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Employees' Perceptions of Talent Development During a Digital Transformation

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Abstract

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MS, Purdue University Global, 2012

BS, University of Georgia, 2000

Dissertation Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Industrial-Organizational Psychology

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Abstract

As organizations transition to new digital technologies, talent development approaches are needed to help employees develop their digital skills. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. The resource-based view was the conceptual framework. Data were collected from ten participants from three organizations, using interviews and questionnaires. The thematic data analysis resulted in three findings: (a) the digital skill of communication is essential and developed through work tasks that contribute to the business outcomes of an organization, (b) the opportunity to practice digital skills is an effective skill development activity because it enables hands-on experience, and (c) employees are their own biggest barrier and should seek resources inside and outside of their company to advance their careers. Human resource management and talent development practitioners may use the results of this study to improve practices to overcome barriers to developing the digital skills of employees. When organizations invest in developing their talent, the outcome may be more engaged and motivated employees. Likewise, employees may experience organizational purpose and meaningful work, which may enhance the well-being of employees and the organization. This study will contribute to positive social change by increasing awareness of talent development practices that may be used during digital transformation to improve the outcomes for organizations and employees.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Kern Edwards, and my children, Kenric, Jaden, Madelyn, and Logan, for inspiring my dreams and motivating me to reach my goals. To my parents, Theordis and Don Lake, and my grandmother, Margrette Horton, for your guidance and encouragement. And to my brothers, Dontae, Jermell, and Jerdon, for your love and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In today's digital economy, the survival of an organization depends on its ability to quickly transform and adjust to meet the needs of a competitive global market (Berghaus, 2017; Harsch & Festing, 2020). This dynamic business environment requires organizations to focus on digitalizing processes and systems (Buntak et al., 2020). Digitalization comprises workforce technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, Internet of things, and big data. These technological advancements are vital to the survival of an organization because the transformation to these digital technologies requires essential changes in organizational structure, processes, systems, and employee behavior (Mahmood et al., 2019).

Digital transformation occurs in organizations rapidly, and many organizations struggle to adjust to the new changes (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). Mahmood et al. (2019) described digital transformation as a disruptive and complicated process in which many of the challenges and issues are related to people and processes. Research showed that digital transformation projects fall short due to an organization's failure to align the transformation strategy to people, processes, and systems (Lam & Law, 2019). For these reasons, nearly 70% of transformation projects do not attain their goal (Bucy et al., 2016). Ivancic et al. (2019) explained that employees and talent development human resource processes are key dimensions of the digital transformation strategy; however, empirical research is needed to further understand the process of talent development in times of transformation. Scholars lack knowledge of the critical skills and talent development activities required to support digital transformation (Lam & Law, 2019). The current

study may contribute to social change by helping human resource management and talent development practitioners develop evidence-based talent development strategies that support employees and organizations during times of change and transformation.

The present chapter introduces information on digital transformation in organizations and employee skills needed in a digital transformation. Chapter 1 includes of a brief review of existing literature, presents the problem statement, and indicates the gap in the literature. Next, the chapter highlights the purpose of the study, the theoretical framework, and the nature of the study. Also, the research questions and significance of the study are presented, and the key terms and assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations are defined. Lastly, Chapter 1 addresses the potential contributions for positive social change.

Background

Digital transformation connects organizations to real-time data and analytics, as well as new technologies, which drive smarter decisions and the automation of human resource processes (Dillon, 2020; Sivathanu & Pillai, 2018). The technological advances result in the loss of jobs; however, new jobs will emerge because some tasks cannot be automated (Sivathanu et al., 2018). Digital skills such as learnability and adaptability are essential because some job roles require human interaction (Ra et al., 2019). Frankiewicz and Chamorro-Premuzic (2020) explained that digital transformation is more about people than technology because technology can be purchased; however, people will continue to interact with members of their team and customers and create innovative products to help solve business problems. Research indicated that new jobs will require a

higher level of cognitive abilities (Ra et al., 2019) and soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving (Dean & East, 2019). According to Nair (2019), there is a significant gap between the skills of employees and the organizational needs of digital transformation. Enterprise Innovation Editors (2019) reported that 60% of employees revealed that they lacked the digital expertise, creativity, and communication skills needed to adopt new technologies, make decisions, and advance business in digital transformation. The lack of skills could hinder an organization's ability to implement digital transformation strategies, negatively impacting their competitive edge and sustainability.

There is a growing need for digital skills; therefore, organizations should make the development of digital skills a priority for a return on digital business models (Cardenas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019). Mahmood et al. (2019) stated that talent development approaches are needed to build the digital skills of employees to meet the demands of a successful digital transformation. Further research is needed in talent development to assess digital skill gaps and the process of developing digital competencies in an era of digital transformation (Sousa & Wilks, 2018; Whysall et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

Digital transformation refers to an organization's transition to digital technologies to enhance business processes while generating value creation and is critical to the sustainability of an organization (Mahmood et al., 2019). Digital transformation occurs in organizations rapidly, and many organizations struggle to adjust to the new changes

(Sousa & Rocha, 2019). Organizations have implemented advanced technologies such as cloud computing, artificial intelligence, Internet of things, and big data to improve the organizational culture, business processes, data-driven decisions, and workforce planning (Warner & Wäger, 2020). However, adapting to new technologies requires a workforce culture of learnability and innovative methods of skill development (Ra et al., 2019).

Mahmood et al. (2019) suggested that organizations assess organizational deficiencies and gaps in digital competencies before digital transformation. Current research focused on a broad view of how digital transformation shapes the structure, processes, and roles of the organization (DiRomualdo et al., 2018; Fenech et al., 2019) or offers insights on organizational challenges, methodologies, and processes during times of digital transformation (Ivancic et al., 2019; Lam & Law, 2019). Nair (2019) explained that there is a significant gap between the current skills of employees and the digital skills needed to support the organizational needs of digital transformation. Scholars have identified the digital skills employees need for a successful digital transformation, such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking; however, the literature did not indicate how the identified digital skills are assessed and developed to potentiate an environment for digital business (Cardenaas-Navia & FitzGerald, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019).

Research indicated that talent management is a critical component that enables an organization's digital transformation. For example, Guinan et al. (2019) asserted that talent management practices must be implemented to develop the employee skills that support digital technologies and transformation. Guinan et al. also suggested that talent

management may be a valuable tool for innovation, and talent development for developing digital expertise; however, the most effective talent management practices are unknown. Demir (2019) described the skills of digital transformation as digital skills necessary for organizations to potentiate digital transformation. Soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking are essential digital skills in a digital transformation (Cardenaas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019); however; additional research is needed to explore how organizations assess and develop the digital skills of their talent during a digital transformation (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Current research on talent development during a digital transformation indicated the digital skills employees need from the perspectives of digital transformation experts (Mihalcea, 2017; Schwarzmüller et al., 2018). Kavanaugh (2019) suggested that organizations should cultivate a digital culture of continuous learning by offering training activities such as digital campuses, boot camps, and hackathons to develop the digital skills of employees needed for digital transformation. Ivancic et al. (2019) explained that people are a priority dimension of the digital transformation strategy. Therefore, talent development is a critical function of talent management and might be a strategic source of value creation for the organization (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). During a digital transformation, a talent management strategy may solve organizational challenges while contributing value to business processes, customer experiences, and organizational culture; however, the most effective talent management practices are unknown (Guinan et al., 2019).

