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Strategies for Implementing Human Resource Information Systems for Nonprofit Organizations

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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MS, Adams State University, 2016

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

The lack of implementing human resources information systems leads to the inability to link human resources with other organizational processes, leading to a disconnect in the workflow and information sharing process. The absence of a human resources information system can limit senior executives' abilities to increase organizational performance. Grounded in the resource-based view theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior nonprofit executives use to implement human resources information systems. Participants were 5 nonprofit senior executives in Germany. Data were collected through semistructured interviews and an analysis of internal and publicly available organizational documents. Through thematic content analysis, the emergent themes identified from this study include strategic alignment, financial flexibility, knowledge sharing, sustainability, and longevity. A key recommendation for nonprofit senior executives is to incorporate financial flexibility in the organization's business strategy increases the capacity to invest in information technology systems that improve human resources functions and organizational performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for senior nonprofit executives to improve organizational performance. Such changes may include improvements in workforce members retention, recruitment, hiring the nonprofit workforce, and enhancing human resources performance to secure nonprofit organizational sustainability to continue supporting communities and their citizens.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my family – their love and support has been the driving force for my dedication to complete this journey. I hope that my children will feel encouraged to pursue their goals and inspired to pursue a doctoral degree in the future.

Table of Contents

ii

List of Tables

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Information technology (IT) systems are undergoing rapid transformations, and organizational leaders establish the implementation of information systems in various areas of an organization (Elsbach & Stigliani, 2019). One of the dominating business process areas undergoing transformation within IT systems is human resources development (Bondarouk, Harms, & Lepak, 2017). Rather than a system of administrative data management, human resources IT systems now include analytical tools, which organizational leaders use to support making strategic decisions related to business sustainability. Marler and Parry (2016) determined that the implementation of such systems leads to improved organizational performance. The authors have also noted that the adoption of human resource IT systems enables leaders to influence organizational growth and adaptability as the workforce changes requiring leaders to identify innovative solutions to employee retention.

Background of the Problem

Researchers have established the advantages of human resources information systems. For example, Marler and Parry (2016) observed that IT in human resources contributed to the effectiveness of the overall performance of an organization. IT systems have the potential to affect improvement in the efficiency of human resource and business processes leading to faster information processing and greater information accuracy (Ravichandran & Mishra, 2018). Although directed towards human resources, human resources information systems provide a number of benefits to the wider organization affecting organizational planning and business decision-making. Bondarouk

et al. (2017) stated that the adoption of human resources information systems improves performance productivity.

Organizational leaders that employ human resources information systems tend to outperform competitors on a variety of performance based measures. However, many organizational leaders face challenges in implementing human resources information systems including financial barriers and concerns about the security of information exchange within organizations (Rahman, Qi, Jinnah, & Liu, 2016). The lack of implementing human resources information systems leads to the inability to link human resources with other organizational processes leading to a disconnect in the workflow and information sharing process (Garaus et al., 2016). To adopt to increasing technology growth, organizational leaders should implement human resources information systems to add value to their human resources department and to improve overall business performance.

Problem Statement

Some business leaders fail to recognize the short-term and long-term benefits of implementing human resource management technologies and human resource information systems (Alam, Masum, Beh, & Hong, 2016). Due to technical resources deficiencies, 57% of nonprofit leaders fail to improve human resource capabilities in all key areas of performance, including recruitment, data organization, data storage, and payroll management (Islam & Mamun, 2016). Many nonprofit leaders are unsuccessful in implementing human resource technology systems to support strategic decisions and human resource process operations (Bondarouk, Parry, & Furtmueller, 2017). The

general business problem is that without adequate strategies to develop strategic planning related to human resources information systems, some senior executives of nonprofit organizations have limited opportunities to improve organizational performance. The specific business problem is that some senior executives of nonprofit organizations lack strategies to develop and implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. The target population for this study consisted of five senior executives in three nonprofit organizations in Germany who successfully developed and executed strategies and derivative action plans to implement human resources IT systems. The implications for positive social change are that the findings of this study may enable senior nonprofit executives to improve organizational performance such as retention of workforce members, recruitment, hiring the nonprofit workforce, and improvement of the human resources performance to secure nonprofit organizational sustainability to continue supporting communities and their citizens.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use the qualitative method to explore individuals' or groups' experiences or to describe human conditions (Koch, Niesz, & McCarthy, 2014). Using a qualitative methodology, researchers explore a phenomenon through an understanding and explanation of participants' perceptions (Koch et al., 2014). The qualitative method

was suitable for this study because the goal of this study was to generate an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of strategies that senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to develop and execute action plans related to implementing human resources IT systems to support the improvement of organizational performance. Researchers use the quantitative method to examine the relationships among variables through hypotheses and to generalize results from smaller samples to larger populations (Yilmaz, 2013). The quantitative methodology was not suitable for this study because I explored senior executives' experiences rather than examining the relationships between and among one or more independent and dependent variables. Researchers use the mixed method to examine and explore complex problems through a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods (Heyvaert, Hannes, Maes, & Onghene, 2013). The mixed method was not suitable for this study because this study did not contain a quantitative component.

Qualitative researchers choose among multiple research designs, including case study, phenomenology, and ethnography (Babchuk, 2017). When the intent is to explore or clarify understanding of an issue or phenomenon, researchers may use a case study design (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2015). I used the case study design because I intended to explore a problem through a collection of experiences allowing for the identification and understanding of numerous phenomena for my study. With the use of a case study design, researchers can explore in depth a specific phenomenon within the real-world context (Yin, 2018). Case study design is one of the most common research designs for applied studies increasing the validity and reliability of the study by

incorporating a variety of data sources leading to in-depth exploration of relevant themes (Lewis, 2015). Researchers use the phenomenological design to describe the meanings of participants' lived experiences (Yin, 2018). A phenomenological design was not suitable for this study because I sought to explore a phenomenon, not to describe participants' experiences. Ethnographic studies are suitable when the purpose of the research is to reveal the common elements of a culture (Wall, 2015). The ethnography design was not appropriate for this study because I did not seek to understand the culture of a group.

Research Question

The research question to guide this qualitative case study was as follows: What strategies do nonprofit senior executives use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance?

RQ1: What strategies did you use to develop action plans for implementing human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance?

RQ2: What performance measures and indicators did you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies for developing and implementing IT in human resources operations processes?

RQ3: What were the key barriers to developing and implementing strategies for IT systems in human resources operations processes?

RQ4: How did you address the key barriers to developing and implementing human resources IT systems?

Q5: What more can you add about successful strategies you use to develop strategies and execute action plans for implementing human resources IT systems?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework I used in this study is Wernerfelt's (1984) resource-based view theory. Wernerfelt determined through his research emerging in 1980s that organizational leaders need to use internal resources available to the organization rather than imitating competitors' resource allocation strategies (Pee & Kankanhalli, 2016; Wernerfelt, 1995). Lin and Wu (2014) stated that in the resource-based view theory, organizational leaders gain competitive advantage with skills, capabilities, and other assets that are unique to the organization and difficult for competitors to copy. Furthermore, the researchers determined that the resource-based view theory contains the assumption that leaders' use of organizational resources affects firms' performance (Lin & Wu, 2014).

Researchers use the resource-based view theory as a framework for understanding how employee performance is contingent on the use of organizational resources (Amit & Schoemaker, 2012). Wei and Liu (2019) noted that organizations achieve successful performance when organizational leaders effectively manage technological resources. The resource-based view theory was expected to be an appropriate lens through which to explore nonprofit senior executives' strategies for developing and implementing IT systems in human resources. I used the resource-based view theory to explain how nonprofit organizational executives develop strategies to use available human resource information systems as an IT resource to increase their organizational performance. Furthermore, the resource-based view theory was relevant for me in explaining how

strategies nonprofit executives use to implement IT systems help to support the effective and efficient operation of human resources processes.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of a research study are important components of planning and conducting a study. Researchers gain knowledge about the scope of their study by identifying facts that are true but not verified, note potential weaknesses of the study, and set the boundaries of the study. This section contains assumptions, limitations, and delimitations pertaining to my study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are concepts that a researcher considers to be true but are not actually verified facts (Gardner & Johnson, 2015). A researcher's assumptions affect the research findings and are critical to understanding research outcomes (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). In this study, I assumed that the participants will provide honest and accurate responses to the interview questions to make an adequate research conclusion. Additionally, I assumed that the participants will present me with accurate and complete information and data. Furthermore, my assumption was that the participants have the expertise to disclose their experiences regarding the implementation of human resource management systems. Last, I assumed that the sample size is sufficient to reflect on the non-profit population and that organizational leaders will have useful insights on strategies for implementing human resource information systems in nonprofit organizations.

Limitations

Limitations are weaknesses of the study that are difficult for a researcher to predict or control (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that the limitations of a qualitative study involve restrictions from uncontrollable external and internal influences that impact a study's methodology and conclusions. One of the potential limitations was my choice of a case study design and conceptual framework. The chosen conceptual framework did not include external industry structures that I may have disregarded during the analysis process.

Another potential limitation of this study was the small sample size. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) identified that a small sample size may lead to the lack of not being penetrating enough to translate into a larger population within the nonprofit sector. Additionally, I restricted the population to nonprofit organizational leaders in Germany. Thus, the findings may not be applicable to all nonprofit organization in other geographical locations. The experiences and views of the selected participants may not represent the experiences and views of other leaders in nonprofit organizations in other geographical regions.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to the rules and boundaries set by the researcher for a study (Yin, 2018). Researchers limit the scope of a study that result from specific choices such as research method, research questions, conceptual framework, and participants. The first delimitation was the choice of using a qualitative study to explore strategies for implementing human resource information systems for nonprofit organizations. The

second delimitation was the purposeful selection of three nonprofit organizations in Germany.

Significance of the Study

The study may add to existing literature on strategies for implementing human resource information systems in nonprofit organizations. This section consists of a description of the potential contributions to business practice and possible implications for social change.

Contribution to Business Practice

In most nonprofit organizations, senior executives develop organizational strategies and align derivative key business processes to provide quality services to members of the communities that their organizations are designed to serve. Research that may lead to improvements of organizational processes may benefit the quality of services and financial performance of nonprofit organizations. The contributions of this study to professional and practitioner applications were that data from this study could identify efficacious strategies and processes for human resources management initiatives so that leaders of nonprofit organizations can increase performance in hiring, recruiting, and retaining staff to reduce implementation and ongoing costs.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change included the potential to increase nonprofit leaders' efficiency in using human resources management processes to secure resources for organizational performance. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources with IT implementation may benefit the communities that leaders of

nonprofit organizations serve through improvements in workforce hiring and retention processes. The results of this study may enable nonprofit executives to understand what strategies may be necessary for the interest of the public and the well-being of community members.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The conception of a literature review is relevant to the development of a research study providing a researcher with an opportunity to expand on existing knowledge (Wolfswinkel, Furtmueller, & Wilderom, 2013). Furthermore, a literature review is a basis for structuring a research study building upon existing literature and determining probing gaps related to the study topic (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). The center of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore what strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance.

This literature review begins with an elaboration on IT systems, including the use of IT systems and business alignment, IT implementation, and business challenges related to IT systems. I then provided a discussion of the conceptual framework, the resource-based view theory, focusing on contrasting theories and the implications of the resources-based view theory in relation to IT and human resources. Finally, I provided an overview of the strategies for implementing human resources information systems.

Strategy for Searching the Literature

I conducted searches to explore and identify literature about the implementation of human resources information systems to improve organizational performance. I

completed searches in the Walden University Library utilizing primary search engines, such as ProQuest, Sage Journals, ABI/INFORM Global, and Business Source Complete to locate peer-reviewed articles. I also used Google Scholar as an alternative research source. The academic and professional literature review for this study included peer-reviewed journals, books, and other academic sources. The strategy for searching the literature was to use a variety of key phrases and terms such as *information technology, information technology innovation, human resources, human resources information technology, resource-based view theory, nonprofit organizations, competitive advantage, resource dependence theory, institution-based view, organizational performance, and business alignment*. I used the purpose statement and research questions to guide the content of the literature review. Additionally, I browsed through journal abstracts to identify relevance of the article to the study. Supplementary techniques included a thorough reading of relevant articles focusing on the purpose, research frameworks, research methods, data analysis, and research findings.

Table 1.

Summary of Sources Researched in Literature Review

Reference Type	Number	Less than 5 years (2016-2020)	Greater than 5 years
Peer-reviewed articles	127	94	33
Non peer-reviewed articles	5	3	2
Books	1	0	1
Total	133	97	36

Research information consisted of 133 sources, including 127 peer-reviewed journals, five non peer-reviewed journals, and one book source. The sources researched in the literature review comprised 74% of peer-reviewed sources that are less than five years from the anticipated graduation date and 26% peer-reviewed sources that have a date greater than five years from the anticipated graduation year.

Information Technology Systems

This section contains an explanation of IT and its alignment with business strategy as well as the implementation of IT. IT is a vital part of the creation of business value and the development of organizational productivity and growth (Wang, Liang, Zhong, Xue, & Ziao, 2012). The implementation of IT and the alignment of a business strategy pose challenges to organizational leaders.

Information Technology

IT constitutes the process of storing, processing, and maintaining data through information systems to efficiently generate information relevant to organizational decision making (Han, Lee, Chung, & Seo, 2013). The purpose of using IT is to maximize employee productivity in an organization and to increase the overall organizational performance. Hence, IT capabilities are increasingly becoming a detrimental factor in reaching a competitive advantage. Many organizational leaders acknowledge the need for advanced IT capabilities and invest in IT systems to meet organizational needs.

As technology develops and innovates, organizational leaders can use IT to provide various advantages to organizational productivity, including the ability to standardize processes enabling quick access to information (Turan & Palvia, 2014).

Quick and efficient access to information provides a resource for organizations to improve business processes and collaboration between sections or departments of an organization. Most importantly, organizational leaders can use IT systems to enable communication between employees, suppliers, and customers leading to the development of a complex IT infrastructure that supports organization processes. Alreemy, Chang, Walters, and Wills (2016) determined that the implementation of IT in organizations leads to the development of IT infrastructures that enable complex information sharing between organizational sections and departments. As a result, organizational members are able to process data efficiently and communicate information effectively and accurately.

