 said, "We have noticed that a top-down approach and getting management buy-in in our effort were the reasons for success of the ITL. It helps to prioritize the tasks, provided adequate resources and communicate with all employees." The "top-down approach" discussed by participants helped in establishing priorities, provided adequate resources, and communicating with all employees.

There was an understanding of the associated leadership challenges among the participants in the study. For example, P3 identified, “understanding” at the leadership level as one of the “biggest challenges.” P3 added, that to overcome such challenges, there is effort toward “understanding roles of responsibilities much better because of the opportunity to have them defined and documented.” P4 explained, “Early on in the ITIL implementation process IT management understood the requirements and importance ...but did not have the support of management … Once management commitment was obtained the focus was to ensure management of the benefits of ITIL.” P4 further discussed, “a number of challenges at various levels within the organization” including the need “to agree on an implementation approach along with getting management and non IT departments buying.” The consensus was that the benefits of ITIL implementation to employees and the organization requires understanding of leadership and the challenges that leaders and staff must overcome to realize the gains that are attainable through success.

Theme 2: Preparation and Training

Successful ITIL implementation, which can lead to positive perceptions of employee job performance, begins with ample preparation and training. Positive changes in job related knowledge and skills which the majority of participants believed impacted their job performance positively stems from adequate preparation for change and related ITIL training. Company documents included a focus on “competencies” and “certifications.” Documents related to the emphasis on training included references to “Continuous experimentation and learning” as an “underlying philosophy” and

"principle." Training should, according to documented practices, "allow for a degree of experimentation without fear of failure."

Examples from the interview data included the discussion of P1 about, "a means of providing training to new employees by virtue of necessary documentation that can be referenced." P3 said, "Once employees have better understandings often through training, exposure, and vested interest – motivation and adaptation to ITIL Operational processes become much clearer. "P4 said, "The ITIL project recognized the requirement to ensure that each team member be trained in ITIL practices. The organization has funded training and has incorporated ITIL training into the Knowledge Management System." P12 said the related training, "helped me and many other staffs to learn new process and to meet all identified requirements… [and] taught our team many new processes to improve the productivity and to accomplish our project in timely matter and under control." Ample skills training and knowledge sharing is integral to positive employee experiences associated with ITIL implementation success.

Some of the participants were involved in certifications or helping to train others, while other participants recommended specific approaches to learning. For example, P4 explained that, "Specific team members are required to acquire and maintain ITIL certifications." P3 discussed involvement in the educational process, saying "After getting ITIL Expert Certified, and focusing my studies around operations, I'm often called upon to aid in projects or educational support writings on subjects around my understanding and experiences with regard to IT Operations support." P5 said, "As I attained knowledge, skills, and experience in IT service operation, I also increased my

proficiency in implementing ITIL service operation." P5 elaborated on the training process by first stating, "There are many fields of work where you study the material and then apply it in the workplace afterward." P5 then further explained, "However, I feel that for the ITIL service operation processes, it would be practical to attain some amount of IT operations work experience first, then learn the ITIL service operation knowledge base." P5 added, "Similar to riding a bicycle - learn to ride first, then go read about how to be a better rider." The consensus among participants was that a combination of training and hands-on applications leads to positive employee experiences leading to ITIL implementation success.

ITIL implementation training led to recognized changes in workplace behaviors. Changes in workplace behaviors represented a shift toward strategic and proactive behaviors. For example, P5 explained, "ITIL service operation defines the behavior of the workspace by having in place operational rules, guidelines for any and all scenarios that may arise during the workday." P3 said, "Workplace behaviors have become more seamless and concise." P12 said, "ITIL service operation changed our workplace behaviors since everyone is now followed a standard process throughout many IT organizations." P13 said, "the behaviors overall in the workplace has improved because task flow implementation has become smoother and more efficient than prior to ITIL service operation." P3 explained, "Before any exposure to the framework, most of my experiences have been based on operations in fire-fighting modes…we went from fire-fighter to strategic and more proactive." P3 added, "After the gained insight, my experience has been more deliberate, more intentional, and more proactive in my overall

operational approach for me and my teams." Training and experiences led to a shift in workplace practices that the majority of participants felt were positive changes in behaviors that had benefits to their organization, customers, and staff.

Theme 3: Establishing a Patient ITIL Culture

Successful ITIL implementation involves the creation of an ITIL oriented organizational culture, which requires and encompasses time and patience. The time and patience invested in the nurturance of an ITIL culture creates a foundation of positive job performance as a consequence of related changes in work practices. Establishing an ITIL oriented organizational culture depends on the buy-in (that requires involvement and commitment), as well as the attitudes and actions of both leadership and staff. Documents reviewed also specifically noted the concept of culture. For example, ITIL related documents from participants' companies referred to "culture - people and process" as well as the "sub-cultures" formed within organizations, and an emphasis on a "culture of continuous learning."

Regarding patience in terms of the time it takes to develop and embrace an ITIL culture, P2 said, "We experienced ITIL implementation in multiple phases and it took some time to see benefits." P2 described an initial "resistance to change and following processes, however after some time, it becomes a second nature and people start following. There was new a process for request fulfillment, access management, etc." P3 said, "The biggest challenges have been time, money, understanding, and true adoption." P6 said, "We took the time to implement our processes so they were consistent with the organization's overall ITIL approach." P13 said, "Initial acceptance may be difficult but

over time the effectiveness of ITIL implementation will ultimately be seen and welcomed." ITIL involves assessing the effectiveness and performance of all service operations processes and functions over time.

Regarding the ITIL culture specifically, P2 said to, "Establish an ITIL culture." P1 referred to, "a company culture acceptance and shift which highlights the need for a top-down approach and it importance of being embraced by leadership." P3 said, "Insistence on documentation, and approval of changes by upper management was an indication of a culture change and upper management visibility…Adequate training was also approved by management to signal a change of culture in IT processes." P11 claimed there has been a "positive and encouraging" impact as a result of ITIL culture. P9 explained how a shift to an ITIL culture, "aligned our business goals to our project delivery." ITIL shall be embraced as an organizational culture aligned with goals and needs.

Part of establishing an ITIL culture is the transformation through buy-in throughout the organizational levels. For example, P4 said, "We faced a number of challenges at various levels within the organization to agree on an implementation approach along with getting management and non IT departments buying in." P4 elaborated that "we have transformed the organization's understanding of the overall value of IT services… throughout all levels of the organization. We had to develop or redesign a number of IT processes to align with ITIL service delivery models." P6 said, "From my perspective ITIL helps place more of a framework around processes and ensure they're documented well. This can be applied to all levels of work." P1 said,

"Changes are now discussed … Business units are more involved in change approvals before implementation." P4 claimed, "ITIL implementation has changed the way our service delivery team interacts with the customer base… IT now has a partner relationship with each customer base." P4 added, "IT operations can have both a positive or negative effect on the organization ability to meet its objectives… There are [now] increased interactions with various external departments." Implementation and introduction of help desks and quality control teams meant that employees were being monitored more closely while being helped and supported by an available staff to help with their technological transition.

Part of an ITIL culture is the involvement and commitment of staff. P1 said, "The company has a whole is also less dependent on individuals" and there has been, "Increased collaboration between the various Business units and IT." P3 said, "Support teams have a better understanding of roles and responsibilities … of their value to the business…I am more holistic in the way I view operations." However, P5 described, "a large professional staff engaged 24-7-365 to keep it fully functional. Without ITIL processes in place, there would be total chaos." P12 said, "Once the ITIL process was implemented, everyone in each organization followed through with their staffs for each assigned events/tasks to meet the schedule." P2 talked about, "improved communication and knowledge across all IT teams which was helpful with company and customer ITIL value realization, satisfaction, and growth." The majority of respondents registered positive changes after ITIL was implemented.

Changes to the culture of the organization accompanying ITIL implementation included a change in workflow and approach to tasks. For example, P1 said, ITIL lead to "better ways of doing the same tasks." P2 explained, "It helped us to clearly focus on important areas … knowledge and got better understanding of the process." P3 said, "Implementing ITIL in operational environments actually improved my perspective as well as my overall skills … ITIL has provided the baseline that can be used across the board." P13 claimed, "With the implementation of ITIL business structure has become more streamlined and organized." Because the implementation of ITIL is about defining, documenting, reviewing, and redesigning organizational procedures based on guidelines for better practice, the application of ITIL contributes positively to these processes.