Further research is needed in talent development to assess digital skills and the process of developing digital competencies in an era of digital transformation (Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Sousa & Wilks, 2018; Whysall et al., 2019). The current study addressed talent development during the implementation of new digital technologies in an organization from the perspectives of employees in a talent development program to understand how the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking are developed. The study also addressed the effective skill-development activities and barriers to participating in a talent development program during a digital transformation. This research addressed the gap in what scholars have identified as digital skills required in a digital transformation and the process of talent development of employees during a digital transformation (Cardenaas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019; Sousa & Wilks, 2018; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019).

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. This study may bring awareness to talent development practices that may be used to build the digital skills that employees need to support enterprise digital transformation.

Research Questions

RQ1: What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving,

and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ2: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ3: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

Conceptual Framework

The resource-based view (RBV) was the conceptual framework for this study. Though this study addressed digital skill development through the experiences of employees during a digital transformation, it was essential to consider talent and technology as strategic resources that enable digital transformation. The conceptual framework was relevant to the themes in the literature review related to talent and technology being valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources and the management of talent as a dynamic capability. RBV is often used to research human resource management practices and human capital resources as potential strategic sources of value creation and sustainable competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Kaufman, 2016; Lim et al., 2017). According to the RBV perspective, resources owned by an organization, such as talent and technology, are considered rare and valuable and the primary source of competitive advantage (Hoffer & Schendel, 1978; Wernerfelt, 1984). These resources enable the organization to implement strategies that improve

organizational performance and effectiveness (Barney, 1991). Harsch and Festing (2020) described talent management as a dynamic capability that creates value to advance organizational agility and competitive advantage. The dynamic capabilities approach, viewed as an extension of RBV, describes an organization's ability to strategically use and renew its resources and capabilities to anticipate and adjust to continually changing environments to survive and sustain competitive advantage (Patricio et al., 2019).

Nature of the Study

This study was designed as a qualitative multiple case study to explore the experiences and perceptions of employees in a talent development program during a time of digital transformation. This study allowed me to compare experiences and perceptions among employees to identify talent development practices that enhance digital skill development and strategic talent management for a successful digital transformation of new digital technologies in the workplace, which is a phenomenon of interest in the field of industrial-organizational psychology (see Hayes, 2019). A multiple case study design yields evidence from various sources and enables more in-depth and contextual study (Yin, 2018). The qualitative research approach was selected to explore what employees in a talent development program perceive as valuable skill development activities, barriers to developing digital skills needed for career advancement, and talent development approaches to assess and develop digital skills during a time of digital transformation. The sample included early to mid-level career individuals from different industries who were currently in or had participated in a talent development program within the last 2 years while their organization implemented new digital technologies to improve

organizational culture, business processes, data-driven decisions, innovation, or the customer experience. The criteria for being accepted and participating in the talent development program were set by the employee's organization. This design allowed for an exploratory approach to obtain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Definitions

The following terms were important for this study and are defined as follows:

Career advancement: Movement among organizational roles that leads to changes in job responsibilities, more challenging assignments, and enhanced skills and knowledge (He et al., 2020).

Digital competencies: Basic knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that employees need to effectively use digital devices and applications to perform at work (Oberländer et al., 2020).

Digital skills: Employee abilities needed to support digital transformation (Lam & Law, 2019).

Digital technologies: The combination of technologies used to improve customer experiences, business processes, and organizational innovation (Demir, 2019).

Digital transformation: The strategic implementation and leveraging of digital technologies to improve organizational processes, operational efficiency, and customer experience to create value, competitive advantage, and sustainability (Cichosz et al., 2020).

Talent development: Strategic developmental strategies for a talent pool to ensure that the organization has the talent to meet current and future business demands (Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018).

Talent management: All of the processes that help organizations sustain a competitive edge through employee recruitment, employee retention, talent identification, and talent development (Hedayati & Li, 2016).

Assumptions

The first assumption was that participants in the study would provide candid and knowledgeable responses to the interview questions. The second assumption was that the interview questions would be relevant to obtain the information needed to answer the research question. The third assumption was that the data collected would be analyzed and reported without any bias.

Scope and Delimitations

The population for this study consisted of employees who were in a talent development program in the United States. The participants were from organizations across multiple industries to enable me to explore the experiences of different employees holistically. Participants who had not participated in a talent development program within the last 2 years and those who had not experienced a digital transformation of new digital technologies while participating in the talent development program were excluded. Employees who had not participated in a talent development program within the 2 two years may not have been exposed to the latest digital technologies or have the latest experiences relevant to developing digital skills during a digital transformation.

Limitations

The first limitation was that the research findings may not be generalizable to talent development strategies or useful to other organizations because the data collected may be unique to participants in the study. The second limitation was that the target population and number of participants may limit transferability. To address these limitations, I explored the experiences of different employees from organizations across multiple industries and used prolonged engagement during the data collection phase to obtain richer data.

Significance

The findings of this study may contribute to linking science to practice by identifying assessment tools and talent development approaches to better prepare organizations for digital transformation. I did not expected that the participants would directly pinpoint this information; however, I assumed the talent development practices most beneficial to organizations would be revealed once the data were collected and analyzed. Human resource management and talent development practitioners may use the results of this study to develop practices to overcome barriers to developing the digital skills of employees. In addition, the results of this study may influence talent management policies and strategies, including talent retention, succession planning, knowledge transfer, and training initiatives before and during a digital transformation.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may contribute to social change by enabling human resource management and talent development practitioners to develop evidence-based strategies that support employees and the organization during times of

change and transformation. There are many positive outcomes when organizations invest in talent development, such as a more highly engaged and motivated workforce and enhanced leadership culture (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). Employees experience organizational purpose and meaningful work, and organizations experience talent retention and commitment (Khoreva et al., 2017; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Digital transformation involves more than technology. It includes an effective transformation project that generates value; competitive advantage encompasses people, culture, and talent development (Kavanaugh, 2019; Ra et al., 2019; Warner & Wäger, 2020). According to Kane et al. (2018), people are the source of the challenges and success of a digital transformation. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization.

Lam & Law (2019) explained that organizations are not prepared for digital transformation because they fail to align their strategy to people, processes, and systems. People lack the skills, knowledge, and resources, as well as the innovative solutions required in digital transformation. Specific competencies and digital skills are critical to success; therefore, further research is needed to understand talent development processes of developing digital skills and competencies to better prepare organizations for digital transformation (Lam & Law, 2019). Ivancic et al. (2019) explained that people enable organizations to achieve their digital transformation strategy by implementing solutions that drive new digital processes and enterprise innovation. Evidence continues to increase, suggesting that talent development is a valuable tool for developing the digital skills that employees need during a digital transformation (Guinan et al., 2019; Ivanci et al., 2019; Lam & Law, 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Nair (2019) explained that there is a significant gap between the current skills of employees and the digital skills needed to support digital transformation. Scholars have identified the digital skills employees need for a successful digital transformation, such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking; however, there is a gap in the literature that shows how the identified digital skills are developed (Cardenaas-Navia & FitzGerald, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019). Understanding digital skill development improves talent development approaches and assessment tools to better prepare organizations for digital transformation.