In most organizations, IT penetrates the administrative and operational functions of an organization. IT systems offer an efficient way of generating a comprehensive picture of organizational processes that are vital to organizational leaders and their decision making processes (Browne, Dreitlein, Manzoni, & Mere, 2016). IT is used by staff to improve productivity, efficiency, innovation, and competitiveness. IT systems enable organizational leaders to create business value, maximize returns from the investment in IT, and sustain a competitive advantage.

Information technology and business alignment. Bloom, Garicano, Sadun, and Van Reenen (2014) expanded on the use of IT in organizations by emphasizing the alignment of business strategy with IT implementation. The importance of alignment between business strategy and the use of IT lies in the growing attention of technology as part of business value creation (Da Silva & Neto, 2014). Business strategy and IT align when IT systems enable the translation, implementation, and support of business

strategies and objectives. Organizational leaders that use IT capabilities often develop IT strategies that continuously address changing and evolving organizational needs (Bloom et al., 2014). Thus, IT constitutes an ever changing part of organizational growth and leads to increasing advances in organizational processes.

McLaren, Head, Yuan, and Chan (2011) explored that the alignment between IT and business strategy consists of the implementation of IT systems that support overall business priorities. Organizational leaders should conduct IT investments in accordance to organizational objectives. The alignment of IT and business strategies calls for activities that complement and strengthen the accomplishment of organizational goals (McLaren et al., 2011). Both IT and business strategy are tools that business leaders can use to determine organizational success and stronger levels of alignment lead to increased organizational performance.

Information technology systems. IT systems are integral to the processing of data integration. Connecting information gathering with information storage is the focal point of IT systems (Lee, Thomas, & Baskerville, 2015). The electronical collection and storage of information lead to improvements in data management and accessibility. When data entry occurs in an IT system, it is concurrently available to all units of an organization leading to the timely application of business processes (Shiau, Yan, & Lin, 2019). The connectivity between organizational units leads to improved efficiency in communication and transparency.

Various researchers have shown that information technologies lead to improvements in business processes increasing the efficiency of organizational

procedures. For example, Karahanna, Chen, Liu, and Serrano (2019) examined the effects

of IT systems on functions and processes in hospitals. The authors concluded that the

integration of technologies leads to hospital efficiency and increased financial

performance through the improvement of patient care and the reduction of medical errors.

Innovative processes in hospital settings are fundamental to business growth and the

achievement of competitive advantage (Karahanna et al., 2019).

In another study related to IT, Tallon, Queiroz, Colton, and Sharma (2019)

assessed IT systems as a factor in reaching organizational agility in response to

environmental changes. IT systems are tools that assist in the expansion of returns and

achievement of competitiveness by allowing organizational leaders to effectively

determine and respond to market and environmental changes (Tallon et al., 2019).

The integration of IT systems enables organizational leaders to gather and

organize information that is fundamental to decision making and the development of

business strategies (Cespedes-Lorente, Magan-Diaz, & Martinez-Ros, 2019). IT systems

are critical to knowledge and innovation management, which all contribute to the

development of business strategies (Cespedes-Lorente et al., 2019). Furthermore, IT is a

strategic component in investment and organizational growth. Organizational leaders can

use IT systems to generate information that will provide the foundation for future

organizational innovative and sustainable activities (Cespedes-Lorente et al., 2019).

Despite the advancements in IT systems, errors occur in the usage of such

systems. In the process of entering information, human errors, as well as systems errors,

can lead to incorrect reports of information (Jenkin, Chan, & Sabherwal, 2019). In

addition, business owners must create connectivity between systems to avoid duplications in information gathering and retrieval. Information is solely useful when information is gathered systematically and accurately (Woodall, Giannikas, Lu, & McFarlane, 2019). Thus, the correct usage of IT systems requires proper training of employees to circumvent poor quality control of information technologies (Woodall et al., 2019). When organizational leaders choose to use IT systems, they must ensure that employees understand and implement universal data management through standardized acquisition and input of information data.

Information technology implementation. To achieve competitive advantage through the implementation of IT in an organization, organizational leaders should recognize the importance of IT adoption. Not the ownership but the use of IT systems determines the success and value of IT to ensure the sustainability of a competitive advantage (Yang, Yuan, & Huang, 2015). Proper control IT systems is detrimental in maintaining transparency and efficiency of operational processes.

Multiple researchers have shown in their studies that the implementation of IT contributes to organizational growth and success. Nevertheless, the implementation of IT requires engagement and training of employees. Employee resistance to utilizing IT systems to its full potential may lead to the failure of IT implementation of the decrease of business value in IT systems. Ko, Wagner, and Spetz (2018) examined the adoption of IT systems in nursing homes and stated that the lack of training often leads to decrease in effectiveness rather than success. The authors suggested that when implementing IT

system in organizations, organizational leaders should create greater incentives for training of employees in the adequate use of IT.

In a multiple case study, Razak, Jalil, Krauss, and Ahmad (2018) explained that the successful implementation of IT is dependent on various factors, including the influence of the division of labor. Razak et al. (2018) explored the implementation of IT in public schools leading to the findings that the integration of stakeholders as well as shareholders is vital in the success of IT within an organization. The successful implementation of IT systems relies strongly on the alignment with business processes and the integration of internal and external business partners.

Ajjan, Subramaniam, and Subramaniam (2016) stated that the effective implementation of IT is one of the most challenging tasks of organizational leaders. The failure of successful implementation may lead to the waste of resources and decrease the value of an asset, such as IT assets. The authors suggested that organizational leaders should analyze and manage the implementation of IT systems with the help of IT portfolio management. The use of IT portfolios has the potential to improve alignment between IT and business strategy. Additionally, organizational leaders can achieve cost reduction in adopting IT by managing IT activities and its adoption in business processes. Organizational leaders should carefully identify what business processes may benefit from IT systems and how to connect IT infrastructures to minimize the waste of resources and maximize productivity.

Business challenges of information technology. When implementing information technologies to boost organizational performance, business leaders face various challenges related to the acquisition of IT systems. Park, Lee, Lee, and Koo (2017) discovered that only a few businesses possess the levels of IT to compete effectively in markets that are driven by innovation. The authors proposed a strategy to invest in both internal and external IT governance to meet the challenges related to the alignment of IT within organizations (Park et al., 2017). The authors showed that outsourcing of IT resources may lead to improvements in the alignment of IT with organizational processes.

Other researchers, such as Kim, Mithas, and Kimbrough (2017), discovered that investments in IT have significant effects on organizational performance and value. Nevertheless, business managers often face difficulties with the implementation phase of new technologies (Kim et al., 2017). Rather than becoming an asset and valuable resource, such investments become a financial burden if recent technology is not implemented with persistence and long-term dedication of both management and employees. Moreover, when investing in newer technologies, organizational leaders should focus on adapting and integrating business processes that support the implementation of innovative IT systems (Tsaih, Yen, & Chang, 2015).

Oesterreich and Teuteberg (2018) assessed the challenges of measuring the benefits of IT investment and implementation. Organizational leaders recognize the economic benefits of IT adoption but are unable to create a measurement system that quantifies the economic benefits related to future returns (Oesterreich & Teuteberg,

2018). The authors presented a quantification model that enables users to measure investment success from investments in information technologies. Business leaders should employ investment measurements to identify efficient investments activities and to recognize IT investments that may threaten business continuity (Oesterreich & Teuteberg, 2018).

Jeong and Lee (2019) revealed the impact of IT when security breaches occur. When investing in the latest IT systems, organizational leaders need to establish security investments to avoid potential breaches to such systems (Jeong & Lee, 2019). The authors found that when security breaches occur, competitors quickly take advantage of dominating the market. Increasing the competitors market value diminishes the value of IT investments. However, many business leaders do not recognize the implication and importance of security when investing in IT resulting in the vulnerability of business value.

The challenge of implementing IT lies in the nature of fast-changing innovation in technologies (Liew, 2019). Most importantly, the implementation of IT systems produces a variety of complex processes that require adequate embedment of technological innovations (Liew, 2019). In addition to the adoption of IT, the integration of the latest information systems requires continuous maintenance and preservation. When integrating new IT systems, organizational leaders need to develop business procedures that will enhance the use of such technologies and enable the sustenance by managing software requirements (Jayatilleke, Lai, & Reed, 2018).

Human resources information systems. Human resource information systems consist of a fully integrated and organization-wide network of human resource related data and information (Garaus et al., 2016). In particular, organizational leaders can use human resource information systems as IT capabilities that enable distinction from competitors by maximizing potential in human resource processes (Garaus et al., 2016). For example, Shiri (2012) determined that IT systems increase efficiency by generating data relevant to the decision making of the strategic direction of an organization. Initially designed to automate human resources processes, human resources information systems are a platform for critical and strategical analysis (Bondarouk et al., 2017). Organizational leaders can benefit from a variety of relevant services beyond recruitment and records keeping. Advancements in human resource systems are critical to operational and strategic decision making with the focus on succession and workforce planning.

Nonprofit Organizations

Nonprofit organizations are dedicated to furthering social motives utilizing its profits to continue contributing to its social cause (Thomas & Van Slyke, 2019). Compared to for profit organizations that function for financial gains, nonprofit organizations operate based on social and community improvement (Lecy, Ashley, & Santamarina, 2019). Nevertheless, many nonprofit organizations operate on similar premises as for profit organizations leading to a need for the development of efficient business processes to achieve organizational objectives (Lecy et al., 2019). Umar and Hassan (2019) argued that performance measures are as integral in nonprofit

organizations and nonprofit leaders contribute to organizational performance by integrating business strategies analogous to for profit organizations.

Volunteers in nonprofit organizations are a major asset to the sustainability of nonprofits (Nesbit, Christensen, & Brudney, 2018). Nonprofit leaders heavily rely on volunteer engagement and often experience high volunteer turnover (Nesbit et al., 2018). Because of the lack of additional funds to improve volunteer programs, nonprofit leaders rely on volunteers' personal motivation and desire to dedicate their time and efforts to serving their communities (McBey, Karakowsky, & Ng, 2017). High turnover rates in nonprofit organizations decrease efficiency in serving the public sector and reduce organizational morale (McBey et al., 2017). McBey et al. (2017) identified that the perception of organizational support leads to higher levels of voluntarism as individuals perceive opportunities for self-expression.

Along with the recruitment of volunteers, leadership is an additional factor that is vital to the success and sustainability of nonprofit organizations (Stewart, 2016). Stewart (2016) demonstrated that the turnover of nonprofit executives has drastic effects on nonprofit sustainability. The author exemplified that executive turnover in nonprofit organizations occurs when leaders lack experience and expertise in leading an organization on the basis of voluntarism and service (Stewart, 2016). In addition, nonprofit leaders are vital to the sustainability of nonprofit organizations and the employees of the organization (Stewart & Diebold, 2017). Stewart and Diebold (2017) implied that nonprofit leaders are responsible for the motivation and morale among

employees and volunteers leading to improvements in performance when leaders actively engage in creating a positive organizational culture.

Jaskyte, Amato, and Sperber (2018) determined that innovation in nonprofit organizations is a contributor to organizational efficiency in nonprofits. Nonprofit organizational leaders that engage in integrating innovation to improve performance contribute to a wider range of opportunities for nonprofits to sustain in the marketplace (Jaskyte et al., 2018). In particular, organizational leaders that implement IT in nonprofit organizations understand the implications of technology systems on efficiency and productivity increasing nonprofits' ability to gain a competitive advantage (Raman, 2016). Raman (2016) distinguished that IT is an opportunity for nonprofit organizations to reach a wider spectrum of volunteers and to connect with a wider audience within the perspective communities.

Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) is a managerial framework that contains the premise that strategic resources have the potential to deliver competitive advantage to organizations (Dassler, 2016). The resource-based view theory has a foundation in the research undertaken by Wernerfelt (1984) regarding the assumption that internal resources distinguish organizations from its competitors and lead to a competitive advantage. Wernerfelt (1984) conceptualized the RBV theory as a strategic tool, which organizational leaders could use to assess internal resources of an organization that increase organizational performance. Barney (1991) expanded the resource-based view theory to focus on the heterogeneity of organizations that result in a competitive

advantage. In contrast to an economic theory, in which organizational leaders can acquire

resources equally, the resource-based view theorists support the perception of

heterogeneity of resources that leads to a competitive advantage of an organization

(Barney, Ketchen, & Wright, 2011).

The RBV theory includes the unique resources of an organization. Although

Wernerfelt (1984) developed the concept of the RBV theory, Penrose (1959) pioneered

the concept of considering organizational resources as an influential factor to overall

organizational success. Penrose (1959) argued that organizations consist of a broad

spectrum of resources that differentiate an organization from its competitors. Wernerfelt

(1984) expanded on this idea by developing the RBV approach building upon Porter's

(1979) five competitive forces of strategic management that consist of (a) threat of new

entrants, (b) bargaining power of buyers, (c) bargaining power of suppliers, (d) threat of

substitute, and (e) competitive rivalry. Porter's five forces analysis leads to the

investigation of an organization's competition that determines business profitability and

competitive advantage adopting a position that is difficult for competitors to copy.

Wernerfelt (1984) emphasized the view that resources lead to such competitive

advantages as they are valuable and unique to an organization.

Barney (1991) amplified the RBV theory indicating that organizations have

different sets of resources to accomplish their tasks successfully. Rather than focusing on

external factors, such as industry structure and trends, Barney (1991) accentuated the

focus on internal resources and capabilities. One of the assumptions of RBV theory is

that all organizations are heterogeneous meaning that organizations differ in their

structures as well as their capabilities and resources. Barney (1991) stated that organizations may also differentiate themselves from their competitors by developing unique strategies in utilizing available resources. Thus, various organizations may have a similar set of resources, but the strategic use and management of the organization's internal resources may differ leading to a competitive edge.

Researchers of the RBV theory argued that organizational leaders should focus on unique internal resources that will enhance an organization's competiveness, even when competing with others within the same industry or sector (Shafeey & Trott, 2014). Barney (1991) emphasized the notion that organizational leaders should analyze the organization's core resources and identify which competencies are key to organizational performance and success.