Participants discussed the change to an ITIL culture. Before ITIL implementation, according to P1, "The company was usually more dependent" and after ITIL implementation, "there has been a higher level of knowledge transfers, just from improved documentations." P2 said, "There was a significant change before and after ITIL implementations…We saw critical improvements in process and standardization of IT services." P3 similarly shared, "Operations were siloed, disjointed, and provided no overall value to the environment" but after ITIL implementation the organization was "transitioning into an annual savings" stemming from the "support model change and implementation." P4 said, "After ITIL implementation, there has been an increased focus on service delivery and meeting the needs of the customer base." P7 explained, "Our productivity increased, and our customers are happier, while wasteful and unproductive ways of our business execution are shredded." P9 similarly said, "prior to ITIL

implementation, we had less quality of service and customer satisfaction; post ITIL has been a great improvement in service delivery which has resulted in positive customer satisfaction and appreciation."

The transformation to an ITIL culture is not without challenges. For example, P6 said, "ITIL can feel like there is too much structure." P2 said, "At first, there was resistance to change and following processes, however after some time, it becomes a second natural and people start following." P7 warned, "A process is only successful if followed and applied diligently. Hence if employees are not executing as intended or do not have a legitimate buy-in or commitment, the expected outcome would not be reached." P12 shared, "The ITIL process started with some bumps … we had our owned process in the past but ITIL process taught our team many new processes to improve productivity and accomplish our project in a timely matter and under control." P13 described the change in culture from ITIL implementation as helping, "to raise the levels of motivation by assisting in holding employees accountable for their respective duties and tasks." Therefore, the job-related changes that the employees experienced seemed dependent on the circumstances to help them overcome challenges in adopting or moving towards the adoption of ITIL processes.

Theme 4: Embracing Continuous Improvements

Successful ITIL implementation involves embracing the idea that continuous improvements are necessary to support positive changes in processes and performance. The idea expressed was that job related changes and job performance are not static as a result of ITIL implementation. The process of continuous improvement is a necessary

goal to nurture and sustain the positive workplace and performance changes that can stem from ITIL processes. Documents reviewed included a focus on “Quantify, then track improvements and success” and “create shared interest” in “improvements.” Additional emphasis was on “measuring both team success” and “customer feedback” to assess success and guide improvement efforts.

Regarding continuous improvements, P1 said, “ITIL was not about just one point of time in process, however it requires continuous improvements.” P2 referred to, “Growth in business values and internal process improvements…Continuous refinement of processes… knowledge transfer from one domain or deployment area could be very useful in another area.” P7 discussed striving toward, “best practices and processes.” P5 also talked about, “continuously keeping up with the enterprise network technology, associated hardware, software, implementation and management. As a direct result of that increased work experience, your proficiency in the implementation of ITIL service operation will also improve.” P4 also referred to, “lessons learned, risk and issue tracking, change management, project reporting and stakeholder engagement management” thereby improving “a system that can be utilized by the entire organization.”

Regarding ITIL implementation, the majority of participants reported increases in employee satisfaction, which is an attractive area for continuous improvements. P13 shared, “I feel that my experience has become better due to the fact there is more structure and organization of tasks and duties with ITIL implementation.” For example, P4 emphasized the organization’s annual employee satisfaction survey and that the “IT

department has a 23% increase in overall job satisfaction since the implementation of ITIL. IT Management feels that ITIL implementation has been a key factor for this improvement." P4 added, "Employees have noted that they now feel that their service delivery is known and appreciated by the entire organization." Employee performance can improve greatly with appreciation and satisfaction, corresponding with productivity improvements as well enhanced motivation to perform.

Performance is a key area that most participants felt are part of the ITIL improvement efforts. For example, P11 claimed that, "Performance has increased since ITIL improved project flows." P12 explained that, "ITIL process had improved our IT service operation performance within our IT organization in many different ways to achieve the same goals." P13 said that the move toward an organizational ITIL culture "improved the performance level by organizing and optimizing task completion by using the effectiveness of clearly outlining deadlines as well as respective dependencies."

Efficiency and productivity were areas referenced by participants that are aspects of continuous improvement through ITIL implementation. For example, P6 said, "I've found that processes run more smoothly and are easier to measure. Yes, the processes implemented can be more detailed and prescriptive but that is the cost." P4 said, "Overall, the implementation of ITIL has increased the efficiency of IT's ability to deliver to our customer base. Being able to document and report KPI throughout the organization has a positive impact on the value of IT services." P7 said, "Our productivity increased, and our customers are happier, while wasteful and unproductive ways of our business execution are shredded… There is much better execution and

productivity with more synergy among our employees in every aspect of the organization." In a continuous improvement effort, P2 recommended, "Be agile….perform a gap analyses of between where you are and where you want to go." Pursuing and applying best practices and enhancing know-how of ITIL optimize the everyday application of the ITIL system. Continuous improvement efforts help workers achieve goals and improve their efficiency in the IT climate.

Summary

Answers to the three research questions stemmed from the four major thematic findings that emerged from the data. Two of the research questions pertained to changes that occurred as a result of ITIL implementation. The first research question pertained to the job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experienced with the implementation of ITIL service operation. The third question was an inquiry into how small business IT operation employees described any changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. The majority of participants in the sample described positive job-related and job performance changes following ITIL implementation. Positive job-related changes, as well as job performance improvements, that participants described appeared dependent on leadership understanding and support, preparation and training, patience amidst change to an ITIL culture, and commitments to continuous improvement efforts.

The second research question was about how small business IT operation employees described their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operation. The majority of the participants in the sample reported job performance

experiences that were positive and encouraging following ITIL implementation. Improved job performance experiences reported by the participants in the sample similarly stemmed from a leadership orientation toward supportive resources, opportunities for growth in knowledge and skills that occur within an ITIL-oriented organizational culture, and multi-level involvement in strategic and proactive continuous improvement efforts.

Chapter 5 includes the discussion of these results and conclusions drawn from these findings. The discussion of the four major themes, around which answers to the research questions revolve, will occur in light of the conceptual framework and previously published findings. These interpretations of findings will include the ways they confirm, disconfirm, and extend related knowledge. Further acknowledgement of the limitations of this study leads to the recommendations for leaders and future researchers, and the implications of the study for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore perceptions involving job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation. Four major thematic findings that emerged from the data pertained to leadership understanding and support, preparation and training, patience amidst changes to ITIL cultures, and commitments to continuous improvement efforts.

In this chapter, I discuss the four major themes which helped to answer the research questions and conclusions from these findings. Discussion of the four major themes involves previously published findings and the job performance theory as the conceptual framework. The following interpretations include the ways findings confirm, disconfirm, and extend related knowledge. Additional acknowledgements of the limitations of this study lead to recommendations for leaders and researchers, concluding with implications of the study for positive social change.

Interpretation of Findings

Answers to the three research questions stemmed from the four major thematic findings that emerged from the data. Two of the research question pertained to changes that occurred as a result of ITIL implementation. RQ1 pertained to job-related changes that small business IT operation employees experienced with the implementation of ITIL. RQ3 was about how small business IT operation employees described changes in job performance after the implementation of ITIL . The majority of participants in the sample described positive job-related and performance changes following ITIL implementation.

Positive job-related changes as well as job performance improvements that participants described appeared to be dependent on leadership understanding and support, preparation and training, patience amidst changes, and commitments to continuous improvement efforts.

RQ2 was about how small business IT operation employees described their job performance after the implementation of ITIL service operations. The majority of participants in the sample reported job performance experiences that were positive and encouraging following ITIL implementation. Improved job performance experiences reported by the participants in the sample similarly stemmed from a leadership orientation toward supportive resources, opportunities for growth in knowledge and skills that occur within an ITIL-oriented organizational culture, and multi-level involvement in strategic and proactive continuous improvement efforts.

Campbell (1990) identified significant predictors or determinants of an individual's job performance, which included motivation, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and skills. In this study, findings were consistent with these tenets of job performance theory, in that positive perceptions of job performance and reported experiences of positive changes to job performance following ITIL implementation stemmed from adequate leadership support, preparation, and training, which motivated employees. Leadership support, preparation, and training enhanced knowledge and skills required to motivate employees toward improved performance outcomes. This was especially apparent in the findings that participants who had positive perceptions of leadership support and training described being motivated toward performance

enhancement; participants who described less optimal experiences reported a lack of motivation or relatively fewer positive job-related changes following ITIL implementation. These findings are consistent with the ideas expressed by Campbell et al. (1993), who postulated that differences in job performance may be a function of major performance determinants, including support for the building of knowledge and skills.