Chapter 2 consists of four sections. The literature search strategy is described in the first section. In the second section, the theoretical foundation, as well as the rationale for the theoretical approach, is explained. The third section addresses the concepts of talent development, digital transformation, and the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. In the fourth section, I summarize and synthesize major themes in the literature and describe how this study addressed a gap in the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy consisted of exploring the Walden University library databases, such as Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, ProQuest, PsycINFO, Science Direct, and Thoreau, for peer-reviewed journal articles and books. Also, Google Scholar was beneficial in the search by providing relevant publications used in the literature review. The keywords *soft skills*, *digital economy*, *digital transformation*, *digital era*, *digitalization*, *human resource management*, *human capital*,

industry 4.0, *digital competence*, *digital skills*, *talent development*, *talent management*, *digital capabilities*, *dynamic capabilities*, and *resource-based value theory* were used in the literature searches. Searches for peer-reviewed journal articles ranged from 2016 to 2020 to capture recently published literature; however, searches related to the RBV was not subject to time limitations. The search included two conference proceedings, which were used to understand common activities and approaches to digital transformation.

Conceptual Framework

The RBV was the conceptual framework for this study because it was essential to look at talent and technology as strategic resources that enable digital transformation. The conceptual framework was relevant to the themes of talent and technology as strategic resources and the management of talent as a dynamic capability. RBV has been used to examine human resource management practices and human capital resources as potential strategic sources of value creation and sustainable competitive advantage (Delery & Roumpi, 2017; Kaufman, 2016; Lin et al., 2017). Barney (1991, 2010) explained that sustainable competitive advantage could be established through valuable, rare, inimitable, and nonsubstitutable resources. According to the RBV, resources owned by an organization, such as talent and technology, are valuable and the primary sources of competitive advantage (Hoffer & Schendel, 1978; Wernerfelt, 1984). These resources enable the organization to implement strategies that improve organizational performance and effectiveness (Barney, 1991).

Critics of RBV argued that the theory does not logically explain value or provide specifics on determining which resources are the sources of value creation (Kaufman,

2016). However, Delery and Roumpi (2017) found that human resource management practices, such as talent development, have the potential to generate a sustainable competitive advantage. For instance, investing in skill development training during the launch of new technological systems improves the skills of employees and system success (Snell & Dean, 1992). When organizations focus on developing specific skills based on business objectives and enterprise strategy, they improve competitive advantage (Becker et al., 2009; Delery & Shaw, 2001). According to Delery and Roumpi, sustained competitive advantage emerges when human resource practices and human capital capabilities are leveraged to make unique contributions that achieve strategic objectives. Barney (1991, 2010) explained that technology may be easily imitable, transferable, and substitutable by competitors. However, talented employees are scarce, and human resources such as policies, culture, and traditions are socially complex and not easily inimitable (Lim et al., 2017).

The dynamic capabilities approach, viewed as an extension of RBV, describes an organization's ability to strategically use and renew its resources and capabilities to anticipate and adjust to continually changing internal and external environments to survive and sustain competitive advantage (Patricio et al., 2019). Grant (1991) described capabilities as the competence of an organization to quickly transform its processes, people, and other valuable resources to sustain competitive performance. The three dynamic capabilities are the ability to learn quickly, integrate new strategic resources, and transform existing resources into organizational processes (Hutchinson, 2019). Hutchinson (2019) further explained that this requires effective communication skills to

collaborate for assets and critical thinking skills to anticipate both positive and negative changes and then take action. Moreover, Harsch and Festing (2020) referred to talent management as a dynamic capability that creates value to advance organizational agility and competitive advantage. Talent development is a critical function of talent management and a potential source of value to organizations (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). Employees, employee training, and technology are strategic organizational assets that can be transformed and reused to create value and sustain competitive advantage (Hutchinson, 2019).

Considering the perspectives of RBV and dynamic capabilities, talent and technology are valuable resources and a major source of competitive advantage (Hoffer & Schendel, 1978; Wernerfelt, 1984). The dynamic capabilities of these strategic resources contribute to sustainable competitive advantage (Harsch & Festing, 2020; Hutchinson, 2019; Sparrow & Makram, 2015). In the current study, the selected conceptual framework was relevant to the research problem and addressed the research question. The rationale for using this conceptual foundation for the study was that it is essential to link employees and digital skill development to value, especially during times of digital transformation. Also, talent development is a unique and valuable resource that contributes to organizational learning. The ability to quickly learn from previous successes and shortcomings is a dynamic capability that enables organizations to anticipate opportunities, mobilize resources, and transform resources (Hutchinson, 2019). Talent development contributes to this process through identifying, assessing, and

developing critical skills. In addition, more studies are needed that link human resource processes such as talent development to business outcomes (Delery & Roumpi, 2017).

Literature Review

Talent Development

Talent development consists of the developmental strategies an organization executes to ensure its talent meets current and future business demands (Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018). According to Hedayati and Li (2016), talent development involves topics related to career development, including the influence of contextual factors such as organizational climate and culture, talent attraction and retention, and diversity. Talent development is often discussed as it relates to talent management, and like talent management, the scope of talent development remains ambiguous; therefore, it is difficult to generalize research findings (Hedayati & Li, 2016).

Talent development literature indicated that there is not a consensus on a concise definition and theoretical framework (Dalal & Akdere, 2018; Heydayati & Li, 2016; Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018). However, scholars agreed that there are commonalities in talent development research. For instance, talent development is an intentional process and structured practice (Dalal & Akdere, 2018; Heydayati & Li, 2016) based on organizational needs and driven by strategic priorities (Chaudhuri et al., 2018; Oseghale et al., 2018). Also, organizational resources and policies influence talent development practices (Oseghale et al., 2018), including leadership development, training, coaching, mentoring, and targeted initiatives for skill development (Hedayati & Li, 2016; Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018). Talent development is an investment in employees to build skills,

knowledge, and capabilities, which are considered components of organizational intelligence (Hamad, 2019). According to Hamad (2019), the development of employees drives organizational performance and competitive advantage. Dalal and Akdere (2018) described employees as an organization's most valuable asset; therefore, talent development is critical to providing customers with high-quality products and services.

Talent development must intentionally develop specific skills to have an impact on an organization. Schreuder and Noorman (2019) proposed that talent development should align with the organization's strategy and target specific talent and skills. The results of strategic talent development included the achievement of business goals, competitive advantage, and innovation (Dalal & Akdere, 2018). Additionally, talent retention, talent attraction, affective commitment, and job satisfaction are outcomes of talent development (Hedyaati & Li, 2016), which is often discussed in terms of talent management. Talent management processes and systems influence the development and deployment of skills needed to achieve current and future business objectives (Hamad, 2019). Crowley-Henry et al. (2018) suggested that the effective management of talent is essential to the success of an organization. Research showed that talent management impacts organizational performance and workforce productivity (Zadeh & Ahmadi, 2017), sustainable business growth (Mwila & Turay, 2018), and organizational agility (Sareen & Mishra, 2016). Talent management strategies and practices are critical to the sustainability of an organization (Anlesinya et al., 2019).

Furthermore, research indicated that talent development and talent management are sources of competitive advantage and value creation (Delery & Roumpi, 2017;

Kaufman, 2016; Lin et al., 2017); however, the topics are underresearched and underdeveloped (Dalal & Akdere, 2018). Talent development is often investigated through a qualitative approach or critically analyzed through a systematic review. A qualitative study enables the exploration of underlying reasons and processes, whereas a quantitative approach allows the study of a broad view of talent development (Hedayati & Li, 2016).