Resources

Resources are valuable assets to an organization if organizational leaders exploit internal resources to increase organizational performance (Kozlenkova, Samaha, & Palmatier, 2013). Internal resources are important contributors to organizational growth (Colbert, 2004). In determining whether a resource can lead to a competitive advantage, the RBV concept entails four conditions that validate the disparateness of an organization's resources. A resource that has the potential to become a source of sustainable competitive advantage should be valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and not substitutable (Barney, 1991). By creating different strategies and capabilities, organizational leaders are able to exploit the uniqueness of the organization's resources. Furthermore, when focusing on internal resources rather than external resources,

organizational leaders have the ability to control and exploit organizational resources by shifting the focal point on the use of internal capabilities.

Competitive advantage. Porter (1985) determined that competitive advantage involves factors that lead to the outperformance of an organization's competitors by using organizational resources to achieve a competitive edge on the market. Grant (1991) emphasized on the concept of a sustainable competitive advantage that involves an organization's ability to maintain an advantage over its competitors over a long period of time. Newbert (2008) argued that business leaders can achieve competitive advantage if they use the resources that enhance an organization's performance. In the context of the resource-based view theory, whereas Barney (1991) argued that valuable resources can be the source of competitive advantage. By conducting an analysis of an organization's resources, business leaders can formulate a business strategy that will lead to the exploitation of a competitive advantage (Grant, 1991). By analyzing essential resources, leaders can focus on expanding the use of resources effectively to capture the market.

The ability of organizational leaders to make an organization unique in its strategies or resources is a determining factor of a firm's position in the market leading to its competitive advantage (Shan, Luo, Zhou, & Wei, 2019). Achieving competitive advantage is a pivotal focus when developing management and marketing strategies. A competitive advantage allows business leaders to exploit the marketplace and place an organization in a long-term and sustainable position (Kaleka & Morgan, 2017). Bustinza, Bigdelim, Baines, and Elliot (2015) stated that differentiation is the key factor in achieving competitive advantage. Moreover, organizational leaders have to maintain the

business' competitive advantage by implementing innovative measures (Gabrielsson, Seppla, & Gabrielsson, 2016). In particular, when using technology as a valuable resource, organizational leaders should analyze and improve the advancements of its resources to sustain the organization's competitive advantage.

One of the resources that lead to a competitive advantage includes IT. Dalic and Paunovic (2017) noted that IT leads to improvements in organizational processes and increases the effectiveness of organizational performance. IT is a valuable resource to organizations as business leaders can use advancements of technology to gain an advantage at a lower cost (Sook-Ling, Ismail, & Yee-Yen, 2015). In connection to the use of human resource IT, organizational leaders can take advantage of the ability to simplify complex organizational processes by linking human resources with business processes with the use of information systems (Strohmeier, 2013). Managing human capital effectively with human resource information systems enhances an organization's capacity to develop strong internal structures management processes.

Organizational Performance and the Resource Based View Theory. Researchers use the resource-based view theory to determine the relationship between the use of organizational resources and organizational performance (Liang, You, & Liu, 2010). An important concept of the resource-based view theory is that organizational leaders should use internal resource available to the organization to create a competitive advantage and to increase organizational performance. Almatrooshi, Singh, and Farouk (2016) identified organizational performance as an organization's ability to implement business strategies to achieve organizational goals. Organizational leaders can therefore

measure organizational success by comparing strategic objectives with organizational outcomes that translate into business performance (Almatrooshi et al., 2016).

Gupta, Kumar, Singh, Foropon, and Chandra (2018) expanded on the research of organizational performance and stated that the use of internal resources to gain competitive advantage leads to the creation of a strategic orientation that evolved to sustainable performance. As business leaders and executives leverage internal resources to gain competitive advantage, they can control the strategic orientation of an organization without relying on external resources to reach organizational success (Gupta et al., 2018). Ramon-Jeronimo, Florez-Lopez, and Araujo-Pinzon (2019) supported the idea that organizational leaders contribute to improved organizational performance when internal resources are the main subscribers to business operations leading to a sustainable competitive advantage.

An organization's access to resources determines the levels of organizational success concerning organizational performance (Cruz & Haugan, 2019). Business leaders should recognize internal firm-specific assets that maximize business capabilities to increase organizational performance that ultimately lead to long-term organizational sustainability (Cruz & Haugan, 2019). Increased organizational performance encompasses financial success as well as external accomplishments related to a firm's market position.

Human Resources and the Resource Based View Theory. Theories regarding human resources and its effects on organizational success have evolved under the growth of research on human capital (Otoo, 2019). Human resources are a vital component of

successful businesses and many organizational leaders emphasize the effects of human capital on organizational growth and sustainability (Otoo, 2019). Ghasemi, Shahin, and Safari (2018) argued that human resources strategies influence organizational performance. Human resources involve factors beyond administrative management of personnel. The management of personnel encompasses talent management and talent development that can help an organization gain a competitive advantage (Ghasemi et al., 2018). Wood, Dibben, and Meira (2016) argued that human resources practices are significant contributors to organizational survival as they enable the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Effective human resources procedures are the results of building and maintaining human resources processes throughout the organization. Rather than viewing human resources as an isolated system, Otoo (2019) identified human resources as an entity organic to the entire organization. Organizational leaders should recognize human resources as a valuable asset to an organization (Otoo, 2019). The author found that successful organizations include the development of an integrated relationship between human resources and other departments of a business. Through the creation of strong relationships and networks, organizational leaders can create business longevity and sustainable competitive advantage. Nevertheless, many organizational leaders fail to effectively incorporate human resources into their business strategy and are unable to take advantages that result from the creation of efficient human resources management (Shammot, 2014). To comprehend why business leaders, fail to integrate human resources as a valuable resource, Juarez-Tarraga, Santandreu-Mascarell, and Marin-

Garcia (2019) identified strategies organizational leaders use when implementing human resources into business strategies and processes. The authors found that organizational leaders that focus on talent management and involving human resources in decision making processes face higher levels of performance and effectiveness within not only human resources departments but also within the entire organization. Dejo-Oricain and Aleson (2014) also identified that human resources and an extensive use of human resource networks contribute to organizational success, including long-term sustainability and the achievement of a competitive edge.

Human resources are essential in establishing personnel functions, talent management, and ultimately the human capital asset to an organization. Personnel management is a major part in creating innovation and successful adaption to change (Maier et al., 2014). With shifting workforce requirements and considerations, organizational leaders need to address future employee requirements. Thus, organizational leaders should incorporate human resources into organizational planning and the development of business strategies (Albercht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Part of maintaining competiveness is the incorporation of employees' creativity and innovativeness that is the driving force of organizational improvement (Albercht et al., 2015).

The importance of human resources in organizations aligns with the concepts of the resource-based view theory. The resource-based view theory provides a basis for determining the unique resources regarding human resources processes. Organizational leaders that focus on human resources strategies create a competitive advantage that is

difficult for competitors to emulate (Katou, 2012). Human capital is a unique internal

resource that differs from organization to organization. The collection of high quality

human capital and human resources strategies contribute to the development of internal

resources (Shammot, 2014). Moreover, such internal resources are difficult to imitate as

they are scarce and challenging to translate into outside organizational structures.

When applied to human resources, organizational leaders can improve their

competitive advantage by identifying human capital resources and their role in creating

longevity and sustainability (Coff & Raffiee, 2015). Delery and Roumpi (2017) identified

human resources as a determining factor in achieving competitive advantage. In

particular, organizations compete with others though the attraction, retention, and

development of talent leading to the creation of an important internal asset (Nyberg et al.,

2918). A committed relationship between human capital and competitive advantage is

evident when organizational leaders establish embedded human resources strategies into

organizational planning and execution (Amarakoon, Weerawardena, & Verreyne, 2016).

When a resource is scarce, specialized, and difficult to duplicate by competitors,

organizational leaders can achieve competitive advantage. Davis and Davis (2017)

conducted a study amplifying the importance of human resources in business context.

The authors identified human resources as a main contributor to successful organizational

performance. Human resources are a specialized resource as human capital is unique in

its core competencies. Organizational leaders contribute to the development of trained

and experienced staff that is part of an organization's structure and culture (Li et al.,

2018). Employees provide value, knowledge, and expertise to the organization that are

internal to an organization. Well trained and knowledgeable personnel contribute to the increase of business performance creating a valuable resource to an organization (Li et al., 2018). Shammot (2014) demonstrated that human capital is an asset that leads to the implementation of processes unique to an organization resulting in competitive advantage.

      Information Technology and the Resource Based View Theory. ITis an integral part of many businesses. IT is an enabler of automated and innovative business processes (Thatcher, Wright, Heshan, Zagenczyk, & Klein, 2018). Businesses leaders that adopt ITprovide tools that contribute to the planning, management, and decision making of organizational strategies (Thatcher et al., 2018). In the age of continuous growth and innovation of technology, it is difficult for businesses not to embrace the implementation of IT in business processes (Vithayathil, 2018). Not only does IT lead to an improvement in businesses efficiency but also enables business leaders to standardize procedures across all domains of an organization.

      Organizational leaders continuously focus on the implementation of information systems as part of organizational growth. Information systems are relevant to the success of business strategies that consist of innovation (Cecez-Kecmanovic, Kautz, & Abrahall, 2014). The investment in information systems has become increasingly the focus of organizational leaders (Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2014). Sabherwal, Sabherwal, Havakhor, and Seelman (2019) emphasized the significance of strategic alignment between business and IT. In their study, the authors highlighted the positive effects of IT

implementation on business returns. The alignment of IT with business strategies leads to the creation of internal resources that are value enhancing (Sabherwal et al., 2019).

The prominence of IT in organizations aligns with the concepts of the resource-based view theory. IT is an internal resource that can lead to the accomplishment of organizational success by gaining a competitive advantage. Qosaso et al. (2019) demonstrated that IT along with organizational agility has a significant effect on competitive advantage. IT capabilities include an organization's ability to strategically use IT to create efficiency and effectiveness of business operations strengthening an organization's competitive advantage (Qosasi et al., 2019). In ever-changing business environments, investments in information technologies create capabilities that enable organizational leaders to adjust and recreate internal resources to reach organizational advantage when competing with other businesses (Qosasi et al., 2019).

Consistent with the resource-based view theory, IT is a business capability that organizational leaders can develop and implement internally creating a competitive advantage (Sabherwal et al., 2019). Sabherwal et al. (2019) identified in their study that IT drives organizational performance through the establishment of internal capabilities that leverage organizational resources leading to increased value creation. IT is a capability that enhances the value of organizational resources (Sabherwal et al., 2019). The authors implied that it is the task of business leaders to influence IT integration into organizational processes to enhance organizational performance.

To reach a competitive advantage with the use of IT systems, organizational leaders should determine what IT resources are relevant for organizational success

(Tallon et al., 2019). The acquisition and retainment of pertinent resources are vital in the implementation of internal resources that will lead to increased competitiveness. The advantage of creating internal resources that are linked to IT is the ability of organizational leaders to prove flexibility when adapting to possible changes (Tallon et al., 2019). Internal resources are accessible to businesses and can be altered accordingly to meet the demands of changing market requirements.

Resources are the central construct in resource-based view theory and an organization's competitive advantage is directly linked to its internal resources (Shafeey & Trott, 2014). Technological resources are an important resource to organizational success that drive organizational performance (Fernandez-Marquez & Vazquez, 2018). Fernandez-Marquez and Vazquez (2018) argued that accurate information requisition can lead to higher levels of business performance. Organizational leaders can use data collected with IT systems and leverage information to create improved business strategies.

IT affects organizational performance by enhancing business productivity and efficiency (Thatcher et al., 2018). Bronkhorst, Schaveling, and Janssen (2019) emphasized the positive association between IT innovation and business performance. IT is attributed to acquisition and analysis of information relevant to future business processes (Bronkhorst et al., 2019). Rosenbusch, Brinckmann, and Bausch (2011) disagreed and stated that increased business performance is the result of the contextual disposition of both IT and organizational culture. Non-measurable elements, such as

organizational culture and leadership style, contribute to the success of IT

implementation and its effects on organizational performance (Rosenbusch et al., 2011).

Park et al. (2017) explained how the resource-based view theory is a theoretical

perspective that encompasses the implications of IT on business competence. The authors

argued that competitive advantage is a result of internal resources that are part of

organizational processes and controlled by the organization's leadership. To achieve

superior performance and competitive advantage, organizational leaders must own the

dissemination of internal resources allowing them to directly manage business

capabilities (Park et al., 2017). Governing IT capabilities requires the alignment between

technology implementation and business objectives to reach full potential of an

organization's performance and productivity.

Analysis of Contrasting Theories

The resource dependence theory is a conceptual framework that is in contrast to

the fundamentals of the resource-based view theory. Pfeffer and Salancik conceptualized

the resource dependence theory in 1978 focusing on the effects of external resources on

organizational behaviors. In contrast to the resource-based view theory emphasizing that

organizational performance is a result of the distribution of internal resources, the

resource dependence theory involves the inclusion of external environments as a

determining factor of organizational success (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979). The fundamental

ideas of the resource dependence theory are: (a) organizations depend on resources; (b)

resources derive from an organization's environment; (c) an organization's environment

consists of other organizations; (d) because of the existence of other organizations, an

organization depends on other organization; and (e) resources are a source of power (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1979).

The fundamental concepts of the resource dependence theory include the interdependency of organizations. Boyd (1990) emphasized the ideas of the resource dependence theory stressing the various components of interconnectivity between organizations and external environments. Organizations depend on external resources that derive from environments that contain other organizations leading to an exchange of resources on the basis of a mutual need for external resources (Boyd, 1990). Thus, organizations operate interdependently, and organizational leaders build their business strategies upon the interconnectivity to other organizations and their resources.

Hillman, Withers, and Collins (2009) emphasized that in the context of the resource dependence theory, organizational leaders depend on each other's resources creating a basis for power. Organizations that lack in resources are dependent on the production of resources by other organizations leading to a codependence between organizations (Hillman et al., 2009). Organizational leaders seek the collaboration and relation with other businesses when in need of resources essential to their own generation of products and services. Business leaders that acquire resources from other organizations and their environments create differences in power through unequal distribution and generation of resources (Hillman at el., 2009). As a result, resource dependencies may create advantage to the sustainability of an organization and disadvantages to the distribution of power among various organizations.