Further described by Adjali (2017) was how behavior and results relate to performance; while behaviors are actions, results are changes that stem from behaviors, and performance is the organizational value of behaviors that remains an ongoing concern of modern businesses. According to the majority of participants in this study, viewed in light of the job performance theory, the enhanced performance that can stem from ITIL implementation is a consequence of the value of their changes in behavior that led to improved results. These changes in behavior had greater value to the business when driven by leadership support and understanding, and training that led to a change in culture and continuous improvement efforts.

Training and support were not the only factors that participants believed led to post-ITIL implementation performance improvements. As Borman and Motowidlo (1997) also concluded, there are other organizational enabling factors that also enhance or hinder individual performance, also known as contextual performance. Contextual activities are the organizational and social activities that indirectly aid individual performance; Bormon and Motowidlow argued that these concepts encompass organizational behavior that could predict job performance. As expressed by the majority of participants in this study, one can view these types of contextual factors and

organizational behaviors as a type of organizational culture. In this study, the ITIL organizational culture took time to develop and nurture, but ultimetley led to the perceptions of improvements in employee and organizational perforamnce.

To extend insight into the scope of employee performance, Pradhan and Jena (2017) and Park and Park (2019) emphasized other aspects of working situations that could affect job performance: uncertainty and unpredictable work situations, interpersonal adaptability, proactivity, and attitude, among others. These four factors, in particular, were consistent with the experiences expressed by the sample in this study. For example, there were data about how ITIL implementation moved employees and their organizations from “fire-fighting” to “proactive and strategic.” There was a prominence in the dataset of concepts related to adaptability, which required patience, preparation, support, and continuous effort, especially in interpersonal, multi-level, and team contexts. There was a consensus that emerged from the data that ITIL implementation helped to mitigate uncertainties and unpredictability, and in some cases might even lead to a sense of over-structure. Nevertheless, these concepts revolved around the attitudes of employees and aligned well with the previous focus of Pradhan and Jena, and of Park and Park, on predictors of job performance as extensions of the job performance theory.

Motivation, as previously identified by Campbell et al. (1996) as integral to job performance, stems from conditions and actions that encourage one toward optimally accomplishing a job or activity (Rasmi et al., 2017). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation within organizations can affect workforce stability, growth, productivity, and job

satisfaction (Quesado et al., 2016). The majority of participants in the sample expressed increased motivation (post-ITIL implementation) from intrinsic elements related to feelings of improved job satisfaction and extrinsic elements, such as the appreciation expressed by others as a result of improved work outcomes and process experiences. The concepts of self-adopted work behaviors and self-efficacy, as also dicussed in prior literature (Quesado et al., 2016; Rasmi et al., 2017; Weseler & Niessen, 2016), was not a focus in this study and did not appear to emerge from the data as a major thematic finding. However, the implication from the four major themes is that leadership support and training within an ITIL-oriented culture revolving around continuous improvement efforts, could enhance self-efficacy which might positively shape self-adopted work behaviors.

Similarly, Weseler and Niessen (2016) and Groen et al. (2017) highlighted employee participation in the development of performance measures and perceived measurement quality, as well as perceived control over performing well and job performance. While these related concepts were beyond the scope of this study, the emphasis of participants on the continuous improvement orientation as part of a post-ITIL implementation culture, was an indication that performance measurements and quality were important to them. However, in association with the focus on improvement efforts, there was also an emphasis in company documents on “continuous experimentation and learning” as an “underlying philosophy” and “principle” that allows “for a degree of experimentation without fear of failure.” The idea appears to be

consistent with the concept of a certain degree of employee control with respect to their performance measures and improvement efforts.

The first major themes revolves around leadership understanding and support, which is consistent with the volume of research findings about the impact of leadership on employee performance and experiences. For example, many research study conclusions were that leadership and human resource practices are influential on the performance of employees, especially helpful for adopting business practices in various change contexts (Cuéllar-Molina et al., 2019). In general, invested leadership influences employee performance (Mittal, 2016), which participants in this similarly expressed.

The second major theme pertained to preparation and training. From the previously published literature, findings were that change processes that include adequate training can counter the negative effects of job redesign (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Conclusions drawn by Okundaye et al. (2019) in the small business setting, was that leaders must identify the training needs of skilled and determine the optimal leadership that can enhance employee and organizational success amidst IT-related changes. These findings aligned with participants' experiences that proper training led to new skills acquisition that could positively influence their work performance. Additional findings from previous literature were that ITIL improved the service-oriented focus for IT employees, but implementation barriers included lack of appropriate employee education and managerial time commitment that undermined employee motivation. According to participants in the study, appropriate employee education starts with leadership understanding and the commitment to a patient culture of continuous learning.

The third major theme pertained to the development of a patient ITIL-oriented organizational culture. Prior conclusions drawn were that organizational culture and leadership enhanced employee engagement, which could improve an employee's performance (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2016). Although engagement was not a specific focus of this study, participants did verbally link leadership with culture and performance. Humphries et al. (2016) similarly focused on attention to employees' needs, concerns, and experiences in their workplaces and daily tasks, which are aspects of the ITIL-oriented organizational culture that participants discussed. Bertsen (2018), following the work of earlier authors, discussed bureaucratic, innovative, and supportive cultures when applied to concepts such as ITIL implementation, as discussed in Chapter 2. Participants in this study appeared to describe a supportive culture (known as friendly, helpful and harmonious with trust, equity, relationships, and collaboration) as a preferable context for ITIl implementation growth in their small businesses.

The fourth major theme revolved around commitments to continuous improvement efforts. Implementation of the ITIL itself is a quality improvement tool and technique to standardize IT services; accordingly, it can help small businesses achieve customer satisfaction goals and maximize information service processes to increase IT service quality (Obwegeser et al., 2019). Yet, there is an ongoing need for small business leaders to implement quality improvement continuously to maximize benefits and minimize potential drawbacks that small business ITIL project leaders might encounter (Eikebrokk & Iden, 2016). Bernsten (2017) similarly claimed that businesses need to focus more on continuous improvements of ITIL processes and experiences following

implementation, which is what participants in this study also explained. Emphasis of prior studies has been on staff participation in process improvements to motivate employees toward achieving organizational goals (Elbaz & Haddoud, 2017). Consistent with the findings in this research were the previous assertions that management practices oriented toward continuous improvements among the workforce enhance performance (Bloom et al., 2016). Echoed by participants was the idea advanced by Sastry-Akella and Venketeswara (2016) in their model of performance enhancement, which included feedback, follow-up action and appreciation to motivate and demonstrate organizational support and continuously improve upon IT efforts. As Jantti and Kallinen (2017) concluded, and participants similarly shared, a trained and rewarded workforce becomes skilled and motivated, which inspires service excellence, and affects the customer experience positively, resulting in increased customer satisfaction leading further into increased service sales and organizational growth.

Limitations of the Study

A potential limitation of this qualitative research pertains to potential biases that may emerge during the data collection and analysis process, due to the subjective nature and smaller samples used in qualitative research, in comparison to quantitative or mixed methods (Morgado et al., 2017). The representation of six companies in the sample, along with the review of related documents, triangulation of data from multiple sources and informants, and the identification of discrepant findings helped to eliminate bias from sampling and interpretations. The selection of the conceptual framework of the study was also pertinent to the interpretation of findings; however, a comprehensive review of the

related research and a comparison of findings from previous research efforts with similar study interests demonstrated an appropriate applicability of the job performance theory to this research effort.

The geographic location of the study was Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia, with a focus on small businesses IT employees. As a multiple case study of small business IT employees, the findings from this research are not readily transferable to other IT employees in other locations or types of businesses. I was able to reach and recruit participants to form a convenient sample appropriate for qualitative case studies and participants were willing to provide the data necessary for data saturation and for answering the research questions. In this research, it was not possible to prove that accounts of experiences provided by participants were truthful reflections of their actual experiences; however, the reported experiences of participants well-aligned with the findings in the previously published literature, while adding new insights about the experiences if small business IT employees tasked with ITIL implementation at the service operations levels.

