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Managers' Strategies for Leading Innovative Followers

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Abstract

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MBA, Walden University 2010

BS, Kaplan University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

In hierarchical structured organizations, leaders often assume that innovation will happen randomly but lack an understanding of what leadership qualities contribute to employees' innovativeness. Innovation is a requirement in the current business marketplace to stay relevant. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative case study is to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. The overarching research question is from an employee and leader perspective how do leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation? Leveraging the conceptional framework of the innovative blueprint created by C. Brooke Dobni, an analysis of 18 interviews with healthcare employees located in the pacific northwest will be shared. The study identified 9 themes that leaders influence in enabling an innovative environment. The 9 themes were sharing ideas, support from peers and customers, being surrounded by people who think differently, alignment to organization priorities, questioning ideas and solutions, environment of curiosity and failure, and manager expectations and trust. The results of this study provided practical, actionable themes for leaders to implement that enabled innovation and can impact positive social change by shifting leader behaviors to proactively support employee innovation.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to leaders who want to bring out the best in their employees. I have been fortunate to be inspired by amazing leaders and challenging leaders. Hopefully this study will encourage all current and aspiring leaders to be the best they can be.

Acknowledgments

There are so many people to thank. I would like to thank my wife who encouraged me and demonstrated much patience through this entire process. I would like to acknowledge my daughter, who was born in the middle of writing but encouraged me to continue working on my schooling as soon as she was able. I would like to thank my parents, who encouraged me to go to school. My brother and sister who both received their doctorates were inspirations to me throughout the process. Organizations who provided me with funding and encouragement to share learnings. Last and not least, I am grateful to God for giving me strength and focus to finish.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Innovation created through unique ideas and solutions is an expectation in organizations to ensure relevancy and customer satisfaction (Reade & Hyun-Jung, 2016). For employees, unique solutions are required to move forward by pushing boundaries, being curious, and asking questions, which may include challenging an employee's leader. All these behaviors can lead to innovation. Curiosity leads to questioning the status quo and figures of authority. This typically conflicts with the traditional hierarchical leadership structure that is found in most high performing organizations. Innovation is an expectation and a goal in most organizations; however, research has shown that within hierarchical organizations, leaders are expected to manage their teams in a way that does not naturally inspire innovative ideas and solutions (Park, Choi, & Lee, 2015). Although there is a large amount of research available on how to be an innovative employee and how to be an effective leader in a hierarchical organization, there is limited research on leading to inspire innovativeness in a hierarchical structured organization (Delmas & Pekovic, 2018).

Dobni's (2006) innovative blueprint supports the fact that leaders of organizations must be intentional about building a culture of employee innovation. The intentional culture may require organizations to change multiple aspects of their culture. My study leverages Dobni's innovative blueprint and evaluates innovative leadership behaviors in a hierarchical structure. The outcomes of the research build on limited research regarding innovative leadership behaviors from an employee perspective. My study could result in changing behavior for leadership expectations to support innovation (impacting social

change) with employees at all levels within the workplace. The background of the research problem, problem statement, nature of study, research questions, and conceptual framework are included in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth review of the literature describing the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 includes a review of the research methodology. The results of the study are presented in Chapter 4 and are followed by a conclusion to the study in Chapter 5.

Background of the Study

Stincelli (2016) researched how innovation is influenced by leadership and how building a collaborative culture is a key to an innovative organizational culture. Norbom, & Lopez (2016) researched how informal power and connection power influence innovation within the organization. The concept of innovation management and how leadership behaviors drive employee empowerment and courage (Saray, Patache & Ceran, 2017) are essential components to creating an innovative environment.

Employee autonomy and organizational structure influence open innovation (Burcharth, Ana, Mette & Søndergaard, 2017; Robert, 2007). The research using Schein's model of innovation and Dobni's innovative blueprint is limited in scope for organizations structured hierarchically; however, the research does support the importance of intentional focus on structure and systems in organizations to attain the goal of strategic innovation (Hogan, 2013; Dobni, 2006). This study explores and thus contributes to the limited research on leaders' behaviors that inspire innovation.

Problem Statement

Innovation is a requirement in the current business marketplace to stay relevant. Companies that strategically plan for innovation achieve 13% increase in revenue and growth compared to organizations that experience innovation randomly without a structure or plan (Cassiman & Valentini, 2015; Dobni & Klassen, 2015). Based on the 2015 Innovation Health Index 66% of organizations experience innovation in a random, non-systematic manner in their organizations (Dobni, Klassen, & Nelson, 2015). Even when there is a specific plan for innovation in place, it may be challenging to achieve. The challenge is based on the hierarchical structure of many organizations within the US, where employees are subordinate to one another and leaders control employee tasks and actions. This authority structure results in leader behaviors that typically stifle innovativeness (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The general problem is that, to maintain control of employee tasks, leaders must manage teams to meet business goals. However, those business goals usually do not set any specific targets about innovation although innovation is expected from many C-suites (Kao, et al., 2015). The specific problem is that in hierarchical structured organizations leaders often assume that innovation will happen randomly, but leaders lack an understanding of how to lead employees in a manner that will create or enhance their innovativeness(Burcharth et al., 2017; Stincelli, 2016).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization

culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. A healthcare organization in the Pacific Northwest was selected with a value of innovation. The organization was hierarchically structured and designed to develop innovative solutions to provide hope, care, and cures for children to live their healthiest life. The department of research leaders provided the leadership to the innovative teams. Examples of research completed in the research teams included immunotherapy for curing child cancer and child development knowledge building. Data was gathered from leadership behaviors within the research department and how it fosters or hinders innovation within the teams. My research was completed through interviews conducted with 14 employees and 6 leaders of the department focused on innovation in the Pacific Northwest.

Research Questions

The overarching research question of the study was: From an employee and leader perspective, how do leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study was the innovation blueprint (Dobni, 2006). According to Saray, Patache, and Ceran (2017), there are multiple behaviors that drive innovativeness in organizations, and the innovative blueprint compiles these behaviors into one model. Employee innovation was influenced by multiple factors within organizations (Delmas & Pekovic, 2018) that include structure, leadership behaviors, and organizational goals. Dobni (2006) introduced a blueprint for innovation that defines the behaviors and environment needed for organizations to stay in the

"innovation zone." I provide a detailed analysis of these behaviors and this environment in Chapter 2. The innovation blueprint focuses on a mindset instead of actions and provides a comprehensive framework to develop the required mindset. The framework applied to the study because it provided a strategy to increase innovation in organizations. Leaders could leverage the innovative blueprint to identify behaviors that build employee innovativeness.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a qualitative research approach using the exploratory case study design. The study focused on understanding how leader actions and behaviors within a hierarchical structure influence employee innovation. A quantitative research approach was not selected because the study did not compare known variables or differences among various groups (Appelbaum et al., 2018). The mixed method research design is used when both a qualitative and quantitative research method is necessary (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). There was quantitative component to this study, therefore a mixed methods research approach would not be appropriate (Van den Berg & Struwig, 2017).

The exploratory case study research design of this study was applicable based on the intent to explore a case for the purposes of gaining and generating insights in a real-life setting (Yin, 2017). The exploratory case study design allowed insights to be gathered on different interventions and theory while answering the questions of why and how leader behaviors influence employee innovativeness (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 1995). The focus of the study was on how leadership behaviors in a real-life

hierarchical structure influence innovation. Additional research designs considered included both phenomenological and survey designs. The phenomenological design is focused on observations and experiences (Vagle, 2014). The intent of this study was not to focus on observations and experience; instead the focus was on gaining insight on how current leadership support motivates employee innovation. The survey design is focused on the intended outcome of a particular event or phenomenon and would not be appropriate for the intent of this study (Yin, 2017).

The case study involved one healthcare organization in the pacific northwest of the United States with a hierarchical structure focused on creating an innovative environment to solve problems in medicine. The research department focused on innovation consists of 50 employees, 12 leaders, and 38 team members. Fifty percent of team members in the innovative hierarchical structure (14 individuals) and Fifty percent of all leaders (six individuals) in the innovative hierarchical structure were interviewed based on data saturation occurring. Although a specific number is not defined for qualitative studies, interviewing the defined percentage of employees and leaders should arrive a point where no additional new findings are generated (Sanders et al, 2017). The participants were interviewed individually, notes were collected through a recorder, and trends analysis was completed. The research design contributed to the limited research on leader behaviors needed to influence innovativeness in employees and/or to remove hindrances within a hierarchical structure.

Definitions

Innovation: “Something new that creates value in the eye of the consumer” (Reade & Hyun-Jung, 2016, p. 199-224).

Hierarchical Structure: “Hierarchy refers to the intra-organizational structure in which individuals are arranged in a cascade of authority and communication relations” (Park, Choi & Lee, 2015, p. 71-104).

Mind-set: “A set of attitudes and organizational norms” (Hogan & Coote, 2013, p. 1611-1616).

Assumptions

In this study, I assumed that leaders and employees provided accurate information to interview questions asked during individual interviews. Another assumption for the study was that leaders and employees understand innovation and the goals provided by the organization. In a hierarchical structured organization, it is assumed that employees understand their leader is responsible for providing direction and impetus for achieving defined outcomes. Finally, another assumption was that innovation is defined as a concept that is new or different, and the goal is to implement the new concept.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was to identify leader behaviors that lead to innovativeness for employees in a hierarchically structured organization. This study was selected based on the limited research in the field on this topic. Current research is focused on innovative behaviors and motivating employees. This study focused on employees and leaders in a hierarchical healthcare setting in the pacific northwest. The

population was selected based on the organization's focus on innovation. The study focused on 14 employees and 6 leaders, leveraging Dobni's (2016) innovative blueprint. The individuals were selected based on their focus for identifying innovative solutions in healthcare (see Participants in Chapter 3).

Limitations

Exploratory case study research designs are effective when answering questions about the what and how in the research question. In the current study, I explored what and how leadership behaviors influence employee innovativeness. However, there are limitations in exploratory case study research design that are applicable to this study. The study focused on one organization and a department within the organization, limiting the scope of research. The research could be replicated in other organizations and similar settings at the discretion of the researcher in the future; however, the number of research participants is a limitation in the current study. The study was completed in a research healthcare setting within the US and may have resulted in bias based on the defined innovation outcomes.

Significance of the Study

The research addressed a gap in the literature by focusing on how leaders' behaviors and the organizational structure influence innovativeness from the perspective of employees and leaders. (Norbom et al., 2016, Li, Mitchell and Boyle, 2016). Insights from the study are intended to help leaders understand the impact of hierarchical structure on innovation, aiding leaders to encourage employee innovation or consider new structures. Innovation is a key strategy for social change by allowing employees to bring

forth thoughts and ideas that enable organizations to meet consumer demands (Martin & Terblanche, 2003). The research may positively impact social change in the corporate workplace by building awareness of how leadership and an organization's structure influence employee innovation to further encourage diversity of thought and ideas in the workplace (Robert, 2007). Innovative employees assist an organization in remaining relevant in the global economy (Anderson, Potocnick & Zhou, 2014). As previously shared, there is a gap in research on how leader behaviors impact innovation from an employee perspective. With the gap in research, it may be challenging for leaders to proactively support employee innovation. This study intended to provide practical, actionable insights from employees on leader behaviors that support innovation so that leaders can proactively provide support. With guidance from employees on leader behaviors the guidance may turn into action which results in having a positive impact on innovation and employee engagement and could provide a significant impact to social change.

Summary and Transition

There is a gap in research regarding leader behaviors that influence employee innovation in a hierarchical structured organization. The innovation blueprint provided a conceptual framework for innovation by combining different factors that influence innovation. This exploratory case study revealed what behaviors influence innovation and how they are operationalized in a specific organizational setting. Chapter 1 included the introduction, nature, limitations, and scope of the study. Chapter 2 includes a

detailed literature review and description of leader behaviors that have been known to impact innovation in employees through previous studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Innovation is a requirement for a company to remain relevant. Companies that strategically plan for innovation achieve 13% increase in revenue and growth compared to organizations that experience innovation randomly (Cassiman & Valentini, 2015; Dobni, Klassen and Nelson, 2015). Based on the 2015 Innovation Health Index , 66% of organizations experience innovation in a random, non-systematic manner (Dobni, et al., 2015). The hierarchical structure of many organizations within the US involves the subordination of employees to leaders, creating a dynamic that stifles innovativeness (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The general problem is that in a hierarchical structure, to maintain control of employee tasks, leaders must manage teams to meet business goals. Those business goals usually do not set any specific targets about innovation, although innovation is expected from many C-suites (Kao et al., 2015). The specific problem is that in hierarchical structured organizations, leaders often assume that innovation will happen randomly, but leaders lack an understanding of what contributes to innovativeness, resulting in the potential obsolescence of their organization (Burcharth et al., 2017, Stincelli, 2016).

The purpose of this exploratory case study research was to explore from an employee and leader (with direct reports) perspective how leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation in a hierarchical organization. An exploratory case study design represents an appropriate research study to identify how employee innovativeness is influenced by collecting, analyzing, and reporting results on the data. Information on how employee

innovativeness is influenced by leaders and the organization has been missing from research on innovation in the workplace (Burcharth et al., 2017).Chapter 2 includes a description of the literature search strategies, a review of the conceptual framework for the study, a review of current literature relevant to the research questions, and the problem statements.