In a systematic literature review, Hedayati and Li (2016) discussed the lack of literature on talent development, which is a topic often explored through talent management. The purpose of their literature review was to understand the status and nature of talent development and guide future research efforts. The literature search was conducted in 2014 and did not include a time specification. The results included 57 research articles; however, 28 were individual experiences or self-report of practitioners, so those articles were excluded. The remaining articles included 16 empirical studies and 13 conceptual papers.

In the quantitative research examined, the independent variables were leadership development, training, coaching, mentoring, and targeted initiatives (Hedayati & Li (2016). The outcomes included innovation, talent attraction, talent retention, performance, organizational value, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. Regarding the qualitative studies, the major purpose was to understand talent development processes. Four themes of talent development were identified: (a) career development, (b) the influence of contextual factors such as organizational climate and culture, (c) talent attraction and retention, and (d) diversity.

Qualitative research enables the study of challenges in talent development practices (Whysall et al., 2019). Using a case study approach builds theory and extends the literature (Oseghale et al., 2018). In a qualitative study, Oseghale et al. (2018) investigated the factors that influence talent development decisions. The study indicated that most skill gaps exist at the organizational level, and talent development serves a strategic purpose. For instance, when the organization changed technology, they implemented employee training to build skills needed to optimize performance. The study revealed that the key drivers of talent development decisions are organizational strategy, policies, and technology changes.

Scholars have suggested that talent development should align with the strategy of the organization and target specific talent and skills (Chaudhuri et al., 2018; Schreuder & Noorman, 2019). Chaudhuri et al. (2018) conducted case studies to explore talent development practices in three organizational settings. The organizations did not have the resources to hire external talent, so they focused on identifying and developing their employees through online resources and internal mentors. The findings showed that by developing the soft skills of internal talent, the organization increased talent retention and performance. Through a quantitative approach, Hamad (2019) investigated the relationship between talent management and organizational intelligence. Hamad conducted survey research on top and middle managers working in the food industry. The study confirmed that talent development through talent management practices drives an organization's ability to create, communicate, and deploy knowledge. Also, the study

indicated that developing critical employee skills increases the organization's ability to solve critical problems and achieve business goals.

Empirical literature linked talent development to specific benefits; however, there were many challenges in defining the scope and nature of the concept. Scholars agreed that there is no established definition, theoretical background, or scope of talent development (Dalal & Akdere, 2018; Heydayati & LI, 2016; Oseghale et al., 2018; Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018). Also, the current literature did not address technology and talent development. There is a lack of attention to the use of technology and its effect on talent development (Heydayati & Li, 2016). Whysall et al. (2018) explained that there is an absence of research on the digital economy's impact on talent development and empirical studies that address talent development from the perspectives of employees. Human resource managers and CEOs have agreed that the major challenge of talent development is the adoption of critical skills related to the implementation of business technologies (Juarez-Tarraga et al., 2019). Studies have shown a gap in linking talent development to organizational outcomes and strategy (Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020; McFarland & Jestaz, 2016).

Digital Transformation

Cichosz et al. (2020) defined digital transformation as the strategic implementation and leveraging of digital technologies to improve organizational processes, operational efficiency, and customer experience to create value, competitive advantage, and sustainability. Digital transformation requires an extensive implementation and acceptance of new digital technologies and is associated with

strategic renewal (Kretschmer & Khashabi, 2020). Moreover, it involves the implementation of advanced technologies such as Cloud Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of things, and Big Data to improve the organizational culture, business processes, data-driven decisions, and workforce planning (Warner et al., 2020). Digital transformation also includes social media, mobile devices, analytics, and embedded devices (Singh et al., 2020).

Organizations recognize digital transformation as a strategic priority because it enhances business models and data-driven decisions. Digital transformation connects organizations to data and analytics, as well as new technologies, which drive smarter decisions and the automation of human resource processes (Dillon, 2020; Sivathanu et al., 2018). Also, it informs weaknesses in existing systems (Kretschmer et al., 2020), improves products and services (Correani et al., 2020), and streamlines business operations (Singh et al., 2020). Cichosz et al. (2020) proposed that digital transformation creates value by improving operational efficiency, customer experiences, business models, strategic differentiation, cost, stakeholder relationships, and competitive advantage. Scholars have agreed that digital transformation is a value-creating process that is critical to the sustainability of an organization (Mahmood et al., 2019; Solberg et al., 2020).

Digital transformation poses opportunities as well as potential challenges because it impacts many dimensions of an organization. Kretschmer et al. (2020) explained that an organization comprises groups who work collectively to achieve the goals of the organization. Further, digital transformation changes the way the tasks are disseminated.

Not only does digitalization inform weaknesses, but it also exposes redundant and expensive processes. According to Kretschmer et al. (2020), it discovers tasks that are no longer needed and then reveals new-found tasks needed among the groups to enhance business operations. As a result, digital transformation initiates change within the structure of an organization. Since digital transformation is an emerging topic, it still is not evident how it impacts employees who perform internal processes and tasks (Kretschmer et al., 2020).

Empirical research on digital transformation and its impact on organizational structure is limited (Cichosez et al., 2020). However, digital transformation has been examined through qualitative studies and literature reviews. Cichosz et al. (2020) investigated digital transformation in logistics service providers to understand barriers, success factors, and leading practices. The research was conducted through a systematic literature review and nine case study analyses. The case study consisted of interviews with directors who were managing the digital transformation projects. The researchers identified barriers due to the complexity of processes and systems and the shortage of digitally skilled employees. The success factors were connected to employee training and technology acceptance. Cichosz and colleagues explained that the major challenge and main source of success were the employees (Cichosz et al., 2020).

Correani et al. (2020) conducted case studies of digital transformation projects at three organizations. The purpose of their study was to develop and propose a framework to help organizations improve their digital transformation strategy. Findings indicated that organizations lack a specific plan and defined scope; therefore, digital transformation

projects fail between the formation and implementation phases. Specifically, the researchers found that organizations lack a strategy for leveraging digital technology long-term and do not consider the change management challenges for employees and customers. Additionally, the study showed that people are slow to adapt to the pace of digital transformation, and organizations often underestimate the urgency of digital transformation (Correani et al., 2020). Furthermore, Kretschmer et al. (2020) stated that a deficient digital transformation could be detrimental to business growth and cause a long-lasting loss in market share and competitive advantage.

Since digital transformation is high priority, organizations hire chief digital officers to help implement digital transformation activities while leading strategic change. Singh et al. (2020) conducted a multiple case study to explore how chief digital officers engage in digital transformation activities. The study showed that the chief digital officer supports managers with the culture shift and cross-functional training. In a qualitative study, Brunetti et al. (2020) interviewed stakeholders during digital transformation to understand the challenges and explore strategies. The study identified digital skills and culture as the major challenges. Brunetti and colleagues proposed investing in the development of knowledge and skills to enable employees to better interact with digital technologies (Brunetti et al., 2020). Research has also shown that the most significant aspect of digital transformation is human interaction; thus, employees must adapt and be retrained (Grula et al., 2020).

Although empirical literature connects digital transformation to value creation and organizational sustainability (Mahmood et al., 2019; Solberg et al., 2020), there is a lack

of research that connects digital transformation with employee skill development and technology acceptance (Cichosz et al., 2020; Correani et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Solberg et al., 2020), which are the sources of major challenges. According to Nair (2019), there is a significant gap between the skills of employees and the organizational needs of digital transformation. Further research is needed to assess the barriers and success indicators to cultivating a digital culture and developing digital skills (Cichosz et al., 2020; Correani et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Solberg et al., 2020). Cichosz et al. (2020) recommended quantitative studies to examine the importance of success factors during different phases of digital transformation.