Drees and Heugens (2013) expanded on the resource dependence theory by stressing the interorganizational interdependencies to explain how organizational leaders engage in various arrangements, such as joint ventures or mergers. The authors determined that such arrangements increase the basis of power of an organization and contribute to the exploitation of available resources. In contrast to the resource-based view theory, resources are interchangeable, and organizations are in constant movements between power imbalance and mutual dependence (Drees & Heugens, 2013). Organizational leaders continuously face constraints from their environments with an emphasis on resources management.

An additional contrasting theory to the resource-based view theory is the institution-based view. Developed by Peng (2002), the institution-based view involves the understanding of an organization's competitive advantage by integrating the role and impact of institutions. Prior to the development of the institution-based view, researchers focused on industry conditions as the primary driver of strategic choices (Porter, 1985). As an expansion of the industry focus, researchers focused on an organization's resources leading to the development of the resource-based view theory (Barney, 1991). In contrast, the institution-based view involves political, economic, and social interactions that pose constraints and involve human behaviors (Peng, 2002).

Peng (2002) emphasized the relevance of legal, moral, and cultural boundaries within an organization's competitive framework. Organizational leaders make strategic decisions based on the organization's institutional environment whereas resources are homogenous to all organizations until organizational leaders deem certain resources as

relevant to the business' competitive advantage. The concepts of the institution-based view are in particular relevant in the context of globalization. In international markets, organizational leaders encounter differences in human behaviors and institutional environments (Garrido, Gomez, Maicas, & Orcos, 2014).

Strategies for Implementing Human Resources Information Systems

Access to human resources information systems is vital in the success of organizational processes. Human resources information systems are advantageous to businesses for several reasons, including increased quality of human resources processes, operational efficiency, and improved record keeping. When implementing human resources information systems, organizational leaders have to focus on various aspects that will enable a successful integration of such systems. Hoch and Dulebohn (2013) emphasized that the selection and implementation of human resources systems depend on the spectrum of services an organization requires and the type of services that stand in the focus of attention. Various human resources information systems offer a variety of amenities, incorporating employee records keeping, compensation management, as well as services beyond the traditional avenues, such as performance management and workforce planning (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013).

When implementing human resources information systems, business leaders should become cognizant of numerous strategies that will enhance the success of technology integration. Dulebohn and Johnson (2013) exemplified that the sheer understanding of the capabilities of human resources information systems is fundamental to the success of technology implementation. As information systems generate data and

information relevant to the decision making process, organization leaders have to

recognize and understand how such technology systems will help solve key human

resources problems (Dulebohn & Johnson, 2013). To avoid misinterpretation of data,

users of human resources information systems have to determine what factors play a role

in the decision making process to accurately assess the what data is applicable to the

support of operational and strategic decision making. Managing capabilities generated

from human resources information systems is a key component of effective integration

and efficient utilization of such technology systems.

Bondarouk et al. (2017) highlighted the implications of comprehending the effects

of human resources information systems on organizational processes. The authors noted

that many business managers fail to integrate technology systems by utilizing them solely

as an administrative support task rather than taking advantage of the applications of

human resources systems. Bondarouk et al. (2017) claimed that the extensive use of

human resource information systems as performance and evaluation systems can lead to

improved quality of human resources functions. Organizational leaders should refrain

from using technology systems for merely the generation and acquisition of data and

should focus on translating data analysis into decision making processes.

In a similar research, Udekwe and De La Harpe (2017) noted that organizational

leaders face difficulties with the implementation of human resources information systems

as a result of the lack of adequate training and quality data entry. The researchers found

that many business owners acquire costly information systems and disregard the

maintenance requirements of such systems. Such requirements include the update of

specific software as well as the training of employees on the sufficient use of new human resources systems (Udekwe & De La Harpe, 2017). Knowledge transfer is an essential component of successful integration of information systems and training leads to the creation of a working environment that supports knowledge sharing. Udekwe and De La Harpe (2017) concluded that an organization will benefit from human resources information systems if its employees understand business processes and its systems. Linked to employee training is the accurate entry of data that sets the basis of data integrity and quality data analysis.

The successful integration of human resources information systems requires careful considerations of security measures. Compared with other information systems, human resources information systems contain sensitive personnel information and the electronic security of human resources technology is essential to the application of computerized systems (Zafar, 2013). Advances in technology systems lead to complex administration and maintenance requirements and the preservation of confidential and sensitive information is pivotal to IT application. Organizational leaders have to ensure integrity, accuracy, and preservation of data and data security is a critical step in the implementation of human resources information systems (Zafar, 2013). This also means that organizational leaders may restrict access to selected members of an organization.

Postsuccession Sustainability of Human Resources Information Systems

Sustainability encompasses the ability to maintain the success of implemented strategies and to create long-term benefits to an organization (Subramanian & Gunasekaran, 2015). Sustainability is vital to organizational survival and competitiveness

in the market. Organizational leaders that integrate sustainability measures into business strategy understand the implications of achieving goals that align with an organization's strategic objectives (Bepari & Mollik, 2016). Organizational leaders benefit from business sustainability in that sustainable practices guide decision-making in strategic planning leading to the development of a stable market position (Bepari & Mollik, 2016).

Zeidan and Spitzeck (2015) stated that sustainability requires continuous efforts to foster processes that support the achievement of long-term sustainability. Organizational leaders gain sustainability by maximizing opportunities to prosper resources integral to an organization (Herz & Rogers, 2016; Svensson et al., 2016; Zeidan & Spitzeck, 2015). Through investments in opportunities for innovation, business leaders provide development opportunities to successfully implement and maintain organizational resources establishing a disposition for business sustainability (Zeidan & Spitzeck, 2015). Organizational leaders become the driving force of business sustainability when integration of opportunities in business strategies occurs long after the initial implementation phase.

To ensure a successful integration of human resources information systems, organizational leaders should devote efforts to creating sustainability of information systems implementation (Gholami, Watson, Hasan, Molla, & Bjorn-Andersen, 2016). Organizational leaders develop an environment of sustainability by incorporating sustainability applications to business processes (Herremans & Nazari, 2016). Ensuring that the integration of information systems becomes a part of a continuous business mechanism leads to the achievement of competitive advantage (Herremans & Nazari,

2016). Organizational leaders gain a competitive advantage by creating and utilizing resources that are unique and integral to an organization. To prevent the implementation inadequacy of human resources information systems, business leaders should develop measures that lead to continuity in that process.

The implementation of human resources information systems requires careful consideration of continuity and sustainability processes. Business leaders can influence the successful implementation as well as maintenance of information systems by creating training initiatives and programs that enhance technological sustainability (Khuntia, Saldanha, Mithas, & Sambamurthy, 2018). Organizational leaders can also provide a platform for knowledge sharing in the use of IT systems to ensure that employees are adequately trained to preserve the continuous use of such systems (Khuntia at al., 2018). Human resources information systems may lead to increased organizational performance when the implementation of such systems sustains long-term strategic objectives.

The integration of human resources IT promotes improvements in organizational performance (Manroop, 2015). It is integral to organizational success that business leaders retain IT to contribute to the prosperity of organizational processes that reach beyond the human resources section (Manroop, 2015). IT leads to knowledge transfer across organizational functions and the development of a complex network (Bidgoli, 2018). Organizational leaders influence cross-functional sustainability by integrating information systems to enhance organizational performance and gain a competitive advantage (Bidgoli, 2018).

Downfalls to Human Resources Information Systems. Despite the advantages of human resources information systems in organizations, such systems accompany various challenges as well as disadvantages to organizational effectiveness (Haegemans, Snoeck, & Lemahieu, 2019). The implementation of human resources information systems poses many challenges to business leaders as human errors may occur during information input. Haegemans et al. (2019) noted that data entry errors may lead to negative consequences in relation to statistical results. Far-reaching effects may include wrong decision making by leadership as a result of inaccurate data. The reasons for inaccurate data entry lie in various aspects, one of them as explained by the authors may lie in the planned behavior of individuals (Haegemans et al., 2019). The lack of motivation or prospect of rewards may influence individuals' intentions of performing a task correctly. Bansah (2018) exemplified this behavior providing suggestions for mitigating data entry errors, such as making the data entry process as easy as possible and encouraging accurate data entry through rewards.

Maintaining clean data when implementing human resources information systems is of particular importance to the success of human resources functions in an organization. Calvard and Jeske (2018) distinguished that the accuracy of data in a human resources information system is critical to an organization as it dominates business leaders' ability to effectively make key business decisions. As organizational leaders increasingly rely on human resources information systems in determining workforce requisitions and talent management, data accuracy is the pivotal factor of successful implementation of information systems in human resources functions (Caputo, Cillo,

Candelo, & Liu, 2019). Caputo et al. (2019) demonstrated that many undetected

inaccuracies pertaining to information generated from information systems result in

incorrect and erroneous data analysis, altering the effectiveness of business assessments

and evaluations.

An additional downfall in implementing human resources information systems

consists of data analysis. Although many human resources information systems include

data analysis tools, it may become difficult for organizational leaders to analyze complex

sets of data and translate them into meaningful reasoning (Pape, 2016). The levels of

sophistication of an information system will determine the ability of a compound

breakdown that will contribute to an understanding of organizational workforce trends

and patterns. However, the requirements for complex data analysis may call for costly

advanced software that is not accessible to small businesses or businesses with

investment limitations, such as nonprofit organizations (Pape, 2016). Additionally,

understanding data analysis to an extent that enables business decision making requires

the expertise of business leaders to handle such data analysis tools. Pape (2016) implied

that organizational leaders should implement information systems in cases when business

leaders are able to fully exploit the implications of such systems, including data analysis

and the exploration of workforce trends and patterns within an organization.

Another major downfall of human resources information system relates to the loss

of subjectivity by organizational leaders when making decisions (Schwarzmueller, Brosi,

Duman, & Welpe, 2018). IT systems in the context of human resources promote decision

making as a result of objective data that the system provides (Schwarzmueller et al.,

2018). Human resources information systems maintain all employee data, such as accomplishments and certifications, and provide business leaders with timeless employee information. Schwarzmueller et al. (2018) identified that some business leaders rely on their decision-making process on the data analysis from information systems resulting in inaccurate depictions of an organization's capacity.

Faulty decision making as a result of human resources information systems may affect individual employee evaluations as well as organizational talent management decisions (Power, Cyphert, & Roth, 2019). When solely utilizing IT systems to assess employee performance, organizational leaders fail to account for personal performance that IT systems are not able to capture. Power at el. (2019) argued that human resources information systems can capture and measure statistical data, but are limited in the conceptualization of abstract factors, such as team morale, employee motivation, or workplace satisfaction. Organizational leaders may neglect individual contributions to an organization that result from a personal role of an employee leading to faulty evaluations of an employee's potential.

Park, Ramesh, and Cao (2016) claimed that emotions and the feelings of regret are integral parts of a decision making process. When organizational leaders solely rely on the data from IT systems, they do not account for factors that are not measurable by technology systems. In relation to talent management within an organization, organizational leaders may lack the expertise and experience to evaluate a business's workforce on the premises of potential and abilities and therefore lean towards the reliance on generated analysis from IT systems to fill future positions. To mitigate this

behavior, Park et al. (2016) suggested that organizational leaders should take their time to get to know employees on a personal level to learn about employees' aptitudes that information systems cannot capture.

Divergent and Conflicting Perspectives. Researchers have shown that human resources IT systems are a contributing factor to improved organizational performance (Bondarouk at al., 2017; Marler & Parry, 2016; Wei & Liu, 2019). However, there are different schools of thought about what business elements improve organizational performance. Ingredients that increase organizational performance are of immediate interest to organizational leaders; however, there are factors that enhance organizational performance, divergent to the assumption that human resources IT systems exclusively improve organizational performance.

Non-Information Technology Systems. In the context of human resources, IT systems provide various advantages to an organization. Nevertheless, many downfalls in relation to the implementation of IT systems may contribute to business leaders' decision against human resources IT systems (Motwani, 2015). Motwani (2015) introduced business professionals' perceptions related to human resources information systems and argued that many business leaders fail to incorporate human resources into strategic decision making because of the lack of simple and reliable data integration and analysis tools. Instead, many business professionals choose to form concepts with the use of more traditional human resources tools.

Becker and Gould (2019) criticized that IT systems are often too costly and complex and expanded the implication of data conceptualization and analysis on simple

Microsoft Excel usage. The authors argued that organizational leaders are able to manipulate and analyze data with simple tools rather than investing in costly software, especially for business leaders that manage small or investment limited businesses. Business leaders can generate analytical data and determine workforce trends that are critical to developing business strategies and making relevant decisions in the context of human resources management (Becker & Gould, 2019).

Outsourcing of Human Resources Information Technology Systems. Rather than employing human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance, Wallo and Kock (2018) suggested that the outsourcing of human resources information systems increases the productivity and effectiveness of a business, ultimately enhancing organizational performance. The authors argued that many business leaders fail to effectively manage human resources and use information systems to analyze workforce trends. In particular, small and medium-sized enterprises may benefit from outsourcing such functions enabling organizational leaders to exploit the advantages of human resources IT systems without having to maintain the costs of maintaining such systems internally.

Agrawal, Agrawal, Seshadri, and Taylor (2017) illustrated that investments in IT systems make up high amounts of total capital costs and the outsourcing of IT lead to increased efficiency of not only human resources functions but also the overall productivity and performance of an organization. The growth in IT proves that organizational leaders can benefit from external resources in the pursuit of business performance enhancements (Agrawal et al., 2017).

Leadership and Management. One of the influential factors widely presented in academic journals and professional journals is the aspect of leadership and management. Although different in nature and difficult to compare, IT systems may lead to increased organizational performance, but in contrast to leadership, systems are interchangeable. In comparison, leadership contributions are a vital component of any organization, regardless of its size and structure (Grobler & du Plessis, 2016). Whereas IT is a tool, which business owners can use to improve organizational performance, organizational leaders determine the direction of organizational performance.

Organizational leaders are the driving force of strategy development and implementation affecting the outcomes of organizational performance (Wang & Feng, 2017). Lee (2018) exemplified in a study a direct linkage between leadership practices and organizational performance. The author argued that specific leadership practices, such as the promotion of diversity, collaboration, and team cohesion, have a positive influence on organizational performance and are instrumental in boosting organizational efficiency.