Recommendations

From the literature reviewed and data analyzed for this study, several themes emerged, which can represent recommendations for leaders: understand, train, patiently promote, and improve. ITIL projects are classified by the type of action, regardless of the size and core ITIL is a benchmark for IT service management, which focuses on processes, people, and technology. For certain cases, though, the introduction of ITIL is seen as yet another development initiative. This strategy is unlikely to be successful

because the application of ITIL is still an organizational reform initiative. It is important to embrace an ITIL culture in an organizational transformation plan to excel in adopting ITIL. The ITIL culture is mirrored in each employee's engagement and attitudes towards a new philosophy of IT support. The challenge is that the attempt to reform has a huge effect on ITIL 's time, expenditure, and risk application.

Technology is evolving more rapidly than ever, and IT administrators cannot keep themselves up to date on their expertise and knowledge. At the same time, international organizations are struggling to reach alignment with IT. ITIL is the latest phenomenon in the world. Indeed, in an AXELOS survey about the “importance of ITIL,” 52% of APAC respondents and 68% of participants in Latin America said ITIL is becoming more important because of current developments in the cloud and agile and ITIL is the ITSM system most commonly used in the world (Rongala, 2015). Therefore, thousands of organizations globally attempt to apply best practices to ITIL, including a growing number of small businesses. According to the results of this study, best practices include leadership support, training, growing into a patient ITIL-oriented culture, and embracing continuous improvement efforts.

In ITIL, service operation is a sub-part, which is made up of several operations and functions. The ITIL service operation aims to ensure efficient and efficient delivery of IT services. This phase includes the completion of user requests, the resolution of service failures, the correction of problems, and routine operational tasks. Accordingly, IT workers in small businesses are integral to the success of many modern businesses (Lamichhane, 2019). More small business IT operation employees are tasked with

managing and negotiating ITIL implementation, which could lead to changes in job performance, following the implementation of ITIL service operation that begins with leadership support, proper training, a patient ITIL-oriented culture, and continuous improvement efforts.

When it comes to making the process of implementing and using ITIL operations easier for IT personnel, there are a number of measures that can be taken, and the IT personnel and workers can enjoy several benefits. The ITIL architecture specifies how service administration, assisted by information management, can be effectively applied. ITIL training can be of immense benefit for individuals working in an IT environment or wherever IT services are a key competency. For certain businesses, the arrangements with the vendors are also primarily the obligation of the manager at the service point. Although this partnership is significant, the understanding is that service development and management is most successful when ITIL traditional control peers often create relationships around the various enterprises (Holland, 2015).

Organizations will note the intention of the consumers as they implement it: the workers before ITIL is introduced. Managers want simple and less complicated solutions to ITIL problems. To the workers, ITIL is typically long and convenient. However, some companies utilize an ITIL standardization system and comprehensive mechanism. Furthermore, companies need to develop and fill in troubles if they want to improve quality and reduce redundant information. When groups work for the same goals, such as with an ITIL-oriented culture, the efficiency of the program's departments can significantly improve. Leadership understanding and support, preparation and training,

and a focus on continuous improvements with ITIL implementation can enhance its employees ' working experience.

It is necessary to note that ITIL is not a norm, but a structure and framework. Each ITIL method is not mandatory or fully practiced by organizations, the company should choose the areas (processes) best suited to its industry. The ITIL structure offers ITIL implementation guidelines on a small scale for organizations who want to adopt, but need to adjust according to their size. Therefore, when organizations implement ITIL practices, it has a significant impact on how employees go about handling it. Analysis of data helped understand that after implementing ITIL, IT processes have been optimized, with reduced conflicts between IT and business processes. Companies assign workers to engage in preparation and tests learn ITIL principles and obtain the credential of ITIL practitioners. The workers are educated in the best practices and know-how of ITIL and the everyday application of the ITIL system. It helps workers achieve and improve their efficiency in the IT climate.

Although the majority of respondents recorded the fact that ITIL had helped their employees in various aspects of the job, further training can add to this transition and bring about smoother operations. The ITIL Credential Base at ITSM offers students with in-depth experience and comprehension of best practices and procedures in IT service management. Employees qualify but opportunities are not limited to trained IT practitioners, and can include company executives and business process owners who may obtain ITIL foundation training. These best practices can be developed to give direction in the implementation of service management with their corresponding publications and

certifications. The qualification course structure flow, ITIL version 3, is based on the Jakobs (2010) assertion by the ITIL V3 Foundation, which requires at least 17 units of Life Cycle Management to receive the ITIL Specialist Credential. ITIL Advanced Qualification is the highest degree of ITIL technical qualification. Interview analysis helped understand the fact that after ITIL implementation, and training of employees, the job performance of these employees was found to have significantly increased, but requires leadership understanding and support, proper training, and a commitment to a patient ITIL culture oriented toward continuous improvements.

Most IT infrastructure providers face problems and inefficiencies in the systems of business operations. Many causes have been established that have contributed to a lag in ITIL adoption: consumer frustration increased costs for curriculum and maintenance, time delays in delivering benefits, the tension between immediate requirements and costs, success factors, the reluctance of staff, and lack of integration capability. Eliminating such inefficiencies through continuous improvement efforts can help to boost the capacity of the IT service supplier to deliver the best customer care assistance.

Future Research Recommendations

Implementation of ITIL best practices may have beneficial impacts on the efficiency of operations in information management, but the study of efficiency was not a focus of this study. Accordingly, future research that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature could revolve such concepts as efficiency, engagement, and results. Although this study pertained largely to participants' experiences and led to some discovery of best practices to support IT employees, it did not specifically identify best practice in service

operations. Future studies to include that focus could expand the knowledge base for leaders of all organizational sizes.

The implementation of ITIL as a tool and technique for quality improvement can standardize IT services, help small businesses to achieve client satisfaction objectives, and maximize information service processes. This study did not revolve around those ITIL-related concepts, which could be the focus of future study. Improving the standard of IT infrastructure can stem from further study of operation employees who can highlight specific elements of ITIL implementation that add to or distract from their job operations. Included in that research could be how ITIL allows IT divisions to reduce downtimes, increase efficiency, improve service quality, develop deliverables for the programs, improve timeliness, and direct the efficient use of capital. Adding more knowledge about the motivational aspects of the employees, can stem from additional research that focuses on how businesses and IT operations work more cohesively.

ITIL may have a positive effect on IT process efficiency, but it is also important to identify the hidden inconveniences small business owners have to adapt to or overcome, which could be an area for future scholarly focus. In addition, quality management strategies to optimize profit and mitigate those inconveniences would help fill that gap in knowledge. Additional research could bridge a knowledge void about ITIL interactions and attitudes of IT workers and customers in small companies after introducing ITIL. ITIL expertise and experience will help IT executives and ITIL authors execute ITIL effectively and put ITIL customers into the closest coordination with small business IT services activities. Instead of the user experience, perceptions, and work-

related changes of the ITIL Implementation phase among small businesses, the majority of previous studies focused on ITIL implementation mechanisms and the business results in larger companies. Though current issues remain sparse related analytical data or research-based hypotheses are available on the possible downsides to ITIL, particularly in the small business setting, additional research can encompass related obstacles, mechanisms of transition, and employee expectations. However, results and analysis from this study helped provide significant insight into the gap that previously existed regarding the operational and employee performance benefits of implementing ITIL service operation.

Implications for Social Change

The findings from this study could be helpful for meaningful positive social change in the field of IT personnel management and IT service management systems. After analyzing the data, I discovered the findings could change senior leaderships behaviors and perceptions in small and medium-sized IT business organizations on how their involvement and participation in ITIL implementation can lead to enhancing employee engagements, motivation and job satisfaction which were all significant experiences shared by the participants in this study. The findings can draw the attention of senior managements and executives towards attending to and prioritizing the well-being and workplace experiences of their IT support employees directly impacted with the additional tasks, roles and responsibilities associated with implementing ITIL processes. Furthermore, findings could be used by IT personnel management to define attainable job performance goals and appropriate IT personnel performance

compensation into the organizations' performance appraisal system in order to alleviate the rate of turnover amongst IT support staff within the IT industry.