Digital Skills

Colombo et al. (2019) explained that new technologies are automating tasks that were previously performed manually by employees. As a result, job tasks are significantly changing, and new skills are required. Ra et al. (2019) stated that the technological advances would result in the loss of jobs; however, new jobs will emerge because some tasks cannot be automated. Also, there is a greater emphasis on problem-solving and communication abilities (Colombo et al., 2019). Specifically, research shows that soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking are essential digital skills (Cardenaas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019).

Communication

Schwarzmüller et al. (2018) described digital communication skills as the ability to use various communication channels to virtually interconnect with colleagues, teams, partners, and other organizations. Communication skills enable employees to interact

with others and their work environment (Colombo et al., 2019). Van Laar et al. (2019) conducted survey research to investigate the level of 21st Century digital skills and the determinants contributing to the level of these skills among professionals working within creative industries. The digital skills explored in the study were information, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. The digital skill of communication involved expressive skills to shape interpersonal impressions to drive effective outcomes from online interactions, contact-building skills to build relationships through social applications, networking skills to mobilize social contacts to achieve business goals, and contact-sharing skills to digitally communicate business content such as status updates and brand awareness. Information and communication expressiveness skills had the highest means, followed by problem-solving and critical thinking digital skills. Also, the study found that self-directed learning contributed to the level of information, collaboration, and problem-solving digital skills; however, it did not impact communication, creativity, or critical thinking digital skills.

Solberg et al. (2020) suggested that communication is an essential skill when implementing new technologies. In a descriptive study, Demir (2019) identified the major technological trends impacting organizations. The study indicated that digital trends affect organizational structures, business models, and employee behaviors simultaneously. Accordingly, digitalization impacts performance, communication, learning, decision making, and business practices.

Problem-Solving

Technology is significantly changing job tasks and skills; therefore, there is a greater need for communication and problem-solving skills (Colombo et al., 2019). Sousa et al. (2018) described the digital skill of problem-solving as the ability to solve problems through critical analysis. Problem-solving digital skills involve the capability to analyze complex problems and generate comprehensive but practical solutions (Van Laar et al., 2019). These skills are essential when using online platforms and digital tools.

Critical Thinking

Van Laar et al. (2019) identified critical thinking as an essential digital skill that requires the capability to use evidence and consider multiple perspectives to make well-informed conclusions. Sousa et al. (2018) conducted a literature review and survey research to identify the critical skills and disruptive technological skills that organizations need in this digital age. The study revealed critical thinking, problem-solving, coordinating with others, creativity, people management, emotional intelligence, judgment and decision-making, and cognitive flexibility as some of the critical skills. The disruptive skills that were identified included artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, Internet of things, augmented reality, and digitalization.

Summary and Conclusions

The review of the literature indicated that scholars know that talent management may be a valuable tool for innovation, as well as talent development for developing digital expertise; however, the most effective talent management practices are unknown. The literature showed a lack of research on the impact of technology on talent development. Organizations are focused on implementing new technologies to improve

business outcomes; however, there is an absence of research to support talent development efforts of building the critical skills that employees need during the implementation of new technologies.

Furthermore, the literature confirmed that employees are critical to successful business outcomes when transitioning to new digital technologies; however, the acceptance of the technologies is a major organizational barrier. Additional research is needed to further understand the impact of digital technologies on employees. Although the literature identified a gap between the skills of employees and the organizational needs of digital transformation, further research is needed to assess the barriers and success indicators for cultivating a digital culture and developing digital skills. Additional research may reveal connections between talent development and organizational outcomes. Additionally, the literature indicated that the digital skills associated with digital transformation are communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking; however, research is needed to understand the talent development practices that are crucial to building the digital skills that support digital transformation.

This research addressed the gap in what scholars have identified as digital skills required in a digital transformation and the process of talent development of employees during a digital transformation. The study explored the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development processes of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. It extends

talent development research that may be used to support the digital skill development of employees during a digital transformation.

The review of the literature built the foundation for the qualitative research methodology for the study. The literature identified talent development as an under-developed and under-researched topic that it is often investigated through qualitative case studies. A qualitative approach allowed the exploration of underlying reasons and processes of the phenomenon (Hedayati Mehdibadi et al., 2016). Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the methodological aspects of the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. The study's goal was to bring awareness to talent development practices that may be used to build the digital skills that employees need to support enterprise digital transformation. Chapter 3 introduces the qualitative research design and rationale and addresses my role as the researcher in the study. Also, I describe the research methodology, which includes the selection of participants, instrumentation, and data collection procedures. In addition, Chapter 3 addresses issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points of the research methodology.

Research Design and Methodology

This qualitative study was guided by three research questions:

RQ1: What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ2: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ3: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

I explored talent development during the implementation of new digital technologies in an organization from the perspectives of employees in a talent development program to understand how the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking are developed. The study also addressed effective skill-development activities and barriers to participating in a talent development program during a digital transformation. The research addressed the gap in what scholars have identified as digital skills required in a digital transformation and the process of talent development of employees during a digital transformation (Cardenaas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Sousa & Wilks, 2018; Van Laar et al., 2019).

The research method for this study was a qualitative multiple case study. A qualitative approach enables the exploration of underlying reasons and processes of the phenomenon (Hedayati & Li, 2016). Moreover, a multiple case study design yields evidence from various sources, which enables more in-depth and contextual study (Yin, 2018). This qualitative research design was used to understand what employees in a talent development program perceive as valuable skill development activities and talent development approaches to assess and develop digital skills in employees during a time of digital transformation. This research design enabled me to compare experiences and perceptions among various employees in a talent development program to identify talent

development practices that may be used to build the digital skills that employees need to support enterprise digital transformation.

Role of the Researcher

I acted as a participant and observer through the data collection and analysis process to make sense of the phenomenon. As the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the researcher conveys the meaning of the research (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). It is expected for a researcher to have feelings, ideas, and knowledge regarding the research; however, any personal bias must be identified and monitored throughout the study (Karagiozis, 2018). Therefore, the researcher must work to mitigate personal assumptions and interpretations.

Throughout the study, my role as the researcher was observer–participant. According to Burkholder et al. (2016), the researcher engages in the study as a participant and an observer throughout the interview and data collection process. Before the data collection process, I examined my experiences to acknowledge predispositions and assumptions and to alleviate any prejudices that may have influenced the process. During the interview process, I interacted with participants as an observer and participant to focus on their experiences, build rapport, and ask follow-up questions.

I did not have a personal relationship with the participants in this study. Although the participants were previous clients of the consulting firm where I am employed, I did not work with them directly. In addition, there were no incentives offered, and the research was not conducted within my work environment. Therefore, the data collection and analysis processes were not compromised due to possible conflicts of interest.

Methodology

The participants in this qualitative study included women and men who are early to mid-level career individuals working in individual contributor, management, and director-level jobs within organizations from three different industries in the United States. The participants had 5 years or more of professional experience in the workforce. They are currently in or had participated in a talent development program within the last 2 years while their organization implemented new digital technologies to improve organizational culture, business processes, data-driven decisions, innovation, or the customer experience. There were no other demographic characteristics identified as factors for this study.