Literature Search Strategy

The databases used to perform the searches were found in Walden University's online databases and included Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM, EBSCO host, Academic search complete, Emerald Insight, Sage Premier, and Google Scholar. I performed searches using the following keywords and combinations: *innovation, innovation and employee behaviors, innovation and organizational structure, innovation and organizational environment, innovation hierarchy, innovation blueprint, leadership and innovation,* and *employee innovation.* I searched for articles pertaining to leadership in innovative environments and organizations with a hierarchal structure. When performing the search, I received over 2,000 articles. In the situation where there was little to no research on the topic, I noted the lack of research available. I used a date range between 2015 through 2019.

Conceptual Framework

The central study that grounded the conceptual research f ramework was how behaviors from leaders and employees influence employee innovativeness. The innovative blueprint (Dobni, 2006) defined the organization and employee behaviors that influence innovation in most organizations. Innovation is defined as intentionally

generating a new idea with a purpose in mind (Abstein, Heidenreich, & Spieth, 2014; Van der Vegt & Janssen, 2003). Hierarchy structured organizations require leaders to manage employees through building expectations and managing employee communication to achieve defined organizational goals (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001) When leaders manage employee communications and set expectations to achieve organizational goals, they create the type of environment that builds employee innovativeness (Delmas & Pekovic, 018). There is a large amount of research around innovation in organizations and employee behaviors that spark innovation; however the research is limited on how leader behaviors impact employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization structure.

I linked the innovation blueprint (Dobni, 2006) that described the environment for innovation in the organization to build a conceptual framework for leader and employee behaviors that may influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical structured organization (see Figure 1). The environment that motivates organizational innovation connected to how employee innovativeness is influenced by leader and employee behaviors (Dobni, 2006).

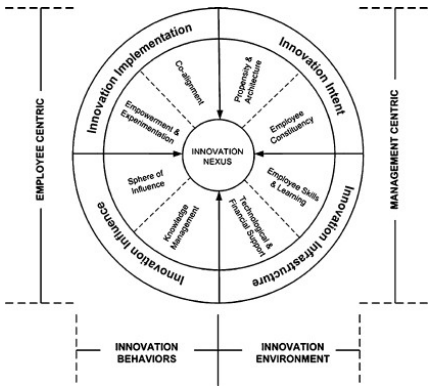

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the study.

The conceptual framework indicated that continual innovation is established through the four factors of intent, infrastructure, influence, and implementation. The innovation environment identified by the factors of intent and infrastructure is management centric. Innovative behavior is employee centric and identified by implementation and influence. Although the framework highlights four factors that influence innovation, the concepts of the innovative framework have not been used by organizations structured hierarchically. In general, the innovative framework has not been widely applied in most organizations (Dobni, 2006). The innovative framework builds on the idea that each of the four factors work together providing a positive impact on organizational innovation. Strategy and innovation partner together for effectiveness, and the innovation blueprint demonstrates the relationship between the two (Dobni, 2010). In addition, Schein's model of innovation (Hogan & Coote, 2013) argued that organizational culture must support innovation to ensure success. In working to understand innovativeness in structured organizations, I built my research on four topics. The four topics around innovation environment and behaviors include infrastructure, intent, implementation and influence.

Literature Review

In this section, I use the conceptual framework to inform and organize a literature review. The literature review is organized into the two main topics of innovation management and innovation behavior. Each of the two main topics has sub-topics of

management centric (innovation infrastructure and innovation intent) and employee centric (innovation implementation and innovation influence).

Management Centric

Dobni (2006) explained that the innovation environment influences employee creativity. The innovation environment is established by building innovation intent and innovation infrastructure. The innovation environment and the innovation infrastructure are both established by management (Dobni, 2006).

Innovation Intent

The three items within the innovation blueprint that support innovation intent include propensity, architecture constituency, and employee constituency. Propensity and architecture refer to the organization's ability to develop new behaviors that support innovation and infrastructure. Employee constituency is defined as how an employee feels that he or she can and will contribute to innovation in an organization (Dobni, 2006).

Propensity and Architecture

Propensity and architecture are impacted by multiple organizational culture elements. Johnsson (2017) explained multiple factors that enable innovation in an organization and influence leader support behaviors. The enablers include: awareness, capabilities, climate, collaboration, culture, dedication, empowerment, entre- / intrapreneurship, incentives, knowledge, knowledge management, management, mind-set, need, processes, strategy, and time.

Awareness is established through organizations being knowledgeable regarding what is taking place around the organization for the intention of a wide perspective on current state impact to consider potential future positive impacts (Coutts, White, Blackett, Rijswijk, Bewsell, Park, et al., 2017). The action of awareness is also reflexivity described as a recognition of the opportunities and barriers presented by one's own social environment (Suddaby et al., 2016). Awareness facilitates innovation and change within organizations.

Innovation enablers for capabilities involves thorough understanding of the organizational factors and identifying the power and abilities needed across the organization with an alignment of resources as needed (Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018). The capabilities needed across the organization may determine the climate of an organization. Climate is the shared meaning of perceptions based on leadership actions and employee expectations, for example the policies, practices, and defined organizational values (Sethibe & Stey, 2018). Organizations that maintain traditional operations and do not adjust capabilities to the current needs of the organization tend to diminish employee innovation and their ability to succeed in the future (Suddaby et al., 2016)**.**

Collaboration becomes an innovation enabler when employees are encouraged to share thoughts and ideas. A culture of collaboration involves giving employees the space to experiment and learn (Hogan & Coote, 2013). Additionally, collaboration with diverse teams and departments can result in innovation implementation (Den Hond, De Bakker, & Doh, 2012). Collaboration succeeds when it is made part of the organizational

climate and realized in organizational culture (Fujimoto, Azmat & Subramaniam, 2019). In contrast to climate, culture is defined as the reality of way the way the work is accomplished in the organization (Purtik & Arenas, 2019). This is different from climate, which is focused on perceptions of established expectations.

Dedication is evidenced by an organization committed to motivating employees by both internal factors (personal value of work) and external factors (compensation, feedback, workspaces; (Miller, 2016). The enabler of dedication may result in empowerment. Empowerment or autonomy to work freely on tasks sparks employee innovativeness and exploration (Russo-Spena, Mele, & Marzullo, 2018). Entre- / intrapreneurship relates to co-creation and collaboration. Co-creation is an innovation enabler based on characteristics such as taking risks, seeking opportunities, overcoming obstacles, and breaking rules to move forward (Chebiyyam, Srivastava, Aggarwal, & Gupta, 2016). In addition to co-creation recognition of creation through, incentives are an innovation enabler (Johnsson, 2017). Organizations that recognize employees for innovative ideas through compensation, organization recognition, and management recognition tend to have higher levels of innovation in comparison with companies that do not provide the organizational support (Chen & Wang, 2017).

Gaining knowledge for innovation is evidenced as an innovation enabler. Building knowledge involves the process of knowledge management, where assets and structures are developed to manage the flow of information. Knowledge building in areas such as customer value require a strong knowledge management infrastructure (Drummond-Dunn, 2016), and organizations with the established infrastructure tend to

experience higher innovation behaviors from employees. Related to customer value, mind-set describes an innovation enabler based on the importance of individuals within organizations to be in tune with customer needs and desires. Mind-set also applies to a structure of continuous improvement and reasonable risk taking. Reasonable risk taking is difficult to define due to the diverse needs of customers and organizations (Miller, 2016). An organization that is committed to innovation is focused on supporting individuals to continue the mindset of innovation and take risks as needed.

Time is one of the lower innovation enablers; however, it is evidenced as contributing to employee innovative behaviors. Time includes the ability to analyze potential innovations while maintaining ample time for innovation (Drummond-Dunn, 2016). When enabled in organizations, these elements lead to more innovation. The extent to which each element is implemented in the organization depends on the organizational need (Johnsson, 2017).

Employee Constituency

Employee constituency is an organization or leader's ability to identify, inform and encourage employee participation. Employee consistency impacts leadership structure, culture, climate, leader expectations and employee expectations. The elements of employee constituency are made through the environment and the influence of leaders within an organization (Dobni, 2006). The leadership behaviors and styles that contribute to employee constituency and includ: collaborative conflict (Reade & Hyun-Jung, 2016), supportive manager behaviors (Lukes & Stephan, 2017), and authentic leadership (Edú-Valsania, Moriano & Molero, 2016).

Formal structures and strictly adhering to the structures tends to stifle innovativeness within the organization (Dedahanov, Rhee, & Yoon, 2017). Organizations structured hierarchically with clear chain of command and team feedback culture, encourage innovation and creativity among employees (Sanner & Bunderson, 2018). A hierarchically structured organization, where leaders are responsible for employee results, has a positive impact on employee constituency when there is adjustment in leader behaviors and collaboration with different leaders in the organization are encouraged and supported (Strutton & Guzmán, 2016). Moving past the strict adherence to chain of command in communication can increase innovativeness (Duncan, 2018).

Organizational climate and organizational culture influence employee constituency. Organizational climate is based on established expectations and culture determined by the reality of how the expectations are applied in the workplace. Climate and culture is mainly influenced by middle management leaders (Duncan, 2018). Climate and culture impacts employee creativity, collaboration, and employee motivation all impacting employee constituency (Jafri,Den & Choden, 2016). Through a literature review Stincelli (2016) found that a collaborative culture and articulated values in hierarchical leadership is a component of innovation. Collaboration is related to innovation enablement and when collaboration is an established expectation and the culture enables collaboration innovation results (Miller, 2016).

In a study comprised of 160 participants, Norbom, & Lopez (2016) defined the influence of informal power and connection power in organizational innovation. This

study was developed through analyzing unique power structures for 60 participants. Related to collaboration, informal and connection power, thrives in environment with a culture that encourages employees at all levels to talk with one another.

Saray, Patache, & Ceran (2017) introduced the concept of innovation through innovation management by analyzing successful organizations such as Southwest Airlines, Wal-Mart, and McDonalds. This study explained how leadership behaviors that drive employee empowerment and courage are components to innovation management. A mindset important to leader behaviors is open innovation. Open innovation is the continuous knowledge to drive new thoughts, ideas, and implementations (Miller, 2016). The framework for open innovation is influenced in organizational culture through employee autonomy and organizational infrastructure, for example goal alignment, department vision, knowledge resources, diversity of mindset (Burcharth, Ana, Mette, & Søndergaard, 2017; Robert, 2007). Although limited for hierarchically structure organizations, the research on Schein's model of innovation and Dobni's innovative blueprint explained the structure for strategic innovation (Hogan, 2013; Dobni, 2006).

Supportive manager behavior is evidenced as an element to employee behavior contributing to innovativeness (Lukes & Stephan, 2017). In general, supportive leader behavior relates to empathic leadership, where the leader to demonstrates understanding (Kock, Mayfield, Mayfield, Sexton, & De La Garza, 2019). In a study researching the process of innovative leadership for nursing homes, it was found that when a leader is

supportive, empathic and demonstrates understanding, employee constituency results and improves employee innovation behaviors (Brodtkorb, Skaar, & Slettebø, 2019).

Chiu and Fogel (2016) evaluated manager influence strategies, persuasive strategy, assertive strategy, and relationship-based strategy. This study found that persuasive strategy where information is given to employees around the value of innovation or innovation implementation positively impacts employee innovativeness. In contrast assertive strategy (coercion) and relationship-based strategy (developing a social relationship) does not positively impact innovativeness (Chiu & Fogel, 2016). A leadership style that has a direct positive impact on innovation is authentic leadership. Edú-Valsania, Moriano and Molero (2016) indicated findings in their research that authentic leadership attributes such as transparency, reliability, trustworthiness, and integrity contribute directly to innovation in organizations. Authentic leaders tend to continuously work on management and leadership skills to support and advocate for teams which results in increased organizational performance, one of which aligns to innovation (Storberg-Walker & Gardiner, 2017).

Another leadership style that positively contributes to employee constituency is collaborative management. The style encourages employees to work together, Kwang-Ho & Sunghyup (2016) completed research across multiple organizations and identified that collaborative management discourages the “us vs them” atmosphere and fosters alignment between leaders and employees resulting in more employee innovativeness. Deliberate actions, such as strategic information sharing, in the collaborative style encourage idea seeking from leaders and build employee innovativeness (Jeroen &

Hartog, 2007). When conflict in teams occurs, collaborative leadership considers multiple solutions, and merges ideas together for agreement or decision. Although working through conflict in this style may be lengthy, it is evidenced to positively contribute to employee constituency and increased innovation (Reade & Hyun-Jung, 2016). Humor (another common behavior in the collaborative management style) is evidenced to build employee innovativeness based on the ability to reenergize the mind (Yung-Tag, T, 2008; Mao, Chiang, Zhang & Gao, 2017). Management styles that encourage employee autonomy (for example transformation leadership, adaptive leadership, collaborative leadership and situational leadership) tend to increase employee innovation because the leader adjusts to the leadership style needed for the employee (Martinez-Sanchez, 2009).

Innovation Infrastructure

Two items that establish innovation infrastructure in organizations are employee skills and learning and technological and financial support. Employee skills and learning indicate the manager or leader's role in understanding the skills of an employee and supporting the development employee potential. Technological and financial support indicates is the organization's desire and will to shift resource allotment to innovative ideas and to take appropriate risk on an innovative idea (Dobni, 2006).