Academic scholars and management practitioners could benefit from the study in order to further advance their understanding of the integrative role changes in job performance and job related changes experienced by small business IT support employees working in 6 companies across Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia could have when implementing IT service management framework in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. It is obvious that understanding ITIL implementation from the shared experiences of the IT support participants involved in the day-to-day delivery of quality IT services are significant factors that should not be overlooked by senior managements of contemporary organizations if they are going to be successful in the information technology service management industry.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the results, interpretations of findings, implications for social change, limitations, and recommendations. The study used a qualitative multiple case study to unveil four major themes. In addition to the four major themes that helped to answer the overarching research questions in this study, several take-home points emerged from this study.

Implementation of the ITIL is not as easy as anyone can think. It involves educating the IT staff on the framework as well as the advantages to be obtained. The rich and diverse data from the IT support employees in this study has given a voice on how senior managements engagements, adequate preparation and training of IT staff,

coupled with establishing a patient ITIL culture and embracing continuous process improvements can impact the overall job performance and job related changes of IT support employees during the operational implementation of ITIL service operation. These identified thematic findings could further assist scholars and management practitioners in expanding additional knowledge to address the gap in the research in the literature.

Accordingly, future research that is both qualitative and quantitative in nature could revolve such concepts as role ambiguity, role conflicts, efficiency and the different leadership engagements efforts associated with ITIL implementation. Although this study pertained largely to participants' experiences in small business IT organizations and led to some discovery of best practices to support IT employees, it did not specifically identify best practice in ITIL service operations. Future studies to include that focus could expand the knowledge base for ITIL adopters of all organizational sizes.

References

Abdullah, F., & Ward, R. (2016). Developing a general extended technology acceptance model for e-learning (GETAMEL) by analysing commonly used external factors. *Computers in Human Behavior, 56,* 238-256. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.11.036

Airoldi, M. (2018) Ethnography and the digital fields of social media. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 21*, 661-673. doi:10.1080/13645579.2018.1465622

Aithal, P. S. (2017). An effective method of developing business case studies based on company analysis. *International Journal of Engineering Research and Modern Education, 2*(1), 16-27. doi:10.5281/ZENODO.400579

Ali, Z., & Bhaskar, S. B. (2016). Basic statistical tools in research and data analysis. *Indian Journal of Anaesthesia, 60,* 662-669. doi:10.4103/0019-5049.190623

Allen, M. (2017). *The sage encyclopedia of communication research methods* (Vols. 1-4). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Alreemy, Z., Chang, V., Walters, R., & Wills, G. (2016). Critical success factors (CSFs) for information technology governance. *International Journal of Information Management, 36*(6), 907–916. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.05.017

AlShathry, O. (2016). Maturity status of ITIL incident management process among Saudi Arabian organizations. *International Journal of Applied Science and Technology, 6*(1), 40-46. Retrieved from https://www.ijastnet.com/

Asongu, S., & Le, S. (2017). Technological forecasting and social change enhancing ICT for inclusive human development in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 118*(5), 44-54. doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2017.01.026

Bartlett, C., Oehrlich, E., & Mai, M. (2014). Forrester research/itSFM: The state and direction of service management: Progression, deceleration, or stagnation. Retrieved from https://c.ymcdn.com

Berner-Rodoreda, A., Bärnighausen, T., Kennedy, C., Brinkmann, S., Sarker, M., Wikler, D., Eyal, N., & McMahon, S. A. (2020). From doxastic to epistemic: A typology and critique of qualitative interview styles. *Qualitative Inquiry, 26*(3-4), 291-305. doi:10.1177/1077800418810724

Berntsen, K. R. (2017). *ITILs effect on organizational culture, worklife and success from the employee perspective* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from Proquest Dissertation and Theses Database.

Berrahal, W., & Marghoubi, R. (2016). Projection of ITIL framework. *International Conference on Information Technology for Organizations Development*, 2016, 1-6. doi:10.1109/IT4OD.2016.7479279

Bhuvanaiah, T., & Raya, R. P. (2016). Predicting employee work engagement levels, determinants, and performance outcome: Empirical validation in the context of an information technology organization. *Global Business Review, 17*, 934-951. doi:10.1177/0972150916645696

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: A

tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*, 1802-1811. doi:10.1177/1049732316654870

Bloom, N., Lemos, R., Sadun, R., Scur, D., & Van Reenen, J. (2016). International data on measuring management practices. *American Economic Review, 106*(5), 152-56. Retrieved from https://www.aeaweb.org/aer/

Booth, A. (2016). Searching for qualitative research for inclusion in systematic reviews: A structured methodological review. *Systematic Reviews*, *5*(1), 74-80. doi:10.1186/s13643-016-0249-x

Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1997) Task performance and contextual performance: The meaning for personnel selection research. *Human Performance, 10*(1), 99-109. doi:10.1207/s15327043hup1002_3

Bromley, E., Mikesell, L., Jones, F., & Khodyakov, D. (2015). From subject to participant: Ethics and the evolving role of community in health research. *American Journal of Public Health*, *105*, 900–908. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2014.302403

Brown, J., Murphy, C., Kelly, J., & Goldsmith, K. (2019). How can we successfully recruit depressed people? Lessons learned in recruiting depressed participants to a multi-site trial of a brief depression intervention. *Trials*, *20*(1), 131. doi:10.1186/s13063-018-3033-5

Bruce, A., Beuthin, R., Sheilds, L., Molzahn, A., & Schick-Makaroff, K. (2016). Narrative research evolving: Evolving through narrative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Method*, *1*(2), 1-6. doi:10.1177/1609406916659292

Bufoni, A. L., de Sousa Ferreira, A. C., & Oliveira, L. B. (2017). Waste management CDM projects barriers NVivo 10® qualitative dataset. *Data in Brief, 15,* 595–599. doi:10.1016/j.dib.2017.10.014

Campbell, J. P. (1990). Modeling the performance prediction problem in industrial and organizational psychology. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 687–732). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Campbell, J. P., Gasser, M. B., & Oswald, F. L. (1996). The substantive nature of job performance variability. In K. R. Murphy (Ed.), *Individual differences and behavior in organizations* (pp. 258-299). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Campbell, J. P., McCloy, R. A., Oppler, S. H., & Sager, C. E. 1993. A theory of performance. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.*), Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 35-70). San Francisc, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., DiCenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, *41*, 545-547. doi:10.1188/14.ONF.545-547

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *Qualitative Report*, *21,* 811-830. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2

Chakrabarti, S., & Guha, S. (2016). Differentials in information technology professional category and turnover propensity: A study. *Global Business Review*, *17*(3_suppl), 90S-106S. doi:10.1177/0972150916631086

Chigbu, U. (2019). Visually hypothesising in scientific paper writing: Confirming and refuting qualitative research hypotheses using diagrams. *MDPI Publications, 7,* 22-40. doi:10.3390/publications7010022

Cleland, J. A. (2017). The qualitative orientation in medical education research. *Korean Journal of Medical Education*, *29*(2), 61-71. doi:10.3946/kjme.2017.53

Collins, C. S., & Stockton, C. M. (2018). The central role of theory in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 17*(1), 1-10. doi:10.1177/1609406918797475

Conway, J. M. (1999). Distinguishing contextual performance from task performance for managerial jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*(1), 3-13. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.84.1.3

Cuéllar-Molina, D., García-Cabrera, A., & Déniz-Déniz, M. (2019). Emotional intelligence of the HR decision-maker and high-performance HR practices in SMEs. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, *28*(1), 52-89. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-10-2017-0033

Dayal, R., & Rana, R. (2019). Adoption of ITIL best practice methodologies in Indian industries. *Journal of Statistics and Management Systems, 22,* 783-790. doi:10.1080/09720510.2019.1609558

DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. (2019). Semistructured interviewing in primary care research: a balance of relationship and rigour. *Family Medicine and Community Health, 7,* 5-7. doi:10.1136/fmch-2018-000057

Deprez, J., & Euwema, M. (2017). You can’t always get what you want? Leadership

expectations of entrepreneurs. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 32*, 430-444, doi:10.1108/JMP-04-2016-0107.