This qualitative multiple case study included participants from three different industries, including human capital management technology, supply chain management, and data analytics. These organizations had experienced digital transformation and had talent development programs. The participants were selected through purposeful sampling. This method is useful in identifying individuals who have experienced the phenomenon and meet the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015). In addition, qualitative researchers who use this sampling strategy try to obtain all of the data needed to understand the phenomenon to reach theoretical saturation (Van Rijnsoever, 2017). This sampling method was used to select individuals who met the research criteria. Initially, I contacted the selected participants through email or LinkedIn to provide them with a brief description of the study and requested their agreement to participate in the

study. Once they agreed to participate, I emailed them a link to an online questionnaire and contacted them to schedule a virtual interview.

Instrumentation

The data collection process included an interview protocol. The research questions were transformed into interview questions. According to Patton (2015), the interview establishes a framework for obtaining responses that express the realities of the participants. I developed interview questions to guide participants to describe the vivid details of their experiences. Yin (2018) stated that the ability to ask good questions enables the researcher to engage in rich conversations. Themes from the literature review and theoretical framework influenced the structure of the interview questions. The interviews were conducted virtually.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The participants were recruited through purposeful sampling. I reviewed a database of organizations that had talent development programs. Of these organizations, I selected three that had implemented digital transformation of new digital technologies and identified employees based on the inclusion criteria. The employees received an invite via email to request their participation in the study. Prior to participating in the research, participants received a consent form to review and send back via email. I confirmed a virtual meeting date with the participants who agreed to participate in the study. Then an Outlook meeting request with the interview date, time, and meeting link was sent.

Prior to attending the virtual meeting, the participants were sent a demographic questionnaire to complete online in Qualtrics. The online questionnaire addressed the participant's place of employment, gender, job position, years of experience, and general information about their organization's digital transformation projects during the time of participating in the talent development program. This involved identifying digital technologies implemented during their participation in the talent development program and the length of time of their talent development program. The virtual interviews were recorded and conducted within 10 days of completing the online questionnaire. The interviews were transcribed using GoToMeeting online conferencing software. To ensure the data were accurate and complete, participants received a copy of their transcript to review. This approach also supported triangulation and member checking of the data, which enriched the validity of the findings.

Data Analysis Plan

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained thematic analysis as a six-phase framework in which the researcher becomes familiar with the data, generates initial codes, searches for themes, refines themes, defines themes, and evidences the theme. Thematic analysis enables the researcher to engage in a flexible approach to analyzing the data for meaningful patterns related to the research questions. This method is recursive rather than linear because the researcher moves back and forth between the data as necessary during the analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The first phase of thematic analysis involved me completely immersing myself in the data to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the data (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using GoToMeeting, I transcribed the interviews to thoroughly interpret the data. I repeatedly read the data to search for meaning and patterns. During this process, I generated an initial list of codes. Once the data were systematically organized into meaningful groups, I sorted the codes into possible themes. After I generated a set of potential themes, the themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they were clear and distinct. Additionally, I evaluated the validity of the themes to confirm that they precisely represented meanings presented in the data.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Ravitch and Carl (2016) indicated that trustworthiness, or validity, is a critical element of the qualitative research design; therefore, researchers must consider the approach that mitigates threats to validity and promotes quality data. Korstjens and Moser (2018) explained that trustworthy qualitative research is based on credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and reflexivity. A suitable strategy to establish credibility is reflexivity. Engaging in reflexivity enables researchers to identify and record personal biases, assumptions, and interpretations throughout the study. Another strategy is triangulation, or the use of multiple approaches to increase trustworthiness and validity. In the current study, I conducted member checks by presenting probable findings to the participants. This gave participants an opportunity to validate the interpretation of their experiences and perspectives.

Credibility can also be established through spending extended time in the data collection process with purposefully selected participants (Palinkas et al., 2015). Also, this helps researchers reach saturation or a point where no additional themes of data can be identified. As researchers engage in prolonged contact during the data collection process, they build trust and rapport with the participants. The result is richer and thicker data and a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, which promotes transferability. Transferability, which indicates external validity, means that the findings may be applied to a broader population. To strengthen transferability, I purposefully selected a diverse sample of participants to ensure generalizability to similar contexts.

Further strategies are needed to strengthen dependability to ensure consistency and internal validity. However, I used triangulation and audit trails as strategies for dependability. The data were collected through emails and online virtual interviews. The audit trail included details on how the study was conducted and data were analyzed. Also, I recorded how the data were collected and explained the decisions that were made throughout the study. The researcher's lens and critical self-reflection are significant to qualitative inquiry; therefore, researchers must acknowledge their position and impact on the research process (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). I engaged in the process of reflexivity throughout the study to establish confirmability and scientific objectivity.

Ethical Procedures

Prior to the data collection phase of the study, I obtained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (03-15-21-0277754). To ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, I followed the requirements of the approved IRB.

Individuals who agreed to participate were sent consent emails that provided details on their rights and expectations regarding the study. In the consent, participants were informed that their interview would be recorded to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Also, the participants were informed that their names would not be published and that their responses would be a part of a group of participants. The data collected were not of a sensitive nature, and the participants were not a part of a vulnerable group; therefore, the study presented a minimal risk to the participants. All interviews were conducted through GoToMeeting. The data were saved on my password-protected external drive. Once the study is published, the data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university, then deleted.

Summary

In Chapter 3, the phenomenon of the study and the rationale for the chosen research design were defined, and the role of the researcher and the methodology of the study were explained. In the methodology, the population, sampling strategy, and recruitment method were identified, and the data collection process and the data analysis plan were described. Also, the strategies that were employed to strengthen trustworthiness in the study were presented. Lastly, to ensure that the study complied with ethical standards, the requirements of the approved IRB were followed. In Chapter 4, details on the data collection and data analysis procedures are provided, as well as the results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. The research questions that guided this study were the following:

RQ1: What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ2: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ3: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

This chapter provides the results of questionnaires and interviews conducted with 10 participants. The sample population, data collection, and data analysis procedures are described. The research findings are organized according to each research question. This chapter also includes a review of the evidence for trustworthiness and concludes with a summary of the findings.

Setting

During this study, no personal or organizational conditions influenced the participants' experiences or their responses to the interview questions. The qualitative data collection methods were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were used to collect initial data to confirm the participant met the research criteria. The interviews served as the primary method for collecting data to address the research questions.

I selected 22 individuals from three organizations who met the research criteria and sent an email with a brief description of the study, along with a request for their participation. Within a week, 10 responded and gave consent to participate in the study. Once I confirmed their availability, I emailed participants the online questionnaire and a meeting link for the virtual interview. Individual interviews were conducted with 10 research participants using GoToMeeting and lasted 20 to 50 minutes for each participant.

The interviews were audio-recorded; the webcam feature was turned off. There were a few minor technical difficulties with the computer audio. For these instances, I and the participant used phones to call into the meeting. This method resolved the technical issue with the audio. Each of the interviews was recorded and transcribed using the GoToMeeting platform.

Demographics

A total of 10 participants from three organizations participated in the study. Two (20%) of the participants were from a human capital management technology

organization, four (40%) were from a supply change management organization, and four (40%) were from a data analytics organization. The job level of the participant was another demographic captured by this study. Four (40%) of the participants were at the director level, four (40%) were managers, and two (20%) were individual contributors.

Years of experience was the third demographic collected in this study. One (10%) of the participants had 5 to 10 years of experience, and one (10%) had 11 to 15 years of experience. Four (40%) of the participants had 16 to 20 years of experience, and three (30%) had 21 to 25 years of experience. One (10%) had 26 to 30 years of experience. Lastly, there were four (40%) male and six (60%) female participants.