Employee Skills and Learning

Employee skills and learning supports an innovative environment through multiple factors such as awareness, knowledge sharing, and employee creativity, organizational support, and work arrangement (Dobni, 2006). Employee learning can be

developed through informal learning systems, such as on the job review of current innovations and employees being encouraged to review day to day operations for improvements (Laviolette, Redien-Collot and Teglborg, 2016). Through information learning opportunities, employees can develop skills for creative thinking building the mindset for innovation (Laviolette, et al., 2016). Leadership support of employee skills and learning development influences employee action in informal learning opportunities (Laviolette, et al., 2016).

Hartley & Rashman (2018) found that awareness building can be completed through learning development focused on building employee skills for curiosity in comparison to learning experiences designed to imitate. Hartley & Rashman indicated that most research is focused on innovation at a point in time or past experiences and there is limited research on how to incite innovation overtime. Building employee awareness through learning opportunities and creating curiosity will support sustained employee innovation (Hartley & Rashman, 2018). Employee behaviors shift based on the perceived organizational support. Employees will share their mistakes, learnings from failure, and seek feedback if they feel that the organization will support the learning process (Department of Management & University of Bologna, 2016). One element that contributes to perceived organizational support are the policies in the organization, for example the HR policies. Organizations that have flexible HR policies tend to experience more employee innovativeness and reasonable risk taking (Ben-Roy, 2016). Doran & Geraldine (2017) indicated that work arrangement influences Employee behavior. For example, when work can be completed through brainstorming and multi-

disciplinary teams it tends to positively impact employee innovativeness (Doran & Geraldine, 2017). Rotation of employees between workgroups tends to impact employee innovativeness, however not at the same level as brainstorming and multi-disciplinary teams (Doran & Geraldine, 2017).

Technological and Financial Support

Organizations that have successfully created innovative environments focus on "designing process processes to create innovation, adopting strategies of generating new ideas from various sources, ensuring stable and secure innovation funding and deploying explicit innovation measurement" (Sharmelly, 2017). Successful organizations are organizations with innovative practices as a core value and they tend to have specific strategies that define success to outperform their peers (Sharmelly, 2017). Enabling systems that leverage the employee voice in the organization are found to align to employee innovativeness, Rasheed (2017) indicated that, organizations who encourage employees to share feedback and raise their voice in the organization tend to experience more innovation in comparison to organizations that do not. Organizations with an established innovative environment that includes harmonious atmosphere, communication platform, and well-established learning plans tend to have more employee innovation (Wang & Yang, 2017). Organizations with an established innovative environment tend to experience employee well-being and employee knowledge sharing, resulting in higher innovation (Wang & Yang, 2017). Sharmelly (2017) indicated that financial systems supporting innovation may include financial compensation for employees. The financial allocation based on the end of year earnings

or sales with a clear distinction for innovation demonstrates commitment for an environment of innovation (Sharmelly, 2017). Successful innovative organizations tend to have business goals with innovative measurements or indicators to ensure that an innovative environment is sustained (Sharmelly, 2017).

Employee Centric

Dobni (2006) identified that the innovation behavior are the behaviors that employees must demonstrate to implement innovation in the organization. Dobni (2006) found that innovative behaviors are driven by the two elements of influence and implementation. The convergence of convergence of the two elements results in continuous and sustained innovation in organizations (Dobni, 2006).

Innovation Influence

Dobni (2006) highlighted the two items that support innovation influence in the innovation blueprint as sphere of influence and knowledge management. Sphere of influence is defined as employees understanding the role that they are in and how they are able to move past defined boundaries with creativity and innovative ideas (Dobni, 2006). Knowledge management is defined as gaining knowledge that will help in generating ideas to encourage creativity and potential innovative ideas.

Sphere of Influence

Dobni (2006) found that employees identify innovative opportunities through understanding the business sphere. The business sphere is typically based on the industry, customer, and competitors (D'Aveni, 2004). West & Farr (1989) introduced a sphere of influence related to innovative behavior in employees, which is demonstrated

through ideation, introduction, and implementation of a new idea and the employee works to move from ideation to implementation deliberately (West & Farr, 1989).

Kahn's (2018) research indicated that innovation includes three things outcome, process, and mindset. Understanding that innovation includes three elements may help employees realize that innovation is not only large ideas, innovation includes small wins and innovation is based on a continuous mindset (Kahn, 2018). Two terms that tend to be used interchangeably for employee behaviors in innovation are innovation and employee creativity (Fischer & Montalbano, 2014). Although used interchangeably, there is a distinct difference between the two terms of innovation and employee creativity. Fischer & Montalbano (2014) defined employee creativity as generating new ideas with no intent to move the idea forward and innovation is a generation of new ideas and a series of actions to implement the idea. The major difference between innovation and creativity the intent to move from a thought to action and implementation. Employee creativity can lead to innovation; however, the terms have a distinct difference (Fischer & Montalbano, 2014).

Knowledge Management and Innovation Implementation

Teixeira, Oliveira, & Curado (2018) found that organizations with clarity around how employees impact and are responsible for knowledge management tend to experience a positive impact to employee innovativeness. A clear knowledge management strategy such as a system or organization of classes that build employee knowledge, experience increased innovation. (Teixeira, Oliveira, & Curado, 2018). Knowledge management that is actionable for employees and connect the dots to how

newly gained knowledge may apply to the organization and empower employees directly results in employee innovative behaviors that lead to innovation implementation. Innovation implementation involves moving forward from the idea of innovation to the implementation of innovation (Dobni, 2006). Dobni (2006) found that three elements are included in innovation implementation, empowerment, experimentation and co-alignment. Innovation implementation is the final quadrant of the innovation blueprint and it is also the most challenging element of innovation to implement (Dobni, 2006).

Empowerment and Experimentation

Dobni (2006) was very specific with the relevancy of empowerment and experimentation to innovation and aligned empowerment and experimentation. Empowerment and the alignment to innovation is based on two factors, empowerment climate and psychological empowerment. Empowerment climate is based on the organization's ability to set expectations and employees to feel empowered to have autonomy in the organization (Dobni, 2006). Wass and Vimarlund (2016) in a study focused on empowering patients in healthcare shared the importance of providing tools that allow access to information to demonstrate autonomy and support an open approach to innovation. The research around applying empowerment to develop innovation is limited and suggests that employees feeling empowered will result in increased innovation implementation if the business outcomes align to innovation (Pradhan & Panda, 2019). The concept of psychological empowerment is the employees feeling of the organization, moving past climate to culture and the reality of the organization. Psychological empowerment is closely related to the empowerment climate, where

employees receive access to information and employees leverage the information for innovation (Aggarwal, Dhaliwal, and Nobi, 2018). Empowerment climate is based on opportunity, information, resources, formal power, and informal power (Aggarwal, et al., 2018).

Employees determine how to implement innovative behaviors on multiple factors such as leadership support, organizational environment, and employee engagement (de Jong & Wennekers, 2010). If the climate and culture support innovation some examples of employee behaviors demonstrated include, idea generation, idea search, idea communication, implementation activities, involving others and overcoming obstacles (Lukes & Stephan, 2017). Idea generation is the process of working to explore changes or new processes to institute a thought. Idea search builds on idea generation to research if similar ideas have been gathered, idea search will involve tools such as the internet to verify concepts. Idea communication is the ability to share different or new thoughts with other people. Implementation tends to be a time-consuming part of the innovation employee behaviors. Implementation requires a large amount of influence by working with other people to move an idea forward through introducing the idea in a certain process or building the resource for broader use (Lukes & Stephan, 2017).

Experimentation and Co-alignment

Experimentation involves trying different experiences to understand the impact and if the impact is desired based on the desired value (Kahn, 2018). In addition to experimentation networking to gather different ideas and perspective is helpful to experimentation (Kahn, 2018). Dobni (2006) found that experimentation is the balancing

managed risk taking. Risk taking is uncomfortable for the organization and leader, in addition risk taking is uncomfortable for employees (Arpiainen, & Kurczewska, 2017). Arpiainen and Kurczewska (2017) identified that building coping skills for risk taking will be helpful with generating experimentation. Dobni (2006) defined co-alignment as employees empowered by leaders to make decisions as the environment changes. Change is constant and by all the elements working together in the innovation blueprint, employees should be able to adjust as needed based on alignment with their leader and the organization (Dobni, 2006). Yildiz (2017) found that employee innovativeness behavior can be influenced by the employee's personality. Yildiz (2017) found that when employees demonstrate proactive personality it can lead to positive innovative behaviors. Proactive personality is defined as go-getter or someone who can get things done (Yildiz, 2017). Proactive personality coupled with psychological organizational safety results in strong employee innovative behaviors (Yildiz, 2017).

While compensation for innovative behaviors results in innovativeness (as previously stated), employee tenure can impact innovativeness at a larger scale (Woods, 2018). Employees who have been employed in an organization for a longer period tend to be open to sharing thoughts, ideas, and adjusting behavior in comparison to employees who have been with the organization for a shorter period of time (Woods, 2018). Employees that have collaborative relationships tend to demonstrate more innovative behaviors by intentionally sharing ideas to discuss additional thoughts and spark more creative ideas with a goal to implement (Kwang-Ho & Sunghyup, 2016). In contrast employees that conflict with each other or the environment have challenges collaborating

with each other. The challenges of collaborating with each other lead to non-innovative behaviors which include lack of creativity and keeping thoughts and ideas to oneself with no intention to implement ideas (Reade & Hyun-Jung, 2016)

Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I provided context for studying innovation through defining the conceptual framework, literature review, and search strategy. I identified the focus of the study and provided research on concepts around organizations, leaders, and employees influence on employee behavior to support innovation. Using the innovative blueprint as the conceptual framework, my study focuses on management centric behaviors and employee centric behaviors providing a framework for managers and employees to demonstrate innovation in the organization.

Focusing first on the management centric behaviors I started with an innovation intent that includes the elements of propensity and architecture and employee constituency. Propensity and architecture described the enablers of innovation for managers creating the environment of innovation. Employee constituency identified research on leadership behaviors that can encourage innovation and hinder innovation. I focused on the next quadrant of employee skills and learning and technological and financial support. Within employee skills and learning the research indicated that awareness, knowledge sharing, employee creativity, organizational support, and work arrangements support an infrastructure of innovation. Technology and financial support can be demonstrated with an infrastructure that has a process for employee feedback and dedicates organizational funds to innovation. Employee centric behaviors began with

innovation influence, which included the topics of knowledge management and sphere of influence. Knowledge management provided research on the importance of a strategy on how employees learn and receive information. Sphere of influence built on knowledge management with employee clarity on what can be influenced in the organization. Innovation implementation focused on the elements of empowerment and experimentation and co-alignment. Empowerment and experimentation can be supported through different leadership styles. The literature review concluded with co-alignment and focused on how employees shift behaviors based on the constant change in the environment. In reviewing the literature, the research indicated that balance of employee behaviors and leadership behaviors creates an innovative environment. Actions are required by both employees and leaders to sustain innovation and move an innovative idea to an implementation.

In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the research strategy and why the strategy was selected for the study. A description of the researcher's role, research strategy, tactics, and ethical framework are included in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this exploratory case study research is to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employee behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. A healthcare organization has been selected with a research department focused on innovation. The research department is hierarchically structured and designed to develop innovative solutions for healthcare issues such as transparency in billing, ease of scheduling and funding for critical care. Interviews were conducted with 14 employees and six leaders from the research department located in the Pacific Northwest to gather data on how leadership behaviors foster or hinder innovation.

Research Design and Rationale

The overarching research question of my study is: From an employee and leader (with direct reports) perspective, how do leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation? The nature of this study was a qualitative exploratory case study research approach. The study focused on understanding how leader actions and behaviors within a hierarchical structure influence employee innovation. The study was a qualitive research approach and it was selected because the because the study did not compare known variables or differences among various groups (Appelbaum et al., 2018) for a quantitative research approach. The mixed method research approach is used when both a qualitative and quantitative research method is necessary (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) and there is not a quantitative component to this study (Van den Berg & Struwig, 2017).

The exploratory case study research design of this study was applicable for the purposes of gaining and generating insights in a real-life setting (Yin, 2017). The focus of the study regarded how leadership behaviors impact employee innovation in a real-life hierarchical structure. The exploratory case study design provided insights from the participants on why and how specific actions increase or decrease employee innovativeness (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Stake, 1995). In designing the research t phenomenological and survey designs were considered. The phenomenological design focused on observations and experiences (Vagle, 2014) and the survey design is typically used in quantitative research methods. This study does not focus on observations and experience and this study is not a quantitative method; instead the focus will be gaining insight on how current leadership support motivates employee innovation.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I am the instrument for gathering and analyzing data. I developed research interview questions based on the innovation blueprint and observed verbal and non-verbal reactions from interview participants (see Appendix B). My research strategy aligned with Yin's (2011) abilities of a researcher include listening, asking probing questions, having knowledge about the research topic, caring about the data, multitasking, and persevering to complete the survey and observe reactions.

The individuals involved in the study work at the same location as I. However, the individuals were located in different departments. The participants and I did not have any power relationship such as reporting or instructor alignment. As the researcher,

I followed my defined questions for each interview to avoid personal biases, and all interviews were conducted over the phone.