Eikebrokk, T., & Iden, J. (2016). Enabling a culture for IT services: The role of the IT infrastructure library. *International Journal of Information Technology and Management, 15*(1), 14-40. doi:10.1504/IJITM.2016.073911

Elbeltagi, I., Hamad, H., Moizer, J., & Abou-Shouk, M. (2016). Levels of business to business e-commerce adoption and competitive advantage in small and medium-sized enterprises: A comparison study between Egypt and the United States. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management, 19*(1), 6-25. doi:10.1080/1097198X.2016.1134169

Ellard-Gray, A., Jeffrey, N., Choubak, M., & Crann, S. (2015). Finding the hidden participant: Solutions for recruiting hidden, hard-to-reach, and vulnerable populations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 14*, 1-5. doi:10.1177/1609406915621420

Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngäs, H. (2014) Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *SAGE Open*, 4, 1-10. doi:10.1177/2158244014522633

El Yamami, A., Mansouri, K., Qbadou, M., & Illoussamen, E. (2018). An Ontological Representation of ITIL Framework Service Level Management Process. In *International Conference on Advanced Information Technology, Services and Systems* (pp. 88-94). New York, NY: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-030-11914-0_9

El Yamami, A., Mansouri, K., Qbadou, M., & Illoussamen, E. (2019). Introducing ITIL

framework in small enterprises: Tailoring ITSM practices to the size of company. *International Journal of Information Technologies and Systems Approach, 12*(1), 1-19. doi:10.4018/IJITSA.2019010101

Erlingsson, C., & Brysiewicz, P. (2017). A hands-on guide to doing content analysis *African Journal of Emergency Medicine, 7*(3), 93-99. doi:10.1016/j.afjem.2017.08.001

Eyisi, D. (2016). The usefulness of qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in researching problem-solving ability in science education curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7(*15), 91-100. Retrieved from https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP

Filkins, B. L., Kim, J. Y., Roberts, B., Armstrong, W., Miller, M. A., Hultner, M. L., & Steinhubl, S. R. (2016). Privacy and security in the era of digital health: What should translational researchers know and do about it? *American Journal of Translational Research*, *8*, 1560–1580. Retrieved from http://www.ajtr.org/

Forth, J., & Bryson, A. (2018). *The impact of management practices on SME performance.* Bonn, Germany: Institute of Labor Economics.

Franz, D., Marsh, H. E., Chen, J. I., & Teo, A. R. (2019). Using Facebook for qualitative research: A brief primer. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *21*(8), e13544. doi:10.2196/13544

Fusch, P. I., Fusch, G. E., & Ness, L. R. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change, 10*(1), 19–32. doi:0.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.02

Groen, B. C., Wilderom, C. M., & Wouters, M. F. (2017). High job performance through co-developing performance measures with employees. *Human Resource Management, 56*(1), 111-132. doi:10.1002/hrm.21762

Guillemin, M., Barnard, E., Allen, A., Stewart, P., Walker, H., Rosenthal, D., & Gillam, L. (2018). Do research participants trust researchers or their institution? *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics, 13*(3), 285- 294. doi:10.1177/1556264618763253

Gupta, N., & Sharma, V. (2016). Exploring employee engagement—a way to better business performance. *Global Business Review, 17*(3_suppl), 45S-63S. doi:10.1177/0972150916631082

Gupta, S. (2018). Research design: Ethical issues in designing internet-based research: Recommendations for good practice. *Journal of Research Practice, 13*(2), D1. Retrieved from http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp

Harness, D., Ranaweera, C., Karjaluoto, H., & Jayawardhena, C. (2018). The role of negative and positive forms of power in supporting CSR alignment and commitment between large firms and SMEs. *Industrial Marketing Management, 69*(2), 10-11. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2018.03.006

Hassan, A., Mike, I., & Guyo, W. (2017). Effect of integrated service approach on service delivery at huduma centres in the public service of Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences, 6*(3), 1-12. Retrieved from www.ejbss.com

Hejase, H., Hejase, A., Mikdashi, G., Al-Halabi, A., Alloud, K., & Aridi, R. (2016). Information technology governance in Lebanese organizations. *African Journal of Business Management, 10,* 529-545. doi:10.5897/AJBM2016.8185

Hickman, L., & Akdere, M. (2018). Effective leadership development in information technology: Building transformational and emergent leaders. *Industrial and Commercial Training, 50*(1), 1-9. doi:10.1108/ICT-06-2017-0039

Hinojosa, N., & Gutiérrez-de-Mesa, J. (2016). Literature review of the situation research faces in the application of ITIL in small and medium enterprises. *Computer Standards & Interfaces, 48,* 124-138. doi:10.1016/j.csi.2016.05.001

Hoerbst, A., Hackl, W. O., Blomer, R., & Ammenwerth, E. (2011). The status of IT service management in health care - ITIL® in selected European countries. *BMC Medical Informatics and Decision Making, 11,* 76-82. doi:10.1186/1472-6947-11-76

Hokke, S., Hackworth, N. J., Quin, N., Bennetts, S. K., Win, H. Y., Nicholson, J. M., & Crawford, S. B. (2018). Ethical issues in using the internet to engage participants in family and child research: A scoping review. *PloS One, 13*(9), e0204572. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0204572

Holden, T. R., Keller, S., Kim, A., Gehring, M., Schmitz, E., Hermann, C., & Kind, A. (2018). Procedural framework to facilitate hospital-based informed consent for dementia research. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, 66,* 2243-2248. doi:10.1111/jgs.15525

Holt, K. (2017). *The influence of an ITIL based service desk on users' perceptions of the ITIL service and their use of ICT from the perspective of the IT team* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database.

Houghton, C., Murphy, K., Meehan, B., Thomas, J., Brooker, D., & Casey, D. (2017). From screening to synthesis: Using NVivo to enhance transparency in qualitative evidence synthesis. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 26,* 873-881. doi:10.1111/jocn.13443

Huang, S., Lee, C., Chiu, A., & Yen, D. (2015). How business process reengineering affects information technology investment and employee performance under different performance measurement. *Information Systems Frontiers, 17,* 1133-1144. doi:10.1007_s10796-014-9487-4

Hurwitz, L. B., Schmitt, K. L., & Olsen, M. K. (2017). Facilitating development research: Suggestions for recruiting and re-recruiting children and families. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 1525-1527. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01525

Hyett, N., Kenny, A., & Dickson-Swift, V. (2014). Methodology or method? A critical review of qualitative case study reports. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Wellbeing, 7,* 1283-1294. doi:10.3402/qhw.v9.23606

Iden, J., & Eikebrokk, T. (2014). Using the ITIL process reference model for realizing IT governance: An empirical investigation. *Information Systems Management, 31*(1), 37-58. doi:10.1080/10580530.2014.854089

Ikesaka, R., Langlois, N., Carrier, M., Kearon, C., & Le Gal, G. (2018). Pilot trials in thrombosis: Purpose and pitfalls. *Research and Practice in Thrombosis and*

Haemostasis, 2, 572-579. doi:10.1002/rth2.12117

Imroz, S. M. (2019). A qualitative case study identifying metrics for ITIL request fulfillment process: Perspectives of an information technology service provider group. *Journal of Organizational Psychology, 19*(4). Retrieved from http://www.na-businesspress.com/jopopen.html

Jäntti, M., & Cater-Steel, A. (2017). Proactive management of IT operations to improve IT services. *Journal of Information Systems and Technology Management, 14*(2), 191-218. doi:10.4301/s1807-17752017000200004

Joseph, R. P., Keller, C., & Ainsworth, B. E. (2016). Recruiting participants into pilot trials: Techniques for researchers with shoestring budgets. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion, 14*(2), 81-89. Retrieved from http://www.cjhp.org/

Kaur, N., Figueiredo, S., Bouchard, V., Moriello, C., & Mayo, N. (2017). Where have all the pilot studies gone? A follow-up on 30 years of pilot studies in clinical rehabilitation. *Clinical Rehabilitation, 3*, 1238-1248. doi:10.1177/0269215517692129

Keightley, M., & Hughes, J. (2018). *Pass-throughs, corporations, and small businesses: A look at firm size*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.

Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Practical guidance to qualitative research: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice, 24*(1), 120-124. doi:10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092

Lamichhane, N. (2019). Implementing continual service improvement in business enterprises: A proposal to improve business effectiveness of Nepal. *International*

Journal of Advanced Research and Publications, 3, 238-251. Retrieved from http://www.ijarp.org/

Leung L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care, 4*, 324-327. doi:10.4103/2249-4863.161306

Longfield, K., Moorsmith, R., Peterson, K., Fortin, I., Ayers, J., & Lupu, O. (2016). Qualitative research for social marketing: One organization's journey to improved consumer insight. *Qualitative Report, 21*, 71-86. Retrieved from https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr

Lorincová, S., Štarcho, P., Weberová, D., Hitka, M., & Lipoldová, M. (2019). Employee motivation as a tool to achieve sustainability of business processes. *Sustainability, 11*, 1-15. doi:10.3390/su11133509

Mahy, Y., Ouzzif, M., & Bouragba, K. (2016). Supporting ITIL processes management (ITSM) (2000 — 2010): An overview. *International Journal of System Services, 6*(4), 73 91. doi:10.4018/ijisss.2014100105

Manti, S., & Licari, A. (2018). How to obtain informed consent for research. *Breathe, 14*(2), 145-152. doi:10.1183/20734735.001918

Marrone, M., & Hammerle, M. (2017). Relevant research areas in IT service management: An examination of academic and practitioner literatures. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 41*, 517-543. Retrieved from https://aisel.aisnet.org/cais/

Matzler, K., Strobl, A., Stokburger-Sauer, N., Bobovnicky, A., & Bauer, F. (2016). Brand personality and culture: The role of cultural differences on the impact of brand personality perceptions on tourists' visit intentions. *Tourism Management, 52*, 507-520. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2015.07.017

Melendez, K., Dávila, A., & Pessoa, M. (2016). Information technology service management models applied to medium and small organizations: A systematic literature review. *Computer Standards & Interfaces, 47*(1), 120-127. doi:10.1016/j.csi.2015.10.001

Morgado, F., Meireles, J., Neves, C., Amaral, A., & Ferreira, M. (2017). Scale development: Ten main limitations and recommendations to improve future research practices. *Psychology: Research and Review, 30*(1), 1-20. doi:10.1186/s41155-016-0057-1

Motowidlo, S. J., & Van Scatter, J. R. (1994). Evidence that task performance should be distinguished from contextual performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 79*, 475-480. Retrieved from https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/apl/

Motowidlo, S. J., Borman, W. C., & Schmit, M. J. (1997). A theory of individual differences in task and contextual performance. *Human Performance, 10*, 71-83. doi:10.1207/s15327043hup1002_1

Napitupulu, D., Syafrullah, M., Rahim, R., Abdullah, D., & Setiawan, M. (2018). Analysis of user readiness toward ICT usage at small medium enterprise in South Tangerang. *Journal of Physics, 1007*(1), 1-8. doi:10.1088/1742-6596/1007/1/012042

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *Belmont report*. Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Retrieved from https://www.hhs.gov

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *8*(2), 90–97. doi:10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Neziraj, E., & Berisha-Shaqiri, A. (2018). Impact of information technology and internet in businesses. *Informatol, 51*(1-2), 13-23. Retrieved from https://hrcak.srce.hr

Niebel, T. (2018). ICT and economic growth: Comparing developing, emerging and developed countries. *World Development, 104*, 197-211. doi:10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.11.024

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing, 18*(1), 34-35. doi:10.1136/eb-2015-102054

Nordlöf, H., Wijk, K., & Westergren, K. E. (2015). Perceptions of work environment priorities: Are there any differences by company size? An ecological study. *Work, 52*, 697–706. doi:10.3233/WOR-152123

Noyes, J., Booth, A., Moore, G., Flemming, K., Tunçalp, Ö., & Shakibazadeh, E. (2019). Synthesizing quantitative and qualitative evidence to inform guidelines on complex interventions: Clarifying the purposes, designs and outlining some methods. *BMJ Global Health, 4*(Suppl 1), e000893. doi:10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000893

Obwegeser, N., Tranberg Nielsen, D., & Munklinde Spandet, N. (2019). Continual process improvement for ITIL service operations: A lean perspective. *Information Systems Management, 36*(2), 141-167. doi:10.1080/10580530.2019.1587576

Okundaye, K., Fan, S. K., & Dwyer, R. J. (2019). Impact of information and communication technology in Nigerian small-to medium-sized enterprises. *Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Science, 24*(47), 29–46. doi:10.1108/JEFAS-08-2018-0086

Orta, E., & Ruiz, M. (2014). A simulation approach to decision making in IT service strategy. *Scientific World Journal*, *2014*, 829156. doi:10.1155/2014/829156

O'Toole, E., Feeney, L., Heard, K., & Naimpally, R. (2018). Data security procedures for researchers. *Jameel Poverty Action Club, North America, 8*(1), 1-14. Retrieved from www.povertyactionlab.org

Pradhan, R. K., & Jena, L. K. (2017). Employee performance at workplace: Conceptual model and empirical validation. *Business Perspectives and Research*, *5*(1), 69-85. doi:10.1177/2278533716671630

Quesado, P. R., Aibar-Guzman, B., & Rodrigues, L. (2016). Extrinsic and intrinsic factors in the balanced scorecard adoption: An empirical study in Portuguese organizations. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics, 25*, 47-55. doi:10.1016/j.redeen.2016.03.002

Rahayu, R., & Day, J. (2017). E-commerce adoption by SMEs in developing countries: evidence from Indonesia. *Eurasian Business Review, 7*(1), 25-41. doi:10.1007/s40821-016-0044-6.

Råheim, M., Magnussen, L. H., Sekse, R. J. T., Lunde, Å., Jacobsen, T., & Blystad, A. (2016). Researcher-researched relationship in qualitative research: Shifts in positions and researcher vulnerability. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, *11*, 10-14. doi:10.3402/qhw.v11.30996

Rahmana, N., Yaacobb, Z., & Radzi, R. (2016). An overview of technological innovation on SME survival: A conceptual paper. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences, 224*, 508-515. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.05.427

Ramawickrama, J., & Opatha, H., & Pushpakumari, M. (2017). A synthesis towards the construct of job performance. *International Business Research, 10*, 66-81. doi:10.5539/ibr.v10n10p66

Ranney, M. L., Meisel, Z., Choo, E. K., Garro, A., Sasson, C., & Morrow, K. (2015). Interview-based qualitative research in emergency care, part II: Data collection, analysis and results reporting. *Academic Emergency Medicine, 22*, 1103-1112. doi:10.1111/acem.12735

Rasmi, R., Amrullah, A., & Sumardi, S. (2017). Compensation and motivation effect to employees' job satisfaction. *Hasanuddin Economics and Business Review, 1*(2), 162-167. doi:10.26487/hebr.v1i2.1188

Rubio-Sánchez, J., Arcilla-Cobián, M., & San Feliu, T. (2017) Analysis about the implementation level of ITIL in SMEs. *Trends and Applications in Software Engineering, 5*(1), 13-22. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-48523-2_2

Russell, J., Berney, L., Stansfeld, S., Lanz, D., Kerry, S., Chandola, T., & Bhui, K. (2016). The role of qualitative research in adding value to a randomised

controlled trial: Lessons from a pilot study of a guided e-learning intervention for managers to improve employee wellbeing and reduce sickness absence. *Trials, 17*(1), 396. doi:10.1186/s13063-016-1497-8

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., … Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: Exploring its conceptualization and operationalization. *Quality & Quantity*, *52*, 1893-1907. doi:10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Shahsavarani, N., & Ji, S. (2014). Research in information technology service management (2000 to 2010): An overview. *International Journal of System Services, 6*(4), 73-91. doi:10.4018/ijisss.2014100105

Sivam, A., Dieguez, T., Ferreira, L., & Silva, F. (2019). Key settings for successful open innovation arena. *Journal of Computational Design and Engineering, 6*, 507-515. doi:10.1016/j.jcde.2019.03.005

Steiner, D., & Mendelovitch, M. (2017). I'm the same teacher": The attitudes of science and computer literacy teachers regarding integrating ICT in instruction to advance meaningful learning. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, 13*, 1259-1282. Retrieved from https://www.ejmste.com/

Sun, R., Gregor, S., & Keating, B. (2016). Information technology platforms: *Definition and research directions*. Proceedings from the Australasian Conference on Information Systems. Auckland, New Zealand: ACIS

Surmiak, A. (2018). Confidentiality in qualitative research involving vulnerable participants: Researchers' perspectives. *Forum Qualitative Social Research, 19*(3), 12. Retrieved from http://www.qualitative-research.net