Data Collection

A qualitative multiple case study was conducted to explore the experiences of 10 research participants and to use their responses to identify themes to address the research questions. There were no variations in the data collection plan or any unusual circumstances encountered during the data collection process. Questionnaires and interviews were used as the qualitative methods for data collection.

Over a 10-day period, a total of 10 questionnaires were completed, and 10 interviews were conducted. Each participant completed a questionnaire in Qualtrics prior to participating in the interview to ensure they met the research criteria. The first interview was conducted on March 18, 2021, and the last interview was completed on March 28, 2021. Appendix A includes the interview protocol and the list of questions and procedures for the interviews. In addition, the demographic questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

Each interview was conducted and recorded in GoToMeeting. Additionally, this online conferencing platform provided a transcription of the audio at the conclusion of each interview. Following the interview protocol, each participant was emailed a copy of their transcribed audio to check for accuracy and to determine whether they wanted to revise or add information to their responses. After that, participants were given 5 days to review and make corrections to their transcript to ensure the data were precise and complete. All participants confirmed the accuracy and completeness of the transcripts.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a six-phase framework in which the researcher becomes familiar with the data, generates initial codes, searches for themes, refines themes, defines themes, and evidences the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first phase of thematic analysis requires complete immersion in the data to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the data. I continually read through the transcripts to become immersed and deeply connected with the data. I also used the transcripts to summarize my interpretations of the participants' responses to the interview questions. To ensure the accuracy of my interpretations, I sent each participant my summary of their responses to review. Within a week, all participants confirmed the accuracy of the summaries. Next, I resumed exploring the data for meanings and patterns. During this process, I generated an initial list of codes. Once the data were systematically organized into meaningful groups, I sorted the codes into possible themes. After I generated a set of potential themes, the themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they were clear and distinct. Table 1 illustrates the five codes and

themes that emerged from the data analysis. In addition, Table 1 includes the keywords

most referenced in the participants' responses during the interviews.

Table 1

Codes and Themes

Codes	Themes	Keywords
Remote work environment	The ability to be able to communicate virtually is essential in the corporate environment	Pandemic COVID Remote Virtual Online
Training	Training has shifted from face-to-face to virtual	Training Talent development Skill development
Digital skills	Importance of practice opportunities to develop digital skills	Practice Skills
Barriers	The employee's own perception of being able to do the work	Perception Change Learning Traditional Opportunities Challenging
Career development	Seeking resources within and outside of the company	Resources Company Mentor Coach Learning management system Online courses Professional development sites Strategy

Remote Work Environment

During the interviews, each participant discussed how the nature of work had

changed partly due to the current pandemic. However, participants contended that remote

or virtual work environments were imminent because of digital transformation and the increased need to distribute critical resources and information globally. This included the ability to effectively build cross-border teams to power innovation and digital technologies. Research participants referenced the ability to communicate virtually on assignments and projects with leaders, coworkers, and clients as essential in today's remote work environment. Participant 2 stated "we took advantage of our new video conferencing platform. We have a new culture of working remotely and collaborating outside of the office and getting used to how we connect in a new way at a new level." This was consistent with the findings of Frankiewicz and Chamorro-Premuzic (2020) who explained how digital transformation is more about people than technology because people will continue to interact with members of their team and customers and create innovative products to help solve business problems.

Training

The participants referred to talent development as employee training; they felt as if training had changed because of the current pandemic and the need to shift from in-person training, which allows for face-to-face interaction, to virtual training using online communication platforms like Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom. Also, the shift to virtual training was impending because organizations were becoming more digitalized. Participant 2 stated

> The company is very pioneering and forward-thinking, so we've been going down the path of using technology and innovation to train and develop people. We've had the tools and technology before the pandemic hit. We've been developing

people remotely and scaling processes for efficiency prior to COVID, so we were

already prepared and didn't have to make a lot of adjustments. However, people

learn in different ways, and years ago, instructor-led training was a popular form

of training. We are seeing gaps in how people adjust to technology and how

people develop through the use of digital technology.

Participants also described on-demand training opportunities in learning management systems, which enable the opportunity to practice skills. Prerecorded or e-learning training allowed participants to learn and practice at their own pace and reference content they learned in previous virtual training.

Digital Skills

The digital transformation made digital platforms available for learning and practicing new skills. For example, Participants 3, 4, 5, and 6 work at an organization that has been experiencing a digital transformation for almost 2 years. Their organization is changing from Microsoft 365 to Google Workspace. Each participant described their experience of being a part of the digital transformation strategy as planned and well prepared. Participants reported ample training opportunities to develop the digital skills needed to perform their jobs; this helped them to adapt to the new technologies. All training was virtual and was offered synchronously and asynchronously. The synchronous format allowed participants to collaborate and ask questions, and the asynchronous modality enabled refresher training and practice opportunities. Participant 4 stated

> The company has done a lot to improve talent management programs on the
> digital side. For instance, to improve digital skills in communication, such as
> communicating digitally – training has migrated to a digital platform that enables
> employees to access training on-demand. The platform that we use allows for
> personalized courses offered digitally to employees. The learning path has
> customized courses specific to our work and job duties.

This finding aligns with Ra et al. (2019) who found that employees' ability to adapt to new technologies requires an organizational culture of learnability and innovative methods of skill development. In addition, Brunetti et al. (2020) explained that investing in the development of knowledge and skills enables employees to better interact with digital technologies.

Barriers

All but one participant reported that they were the main barrier to developing digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation. Participant 1 stated

> Barriers are all in how an individual perceives their situation. I think some of the
> perceived barriers during the talent development program were really around their
> ability to do the stretch assignments because the company was taking an
> employee from one role and really kind of telling them, you're going to do three
> roles.

Another barrier was a lack of opportunities to practice new skills. Participant 7 stated "the lack of practice opportunities and lack of direction makes me feel like what should I

be doing?" Participants also discussed how the shift from in-person to virtual training was a barrier to career development. Participant 6 expressed "the lack of face-to-face interactions makes it harder to learn new systems." Prior studies indicated that talent development is an intentional process and structured practice (Dalal & Akdere, 2018; Heydayati & Li, 2016) that is influenced by organizational needs, policies, and strategic priorities (Chaudhuri et al., 2018; Oseghale et al., 2018).

Career Development

The participants discussed the importance of exploring resources both internally within the organization and externally to develop their career development. Participant 4 stated

> The company has done a lot to improve talent management programs on the digital side. For instance, to improve digital skills in communication, such as communicating digitally – training has migrated to a digital platform that enables employees to access training on-demand. The platform that we use allows for personalized courses offered digitally to employees. The learning path is customized courses specific to their work and job duties.

Participant 8 stated "we had an extensive resource library of training, which was helpful to review after training sessions and a mentor to provide advice and feedback." This finding connected to the activities that support talent development, such as training, coaching, mentoring, and targeted initiatives for skill development (see Hedayati & Li, 2016; Rezaei & Beyerlein, 2018).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Triangulation was used as a strategy to increase trustworthiness and validity. Multiple strategies were used to evaluate the data and establish credibility. Questionnaires, interviews, and member checks were used to evaluate the data. Member checks were performed on the data collected from the interviews to validate the interpretation of participants' experiences and perspectives. Credibility was established through the data collection process through prolonged engagement to build rapport and trust with the research participants.