I conducted interviews in my own work environment. I followed Yin's (2011) recommendations and completed reflective journaling. I also rehearsed interview questions to ensure my personal biases were not present in the data gathering. I completed a literature review that involved understanding the innovative blueprint and multiple leadership behaviors that contribute to the motivating employee innovativeness. The interview questions were based on understanding information related to innovativeness from employees in respect to organization structure, leader behaviors, employee behaviors, and organizationenvironment.

Methodology

This section includes information on participant selection, instrumentation, and the instruments leveraged for the study. I discuss the procedures for recruitment, participation, data collection, and the data analysis. In this section, I describe the components of the process in detail so that other researchers can replicate the design.

Participant Selection Logic

The case study involved one healthcare organization in the pacific northwest of the United States with a hierarchical structure in a department. The research department in focus consists of 50 employees (12 leaders and38 team members). Thirty-four percent of the team members (13 individuals) and forty-two percent of the leaders (5 individuals) in this hierarchy were interviewed based on data saturation. All leaders and individuals received a request to participate in the interview, and my goal was to obtain fifty percent

participation or less if data saturation occurred. Fifty percent was selected based on anticipated saturation, where continued interviewing would not lead to new information (Yin, 2017). I requested involvement by emailing individuals asking for interest. If they were interested, I provided a consent form via email and scheduled an interview.

Instrumentation

Time was scheduled with individuals who voluntarily decided to participate in the interviews. Pre-determined questions related to the research question were completed individually(see Appendix B). I, as the data collection instrument, used equipment that included a recorder (dependent on participant consent) with a secondary backup recorder in case of malfunction. The interview and observation data was completed on an interview protocol containing standard wording and interview questions (see Appendix B). I defined the interview questions. Yin (2014) defined six elements that provide evidence of analysis. My study included three of the elements: interviewing, journaling, and direct observation. The data from the collection tools were analyzed together to increase the dependability of the research and to validate information from multiple sources.

I produced interview questions that were aligned with the overarching research question. Multiple open-ended interview questions provided in-depth responses from interviewees in the case study interview format. I conducted interviews with multiple managers and employees who consented to the process. The format of the interview protocol included a self-introduction, a restatement of participant rights and consent to be in the study, a brief participant introduction, the questions, and an observation page. The

same interview questions were used in each interview to establish sufficiency of the data collection instrument. Prior to using the interview questions, I held a pilot interview to test the interview questions. The pilot interview included individuals who were used in the final interview for data collection. The validity of the content was evaluated based on current literature research. As data is gathered, I reviewed literature for alignment and conflicts.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Journaling

I completed reflective journaling to remove personal bias from the interview process and maintain a neutral state. In the reflective journaling process, it is important for researchers to share their initial reactions and approach to the data and be transparent about personal bias (Yin, 2014). I used reflective journaling to record my thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about the process to remove the bias from the overall analysis and ensure a reliable process.

Virtual Observations

The interviews were virtual. I observed how managers and employees responded to the questions. The observations during the interview provided context to the information shared through additional context around behaviors that motivate employees in the organizational structure (Yin, 2014).

Researcher-Developed Instrument

I developed the interview questions. I used a standard interview template so that the same questions were asked in each interview. Additionally, I piloted my questions

and adjusted questions for final data collection. I used my conceptual framework of the innovation blueprint to develop open-ended questions. The interview questions consist of demographic information such as role, time in role, department, gender, area of research, and contact information. . I facilitated the interviews over the phone using the interview questions. I analyzed the data and worked with each participant to ensure that the analysis accurately summarized the information provided. I reviewed my notes with the recording to ensure accuracy and update information as needed. (see Appendix B).

Participants were emailed a solicitation letter to ask if they would be interested in participating. After they shared interest I sent a consent form for participants to agree to involvement in the study by responding to me. The consent form included an outline of the equipment I used and consent for recording. After receiving the consent form, I asked participants to select three dates and coordinated the scheduling by sending a meeting invite. Data collection was virtual and stored in my personal computer and a back-up hard drive. The interviews are completed weekly until all interviews are completed, with each interview being approximately one hour. The data was recorded from the interview through a cell phone recorder, with a backup cell phone recorder, and personal notes. I journaled weekly for my process of self-reflection and to avoid personal bias in the process

If I was unable to obtain fifty percent saturation, my plan was to recruit additional participants by reaching out to individuals that are working on innovative projects within the organization. If I was still unable to obtain additional interest and less than fifty percent saturation occurred, I would use additional sources by expanding recruitment for

participants outside of my intended department and organization, potentially include additional evidence such as literature or electronic survey, pending Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

Participants where be allowed to exit the study at any time and were required to notify the researcher of exit or lack of interest in the study. In the consent form and when beginning the interview dialogue, I explained to each participant that they could exit the study at any time. If a participant exited the study, I would analyze the data provided by my participant(s) and determine if additional participants should be contacted to ensure that reliable information was gathered. As I reviewed my notes I will reached out to the participant for additional questions.

Data Analysis Plan

For my data analysis plan I used Yin's (2014) general strategy of theoretical propositions. Using the literature that led to my initial study, I determined topics and completed cross pattern analysis to align the topics to the theoretical propositions. I created a case study data base using NVivo as the software to record data and assist in my analysis. The theoretical proposition analysis informed the questions that I asked to aid in the cross-pattern analysis. The theoretical proposition focused on the concepts of innovation and organization structure, leader behaviors, employee behaviors, and organization environment. Each question focused on the four concepts and the cross-pattern analysis provided the ability to correlate responsesto the concepts.

I coded concepts to determine trends and themes from the interviews, observations, and journaling. In following the five-phase process of analyzing data

described by Yin (2011) I compiled, disassembled, reassembled, interpreted, and drew conclusions from the data. During the compiling phase I gathered various data elements through interviews, observations, and journaling. I disassembled the data through entering the information in NVivo and analyzed the data individually to determine trends for reassembling the data. The last component was interpreting the data to ensure that it was credible, complete, and fair. The initial four phases of analyzing data resulted in the last phase of drawing conclusions from the data where I explained the additional research possibilities for the future.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is defined as the accuracy of data based on the research process (Yin, 2014). I used the strategy of triangulation by using different data collection methods. The data collection methods that I used include, participant information sharing, virtual observation, and journaling my own bias to ensure my results were credible. Through different data collection methods, I was able to validate data in my systematic research process.

Transferability

Transferability is the process of being able to apply information from one study to another study (Yin, 2014). Through participant sampling, I asked questions of the appropriate number of participants (18 participants) to gather data for saturation. Data saturation was forty-nine percent of the population based on no new information being gathered. I shared trends of innovative employee and leader behaviors, maintaining my

commitment to being confidential in data sharing. I shared my data gathering and analysis process so that the study could be replicated as needed in similar context (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphey, 2013). I provided all participant information (excluding names to maintain confidentiality) so that the study could be transferred to different groups who are interested in further research.

Dependability

Dependability relates to the quality in study results and other researchers being able to replicate the study (Yin, 2014). I conducted an inquiry audit, where my methodology chair will review the research to ensure that my processes were trustworthy. All raw data was documented using the methods described earlier in the chapter and are available for auditing by my methodology committee member to ensure similar conclusions were drawn from individuals outside of my research.

Confirmability

Confirmability involves removing the researcher's bias for accuracy of participant perspectives (Yin, 2014) ensuring that the results are from the participants. I documented all data so that an audit trail could be completed by my methodology committee member. The data, data collection methods, and data analysis was clearly documented for transparency around how conclusions were developed and trustworthiness in the data remains. During my study I made the assumptions that participants responded to questions honestly and accurately.

Ethical Procedures

Ethical procedures were used to conduct the study in a moral and responsible manner. The procedures ensured that participants were treated respectfully, and the data was morally gathered. Additionally, the process for collecting data was consistent and I was transparent regarding how data was analyzed to compile trends and results.

Treatment of Human Participants

Receiving approval from the IRB was the first step in the process to ensure ethical treatment of human participants. I received approval from the IRB following the standards for treatment of human participants and obtained required institutional permissions. My IRB number is 01-14-20-0293266 I considered ethical concerns related to recruitment materials and created a consent form for all participants involved in the study to complete (See Appendix A). Participants were able to opt out of the study at any time by directly contacting me before during, or prior to participating in the study. I explained to participants that by opting out of the study at any time there are be no negative consequences.

Treatment of Data

The data provided was confidential. Participants were known to me however I kept the information confidential. During the data analysis and collection, I coded the data during the data analysis in NVivo to prevent bias in analyzing results. Data protection was added by having all data on my personal locked computer and an encrypted flash drive. Only I maintained a secure protected coding list with the names attached to each code.

Summary

In this chapter I described my research method which was qualitative. The research question for the study was, from an employee and leader perspective, how do leaders' behaviors and organizational structure influence employee innovation? The research design was a qualitative exploratory case study research approach. The data collection methods included interviews, virtual observation and reflective journaling. Elements implemented to ensure I completed an ethical study and protected the rights of the participants.

In chapter 4, I will describe the results of my research. Chapter 4 will provide a through explanation of the research setting, participant demographics, and characteristics relevant to the study. I will conclude chapter 4 with an overview of my analysis and research findings.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this exploratory case study is to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. I did so using an exploratory case study design. The research question was: From an employee and leader perspective, how do leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation? The target population was a healthcare organization in the pacific northwest of the United States with a hierarchical structure. The primary data collection element was interviews supplemented by reflective journaling. The data that resulted from the interviews with 18 participants provided information on how leader's behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation. Chapter 4 includes an overview of the pilot study, setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and data results of the study.

Pilot Study

After the IRB approved my research proposal, two participants outside of the sample participated in the pilot. The purpose of a pilot case study is to refine questions and the intention behind them (Yin, 2014). The pilot study consisted of one leader and one employee who were part of implementing innovative processes within the healthcare setting. Both participants were women with over 1 year of experience in the organization. The conclusion of the pilot study confirmed that all questions were relevant and applicable to the research of leader behaviors, organizational structures, and

organizational cultures that influence employee innovation. The pilot study contributed to further clarifying questions and relevance of the interview questions.

Research Setting

Initially, interviews were scheduled to be in person; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Walden University allowed a shift in setting. After receiving approval from the IRB, the research setting changed to conference calls. During the interviews, participants commented on the impact of COVID-19 has had on their work. The privacy of each participant was maintained by keeping their responses confidential.

Demographics

At the time of data collection, I created a profile for each research participant by identifying if they were male or female and employee or leader. The study included 14 female and four male participants. These included five leaders and 13 employees whose years of experience ranged from 1 year to 10 years. The profiles listed in Table 1 include participants' gender, time in role, and title of role.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Time in role	Title
P1	Female	6 years	Consultant/Employee
P2	Female	2 years	Consultant/Employee
P3	Female	10 years	Consultant/Employee
P4	Female	10 years	Consultant/Employee
P5	Female	3 years	Specialist/Employee
P6	Female	5 years	Consultant/Employee
P7	Male	4 years	Consultant/Employee
P8	Male	3 years	Researcher/Employee
P9	Female	2 years	Specialist/Employee
P10	Female	4 years	Consultant/Employee
P11	Male	4 years	Consultant/Employee
P12	Female	3 years	Consultant/Employee
P13	Male	2 years	Researcher/Employee
P14	Female	1 year	Manager/Leader
P15	Female	2 years	Manager/Leader
P16	Female	10 years	Director/Leader
P17	Female	10 years	Director/Leader
P18	Female	5 years	Lead/Leader

Data Collection

Eighteen participants responded to the interview questions. Originally, 20 participants were planned, but data saturation occurred during the 13th participant. At that point, continued interviews were not required because interviewees where repeating what prior interviewees said. In selecting participants to interview, it is important to identify individuals that will provide information beneficial to the focus of research (Yin, 2014). Interviewees were within a department focused on identifying and implementing innovation in their work. The interviewees included a mixture of leaders and employees in a healthcare organization. Each interviewee had direct experience with implementing innovation in a hierarchical organization.

There were five interviews that were rescheduled based on participant schedules. I used reflective journaling to record and process feelings about the interviews. I also recorded the interviews of participants who consented. I took notes for individuals that did not consent to recording. Additionally, I sent participants transcripts for validation to ensure accuracy and trustworthiness of the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis strategy relied on the theoretical propositions of the innovative blueprint (Dobni, 2006). This conceptual framework defined organization and employee behaviors that influence innovation in most organizations. The analysis technique was pattern matching and achieved by using the conceptual framework to identify patterns.

I transcribed each interview and identified initial patterns related to the conceptual framework. I highlighted patterns that related to certain factors that create an innovative environment. As I read the interviews, I focused on patterns related to organization and individual behaviors that influence employee innovativeness. I added the data to NiVivo 12, highlighted the patterns, and then completed code analysis. After identifying initial patterns, I journaled my bias and reviewed the data again before confirming initial patterns and adjusting patterns based on the review.

NVivo 12 Coding and Patterns

The process of moving from coding to themes and patterns involved adding all the interview transcripts into NVivo. After adding all the input, I created codes for patterns based on the conceptual framework. In tandem, I completed an auto coding analysis reviewing short sentences. The auto coding provided additional themes and

aligned with self-coded themes. I ran auto coding query twice, and each analysis was based on the specific sentences in the transcribed data. The auto coding included new patterns and supported the self-identified patterns. When completing the query twice, the patterns of data were similar, which was helpful in validating the integrity of the data. A word cloud (Figure 2) was produced to highlight the frequency of words spoken during the interviews. The words that participants spoke the least are smaller, and the words that are larger indicate that participants spoke the most.