Khan, Ali, Olya, Zulqarnain, and Khan (2018) expanded on the effects of leadership on organizational performance tying innovation as part of a predictor of business success. The authors argued that leadership leads to increased performance and high performance results from high innovation using IT. The interconnectivity between leadership and organizational performance enables the successful implementation of innovative measures, such as information technologies (Khan et al., 2018). Nevertheless,

IT alone is not a predictor of business performance as the authors evaluated in their research.

Leadership is relevant within the scope of implementing human resources IT systems. Hickman and Akdere (2018) stated that the successful implementation of IT in an organization depends on the active engagement of leadership. Organizational leaders determine the focus of organizational goals and strategies and the emphasis of business leaders on using IT systems (Hickman & Akdere, 2018). Organizational leaders are the driving force of implementing the shift from using traditional tools to enforcing innovative systems within an organization.

Knowledge and Learning. Knowledge and learning are key factors that contribute to organizational performance. Knowledge management capabilities add to achieving organizational objectives by enhancing the effectiveness and productivity of an organization (Lombardi, 2019). Lombardi (2019) argued that in relation to IT, knowledge is a determining element in the successful integration of innovation. Hence, without knowledge development and transfer within an organization, organizational leaders are unable to adapt to changes and prepare a workforce for business transformations.

Lin, Chen, Hsu, and Fu (2015) introduced a similar phenomenon in their research focusing on the implications of knowledge creation and sharing on organizational growth and performance. The authors claimed that organizational leaders require team knowledge to achieve organizational objectives. Building such competence leads to the development of integrative knowledge management processes that enhance the productivity of a business (Lin et al., 2015). The authors also emphasized that knowledge

is a predictor of successful implementation of information systems as it sets the basis for

independent problem solving within an organization leading to increased efficiency.

Gaps in Literature

The implementation of IT systems accompanies many challenges to

organizational leaders resulting from the lack of adequate training as well as

comprehensive understanding of the potential benefits of such systems (Asan & Carayon,

2017). Future research may lead to an amplified understanding about what strategies

nonprofit senior executives use to implement human resources IT systems to improve

organizational performance. Future research should further include the implications of

human resource IT on organizational performance and success. The effects of human

resources information systems extend beyond improvements in human resources

administration (Caputo, Garcia-Perez, Cillo, & Giacosa, 2019). When utilizing IT to

manage human resources processes, organizational leaders have the opportunity to

connect human resources to decision-making and the development of organizational

strategies (DiClaudio, 2019).

Additionally, future research should stress the effects of human resources

information systems on talent management, employee recruitment, and employee

retention. Waite and McDonald (2019) introduced the implication of technology in the

ever-growing digital age on employee management, addressing the increasing autonomy

of employees and their employment choices. Most employees are technology savvy and

organizational leaders should adopt to the trends of IT within their businesses, regardless

of the size of the organization (Li & Herd, 2017). Employees that have advanced

technological skills can contribute to the implementation of human resources IT systems and become an asset to organizational growth (Stone & Deadrick, 2015).

Another focus of future research within the context of the implementation of human resources information systems is the role of leadership. Organizational leaders drive the success of strategy implementation and affect the outcomes of strategy realization (Bhattacharyya, 2018). When implementing technology systems in human resource processes, leaders play a vital role in successful integration of human resources management strategies (Leroy et al., 2018). The focus on implementing human resources IT systems in leadership style context may enhance the understanding of successful integration and increased growth in organizational performance.

Furthermore, a topic for future research is the application of human resources information systems in an international context. Many organizations either conduct business with international organizations or outsource their business processes abroad (Pereira, Munjal, & Ishizaka, 2019). In the context of human resources and IT, organizational leaders should focus on addressing challenges in international human resource management along with the linkage of technology systems (Pudelko, Reiche, & Carr, 2015). As many organizational leaders decide to also outsource human resources functions, they should concentrate on adopting human resources strategies to new environments and integrate IT to maximize effectiveness in human resources management (Patel et al., 2019).

Relationship of the Study to Previous Research and Findings.

      The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. A prosper amount of studies present the positive effects of human resource IT systems on organizational performance. This study expanded on existing literature as I explored what strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance.

<div align="center">

Transition

</div>

      In Section 1, I introduced the background of the business problem, developed the problem statement and purpose statement, outlined the nature of the study, identified the research question and interview questions, outlined the conceptual framework, defined key operational definitions, identified assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, addressed the significance of the study along with contribution to business practice as well as implications of social change. The review of the professional and academic literature included articles related to the conceptual framework, IT, and human resources information systems. Conflicting perspectives and future research suggestions concluded the literature review.

      In Section 2, I outlined the purpose statement, addressed the role of the researcher, addressed the role of participants, discussed research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data collection techniques, data analysis, as well as reliability and validity of the study. In

Section 3, I included a detailed presentation of the research findings and implications for social change.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I present my role as the researcher and the participants. This section includes a discussion of the research methodology and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. The target population for this study consisted of five senior executives in three nonprofit organizations in Germany who successfully developed and executed strategies and derivative action plans to implement human resources IT systems. The implications for positive social change were that the findings of this study may enable senior nonprofit executives to improve organizational performance such as retention of workforce members, recruitment, hiring the nonprofit workforce, and improvement of the human resources performance. Such improvements could secure nonprofit organizational sustainability to continue supporting communities and their citizens.

Role of the Researcher

In a qualitative study, the role of the researcher is to act as the primary instrument for data collection, storage, organization, analysis, and interpretation (Yin, 2018). In this study, I served as the primary research instrument to explore and explain what strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations used to implement human resources IT

systems to improve organizational performance. I interacted with study participants and served as the interviewer and observer. The advantage of personal interviews is that the researcher can make additional observations and collect nonverbal clues from participants. As an observer, I disclosed all my observations that occurred during the interviews. I asked participants semistructured interview questions to explore their perceptions and lived experiences.

In addition, it is the researcher's responsibility to present study results in an ethical and unbiased way (Draper, 2015). Bias can occur in the recording of responses and during the interaction with participants as a result of a researcher's perceptions. I used interview transcripts and other materials to identify common themes. I had no direct experience working with senior leaders from nonprofit organizations or the participants of the study, but I do have an extensive understanding of human resources information systems as part of my current career path.

The Belmont Report protocol outlined the ethical principles when conducting research with human subjects (Adashi, Walters, & Menikoff, 2018). I conformed to the ethical requirements, including mitigating risk to all participants and providing equality and respect to all interviewees. I also complied with all ethical protocols presented by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) as well as the guidelines outlined in the American Psychological Association (APA).

Participants

The recruitment of research participants involves a strategic alignment with the research question to ensure an in-depth collection of data (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017;

Marks, Wilkes, Blythe, & Griffiths, 2017). Marks et al. (2017) stated that researchers need to select participants that will assist in understanding the research phenomenon. Purposive sampling is a technique that enables the researcher to purposely select participants that meet the criteria for the study (Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2015). The population of this study consisted of five senior executives in three nonprofit organizations who had demonstrated the ability to successfully develop and execute strategies and derivative action plans to implement human resources IT systems.

To ensure an in-depth collection of data, researchers should establish eligibility or selection criteria when recruiting research participants (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). To be eligible for this study, individuals were required to be employed in a nonprofit organization with a location in Germany and show that they had implemented human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. Additionally, I selected participants that have extensive knowledge and experience of human resources information systems. Organizational senior executives and business owners are subject to obtaining rich data in a research because of their experience and expertise (Lancaster, 2017). Drew (2014) explored the implications of qualitative interviewing with German senior management and stated that interviewing senior executives leads to the collection of rich and in-depth data.

The relationship between the researcher and the participants is important to the success of a research study (Raheim et al., 2016). I continuously worked on developing a positive relationship with all research participants by encouraging open communication and reflecting on my role and responsibilities to each participant. The interaction between

the researcher and participants develops trust and is a determining factor concerning research ethics (Raheim et al., 2016). Haahr, Norlyk, and Hall (2014) determined that ethical principles in research are vital in the research process and include the building of trust from the beginning of the research progress. The development of a trusting relationship leads to the mitigation of initial barriers and fear of honest disclosures to the researcher (Haahr et al., 2014). I ensured ethical compliance through honest disclosure of the research intentions and purpose, including the revelation of the participants' ability to refrain from the study at any phase of the research process.

I contacted potential participants initially via email, providing information about the study and instructions about the survey. I established a list of potential participants from personal contacts and networking. It is important to establish initial rapport with the participants and to determine their interest in engaging in the research study (Patel, Jensen, Lai, Patel, & Jensen, 2016). I followed up on the initial contact with a telephone call to provide a more personal introduction of the study as well as myself as the researcher. Once a potential participant agreed to engage in the study, I provided the individual with a written summary of the study as well as an informed consent. Participants had the ability to review the informed consent and ask questions during a face-to-face interaction to ensure that the individual understood the ethical implications of the study, including the researcher's responsibilities and participants' rights, such as the possible withdrawal from the study.

Research Method and Design

Research methodology constitutes strategies that researchers use to explore a phenomenon. The appropriate research method and design depends on the research question and objectives (Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2018). In the sections below, I present the justification for the choice of a qualitative multiple case study.

Research Method

Research methods consists of three primary methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. What method a researcher chooses depends on their goal and approach to inquiring about a phenomenon (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Each research method constitutes different data collection methods and provides a variety of analysis methods. When using the quantitative method, researchers examine the relationships among variables through hypotheses and generalize results from smaller samples to larger populations (Yilmaz, 2013). In quantitative research, the researcher examines techniques that depend on measurable characteristics and test hypotheses with the use of instruments (Williams at al., 2016). In the quantitative methodology, the collected data are numerical or statistical and researchers analyze data using statistical procedures in relation to dependent and independent variables (Jervis & Drake, 2014). A quantitative method is appropriate when the researcher intends to use scientific methods to alter variables that lead to specific results. A quantitative methodology was not suitable for this study because I explored senior executives' experiences rather than examining the relationships between and among one or more independent and dependent variables.

Researchers use a mixed method approach to examine and explore complex problems through a blend of qualitative and quantitative methods (Heyvaert at al., 2013). The use of the mixed method enables researchers to eliminate restriction of a single research method and enable an extensive analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Crane et al., 2018). The mixed method is fitting when researchers intend to take advantage of the strengths of qualitative and quantitative, when they wish to capitalize on large amounts of data, and when a single research method is not sufficient enough to answer the research question (McKim, 2017). The mixed method was not suitable for this study because this study did not contain a quantitative component.

I used the qualitative research method to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. Researchers use a qualitative method to explore individuals' or groups' experiences or to describe human condition (Koch et al., 2014). Using a qualitative methodology, researchers explore a phenomenon through an understanding and explanation of participants' perceptions (Koch et al., 2014). In qualitative research, interviews and organizational data compromise of data collection tools that address the research question (Barnham, 2015). The researcher's engagement with interview participants encompasses additional clues from the personal interaction between the research and the participant that contribute to data analysis and themes identification that lead to research conclusions (Barnham, 2015). The researcher's interaction with the participants allows the researcher to gain insights into individuals' perceptions, experiences, and behaviors, gathering natural and holistic data from observations along

with the participants' answers to the research questions (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). In qualitative research, the researcher recognizes researchers' bias and assumptions and identifies the unique experiences of research participants as well as research limitations (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). The qualitative method was suitable for this study because the goal of this study was to generate an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of strategies that senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to develop and execute action plans related to implementing human resources IT systems to support the improvement of organizational performance.

Research Design

Qualitative researchers choose among multiple research designs, including case study, phenomenology, and ethnography (Babchuk, 2017). When the intent is to explore or clarify understanding of an issue or phenomenon, researchers may use a case study design (Saunders et al., 2015). With the use of a case study design, researchers are able to explore in depth a specific phenomenon within the real-world context (Yin, 2018). With a case study design, a researcher explores specific groups of individuals or particular areas of business processes within their natural contextual condition (Dasgupta, 2015). When using this research design, researchers gain flexibility, empowering them to collect data through multiple data sources (Ridder, 2017). Case study design is one of the most common research designs for applied studies, increasing the validity and reliability of the study by incorporating a variety of data sources and leading to in-depth exploration of relevant themes (Lewis, 2015). I used the case study design because I intended to explore a problem through a collection of experiences, allowing for the identification and

understanding of numerous phenomena for my study. In particular, I used the multiple-case study design as a result of interviewing senior executives in three nonprofit organizations. When using the multiple-case design, researchers are able to reproduce data collection across multiple sites to explore a particular phenomenon by comparing data results (Ridder, 2017).

Researchers use the phenomenological design to describe the meanings of participants' lived experiences (Yin, 2018). When using the phenomenological design, researchers interpret lived experiences within an event (Adams & van Manen, 2017). Researchers explore participants' perspectives to understand a phenomenon (Adams & van Manen, 2017). A phenomenological design was not suitable for this study because I sought to explore a phenomenon, not to describe participants' experiences.

Ethnographic studies are suitable when the purpose of the research is to reveal the common elements of a culture (Wall, 2015). Researchers explore human experiences within their natural settings by using interviews and observations (Dawson, 2014). The ethnography design was not appropriate for this study because I did not seek to understand the culture of a group.

Population and Sampling

The target population for this study consisted of senior executives from three nonprofit organizations located in Germany that have experience in successfully implementing human resources information systems. Yin (2018) indicated that there is no norm in selecting the sample size in qualitative research. Researchers use research questions to determine the selection of the research design, and researchers evaluate the

population sample according to the research requirements (Yin, 2018). Molenberghs et al. (2016) contended that a small sample size requires the attainment of saturation to warrant research variety and quality. The quality of the selected population determines the number of participants required to adequately portray the research phenomenon.

Selecting the sample size is a determining factor in reaching data saturation. Data saturation occurs when the selected sample size is adequate to attain sufficient perspectives and information from the research participants. Reaching data saturation is pertinent in qualitative research, in which interviews are the primary source of information collection. I intended to reach data saturation by interviewing five senior leaders in three nonprofit organizations. If data saturation did not occur with the selected sample size, I planned to continue to add additional interviews until data saturation occurs.

The selection of a sampling method is essential in ensuring research quality. I used the purposive sampling method to select participants. When using purposive sampling, researchers recruit participants that have the knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under study. This method enables researchers to obtain participants' responses that contain rich data for research analysis to explore the research question. To maximize useful contributions to the research study, researchers validate the potential participants with the use of participation criteria. I limited the participants' pool to senior executives that have experience in successfully implementing human resources information systems in nonprofit organizations. The invitation to participate (Appendix A) served as the initial contact with potential study participants.