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: Data collection, analysis, and management. *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 68,* 226-231. Retrieved from http://www.cjhp-online.ca/index.php/cjhp/index

Taylor, R., & Thomas-Gregory, A. (2015). Case study research. *Nursing Standard, 29*(41), 36-40. doi:10.7748/ns.29.41.36.e8856

Tob-Ogu, A., Kumar, N., & Cullen, J. (2018). ICT adoption in road freight transport in Nigeria: A case study of the petroleum downstream sector. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 131,* 240-252. doi:10.1016/j.techfore.2017.09.021

Tseng, S.M. (2017). Investigating the moderating effects of organizational culture and leadership style on IT-adoption and knowledge-sharing intention. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management, 30,* 583-604. doi:10.1108/JEIM-04-2016-0081.

van Rijnsoever F. J. (2017). (I can't get no) saturation: A simulation and guidelines for sample sizes in qualitative research. *PloS One, 12*(7), e0181689. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0181689

Varpio, L., Ajjawi, R., Monrouxe, L., O'Brien, B., & Rees, C. (2017). Shedding the cobra effect: Problematizing thematic emergence, triangulation, saturation and member checking. *Medical Education, 51*(1), 40-50. doi:10.1111/medu.13124

Vodanovich, S., & Urquhart, C. (2017). *ICTs and the computerised hijab: women's experiences of ICT in the UAE*. *Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries, 82*(1), 1-17, doi:10.1002/j.1681-4835.2017.tb00608.x.

Willis, D., Sullivan-Bolyai, S., Knafl, K., & Cohen, M. (2016). Distinguishing features and similarities between descriptive phenomenological and qualitative description research. *Western Journal of Nursing Research, 38,* 1185-1204. doi:10.1177/0193945916645499

Wingerden, J., Stoep, J., & Poell, R. (2018). Meaningful work and work engagement: The mediating role of perceived opportunities to craft and job crafting behavior. *International Journal of Human Resource Studies, 8,* 1-10. doi:10.5296/ijhrs.v8i2.12635

Wolgemuth, J. R., Hicks, T., & Agosto, V. (2017). Unpacking assumptions in research synthesis: A critical construct synthesis approach. *Educational Researcher, 46*(3), 131-139. doi:10.3102/0013189X17703946

Wu, Y. P., Thompson, D., Aroian, K. J., McQuaid, E. L., & Deatrick, J. A. (2016). Commentary: Writing and evaluating qualitative research reports. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, *41*, 493-505. doi:10.1093/jpepsy/jsw032

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Yunis, M., El-Kassar, A., & Tarhini, A. (2017). Impact of ICT-based innovations on organizational performance: the role of corporate entrepreneurship. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management, 30*(1), 122-141, doi:10.1108/JEIM-01-

2016-0040

Zafar, A., & Mustafa, S. (2017). SMEs and its role in economic and socio-economic development of Pakistan. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences, 7*(4), 195-205. doi:10.6007/IJARAFMS/v7-i4/3484

Ziegler, R., & Schlett, C. (2016). An attitude strength and self-perception framework regarding the bi-directional relationship of job satisfaction with extra-role and in-role behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology, 7*, 235-239. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00235

Zschirnt, E. (2019). Research ethics in correspondence testing: An update. *Research Ethics*, *15*(2), 1-21. doi:10.1177/1747016118820497

Appendix A: Email to Purposefully Selected Research Participants

Hello <Participants Name>

How are you doing? My name is Imoovberame Darren. Obazu, a member of the ITSM (ITIL) group on LinkedIn. I obtained your contact information from your displayed profile on LinkedIn through the ITSM (ITIL) group. I am a doctoral student at Walden University conducting a research on Information Technology Infrastructure Library: Postimplementation Experiences of Small Business IT Support Employees. The research study is about exploring the perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT support operations employees following ITIL service operation implementation.

I would like to invite you to take part in my study if you are available via a phone/ skype/google meet/zoom interview. If you are interested in taking part in my study, I will be more than delighted to send you an informed consent email for further details and information. Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. The privacy of each individual participant will be protected. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project.

Thank you as I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Imoovberame Darren Obazu.

Member - ITSM (ITIL) group on LinkedIn.

Doctoral Student.

Walden University.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Participant Code: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Start Time: _____

Finish Time: _____

Total Time: _____

Introductory Script:

Hello, I appreciate your participation to be part of my study. The interview will take between 30 to 45 minutes of your time. During the course of the interview questions, I will be asking you 10 questions and your responses will be part of the data collection that will be used to explore the perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to develop a deeper understanding of the perceptions of job performance and job-related changes experienced by small business IT operation employees following ITIL service operation implementation.

If I may ask, I would like to ask you for your permission to record your responses to the interview questions. Do I have your permission to record? During the interview, feel free to stop or ask me any questions for further clarification. Are there any questions or clarifications before we begin?

Interview Questions:

Section A: General Data

1. Please state your role as an IT support operations employee.
2. Please indicate your years of experience implementing ITIL service operations.

Section B: Specific Data

1. How successful has ITIL been in your business?
2. What changes in your workplace have you encountered after the implementation of the ITIL service operation within your organization?
3. How has implementation of ITIL service operation changed your knowledge and skills, if at all?
4. Why or why not has the implementation of the ITIL service operation changed the level of motivation among IT employees?
5. How would you describe your own IT service operation performance before and after ITIL service operation implementation?
6. How has the implementation of the ITIL service operation changed your workplace behaviors, if at all?
7. How would you describe your overall work experiences since the implementation of the ITIL service operation?
8. What are the differences (if any) in your overall work experiences before and after ITIL service operation implementation?
9. How would you sum up your experiences with ITIL before and after implementation?

10. What advice would you give to other small business IT service operation employees who are preparing for ITIL service operation implementation?

Ending Script:

I would like to thank you for your time and participation in this study. An e-mail copy of the transcribed responses will be sent to you for your review. I will appreciate it if you can respond to any edits to the transcriptions within three days of receiving the email. If I do not receive any feedback within 72 hours, I will consider that you have indicated that the transcriptions are correct and that concludes the interview session.

Appendix C: Member-Checking and Followup Interview Questions

<Participants Name >Greetings,

Thank you again for your time and support of this ITIL research. From the data, four major initial ideas emerged as potentially significant, and I would like to invite your additional insight about these major areas. Please review the brief summary of findings below and answer the questions below each area, as you feel may be necessary and appropriate.

Theme 1: Leadership Understanding

The sentiments expressed by participants was that successful ITIL implementation, leading to positive changes in job performance, begins with the development of ITIL understanding and support of leaders.

Please let me know why you do or do not agree with this finding. How is this finding evident in your workplace or with your own ITIL experiences, if at all*?*

Theme 2: Preparation and Training

Successful ITIL implementation, which can lead to positive perceptions of employee job performance, begins with ample preparation and training. Positive changes in job related knowledge and skills, which the majority of participants believed impacted their job performance positively, stems from adequate preparation for change and related ITIL training.

Please let me know why you do or do not agree with this finding. How is this finding evident in your workplace or with your own ITIL experiences, if at all?

Theme 3: Establishing a Patient ITIL Culture

Successful ITIL implementation involves the creation of an ITIL oriented organizational culture, which requires and encompasses time and patience. The time and patience invested in the nurturance of an ITIL culture creates a foundation for positive job performance as a consequence of related changes in work practices.

Please let me know why you do or do not agree with this finding. How is this finding evident in your workplace or with your own ITIL experiences, if at all?

Theme 4: Embracing Continuous Improvements

Successful ITIL implementation involves embracing the idea that continuous improvements are necessary to support positive changes in processes and performance. The idea expressed was that job-related changes and job performance are not static as a result of ITIL implementation. The process of continuous improvement is a necessary goal to facilitate and sustain the positive workplace and performance changes that can stem from ITIL processes.

Please let me know why you do or do not agree with this finding. How is this finding evident in your workplace or with your own ITIL experiences, if at all?

I appreciate your valuable time and effort invested into this study, and hope to hear from you as soon as possible, with your evaluation of these initial findings. I look forward to your added thoughts and updates.

Sincerely,

Imoovberame Darren Obazu.

Member - ITSM (ITIL) group on LinkedIn.

Doctoral Student.

Walden University.