Figure 2. Word cloud.

The depiction of the word cloud was helpful in visualizing the data. The word cloud supported self-coded results and provided additional context to commonly mentioned terms. There were some self-coded results that were discrepant to the word cloud, and through analysis I was able to understand the context of the results. I moved the trends of words into codes where additional sub themes emerged. The analysis

process is based on word frequency, and the visualization of words provided an additional format to identify patterns.

Emerging Themes

NVivo 12 provided a format to analyze the similarities in responses to the questions by providing a way to organize the data. Through coding the data, I was able to see the patterns in a way that gave the ability to simplify, enhance and increase the validity of the research. Through identifying the patterns and then sequencing them with the topic, problem statement, purpose statement, conceptual framework, research question and interview context the patterns were clear.

During the interview process, I was able to follow up questions to gain clarity on some comments that individuals had shared. During the analysis of the data it was clear that the additional probing was helpful due to the additional context the probing provided. The additional context aligned with responses given across participants providing themes. The themes included (outlined in Table 2) sharing ideas, support from peers and customers, being surrounded by people who think differently, alignment to organization priorities, questioning ideas and solutions, environment of curiosity and failure, and manager expectationsand trust

Table 2

Themes Emerged from the Data

Questions	Theme number	Theme description
How do you move ideas forward and influence innovation in the organization?	Theme 1	Sharing ideas

What behaviors are most helpful to support you in being able to innovate or develop something new or different?	Theme 2	Support from self, peers and customers
How does your leader support you in being able to develop something new that is valuable to your customer	Theme 3	Being surrounded by people who think differently
How does your organization culture influence how your support innovation with your employees? How do you move ideas forward with your leader and influence innovation?	Theme 4	Alignment to organizational priorities
How does your leader support you in developing something new?	Theme 5/7	Questioning ideas and solutions Manager expectations and trust
How do you move ideas forward for implementation?	Theme 6	Environment of curiosity and trust

Study Results

The purpose of this exploratory case study research is to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. In the study I gathered an understanding of what individuals experienced within an organization and how their experiences were developed through lived examples. Themes emerged from the data based on the research question, which was from an employee and leader perspective how do leaders' behaviors, organizational structure, and organizational culture influence employee innovation? Searching for emerging patterns

was completed by querying different codes to align with the study topic, problem statement, purpose statement, conceptual framework and research question. The emerging patterns led to themes that included sharing ideas, support from peers and customers, being surrounded by people who think differently, alignment to organization priorities, questioning ideas and solutions, environment of curiosity and failure, and manager expectationsand trust.

Theme 1: Sharing Ideas

As employees within the organization move innovation forward, they think through different ideas about what would be helpful to solve a problem or implement something novel. Generating ideas toward a problem or organizational strategy is essential to the ideation process of innovation in an organization. Figure 3 references the alignment of idea generation for moving innovation forward. The tree graph explains the impact of ideas in employee innovativeness by highlighting how ideas are generated and the result of ideas in creating an innovative environment.

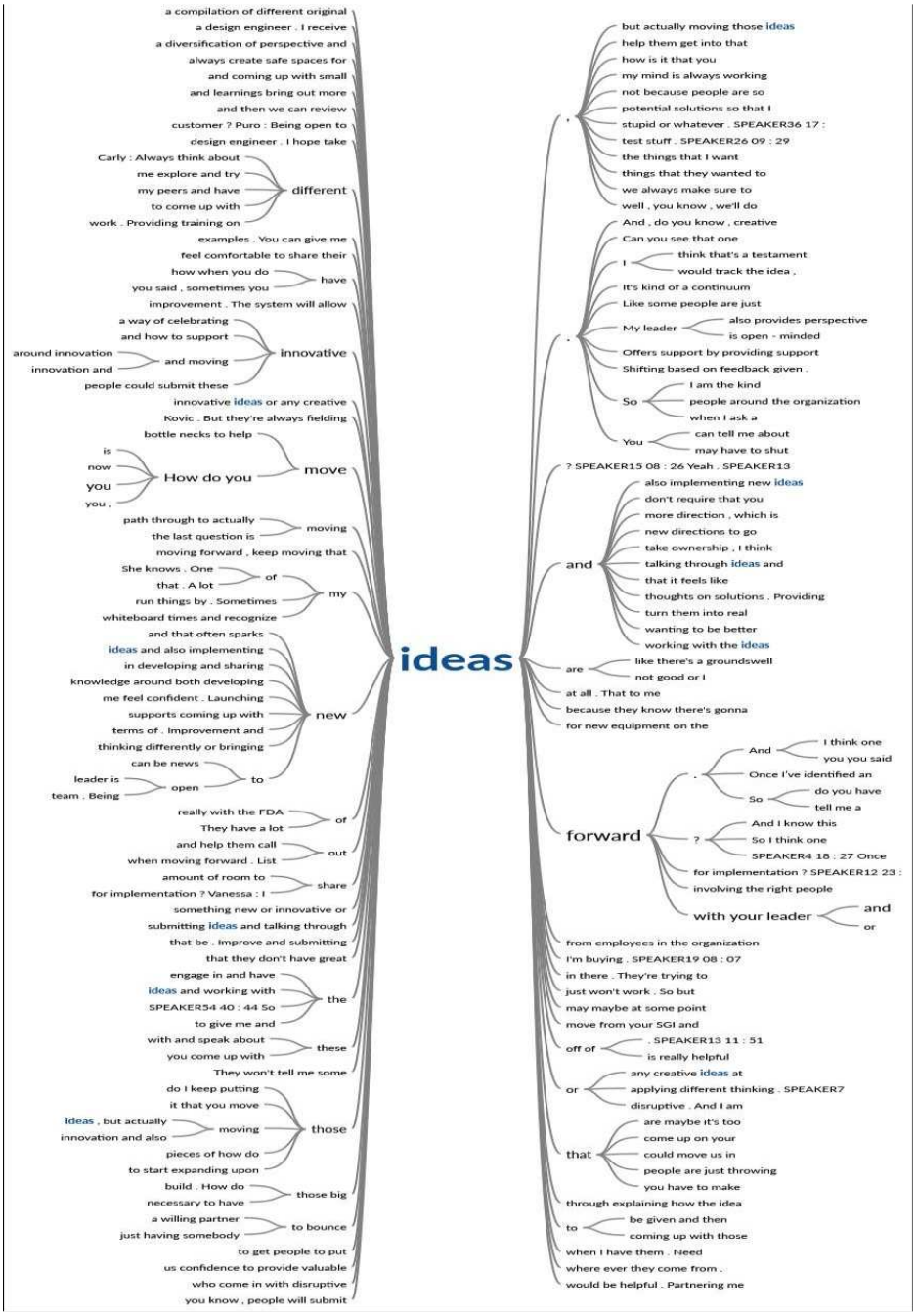

Figure 3. Idea sharing.

In response to the question how do you move ideas forward and influence innovation in the organization, P3 responded "at times the job role of an employee

requires the development of creative ideas to move projects forward to completion." P1 responded "job requirements for innovation naturally support the time needed to focus on thinking about a problem to generate ideas and my mind is always working". P4 "shared that peers are essential in developing new ideas by having a thought partner in conversations and receiving feedback on different ideas". When P5 was asked the same question, the response was "creative ideas are developed through tools that support reflection such as whiteboarding, mind maps and research articles". When asked the probing question, "how do you implement an idea?". P11 explained "First I think about if the idea or solution has relevancy to the organization priorities. Then I think about if the solution is tangible by looking at the return on investment. When looking at the solution I also talk to peers and experts to see if the solution will solve the problem. Then when I go to my leadership I layout the plan, provide examples, share the what I need to move the solution forward. If approval is received, I am able to move forward with the idea". P15 responded "first I make sure that the idea is aligned to organizational strategy, if the idea is aligned, I structure it so that there is clarity on alignment and return on investment. I also make sure that I can define the resources needed. What is essential is knowing what we are trying to achieve and being able to clearly define this to my leader for approval. When the problem and solution is clear it makes it easy for implementation on a large scale or small scale because I am able to communicate to stakeholder the solution and why we need to implement it." P16 sha red that "at times there is a specific approval process for idea implementation which can help support owning and driving an idea forward". P12 responded "building an idea involves seeing

what's possible by gathering a large amount of information and hearing a large amount of information, then aligning different inputs to develop an idea intended to create something new for the purpose of improvement or meeting a need that end users did not even realize was needed".

Theme 2: Support from Self, Peers, and Customers

Support for innovation is demonstrated through ability to learn from failure and the resources to support implementing change. In Figure 4 the tree graph depicts the elements in the interviews that first explain the type of support that encourages employee innovativeness followed by the impact of the support.

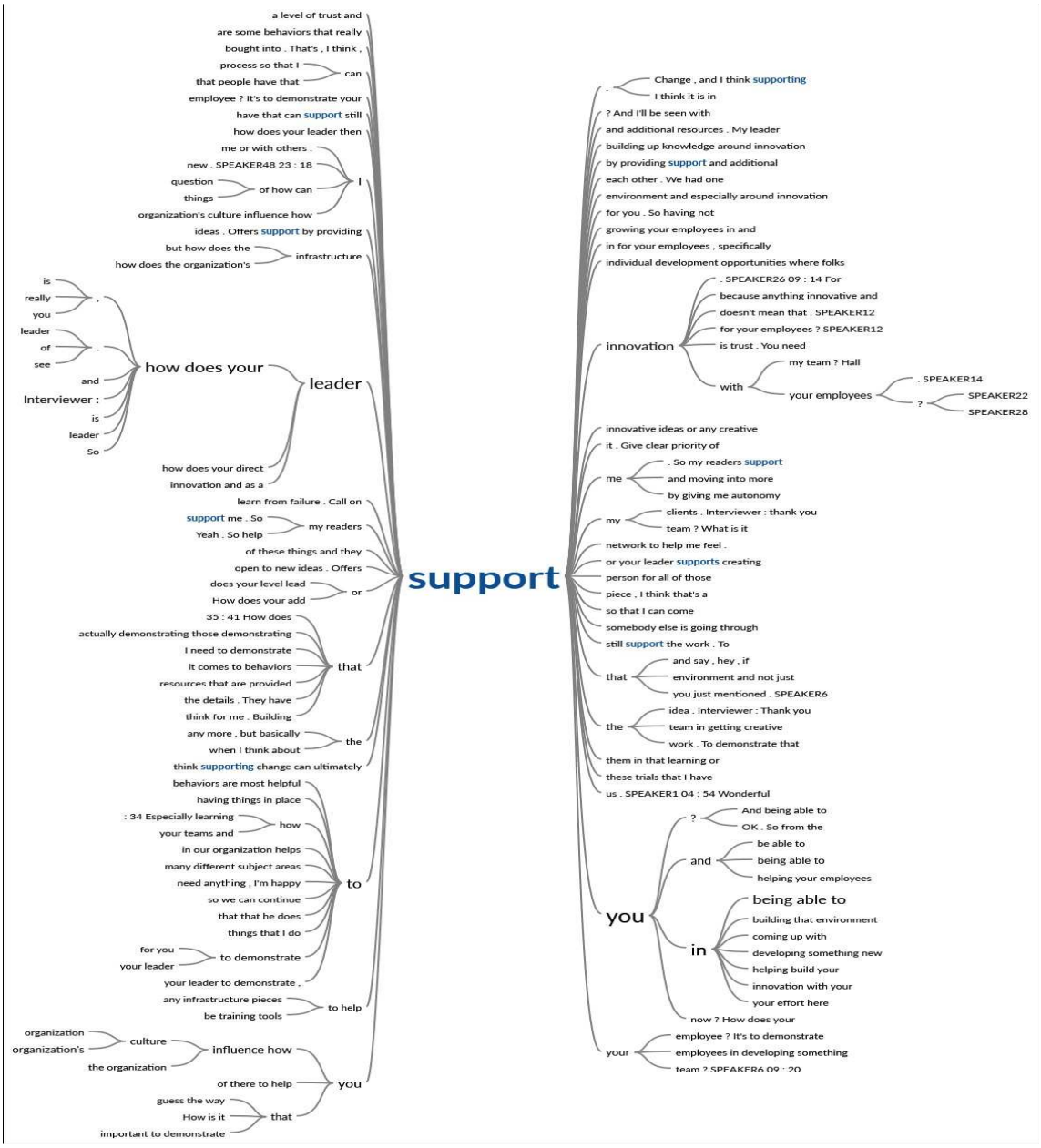

Figure 4. Self, peer, and customer support.

In response to the question, "what behaviors are most helpful to support you in being able to innovate or develop something new or different?". P11, P13, P7, shared that failure was difficult to accept as part of the process of innovation, however the support of self in

allowing failure by reframing as a learning experience was important. P9 shared “I reframe my mindset and the shift in the mindset is helpful to building awareness on how failure sparks innovation.” P11 and P1 shared that peer support that provided new perspective and thoughtful conflict toward a problem was defined as supportive in building employee innovativeness. P1 explained, “I need to share my thoughts with a lot of different perspectives. My idea might be too narrow focused. I need to be able to hear hard feedback. The additional perspective helps employees demonstrate their thoughts on an idea. The support from peers builds relationships and supports networking to identify if an innovation will be helpful”. P3 validated and shared, “peer

feedback encourages me to see that progress has been made on an idea".