When interviewing research participants, the setting is relevant to research success. Boddy (2016) claimed that the interview setting drives the interview dynamics and increases participants' comfort in taking part in the research study. In person interviews allow the researcher to search for nonverbal clues, and conducting interviews in a common setting permits interviewees to feel comfort in addressing the research questions. Due to the unavailability of participants for in person interviews, I accommodated phone interviews. To ensure successful integration of technology measures, I contacted interviewees over the phone in advance to eliminate any technological difficulties.

Ethical Research

Participation in this study was voluntarily and interviewees had the option to withdraw from the research study at any time. To maintain the privacy of all participants, I used pseudonyms for identity protection. In addition, I assigned codes to results data to ensure there was no obvious association of the answers to the participants. To protect participants' information as well as the study material, I protected all files using a password protected digital file on a flash drive. Any written notes or material remained in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years in accordance to ethical practices in research. The final doctoral manuscript included the Walden IRB approval number.

To adhere to the Walden University requirements, I ensured that all research participants signed an informed consent before any interviews. It is the researcher's responsibility to adhere to ethical standards and principles and informed consent is a means of preserving participants' rights within the research study (Artal & Rubenfeld,

2017). The purpose of informed consent is to give interviewees relevant information regarding the participation in the study (Marrone, 2016). Furthermore, in a language that is understandable to all participants, the researcher has the opportunity to explain the purpose and implications of the study as well as any potential benefits or risks of participating in that particular research study (Sobel & Dreyfus, 2017). An informed consent should also include an explanation of data recording and analysis to ensure participants have a clear understanding of the study procedures (Peticca-Harris, deGama, & Elias, 2016).

Rather than a legal obligation, informed consent serves as an ethical requirement guiding the principles of equality, justice, and benevolence (Welch at al., 2017). Welch et al. (2017) addressed the importance of transparency and that all participants should have access to full information about the research. The act of transparency and communications is the basis for trust development between the researcher and the study participants and proves to be an inclination of increased participants' willingness to fully participate in a study (Katvan & Shnoor, 2017). Only if participants consider the research and the researcher as trustworthy are they eager to participate and to provide the interviewer with most accurate information (Katvan & Shnoor, 2017).

Conveying a common understanding between the researcher and the interviewees is part of the researcher's obligation to the participants (Hammersley, 2015). More importantly, researchers must understand the potential consequences to research success when security breach occurs (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Birt et al. (2016) stated that violations of the informed consent may lead to the failure of

completing a research. Additionally, researchers must understand and be sensitive to the assumption that all participants come from different backgrounds and may interpret the research implications differently.

Blackwood at el. (2015) mentioned that the procedures of obtaining informed consent is a vital part in ensuring accuracy in research development. To ensure that I met the ethical implications of the informed consent, I provided a written informed consent form to all participants. Petrova, Dewing, and Camilleri (2016) stressed that researchers should provide the opportunity for participants to ask questions and obtain clarifications regarding the research study. Misinterpretations of the study's purpose and implications may alter the participants responses and information to the researchers (Bronnenmayer, Wirtz, & Göttel, 2016).

Furthermore, researchers use informed consent to stress the importance of voluntarism regarding the participation in a study (Riordan et al., 2015). Participants of a study may decline or terminate their involvement at any time throughout the process of the study as their participation is strictly voluntary (Grady, 2015). This is an important factor in establishing participants' trust and willingness to contribute to the study as the researcher maintains concern for participants' autonomy (Sabar & Sabar, 2017).

Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher is often the primary data collection instrument (Fusch et al., 2017). In this qualitative multiple case study, I served as the primary data collection instrument with the use of semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews serve as a means to obtain information from research

participants to answer a research question (Fusch et al., 2017). In the case of this study, I used semistructured interviews to explore what strategies senior executives use to implement human resources information systems in nonprofit organizations. All interview questions included open-ended questions to enable research participants to expand on their insights and perspectives and to eliminate limitation to the individuals' responses. The interview questions (Appendix B), interview protocol (see Appendix C) and informed consent were all data collection tools that set the basis for data collection in qualitative research. The interview protocol served as the guideline for conducting interviews with research participants (Zhang et al., 2017).

Burau and Ansersen (2014) emphasized the aspects of triangulation in qualitative research stressing the importance of exploiting available data collection instruments to ensure that researchers use a vast amount of data to answer a research question. To reach data triangulation in my study, I also collected secondary data, specifically, organizational documents that are accessible both businesses internally and publicly. The secondary documents included annual business plans, strategic planning documents, and human resources records. All conduct of my study adhered to the approved IRB stipulations when collecting organizational data.

Member checking in qualitative research enhances the reliability of a study (Harvey, 2015). By conducting member checking, I provided the study participants with an opportunity to review their previously given responses and to provide feedback on the accuracy of my understanding and interpretation of their responses. This process enabled all study participants to actively engage in the study process beyond the interviews

(Harvey, 2015). After conducting all interviews, I sent the interview transcripts along with a preliminary analysis of the transcripts to the participants acquiring additional information regarding the correctness of my transcripts and the accuracy of my analysis. I also conducted follow-up interviews with all participants. In addition, their review included any additional comments that the individual participant added to either clarify or expand on their previous responses. Finally, I provided all research participants with a copy of the doctoral study to gain additional review and approval before publication.

Data Collection Technique

After receiving IRB approval, I initially contacted all potential participants that meet the participation criteria with an invitation letter (see Appendix A) to schedule an interview. The interview occurred after an individual received, reviewed, and signed an informed consent. The primary data collection technique for this study consisted of semistructured interviews. I recorded all interviews upon participants' permission to enable accurate and error free transcription of all interviews.

All interviews took place through a telephone interview. I asked all participants to provide me with their preferred date and time to eliminate any disturbances during the interview process. I used the same questions for all study participants. Using the same interview questions eliminated variations in extracting themes and codes from the transcripts. Furthermore, the same interview questions provided a common ground for participants' answers to the questions.

Data Organization Technique

The organization and management of data are detrimental to the successful interpretation and analysis of data and the presentation of study results and conclusions in qualitative research (Chandra & Shang, 2017). During the interviews, I recorded the interview process in accordance to the interview protocol (Appendix C) using a primary tool, such as the recorder on my laptop as well as an alternative method, such as a backup recorder on my mobile phone to eliminate data loss during the interview process. In addition, I took notes using a study journal during the process to record my personal observations about any additional clues.

Gibson, Webb, and Lehn (2014) recommended the use of data management software to organize and manage data enabling researchers to analyze and interpret research data. I transcribed the audio recordings into word document files and uploaded the data into the NVivo software to generate coding and theme categorization. NVivo is a software that enables data organization, comparison, and analysis (Oliveira, Bitencourt, Zanardo dos Santos, & Teixeira, 2016). With the use of coding, I identified themes and patterns from the interviews as well as organizational documentations. Beskow, Check, and Ammarell (2014) identified the confidentiality of study participants as one of the main responsibilities of researchers. To protect the identity of all participants, I removed all identifying labels to include names and organizational associations and code them with alphanumerical codes. Since the study design consisted of the multiple study design, I coded individuals according to their organization. I used the alphabetic code to present

the interviewee and the number to identify the nonprofit organization. I also matched

each participant to the organizational documents to maintain tracking consistency.

Along with the interviews, I explored organizational documents, such as business

strategies, business plans, and annual reports. In compliance with the Walden University

IRB requirements, I will securely store all documents for 5 years for possible retrieval.

Electronic data remained in a password secured folder on my personal computer and

printed documents remained in a locked cabinet in my home office. I will destroy all

collected data after the mandatory 5-year period.

Data Analysis

Data analysis includes making sense of raw data by identifying themes that

contribute to the understanding of a research phenomenon (Chowdhury, 2015). Data

analysis includes a researcher's attempt to exhaust all available data to draw study

conclusions (Chowdhury, 2015). Researchers analyze data in qualitative research to

understand a phenomenon and to explore new concepts (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, &

Casey, 2015). In this multiple case study, I conducted data analysis by collecting data,

analyzing and reviewing data, synthesizing raw data, identifying codes and common

themes, determining what data is relevant to the understanding and explanation of the

study phenomenon, and concluding the data.

Researchers use methodological triangulation to reach data saturation and to

ensure data validity by comparing various sources of data, such as interviews and

organizational archival documents (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville,

2014). Through methodological triangulation researchers validate data from multiple

sources confirming that the collected data is not circumstantial but accurately reflects the study phenomenon (Carter et al., 2014). In addition, methodological triangulation eliminates study bias that may occur when using a single data collection method (Houghton et al., 2015). It is a researcher's obligation to review all available evidence and to identify rival interpretation.

Yin (2018) determined five phases for manual data analysis, which consist of (a) data collection, (b) grouping of data, (c) regrouping data into themes, (d) analyzing data, and (e) making conclusions. I used this five-step model to initially analyze data. Manual data analysis prior to the use of a data analysis software enabled closer familiarization with data content (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Through manually analyzing research data, I also ensured that I understand the implications of the research data.

In addition to the manual interpretation of data, I used the NVivo software to electronically analyze and interpret data. Qualitative data analysis software involves the identification of codes and emerging themes (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2016). Researchers use computerized analysis software to organize data and categorize data into codes for themes and patterns identification (Woods et al., 2016). Computerized data analysis will enable accelerated categorizing of data into themes trough coding (Talanquer, 2014). The use of both manual and computerized data analysis contributed to the enhancement of research reliability and attainment of data saturation.

In addition, researchers use coding to identify themes that contribute to the understanding of a phenomenon (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2016). I analyzed identified codes and translated them into themes to explore what strategies senior nonprofit leaders

use to implement human resources information systems. I focused on key themes and patterns from interviews and organizational documents to reach data triangulation. Member checking increases the credibility and accuracy of the research data and enables a cross-check of data by not only the researcher but also the research participants (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking validated my interpretation of themes.

The interpretation of the study findings included the assessment of the findings to determine whether the study results led to an explanation of the research phenomenon. The research findings resulted from an analysis of participants' interview responses as well as archival organizational documents. In addition, I used the selected resource-based view theory to provide explanations of the study findings related to the implementation of human resources information systems in nonprofit organizations.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

In qualitative research, Yin (2018) identified reliability as a consistent procedure that leads to the ability of researchers to replicate a study with the same results. Researchers establish reliability by developing transparency of the research process and creating trustworthiness through detailed descriptions of the study procedures (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016). I described my research procedures in detail by presenting selected research method and design, data collection techniques, data analysis methods, and data interpretation procedures. Noble and Smith (2015) stated that the collection of data through various sources contributes to the reliability of research. Data triangulation is the process of using multiple sources of data collection to exhaust

data collection and increase data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured data triangulation through semistructured interviews and the review of organizational documents, which increased the research reliability.

Dependability. The dependability of a qualitative study involves the extent to which other researchers may duplicate the study (Cope, 2014). To provide the dependability of a study, researchers should specify in detail the selected research design, data collection process, and data analysis for other researchers to emulate the study procedures (Onwugbuzie & Byers, 2014). In addition, dependability involves the consistency of research results through established research processes (Cope, 2014). This process includes the establishment of interview techniques and procedures to ensure research quality in data collection.

To guarantee research dependability, I thoroughly discussed the study procedures from data collection to data analysis, including my choices of research design and data collection instruments. The sharing of my study procedures enabled other researchers to potentially replicate the study in similar settings. In addition, I used the same interview questions with all participants, which increased the consistency of the study. Member checking was also a useful technique in providing research dependability. The review of interview transcripts with study participants increased data accuracy (Grossoehme, 2014).

Validity

Research validity constitutes the credibility of collected data (Hadi & Closs, 2016). In qualitative research, researchers ensure validity through the accurate selection of research method, design, sampling, and data analysis that affect data collection and

research findings. Research validity involves the validation of research findings increasing the credibility of a research study (Kihn & Ihantola, 2015). Researchers may enhance research validity and credibility with the use of member checking (Birt et al., 2016). Birt et al. (2016) suggested that receiving feedback from research participants increases the accuracy of data and solidifies the credibility of the research. Achieving research validity includes the attainment of credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation.

Credibility. Credibility in qualitative research consists of the validation of collected data and the consistency as well as the accuracy of research findings (Ando, Cousins, & Young, 2014). I warranted research credibility through member checking and data triangulation. By allowing research participants to confirm the accuracy of the recorded data from interviews, I amplified the credibility of the research findings. In addition, I reached data triangulation by using multiple data collection methods, such as semistructured interviews and organizational documentation.

Transferability. Research transferability in the context of validity involves the application of a study (Cope, 2014). In particular, transferability includes the readers' ability to create meaning and understand the study in the context of their experiences (Houghton et al., 2015. A researcher should attain this and rich data to demonstrate the generalizability of the study. Nevertheless, it is up to the readers and future researchers to determine the transferability of my research findings. To validate research transferability, I provided detailed descriptions of the research processes to provide sufficient context for determining the transferability of this research study.

Confirmability. Confirmability in qualitative research relates to the consistency of research findings as well as the assessment of research findings against possible researcher bias and reflexivity (Baillie, 2015). Research journals are a useful method in ensuring confirmability (Anney, 2014). As a researcher, I monitored and recorded my opinions and observations throughout the course of the study to reflect on and eliminate personal bias. By understanding my role as a researcher and the importance of neutrality in conducting a research study, I contributed to research transparency and trustworthiness.

Data Saturation. Data saturation occurs when no additional information is present to perform data analysis (Yin, 2018). Researchers use data saturation to confirm sufficient data collection to understand the study phenomenon in qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The achievement of data saturation is an indicator of the study conclusion in the absence of new data and insights. Member checking is a useful method in ensuring data saturation as it enables researchers to retrieve additional information from interview participants that may not have been addressed during the interview process (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I ensured data saturation through follow-up interviews with all participants.

<center>**Transition and Summary**</center>

In Section 2, I presented the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the research participants, research method and design, and population and sampling. I also introduced ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the study.