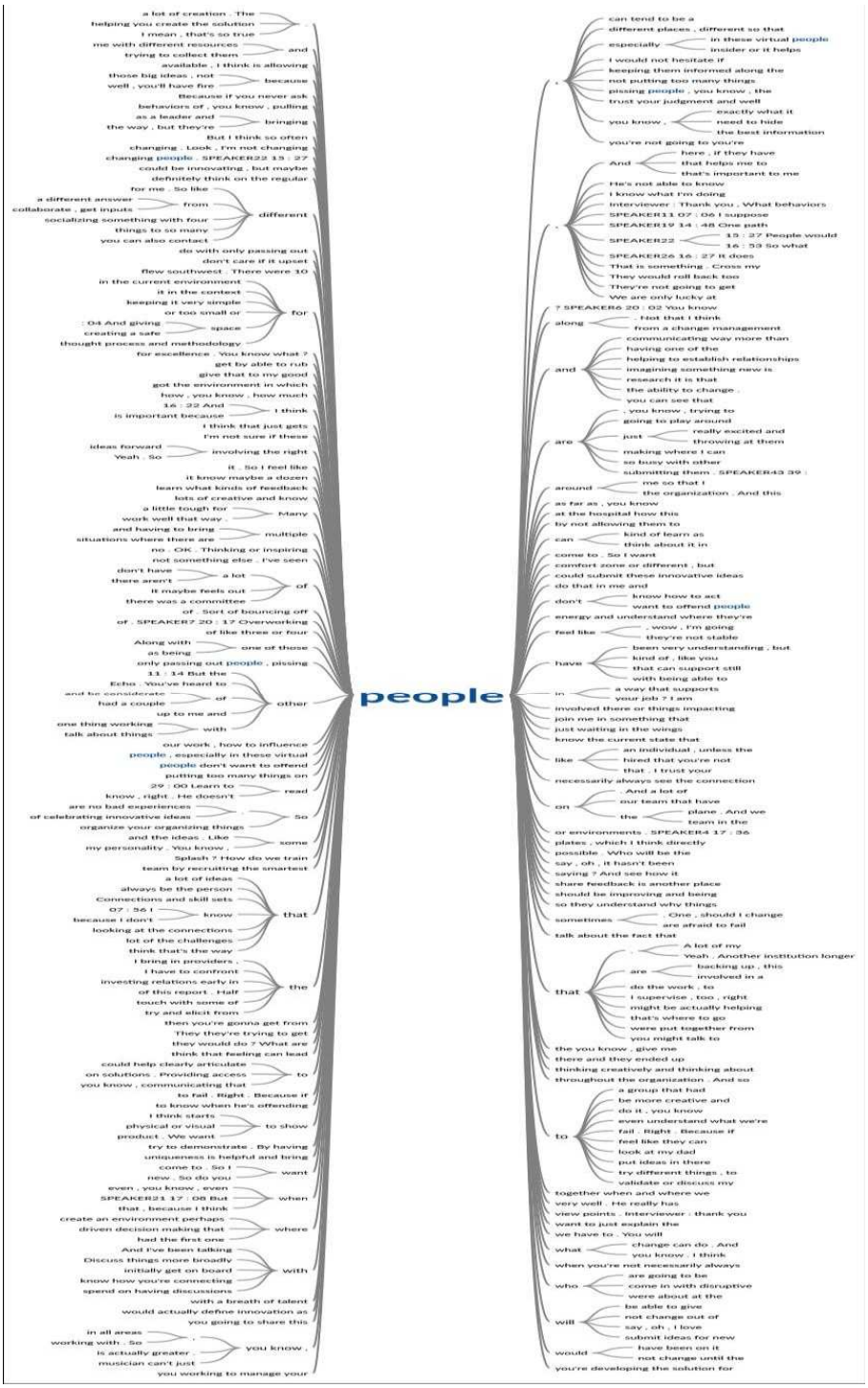

Figure 5. People.

Theme 3: Being Surrounded by People who Think Differently

The word “People" was mentioned 133 times during the 18 interviews and specifically the impact that people, who think differently, have on an innovative environment. Figure 5 outlines how people make an impact on the result of innovation. Sounding oneself with people that are diverse in thought was a sub theme that came out through the word graphic and in the interviews. In response to the question, “how does your leader support you in being able to develop something new that is valuable to your customer?”. P12 shared “connecting me with different resources and people to validate or discuss my opinions or the opinions of others.” P3 validated by sharing “being surrounded with people that have a different point of view is important to help build different resources, collect additional data and unique perspectives.” When sharing ideas for feedback, P12 and P1 explained the need to go to different people that have an expertise or new perspective for feedback. P16 shared that “socializing thoughts with four or more people has been helpful in gathering additional inputs of information to generate solutions.” P7 and P8 shared that gathering additional inputs helped to simplifying complex ideas and solutions to ensure positive impact to the solution. P1 shared “toughness is important when talking to peers because of the different perspectives that people will bring, and it is important to be open to hearing about different ideas.” P13 shared that “my leader is intentional about the people that are being brought in when implementing an innovation to ensure that it is implemented in a sustained way and changes the way work is done.” P16 and P17 explained that the breath of talent is important when working on innovations within the organization, there are

different perspectives, viewpoints, visualizations and explanations needed. Figure 5 outlines the impact of people when innovativeness in an organization and outlines that who, what, why and how people are brought into conversations around innovation are important and require thoughtful consideration.

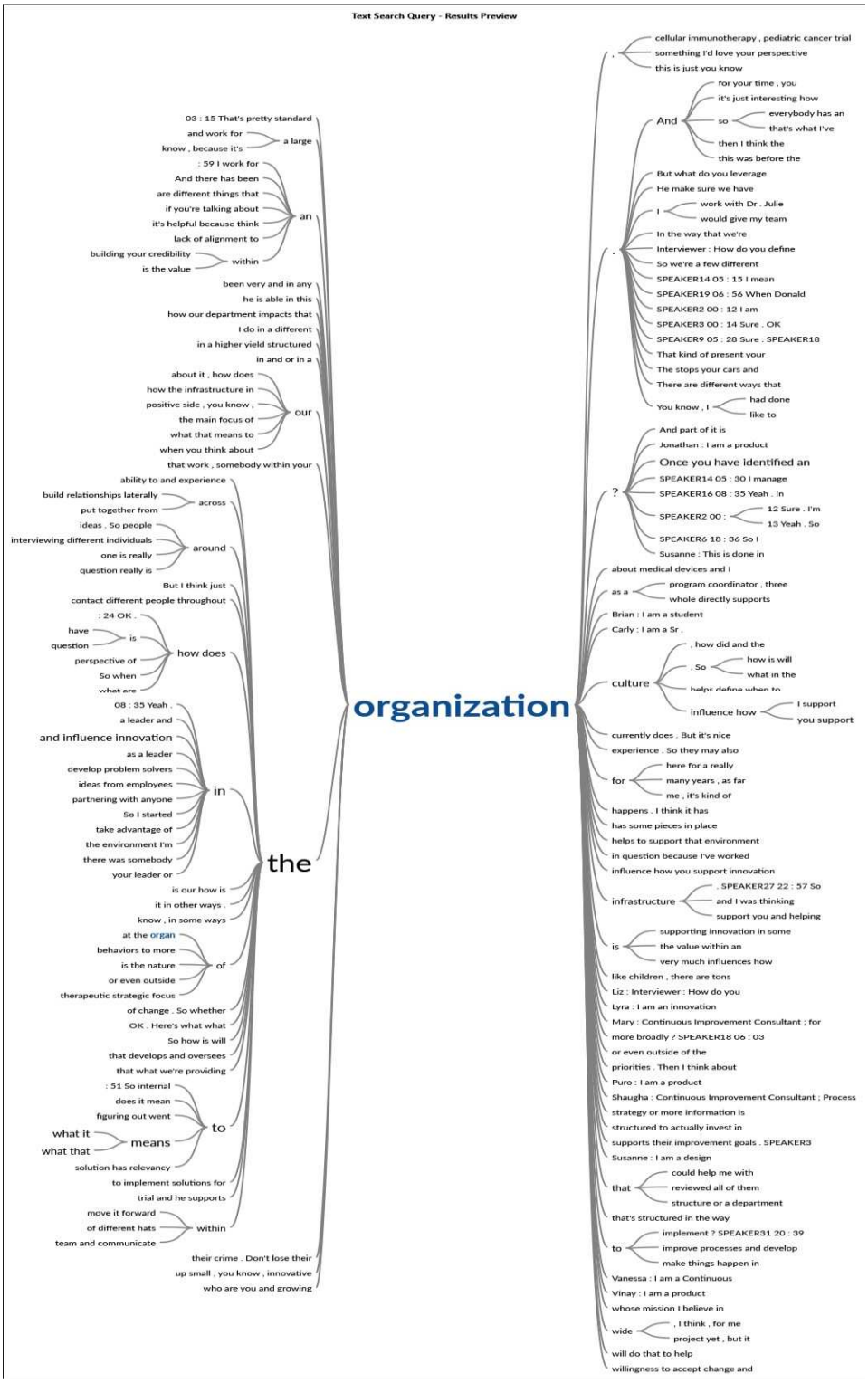

Figure 6. The organization.

Theme 4: Alignment to Organization Priorities

Figure 6 depicts organizational priorities and culture influence on innovation. In responding to the question, "how does your organizational culture influence how you support innovation with your employees?". P16 and P7 explained that the organization is a culture with a large amount of change so innovation in applying a different mindset to problem solving tends to be innate in the culture. P18 shared, "the organization prioritizes getting work done and that can have an influence on the implementation of an idea, moving it forward and overall implementation". In response to the question, "how do you move ideas forward with your leader and influence innovation?", P9 shared "within the organization there are multiple roles that are focused solely on innovation. Although focused on innovation it is important to understand the strategy of the organization and ensure alignment". P13 validated and shared "additionally, leveraging the infrastructure to move innovation forward for approval, resources and long-term sustainment requires true alignment to organizational priorities". P1 shared "at times the priorities can be challenging to understand and due to the culture, it can be challenging to see the alignment in the customer's work". P18 shared "leveraging leadership in determining contradictory priorities is essential for long-term sustainment".

Theme 5: Questioning Ideas and Solutions

Questioning ideas and solutions within the lens of organizational prioritization and ensuring that the innovative solution or idea is new or contributes to a priority was an additional pattern in the interviews. In figure 7 asking good questions was an essential part of the creating innovativeness. Responding to the question, "how does your leader

support you in developing something new?", P1 shared that the leader with direct reports typically asks questions to "help see blind spots and ground me in how the ideas are valuable to my customer". Asking questions that seek to understand and require the employee to increase their depth on the problem is helpful for innovation and was validated by P2 who shared that "asking critical questions to think about the problem was helpful". In response to the question, "what behaviors are most helpful in supporting you to develop something new for your customer", P2 shared "questions that increase depth to understand customers perspective or questions that it is perceived the customer may ask". P7 shared that "asking provocative questions intended to challenge or question the process" supported the ability to think deeper about an innovative solution.

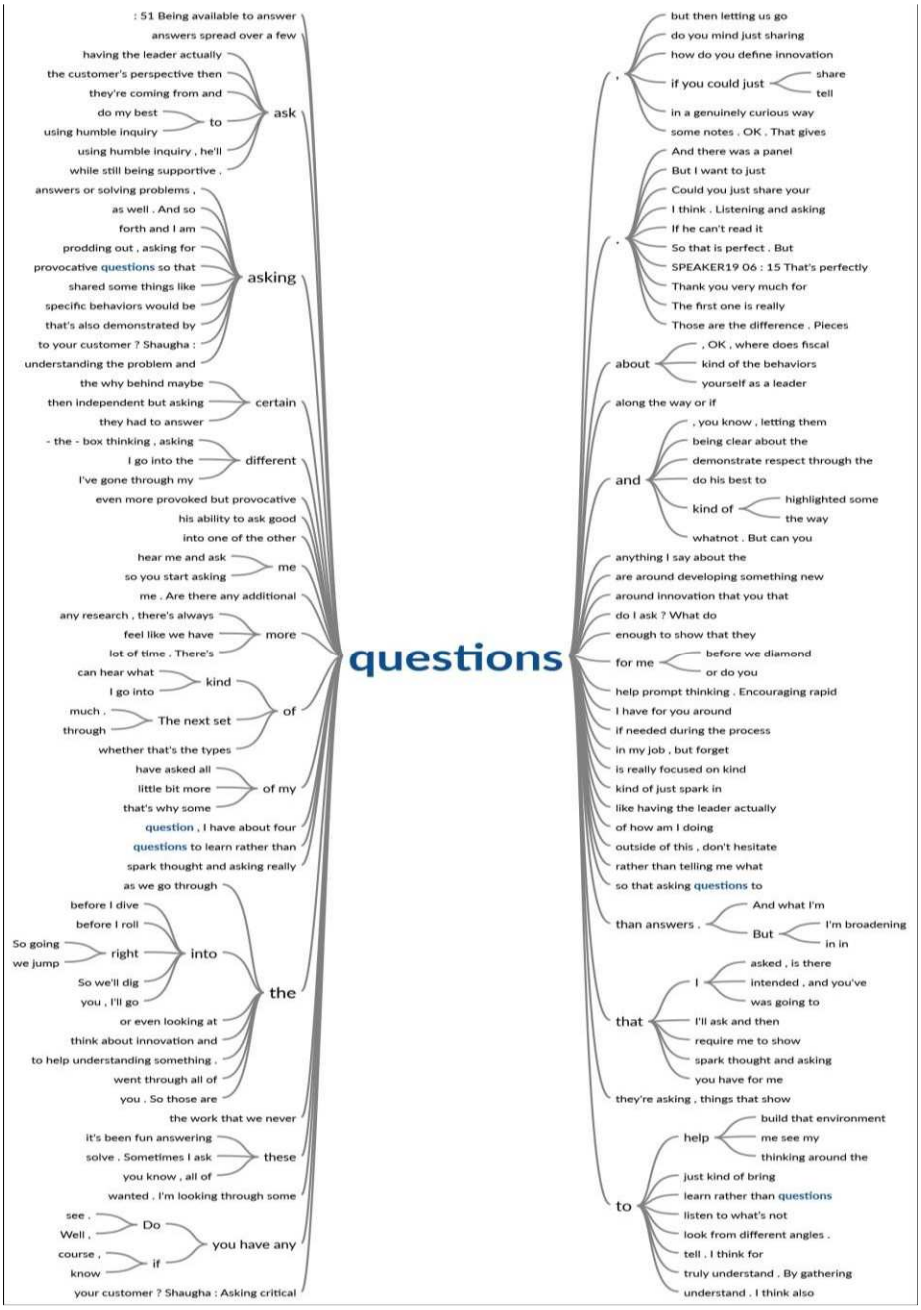

Figure 7. Questions.