In Section 3, I will present the findings of the study, along with the applications to professional practice. In addition, I will discuss the implications for social change, recommendations for actions, and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. The data collection techniques I used included semistructured interviews and a review of organizational and publicly available documents. The use of primary and secondary data collection methods, data triangulation, and member checking contributed to data saturation and research validity. Section 3 includes the presentation of findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, and conclusion of the research.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question of this study was as follows: What strategies do nonprofit senior executives use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance? I used purposive sampling to select participants that were senior executives in German nonprofit organizations and experienced in successfully implementing human resources information systems. Four themes that emerged from the research were (a) strategic alignment, (b) financial flexibility, (c) knowledge sharing, and (d) sustainability and longevity. I established the four emergent themes by coding, analyzing, and organizing participants' transcribed interviews and organizational documentation. These four themes provided answers to the overarching research question.

Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and took place over the phone due to COVID-19 mitigations. To ensure confidentiality, participants' names and locations were not part of the handwritten interview transcripts, and I used codes for the participants identified as P1A, P1B, P1C, P2, and P3. P represented the participant and the number indicated the organization. For example, P1A, P1B, P1C consisted of three individual senior executives in the same nonprofit organization, whereas P2 indicated a senior executive in another nonprofit organization. The resource-based view theory proposed by Wernerfelt was the conceptual framework used to explore the strategies nonprofit senior executives use to implement human resources information systems.

Table 2

Frequency of Themes

Themes	P1A	P1B	P1C	P2	P3	Total
Strategic alignment	4	5	3	2	4	18
Financial flexibility	2	5	4	6	4	21
Knowledge sharing	3	2	7	8	3	23
Sustainability and longevity	1	7	3	2	5	18

Note. P = participant

Theme 1: Strategic Alignment

Existing research contributes to the phenomenon that organizational leaders experience technology acceptance when new technology implementation and obstacles align with organizational strategies (Handayani et al., 2017). I concluded from participants' responses that successful implementation of human resources information systems occurs when the application of such systems aligns with organizational

strategies. P1A stated, "I think that the implementation of our human resources information system was successful because we ensured that the implementation phase was part of our organizational strategy prior to investing in a system." P1C confirmed that the alignment with organizational strategies was an important factor in ensuring that the implementation of human resources information systems was a deliberate effort across the board reaching beyond the human resources department.

Vidgen, Shaw, and Grant (2017) emphasized that the alignment of IT implementation and business strategy leads to the development of business solutions. Analytical data is relevant in the context of creating long term resolution to increase organizational sustainability (Vidgen et al., 2017). When discussing the strategies used to implement human resources information systems, all five participants shared a mutual perception of strategic alignment. For successful implementation, the participants indicated that aligning the implementation phase into the organization's strategy was a pivotal step in achieving the goal of employing IT systems. P2 disclosed, "I am confident that the implementation of our human resources system was successful because we initiated a deliberate plan that aligned with the organization's strategies." P2 went on to explain that the implementation of their human resources information systems consisted of three separate phases within a 6 month span that aligned with the organization's strategy to reform its systems across all departments.

The strategic alignment of IT implementation and business strategy calls for the support of all organizational parties. LeRoux and Langer (2016) explored the importance of board members' oversight and concluded that the integration of board members is

detrimental to the successful implementation of organizational strategies. P1A, P1B, P1C, and P3 confirmed that the board was supportive of the implementation of a new human resources IT system and agreed to the investment. P3 stated, "At the time when we were looking into purchasing a human resources system, it was important to the process to involve everyone in the planning and implementation phase in order to increase engagement as well as acceptance of the new system." P1A confirmed, "I created a team that consisted of me and four volunteers who were savvy in IT to help get the system started and it helped in engaging our people into the process."

The research of Akter, Wamba, Gunasekaran, Dubey, and Childe (2016) revealed that the use of data analysis along with business strategy alignment contributes to the improvement of organizational performance. The strategic alignment derived from a universal understanding within the organizations that such systems will provide relevant support to not only the human resources section but also the entire organization. P2 said that the use of their human resources information system proved to provide useful data regarding future endeavors of the organization. P3 stated, "When I started using the analytical data to its full potential, I was able to provide our board with projections regarding our volunteer trends and I use that data to assess what services we are able to provide to our community." The participant elaborated on this statement emphasizing that the organization's board relies on such projections to develop future strategies. Additional evidence stemmed from organizational annual business plans. P4 shared the nonprofit's 2019 and 2020 annual business plan that included statistical data derived from the organization's human resources information system. P1A also provided records of

human resources reports that were used for decision making related to the establishment of future events.

Theme 2: Financial Flexibility

The theme of financial flexibility emerged from interview questions 1, 3, and 4, addressing strategies that senior leaders use to develop action plans for implementing human resources information systems along with the exploration of key barriers to developing strategies for successful implementation. The participants' responses and organizational records were significant in this study and provided a useful comparison between government funding and organizational investments in IT. In particular, greater amounts of available funding led to an increased involvement in human resources information systems as part of a deliberate process to integrate human resources into the performance growth of an organization.

Larger nonprofit organizations are more likely to adopt IT systems as part of strategic alignment to increase organizational performance. Kim (2017) indicated that increased funding in nonprofits leads to the increased flexibility of an organization, and leaders are likely to invest in systems that will promote organizational sustainability. All participants indicated that the implementation of human resources information systems differs in every organization depending on the size of the nonprofit. The size of an organization drives the amount of government funding and therefore the ability to invest in complex information systems.

All participants also indicated that funding determines the financial flexibility and investment abilities of a nonprofit organization. P1C and P3 agreed that as nonprofit

leaders, their goals are to increase organizational growth and sustainability to ensure

stabilization of funding. P1C noted that "As a nonprofit, we would not be able to invest in

any IT systems without adequate funding." P3 confirmed the need for financial flexibility

and stated, "Our team is continually working on findings ways to promote our

organization to the government and private donors to receive sufficient funding to

support our efforts and one way of doing that is by providing evidence that we are

investing in our employees by integrating human resources systems."

Nonprofit organizations rely heavily on the availability of financial resources. The

nature of a nonprofit organization is to provide services to communities, indicating a

wide range of flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of local communities (Thomas

& Van Slyke, 2019). Nevertheless, the substantial reliance on government funding as a

source of revenue encompasses a bureaucratic oversight along with extensive reporting

requirements of nonprofit organizations (Kim & Kim, 2016). P1B explained, "To

implement human resources information system we are in need of sufficient government

funding, but that also comes with a lot of restraints". P1B went on, "To gain some of that

flexibility back, we aim to receive higher funding so we can independently invest in

information systems that will enhance our performance and sustainability." P1B also

revealed a paradox in the system in that private donors may offer higher levels of

financial flexibility, but the organization cannot solely rely on the unpredictable flow of

private contributions when investing in sustainable resources.

To achieve increased organizational performance, organizational leaders need to

recognize the need to invest in systems that will lead to organizational efficiency. P1A,

P1B, and P1C noted that their organizational needs and financial capabilities were the driving force in the decision-making process to invest in a particular information system. P1A recognized that investing in human resources information systems is only advantageous to a nonprofit if there are sufficient funds to maintain such systems, including the sufficient training of employees and volunteers. P1B stated, "When we adopted our human resources information system, we ensured that the implementation itself consisted of a long term plan that included the training of our staff and volunteers." P1C added, "It was important to us that when we chose our system that we will be able to use the services by the provider to fix any faults within the system."

Investing in IT systems calls for the implementation of strategies to ensure that such resources become a valuable asset to an organization rather than a financial burden (Kim et al., 2017). P3 mentioned that the nonprofit organization used a human resources information system that was too costly and therefore not efficient to use, revealing that "The board decided to purchase a more user-friendly software in order to meet the needs of our organization and to ensure that we do not waste valuable resources if they do not lead to increased efficiency." Selecting a particular human resources information system is a strategic decision that requires careful consideration of the organizational goals and an organization's capabilities. P3 mentioned that most important to the leadership was to maintain organizational efficiency with regard to the use of its resources and allocation of funds.

Lu (2016) identified that financial adaptability and capabilities in nonprofits drive organizational investments and determine the levels of integration of innovative systems.

Through my research, I concluded that financial flexibility also drove the decision of what systems to invest in. All participants referred to the selection of a human resources information system as detrimental to meeting organizational needs while addressing the financial capabilities of the organization. P2 and P3 established that the strategic approach of choosing and implementing a human resources information system included a thorough investigation of the overall financial benefits of a system, its ongoing support, and system maintenance. P1A revealed, "It took us a little longer to finally decide for a human resources system that met our needs and we also waited until we had better funding and flexibility to invest in the system."

Theme 3: Knowledge Sharing

Another theme that I identified during my research was the theme of knowledge sharing. With respect to the successful implementation of IT, knowledge sharing sets the basis for innovation acceptance as well as long term sustainability of such innovations (Bessen & Nuvolari, 2019). Participants expressed that with the initial training of employees and volunteers on the new human resources information system, it was essential to create a system of knowledge sharing. Participants connected knowledge sharing to the success and longevity of the chosen IT system. P2 stated, "Without integrating a program of knowledge sharing, we would not have been able to maintain the system considering the high employee and volunteer turnover."

Knowledge sharing was a dominant theme when participants gave answers to Question 1 about what strategies they have used to implement human resources information systems in their organization. The answers from all participants confirmed

that internal knowledge sharing was a detrimental strategy step for the implementation of human resources information systems. P1A stated, "The sharing of knowledge enabled our organization to pursue and achieve the goal of employing a system that extends beyond the simple input of data." P1A continued explaining that new efforts have been put in place to provide employees and volunteers with training opportunities and to ensure that their knowledge is continuously up to date. As part of the process, P1A shared the organization's human resources standard procedure book, which consisted of human resources reports and analyses from the last 5 years. P1A stated that the documents assist in providing new employees and volunteers with valuable information on the usage of the nonprofit's human resources information system.

Jones and Jayawickrama (2017) explored in their research that training is an important element of successful knowledge sharing. When dealing with IT implementation, leaders should focus on creating a thorough training plan to ensure that employees used innovative systems to their full potential (Jones & Jayawickrama, 2017). P3 indicated that the successful integration of human resources information systems must accompany a strategic training plan to ensure proper integration and use of such systems. P2 states, "We asked the vendor to provide us with a training coach that will accurately show our volunteers and employees how to input data and how to pull reports and after that." P2 also remarked, "After the initial training, we developed internal subject matter experts that passed on the knowledge to incoming personnel and volunteers."

P1A stated that "The implementation of any human resources information systems can only be successful if employees are knowledgeable in utilizing such

systems." Participants of this study acknowledge the importance of training staff on the use of human resources information systems to fully exploit the capabilities of such systems and to increase the efficiency of utilizing information systems. P1B suggested that "To encourage employees of our organization to properly use our information systems in human resources, we have developed an incentive program, in which they receive certifications to add to their resume and work experience." P1C added that the creation of a certification program contributed to the interest of employees as well as volunteers to actively engage in the upkeep of their system. Along with increased efforts, the organization's leaders were able to tie volunteer power as volunteers felt that their volunteering efforts have a positive impact on their working experience.

Relevant to successful knowledge sharing is also the aspect of innovation. Innovation management encompasses the integration of new systems that increase organizational productivity and performance (Meyer & Leitner, 2018). Particularly in human resources in nonprofit organizations, innovation creates a valuable resource for the business (Meyer & Leitner, 2018). Participants of the study repeatedly expanded on the aspects of innovation in relation to knowledge sharing. P1C stated, "When I mention knowledge sharing, I consider it as an expansion of innovation implementation." The participant emphasized the fact that organizational leaders have to engage in innovation to support knowledge sharing among employees and volunteers. P1A revealed in the answer to Question 4, "To overcome any barriers in implementing our human resources information system, it was important to me as a leader of the organization to portray an

openness to innovation." P1A added that leadership engagement in innovation is what encouraged knowledge sharing across the organization.

Theme 4: Sustainability and Longevity

Human resources information systems are not solely a means of data input and collection. The purpose of such systems is to create a platform for organizational decision making and strategy development (Bondarouk & Brewster, 2016). When discussing strategies for implementing human resources information systems, all participants revealed the significance of sustainability and longevity. In particular, when communicating performance measures to assess the effectiveness of strategies used to implement such systems, participants focused on the discussion of the long term sustainability. P1A stated, "I measured the success of the chosen information system on how it has affected the organization's performance in relation to its goal achievements." P1A expanded on the theme of sustainability and longevity by revealing that the accomplishment of organizational goals is a direct result of effective business strategies. P1A added, "Our organization used the new system to make future projections and that is how we planned the upcoming fiscal years, including the projected volunteer participation."

Organizations gain long-term competitive advantage by adopting systems that enhance organizational performance (Coff & Raffiee, 2015). All participants identified sustainability as the ultimate goal of any implementation of new technology systems. P2 stated, "As a leader, I want to make sure that my decisions will affect the organization long term and the decision to implement human resources information systems is a large

investment for a nonprofit organization and should ultimately lead to better performance

of the entire organization." Increases in organizational performance have been the focus

of other participants. P1B indicated that long term success and sustainability are the only

measures that will predict whether an investment in IT has been effective.

Sustainability and longevity not only apply to the use of a human resources

information system but also relate to the extended use of such systems. P1A emphasized

the aspects of strategy development and stated, "A system is only advantageous to an

organization if its use extends to the succession planning of an organization." P1A added

that when implementing the IT system in the nonprofit's human resources department,

the goals were ultimately to add value to the strategic side of the organization. P2 stated,

"To get the board, employees, and volunteers efficiently involved in the process of using

the system, the system had to provide advantages to all parties, not just our human

resources."

P3 said that the organizational leaders have used the system to pull data that was

relevant to the development of organizational strategies. For example, P3 stated, "Last

year I used the analytical data predicting volunteer turnover to determine the number of

volunteers needed to an upcoming event." P3 shared the organization's strategic planning

documents that outlined human resources trends, such as quarterly reports on volunteer

turnover. The participant stated that leadership uses such analytical documents to predict

volunteer numbers allowing the team to determine when and what marketing strategies

for volunteer recruitment should be implemented. Similar prediction strategies were used

by other participants. P2 revealed that the board used data retrieved from the

organization's human resources information system to plan the organization's involvement in an expansion.