P11 shared that when determining the applicability of an innovation employees typically have a set of standard questions that are asked, one of which includes clarity on the why . P18 shared "when asking questions truly listening both to what is said and what is not

said is important to gather clarity on the problem". P17 shared that "at times asking questions while observing processes is important because it increases depth and opens perspective to spark innovation".

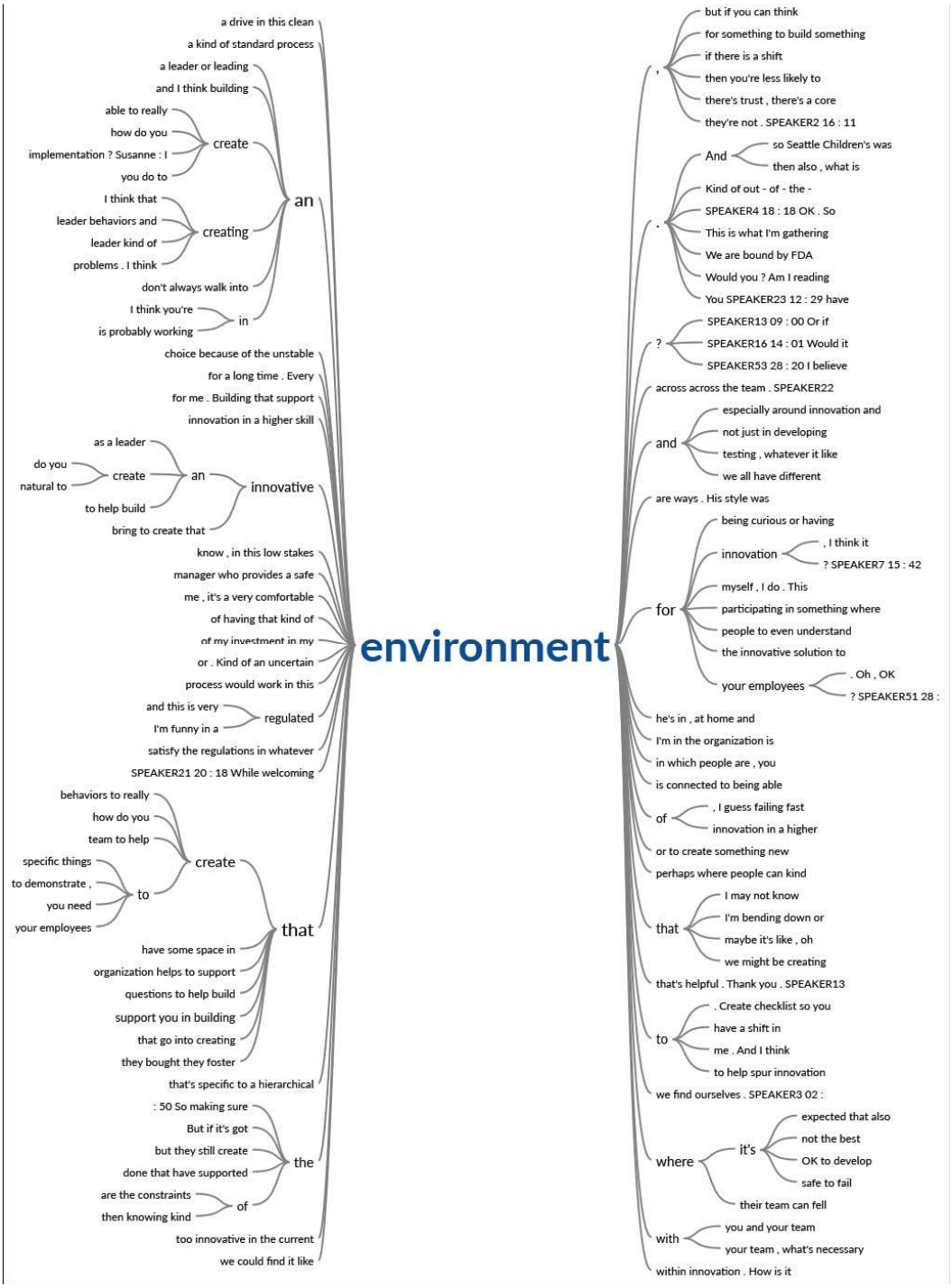

Figure 8. Environment.

Theme 6: Environment of Curiosity and Failure

The environment influences employee innovativeness and figure 8 depicts how an environment can influence and the impact that it could have. In response to the question, "once you identified an innovative idea how do you move it forward for implementation?", P12 shared that "the organization has a standard process such as a system or value that will drive innovation". P13, P14 and P18 validated and summarized that the system (within the organization) encourages ideas from everywhere, with a value that sets the expectation and a process of evaluating. P18 shared that "the organization's infrastructure can drive the process of moving innovative ideas forward" . In response to the question, "how do you move ideas forward with your leader?", P10 shared "leaders that encourage submission of ideas, support and recognize when ideas are submitted contribute to the environment of innovativeness". P5 validated and shared "leaders who make it safe to submit ideas or share how they have learned or applied new ways of thinking are also helpful in creating a positive environment that encourages innovation." When asking a probing question of what makes it safe to share, P5 and P2 shared that leaders may ask for feedback on something they are working on to model the behavior and safety. P1 and P3 shared that like themes around asking questions, leaders and peers who are generally curious and ask questions to seek to understand, instead of seeking to disprove build innovation. P1, P2, P4, P7 and P8 shared that safety to share and ask questions requires learning from failure. P5 shared that "it is difficult to allow myself to fail, however if I reframe it to learning it helps me to allow myself to fail".

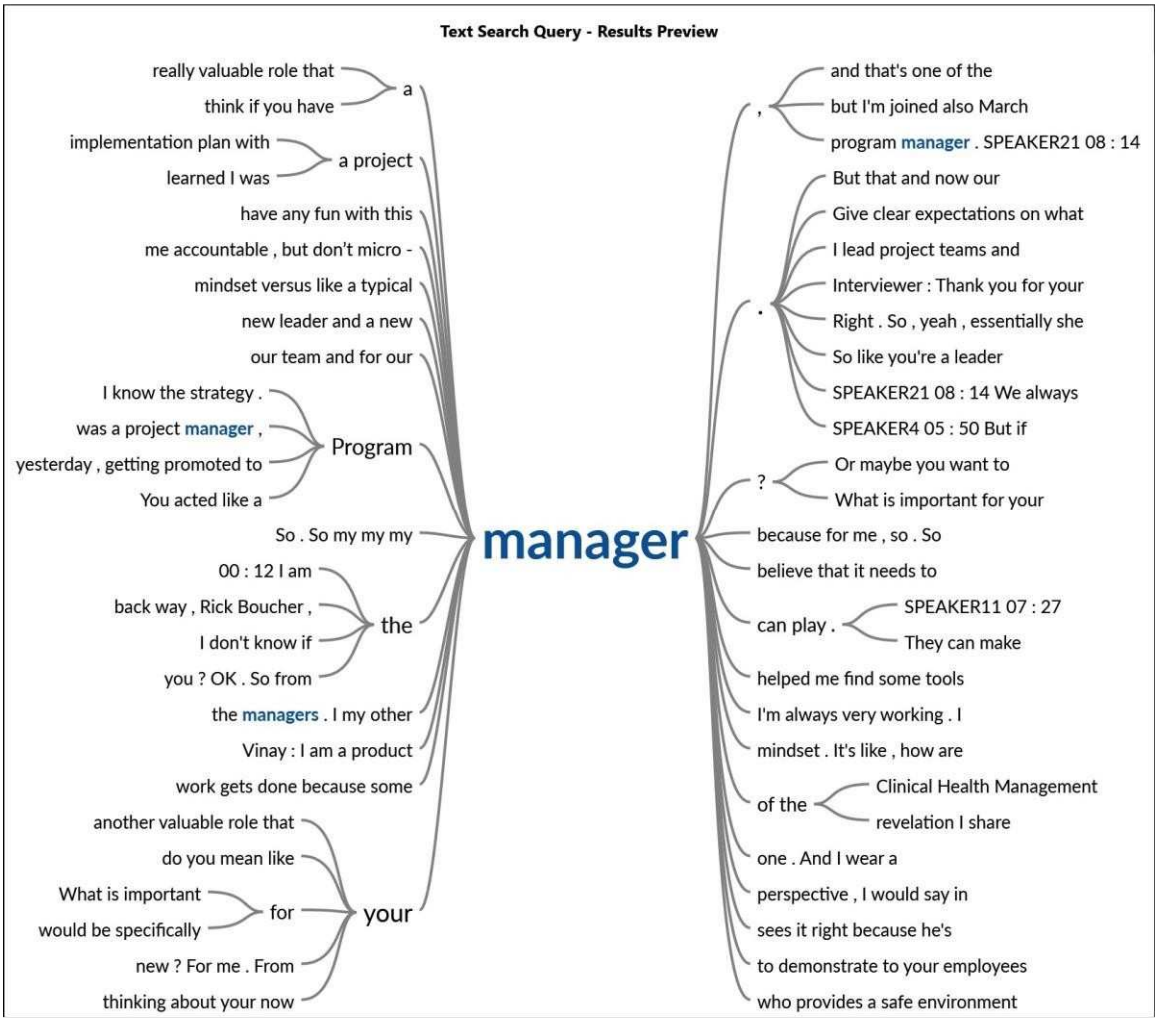

Figure 9. Manager.

Theme 7: Manager Expectations and Trust

Managers, also referenced as leaders, tend to contribute significantly to the innovative environment. In response to the question, "how does your leader support you in being able to develop something new?", P1 shared that "managers provide clear expectations on innovation or the behaviors that spark innovation". P12 shared that "managers who demonstrate that it safe to fail and learn, that new ideas are welcomed and encouraged and that give space to employees to reflect and grow tend to contribute

positively to innovation". P18 shared that "manager self-awareness influences innovativeness. Employees tend to need different support throughout the innovative process and managers who are perceptive to needs contribute to a positive innovative environment." P8 shared "managers who micromanage contribute negatively to innovation". P9 validated and shared that "the ability for employees to have the space and trust to generate new ideas, processes and implementation is essential to innovation". In response to the question of leaders, "what behaviors do you demonstrate in supporting your employees to innovate?", P16 shared that "it is important for a manager to remove barriers, set clear expectations and trust that employees will complete the job and reach out for support as needed". P17 validated and shared that "actually saying to your team, I trust your thinking, I trust your judgement and I trust your analysis of the problem. Go for it and let me know if you have a problem or don't think you can."

Summary

The purpose of this exploratory case study research was to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. The interviews reveled patterns of meaning across all participants. I summarized participant responses in detail around 7 different themes. I leveraged NVivo 12 and text coding to identify patters in the data. Chapter 5 provides an interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations and social change implications.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this exploratory research is to explore how the convergence of leader behaviors, employees' behaviors, organization structure, and organization culture influence employee innovativeness in a hierarchical organization. A healthcare organization in the Pacific Northwest was selected with a department focused on innovation. The department was hierarchically structured to develop innovative solutions to pediatric healthcare. Data on how leadership behaviors foster, or hinder innovation were gathered through interviews with employees.

The results of the study indicate that employee innovativeness is supported through an environment of shared and diverse ideas, support from self, peers, and customers, alignment with organizational priorities, an ability to question ideas and solutions, established manager expectations and trust, and an environment of curiosity and failure.

Interpretation of Findings

The responses from the interviews were matched the conceptual framework regarding how behaviors from leaders and employees influence employee innovativeness. Overall, the nine themes aligned with the conceptual framework identified through the innovative blueprint (Dobni, 2006). The literature review identified key themes on building knowledge formally on innovation that was not reflected in the interview data.

Concurrence of Findings

The nine themes that demonstrated concurrence with literature and interview themes were sharing ideas, support from self, peers and customers, being surrounded by

people who think differently, alignment to organizational priorities, questioning ideas and solutions, manager expectations and trust, and environment of curiosity and failure.

Sharing Ideas

The interview themes on sharing ideas aligned with the views Doran and Geraldine (2017), Miller (2016), and Woods (2018), who shared that brainstorming, collaboration, and length of time at an organization have a positive impact on sharing ideas and increasing employee innovativeness. The experiences shared by participants reflected that leaders and employees created environments that gathered large amounts of information through brainstorming and collaboration throughout the organization to identify return on investment of ideas. These environments encouraged innovativeness. Over 50% of the participants highlighted idea sharing as a contributing factor in generating innovative ideas. Additionally, the participants who had highlighted idea sharing had been with the organization for at least 2 years; however time was not directly identified as a factor when compared to the direct reference in literature as defined by Woods (2018).

Support from Self, Peers, and Customers

In the literature, mindsets attune to customer needs were evidenced as an innovation enabler (Miller, 2016). The interview participants agreed and shared that environments where leaders encouraged networking with customers was helpful in gathering insight on ideas and ensuring the plan to move forward would be relevant to the customer. Lukes and Stephan (2017) claimed that involving others and overcoming obstacles was helpful for inspiring innovativeness. The interview themes concurred that

gathering additional perspectives on an idea through a strong peer support or relationship and having the ability to receive challenging feedback is essential for implementing innovation. Dedahanov, Rhee, and Yoon (2017) explained that employees can identify innovative opportunities by understanding the business sphere. This was validated as participants referenced that networking with customers, peers, and leaders helped to gather an organizational perspective to identify relevancy of an idea moving into implementation.

Being Surrounded by People Who Think Differently

Den, De Bakker, and Doh (2012) shared that collaboration with diverse teams can result in innovation implementation. Interview participants confirmed that leaders who encouraged connection with different resources and perspectives through idea sharing were helpful. Additionally, socializing innovative ideas with individuals who are in turn diverse in thought was beneficial to implementation. Kahn (2018) explained that experimentation networking is helpful to innovation. Interview participants did not specifically highlight experimentation networking. However, they referenced sharing ideas with four or more people to gather perspectives and test out ideas, which is a similar concept to experimentation networking. Interview participants shared that continuously talking about an idea with multiple individuals was helpful to refining the idea and establishing its link to the need. Additionally, being open to hearing new ideas resulted in clarity and simplification of ideas.

Alignment to Organizational Priorities

Dobni (2006) defined propensity and architecture as the organizational ability to develop new behaviors that build infrastructure that enables innovation. Propensity and architecture can include alignment of resources with innovation needs (Schoemaker, Heaton & Teece, 2018), adjusting traditional operations to meet innovative needs (Suddaby et al.,2016), and enabling systems that leverage the employee voice (Rasheed etal., 2017). The interview participants that were leaders (with direct reports) aligned with the research literature and highlighted that the organizational culture is focused on getting things done, which requires shifting processes as needed and leveraging employees for ideas to reach results. Interview participants that did not have direct reports continued to align with the research literature and highlighted that leaders who communicated organizational priorities and/or self-sought the information were essential for moving innovation forward. Within the organization, it is at times challenging to understand the priorities. Thus, leveraging leaders to implement innovative ideas was an important component.

Questioning Ideas and Solutions

Fischer and Montalbano (2014) defined employee creativity as generating new ideas without the intent of moving those ideas forward. In contrast, innovation describes the generation of new ideas and series of actions needed to implement them. The major difference is the intent to move from a thought to an action. The interview participants aligned by stating that when their leader asks questions and realigns to ensure the idea is applicable to the customer, it moved ideas forward for implementation. Interview

participants shared that leaders will ask questions that deepen understanding and clarify the thought process to demonstrate support and help the employee think deeper about the solution.

Employee learning can be developed through informal systems, such as on-the-job reviews of current innovations and day-to-day reviews of operations for improvements (Laviolette, Redien-Collot, and Teglborg, 2016). Interview participants shared that having a standard set of questions that are asked while observing processes is helpful because it increases depth and sparks additional innovation. Participants indicated that asking questions and carefully observing daily processes is helpful for clarifying a problem and identifying an innovative solution.

Environment of Curiosity and Failure

Risk taking is uncomfortable for the organization and the leader, in addition risk taking is uncomfortable for employees. Arpiainen and Kurczewska (2017) identified that building coping skills for risk taking will be helpful in generating experimentation. Employees will share their mistakes, learnings from failure, and seek feedback if they feel that the organization will appreciate the learning process (Department of Management & University of Bologna, 2016). Interview participants shared that it is helpful to building an innovative environment when leaders with direct reports create an environment where being curious and learning from failure or taking risks is acceptable. Additionally, participants shared that risk taking and learning from failure is difficult to allow of oneself, so reframing failure to learning is helpful. Co-creation is evidenced as an innovation enabler based on characteristics such as risk taking, opportunity seeking,

overcome obstacles, and break rules to move forward (Chebiyyam, Srivastava, Aggarwal, & Gupta, 2016). Interview participants identified co-creation by sharing the relationship between leaders with direct reports, peers and customers. The organization's infrastructure requires partnership and co-creation and leaders with direct reports are typically leveraged to support employees in moving ideas forward.

Manager Expectations and Trust

Building the innovation environment and the innovation infrastructure are both established by management and designed to support innovation (Dobni, 2006). Interview participants highlighted that managers establish expectations around innovation and behaviors that spark innovation in addition to sharing that failure is acceptable. Interview participants shared that managers will reach out and ask for ideas on their projects demonstrating that new ideas are welcomed and supported.

Empowerment or autonomy of employees to work f reely on tasks has been indicated to spark employee innovativeness through freedom to explore options (Russo-Spena, Mele & Marzullo, 2018). Interview participants highlighted that managers who share expectations and then provide space for employees to explore, learn and reach out as needed encourage innovation. Interview participants shared the importance of having the space to learn and the resources to reach out to are helpful to explore and experiment with new ideas; then follow through as needed with the leader. A collaborative management style that encourages employees to work together (Kwang-Ho & Sunghyup, 2016) was also highlighted by participants as a helpful innovation enabler by sharing that

managers who provide resources and encourage team members to work together are helpful in building innovativeness.

Limitations of the Study

As stated in Chapter 1 a limitation of my study was that it was focused on one organization with 18 participants. Data saturation occurred at 18 participants based on participants repeating information from prior interviews. The limitation created a challenge in providing broad generalization and may need increased participants and organizations to create generalization. Another limitation was the location of participants in a healthcare organization that had innovation as one of their primary values. Organizations that do not have innovation clearly stated may have different results. In order to ensure that my bias did not reflect the study I completed reflective journaling through the entire data collection and analysis phase. All my findings were based off data collected from the interviews.

Recommendations

The purpose of the qualitative exploratory case study research approach was to focus on how leader behaviors influence innovation from an employee and leader perspective. 18 participants shared their experiences on influence innovation and leading innovation within their organization. Through their experiences I was able to identify seven themes on how leader behaviors influence innovation. Dobni (2006) shared continual innovation is established through the four factors of intent, infrastructure, influence, and implementation. The innovation environment identified by the factors of intent and infrastructure is management centric. Innovation behavior is employee centric

and identified by implementation and influence. The findings of the study support the conceptual framework of the innovative blueprint.

As a recommendation to apply the research, leaders should consider the themes when leading an innovative environment. Encourage idea sharing across the organization and provide systems such as whiteboards, meetings, or online idea sharing tracking and ensure it is a communicated expectation that ideas are shared within the team and externally. Participants explained that idea sharing was essential to implementing innovations. Leaders should ensure peers and customers are supportive and employees have the confidence in themselves to share and implement ideas by giving appreciation through highlighting idea sharing and positive results, even if the ideas do not result in implementation.

Participants highlighted the importance of self, peer and customer support. Leaders should identify how to create an environment that requires diversity of thought and perspective. The creation of the environment could be completed through connecting different resources and providing networking opportunities. Participants shared that networking with individuals who think differently helped to clarify and simplify ideas for implementation.

Leaders should communicate organizational priorities and connect day to day work to the priorities of the organization. Participants shared that it can be challenging to move innovation forward due to lack of understanding around organizational priorities. Leaders should establish safety in respectfully questioning ideas, owning solutions and ensuring that it is ok to fail. Leaders can begin this practice through setting clear

expectations, demonstrating trust by giving employees room to learn and grow and appropriately sharing personal failures and learning. Participants shared that being able to question ideas, fail forward and trust from their leader was helpful in moving innovation forward. Leaders can check in regularly with employees to ensure they are receiving the support needed then adjust to expectations.

During each of the interviews there was a helpful balance of leaders providing opportunities for innovation and employees engaging in the environment. Participants each shared individual responsibility to moving innovation forward and how leaders influence. Leaders can communicate with teams that building an environment for innovation is a combined process between the leader, organization and employees. Leaders can set up environments to enable innovation and employees must be willing to engage and feel ok to engage.

All seven themes may be applied differently with increased organization industries and sample size. Additionally, the themes may apply to creating additional environments outside of innovation and conducting an additional study may be helpful to gaining new insight.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how leader behavior impacts innovation from an employee and leader perspective. The findings of this study contribute to social change on both an individual and organizational level. The findings contribute on an individual level by understanding employee needs and how leaders can play a role in positively impacting the employee environment. The is findings contribute

on an organizational level by sharing how organizational culture positively or negatively impacts the environment of innovation.

The findings can be implemented at a different scale across organizations and the recommendations are general and may be applied in various industries. At times innovation can be a word that is used frequently in organizations as it is essential for continued organizational growth (Park, Choi, & Lee, 2015). Although an expectation of innovation is stated, this study supports that it takes intentional and deliberate actions to create an environment where innovation becomes more than a word.

Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitive exploratory case study was to explore how leader behaviors influence employee innovation from the employee and leader perspective. The gap in literature that was explored by this study was the limited qualitative literature from both an employee and leader perspective on leader behaviors in a hierarchical structure needed to influence innovativeness. Innovation continues to be an expectation for organizations to thrive and meet customer needs and demands. Although innovation is required there is limited research on how leaders contribute to creating an environment of innovation from both the perspective of leaders and employees. This study provided insight through seven themes on what leaders can do to influence innovation. The seven themes were sharing ideas, support from self, peers and customers, being surrounded by people who think differently, alignment to organizational priorities, questioning ideas and solutions, environment of curiosity and failure, manager expectations and trust. Each idea was validated by the 18 participants with equal weight, although there is integration

between each idea. By leaders implementing the seven themes and employee engaging enablement of innovation can continue and be sustained across various organizations.

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Appendix A: Email Inquiry for Interest Sample

You are invited to take part in a research study about leader behaviors that support employee innovativeness. The researcher is inviting adults who are in a department that has a goal or focus on innovation to be in the study. I obtained your name/contact info via our organization and have worked with our human resources and legal department to align with appropriate protocols.

Background of the study

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Keturah Hallmosley, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher as a Sr. Director of Learning and Organizational Development, but this study is separate from that role. The purpose of this study is to see what leader behaviors support employee innovation from the employee perspective.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

Participate in one pre-scheduled one hour in person interview

Review interview notes

Be available for additional questions for clarify up to six months after the one hour in person interview

Please respond to this email by saying "I would like to learn more" if you are interested.

Thank you for considering!

Appendix B: Interview Questions & Interview Protocol

Instructions

First, I would like to say thank you for agreeing to this interview. My name is Keturah Hallmosley and this interview will be divided into two parts. I will ask general information about you, your role, time in role, and department. Then I will move forward to ask questions about innovation in your role. Please feel comfortable to say what you think there are no right or wrong answers in this interview. What questions do you have for me?

Tape recorder instructions (if applicable)

In your email you agreed to having our conversation recorded. The purpose of the recording is so that I can get all the details and have an attentive conversation with you. All of your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report that includes all of the comments without names to specific individuals. Are you still ok with me recording the conversation?

If yes: Ok, I will begin recording now

If no: Thank you for letting me know and I will take notes of our conversation.

What questions do you have before we get started?

- Name:
- Role:
- Tenure in role:

- Department:
- How do you define innovation?
- How does your leader support you in being able to develop something new that is valuable to your customer?
- What behaviors are most helpful in supporting you to develop something new that is valuable to your customer?
- How do you move ideas forward with your leader and influence innovation in the organization? (Employees only)
- Once you have identified an innovation idea how do you move it forward for implementation? (Employees only)
- As a leader, what behaviors are important for you to demonstrate in supporting your employees to develop somethings new that is of value to your customer? (Leader's only)
- As a leader, what behaviors are important for your leader to demonstrate to support you in building the environment for your employees? (Leader's Only)
- How does the organization's culture influence how you support innovation in your employees? (Leaders only)
- How does the organization's infrastructure (employee training and knowledge building resources) support you in helping building your employees skills and knowledge around innovation and moving innovative ideas forward? (Leader's only)