Comparison of Findings with Other Peer-Reviewed Studies

Other peer-reviewed studies either confirm or expand on the research findings of this study. The first emerging theme in this study was strategic alignment involving the need for a connection between human resources information systems and strategy development. All participants confirmed that the strategic alignment of both efforts was the main factor in the successful integration of innovative IT systems in the human resources department. Park et al. (2017) exemplified that the integration of any technology requires an alignment between the implementation of new systems and organizational objectives. Tallon et al. (2016) confirmed that the alignment between business strategy and IT sets the basis for a successful implementation of information systems and long term sustainability of such systems.

Participants of the study emphasized the importance of strategic alignment to achieve business solutions. When comparing my findings to existing literature, other peer-reviewed studies confirm that the affiliation between the implementation of IT and business strategy lead to improved organizational performance. Sirisomboonsuk, Gu, Cao, and Burns (2018) concluded that the integration of innovation into business processes sets the basis for effective IT implementation. Cui, Ye, Teo, and Li (2015) clarified the need for IT and business alignment stating that successful alignment occurs when the implementation of IT complements business objectives and vice versa. The authors confirmed the participant's responses emphasizing the aspects that

implementation of human resources technology without adequate consideration of business objectives is not beneficial to the success of such an investment.

Another emerging theme was financial flexibility and other researchers confirm the complexity of sufficient funding and the ability to invest in innovative IT. Participants in this study illustrated the dependency on government funding that drives investments in IT. Findings in my research are consistent with existing research exemplifying the importance of financial flexibility to reach organizational growth. Von Schnurbein, Perez, and Gehringer (2018) distinguished nonprofit organization's ability to invest in innovation, which ultimately leads to business growth. The authors emphasized the relevance of existing funding recoupment to allow for flexibility in the decision-making process to invest in IT that will enhance organizational performance and increase business efficiency.

Further research studies provide additional as well as contrasting insights into the aspect of financial flexibility. Kim at el. (2017) noted that the investment in IT systems requires deliberate implementation as such investments may become a financial burden to an organization. Schroetgens and Boenigk (2017) argued that the levels of investments depend on additional factors rather than solely the size of an organization. The participants of the study stated that the larger the nonprofit organization is, the more financial flexibility occurs due to increased government funding. However, Schroetgens and Boenigk (2017) claimed that nonprofit organizations benefit from increased private funding based on the nature of the investment.

Participants in this study addressed the elements of knowledge sharing as a relevant strategic step to the successful implementation of human resources information systems. Existing research supports the participants' perception that internal knowledge sharing leads to long term sustainability of IT systems. Li et al. (2018) argued that well-trained personnel contribute to the increased performance of an organization. This also applies to the training of personnel on innovative IT systems. The participants in this study demonstrated that the strategic planning resulting in the implementation of IT should include an organized and deliberate training plan to ensure that employees and volunteers used the system to its full potential. Hajar, Idris, and Noor (2015) argued that knowledge sharing is a fundamental element in the effectiveness of a nonprofit organization. In particular, the promotion of knowledge sharing in nonprofits leads to improved efficiency and increased willingness to employ innovative solutions to business problems.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous literature on knowledge sharing in relation to the implementation of human resources information systems. Participants in this study emphasized the importance of creating a shared knowledge of the implemented IT innovations. Zbuchea, Ivan, Petropoulos, and Pinzaru (2019) expanded on my research findings, exemplifying that organizational culture in nonprofits should reflect a culture of knowledge sharing when dealing with organizations that invest in innovative IT. Udekwe and De La Harpe (2017) argued that knowledge sharing is an essential component in ensuring efficient integration and utilization of IT technology systems.

The final emergent theme in this study consisted of sustainability and longevity. The participants in this study addressed the aspects of sustainability as a result of a successful implementation strategy. When integrating innovative human resources information systems, the participants argued that innovative systems are solely beneficial to an organization if the innovation provided long term efficiency and sustainability to a nonprofit organization. Hertz and Rogers (2016) identified that organizational leaders gain long term sustainability when they created a shared understanding that maximization of IT systems leads to the longevity of an organization. The authors confirmed the importance of longevity by emphasizing the integration of internal resources that consist of innovative information systems beyond the initial implementation phase of such innovative systems.

All participants referred to sustainability and longevity as strategic elements in the successful implementation of human resources information systems. Existing literature also includes these elements as detrimental in the effective integration of IT. Khuntia et al. (2018) stated that it is the organizational leaders' responsibility to create initiatives that enhance technological sustainability. Other researchers confirmed that the implementation of IT requires a strategic plan to reach long term sustainability rather than solely focusing on the implementation phase (Bidgoli, 2018; Bonin-Labelle & Demers, 2019). The focus on the sustainability of IT systems leads to increased efficiency of such systems and enables the integration of innovation into business processes (Khuntia et al., 2018).

Comparison of Findings to the Conceptual Framework

The findings of this study align with the concept of the resource-based view theory. All findings from this study either confirm or extend the conceptual framework used for this study. The results of the study show that internal resources are detrimental to the successful implementation of innovative technology systems. The resource-based view theory encompasses the use of internal resources as a means to gain a competitive advantage without the reliance on external factors (Otoo, 2019). All participants indicated a strong focus on the creation of strategies that enable the human resources information system to become an internal and strategic part of the organization that is difficult for other competitors to imitate.

The findings of the study align with the conceptual framework expanded by Barney (1991), that the implementation of human resources information systems leads to the creation of internal resources that contribute to the added value of an organization. Sabherwal et al. (2019) stated that the integration of innovative technology systems contributes to the development of internal capabilities that lead to a competitive advantage. Participants in this study shared their perceptions regarding what strategies contributed to the successful integration of human resources information systems. Knowledge sharing and financial flexibility are all internal resources that indicate an organization's objective to reach sustainability and longevity with the use of internal systems.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this research may contribute to the applications to professional practice in several ways. The identification of strategies nonprofit senior leaders use to implement human resources information systems is important to employers overcoming challenges in achieving technological solutions to business problems. The participants shared their experiences and perceptions that best contribute to the successful implementation of human resources information systems to increase organizational performance.

The implementation of strategies by senior executives in nonprofit organizations may provide information to organizational leaders with regard to alternative strategies for successful implementation of IT systems. Organizational leaders who lack strategies to implement human resources information systems may use the findings of this study to develop internal strategies and procedures to overcome barriers and challenges. The findings of the study may empower organizational leaders to consider the implementation of information systems within their organizations.

The findings of this study could contribute to valuable information sharing among senior leaders who are seeking to implement human resources information systems to increase organizational performance. This study may influence other senior executives to duplicate such strategies. The study's findings have the potential to advance business practices by increasing the success of IT implementation.

Implications for Social Change

The research study contributes to social change by providing successful implementation strategies of human resources information systems enabling nonprofit leaders to integrate innovation. The findings provide the potential for improving nonprofit leaders' efficiency in using human resources management processes to secure resources for organizational performance. Increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources with IT implementation may benefit the communities that leaders of nonprofit organizations serve through improvements in workforce hiring and retention processes. The results of this study may enable nonprofit executives to understand what strategies may be necessary for the interest of the public and the well-being of community members.

The findings of this research may guide other senior nonprofit executives to improvement of organizational performance such as retention of workforce members, recruitment, hiring the nonprofit workforce, and improvement of the human resources performance. Addressing any deficiencies in the implementation of human resources information systems may lead to increased nonprofit organizational sustainability. The results may benefit organizational leaders to continue supporting communities and their citizens. Community members rely on the success of nonprofit organizations that provide a broad range of services that may not be accessible to individuals if not free of charge. Nonprofit leaders could leverage the results from this study to develop internal strategies that will enhance the organization's performance and its contributions to surrounding communities and societies.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior nonprofit executives use to implement human resources information systems to increase organizational performance. Based on the interview responses and document reviews, I recommend that senior executives of nonprofit organizations should focus on aligning their efforts with the overall business strategy of an organization when implementing human resources information systems. In addition, the implementation phase of such systems should expand beyond the initial integration phase. To reach success with innovative information systems, organizational leaders should strive for long term sustainability of such systems to ensure that IT leads to value creation rather than a data collection mechanism.

Furthermore, I recommend building a team of experts that will engage in the implementation phase, create subject matter experts across the board, and initiate knowledge sharing among all employees and volunteers of a nonprofit organization. Human resources IT systems should be become a separate entity of a business but rather consist of an integrated system that enhances organizational performance. Human resources professionals should view such systems as an improvement to organizational process and organizational leaders should consider the long term implications of such systems on business objectives.

The findings of this study may provide other nonprofit executives helpful insights into strategies that were beneficial to the participants in the process of implementing human resources information systems. I will share a summary of my findings in German

with all the participants in this study. I will also disseminate the findings of this study to other interested professionals in the field of human resources through blogs on social media, publications, academic journals, workshops, and training.

Recommendations for Further Research

The focus of this study was to explore strategies that senior nonprofit executives use to implement human resources information systems to increase organizational performance. The study was specific to a geographical location in Germany. The findings may not be applicable to nonprofit organizations in other geographical areas. To address this limitation of the study, my recommendation is to conduct a similar study in the United States expanding the geographical area.

The small sample size in this study posed another limitation as a small population size may lead to the lack of not being penetrating enough to translate into a larger population within the nonprofit sector. My recommendation for future research is to conduct a replication of this study with a larger sample size that may lead to an increase in the generalizability of the research findings. To enable a larger population sample, I also recommend deviating from using a purposive sample as it limits the potential pool of participants.

Another identified limitation of this study was the use of a qualitative research method. Conducting the study with a qualitative multiple-case design solely enabled the descriptive analyses. My recommendation is to conduct a similar study using a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between the emergent themes and the

levels of increased organizational performance leading to the determination of causal associations.

Finally, I targeted senior executives of nonprofit organizations for this study. My recommendation is to explore the phenomenon with a more diverse population sample. The extended focus on for profit organizations may lead to additional insights and emerging themes regarding the implementation of human resources information systems. Further research should expand on the transferability of the findings to a wider range of organizations.

Reflections

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that senior nonprofit executives use to implement human resources information systems. I selected this topic because of my professional interest in the effects of human resources information systems on organizational performance. Prior to conducting this study, I had practical knowledge of IT in human resources based on my experience working in human resources. From the study findings, I gained an extensive understanding of the use of human resources information systems along with a comprehensive analysis of strategies that lead to the successful integration of such systems.

The theoretical part of the doctoral study, which included the development of my problem statement and the completion of my literature review, was an essential step in gaining an understanding of my topic. Although I obtained extensive knowledge on human resources information systems through my current career, I gained additional insights through existing academic literature. Previous research has opened my mind to

innovative as well as alternative idea about technology and human resources. Identifying the limitations and assumptions of my study contributed to my understanding of the role as a researcher and led to additional reflections necessary to conduct an ethically profound study.

The practical part of my research study was the most interesting and rewarding part. I recruited participants via email by introducing my study and asking about their interest in participation. I was very surprised to receive the high amount of responses and the participants' interest in contributing to my research study through their participation. During the interviews, it was very clear to me that those professionals have extensive knowledge and experience in the field of human resources. Their answers not only contributed to the study but also provided great lessons and insights into my own professional development.

In the early stages of my doctoral study, I identified several biases. One of the biases was my preconceived idea that IT systems are beneficial to human resources since I work with these systems on a daily basis. I had to open myself to the idea that other professionals may view human resources IT systems as a burden to an organization. Another bias, which occurred to me during the interview process was the challenge associated with my role as human resources professional to ask participants research questions rather than engaging in a direct conversation about the topic. Nevertheless, by identifying these weaknesses as a researcher in the early stages, I was able to create personal strategies to overcome such obstacles.

Working on a doctoral study has been a challenging but highly rewarding journey. The ability to independently conduct a research study increased my passion for research. I believed that my research was meaningful to the professional practice when participants reflected a passion for IT systems as part of innovative solutions to business problems. In addition, I greatly enjoyed working with my chair and doctoral committee as well as the librarian and research professionals at Walden University. Their unique perspectives and experiences added value to my research and their guidance increased the quality of my study.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior executives of nonprofit organizations use to implement human resources IT systems to improve organizational performance. Existing literature and findings in this study provided insights into strategies used by senior executives in nonprofit organizations. The emergent themes identified from this study include strategic alignment, financial flexibility, knowledge sharing, and sustainability and longevity. Implementation strategies are essential in the integration of human resources information systems to increase the likelihood of improved organizational performance. The findings of the study contribute to the professional practice in that other senior leaders may use similar strategies to integrate information systems in their human resources department.

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Appendix A: Cover Letter (Invitation to Participate)
Date

Dear_____:

      My name is Katharina Simms and I am Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) candidate at Walden University. I am conducting a doctoral study project of informational interviews to explore what strategies senior executives use to implement human resources information systems.

      Based on your experience as a senior leader in a nonprofit organizations, I would like to interview you in order to gather information about your professional experience and perception on implementing human resources information systems in nonprofit organizations. Your participation in my study will contribute in ensuring that I gather data from a variety of nonprofit leaders with direct knowledge and experience. The interview may take 30-45 minutes of your time and will be schedule at your convenience in person or via phone or Skype.

      Each participant will have an opportunity to review an informed consent. This consent form provides background information on the study and outlines a participant's privacy and rights during the interview process. I hope that you find my study of interest and would like to participate.

      Please contact me if you have any questions or need additional information. You can reach me at +49 XXXXXXX or via email at xx@waldenu.edu. Thank you in advance for your consideration and support of my study.

Sincerely,
Katharina Simms
Walden University Candidate

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to develop action plans for implementing human resources information technology systems to improve organizational performance?

2. What performance measures and indicators do you use to assess the effectiveness of your strategies for developing and implementing information technology in human resources operations processes?

3. What were the key barriers to developing and implementing strategies for information technology systems in human resources operations processes?

4. How did you address the key barriers to developing and implementing human resources information technology systems?

5. What more can you add about successful strategies you use to develop strategies and execute action plans for implementing human resources information technology systems?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

I. Introduce self to the participant(s).

II. Present consent form, go over contents, and answer questions and concerns of

participant(s).

III. Give participant copy of consent form.

IV. Turn on the audio recording device.

V. Follow procedure to introduce participant(s) with pseudonym and coded

identification; note the date and time.

VI. Begin interview with question #1; follow through to the final question.

VII. Follow up with additional questions.

VIII. End interview sequence; discuss member-checking with participant(s).

IX. Thank the participant(s) for their part in the study. Reiterate contact numbers for

follow up questions and concerns from participants.

X. End protocol.