To strengthen dependability and ensure consistency and internal validity, I used audit trails, which included notes about how the study was conducted. These records included data collection and data analysis processes and an explanation of the decisions that were made throughout the study and my self-reflection. To enhance transferability, which indicates external validity, I included 10 participants from three organizations. To establish confirmability, I engaged in the process of reflexivity throughout the study to identify and record personal biases, assumptions, and interpretations. Also, the interviews were transcribed, and each participant reviewed the collected data for accuracy. No participant changed their responses, and all participants confirmed the accuracy.

Results

Data collected from the questionnaires and interviews were reviewed. Additionally, the data were evaluated for outlying responses, and no discrepant cases were evident. The data was organized into codes, which resulted in three themes to address the research questions:

RQ1: What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ2: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

RQ3: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

Theme 1: Communication Is Essential During Digital Transformation

The research findings suggested that the digital skill of communication is essential and developed through practice when implementing an enterprise digital transformation. The digital skills of problem-solving and critical thinking were related to communication. All participants discussed the importance of problem-solving and critical thinking when communicating with their team, co-workers, clients, and leaders on projects. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 discussed how they developed problem-solving and critical thinking skills through their experiences in their talent development programs when they worked on cross-divisional assignments. However, communication was the key digital skill that all participants focused on during their interview. Participant 1 stated, "Communication as it relates to digital chats and virtual platforms is important." Participant 2 shared how communication was essential to develop, and knowing how to

do it virtually was critical to working virtually with peers and communicating with remote leaders the status of projects. Participant 7 discussed that communication from leaders in the form of feedback, coaching, and advice was an effective skill development activity.

Theme one emerged from the data used to explore Research Question one. The data reveals that communication is a key digital skill that participants experienced during digital transformation. Schwarzmüller et al. (2018) described digital communication skills as the ability to use various communication channels to virtually interconnect with colleagues, teams, partners, and other organizations. Participant 1 stated, "The company is providing digital tools that you have to use more regularly, so you need to know how to transfer verbal speech to chat, or a text type of conversation in a corporate environment." Participant 3 stated, "When the company was transitioning to new digital technologies, multiple layers of communication were important during our transition plan." Theme one supports research that suggests that communication is an essential skill when implementing new technologies (Solberg et al., 2020) and that communication skills enable employees to interact with others and their work environment (Colombo et al., 2019).

Theme 2: Opportunities to Practice Skills Is an Effective Skill Development Activity

The research participants perceived opportunities to practice skills as the most effective skill development activity to improve their digital skills during a digital transformation. Participant 5 discussed that the organization provided training and resources to help her and her team practice on the new platforms to get hands-on

experience. Participant 7 stated, "I had the opportunity to practice communication skills that I needed to support my employees. I practiced with a coach, and the feedback was helpful." Participant 9 discussed the difficulty of trying to learn new technical systems and how the online training was helpful to get hands-on experience working directly with products, software, and technology. Participant 6 expressed, "Sometimes, it's hard trying to learn something new, so it's nice to have the practice tools."

The data helped answer Research Question two to suggest that practice is an effective skill development activity to improve digital skills. Many of the participants discussed skill development as it related to building their digital communication skills, but there was also a focus on skill development using the new digital technologies implemented by their organizations. Having opportunities to practice using the new platforms, software, and tools that impacted their work was significant to skill development and acceptance of the new technologies. This aligns with research conducted by Cichosz et al. (2020), who found that the success factors of a digital transformation were connected to employee training and technology acceptance.

Theme 3: Employees Should Seek Resources to Advance Their Careers

The participants perceived career development as a self-directed process where the employee should seek resources both internally and externally to develop the digital skills needed for career advancement. Participant 4 stated:

> You need to be open to learning new things, but also, you need to have a strategy.
> You should focus on [the] top skills that you use regularly. And take courses that

improve your depth of knowledge and develop skill sets in areas most needed for your profession.

Participant 3 stated:

If you're not in technology or not supporting that initiative, then maybe your development opportunities are different. We have a personal responsibility to our own development. I think there are so many different avenues that we can go to get that development.

Participant 3 further stated:

I think it's opening up the world even more because of the technology that we have and the world dynamics that we have today. So, I see we've got a much bigger playing field to work within to find the opportunity. And I believe that we're only limited by our perspective of that world.

The research data answer Research Question three. The findings suggest that a major barrier to digital skill development for career advancement is based on the perception of the employee. Participants described how if an employee feels that learning the new technology is too challenging, it presents the most significant barrier that they must overcome. Employee acceptance of the new technology is a major organizational barrier during transformation projects (Cichosz et al., 2020; Correani et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Solberg et al., 2020). Many participants believed that employees must seek out resources within the organization and externally to develop the digital skills needed to advance their own careers.

Summary

Chapter 4 presented an extensive review of the research findings. The study included 10 participants from three organizations. The data was collected using questionnaires and surveys. Once the participants confirmed the accuracy of their responses, the data was coded, then organized into themes. Three themes emerged to answer the research questions.

RQ1: What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization? Communication is an essential skill, and its development is ongoing during a digital transformation. Communication is needed to interact with organizational members, collaborate on business initiatives, and provide project statuses. Problem-solving and critical thinking are connected to communication because these skills are needed to work through business initiatives and projects. The participants' experiences of developing these skills were through stretch assignments, cross-functional projects, and organizational tools that enabled opportunities for practice.

RQ2: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization? The opportunity to practice digital skills is an effective skill development activity because it enables hands-on experience. It is also beneficial to receive feedback from a coach or mentor during practice activities.

RQ3: What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization? Employees are their biggest barrier and should seek resources inside and outside their company to advance their careers. Chapter five discusses the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations. In the next chapter, the implications and potential social change impact will be described.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand the talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. This study was conducted to increase awareness of talent development practices that may be used to build the digital skills that employees need to support enterprise digital transformation. There were three key findings from the study. The first finding was that communication is an essential digital skill during a digital transformation that is developed by performing work tasks such as cross-divisional projects and assignments in a remote work environment. The second finding was that the opportunity to practice digital skills is an effective skill development activity because it enables hands-on experience. It is also beneficial to receive feedback from a coach or mentor during practice activities. The third finding indicated that employees are their biggest barrier and should seek resources inside and outside their company to advance their careers.

Interpretation of the Findings

Three findings emerged from the research data to help answer the research questions. This section includes an interpretation of the findings related to the three themes that emerged.

Finding 1: Communication Is Developed by Performing Work Tasks Such as Cross-Divisional Projects and Assignments in a Remote Work Environment

The findings suggested that the digital skill of communication is essential and developed through work tasks that contribute to the business outcomes of an organization. The ability to communicate virtually on assignments and projects with leaders, coworkers, and clients is essential in a remote work environment. Employees build the digital skill of communication by performing work assignments that enable them to practice presenting and distributing information virtually. Also, communication is developed through working with a coach or mentor who can give the employee feedback and advice. In addition, the digital skills of problem-solving and critical thinking were related to communication. These digital skills are developed as employees build their communication skills. For example, when employees collaborate on projects and communicate with colleagues and leaders, they must also research business challenges and explore solutions, which builds problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Prior studies revealed the digital skills employees need for a successful digital transformation, such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking; however, the literature did not indicate how the identified digital skills are assessed and developed to potentiate an environment for digital business (Cardenaas-Navia & FitzGerald, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019). Kavanaugh (2019) suggested that organizations should cultivate a digital culture of continuous learning by offering training activities such as digital campuses, boot camps, and hackathons to develop the digital skills of employees needed

for digital transformation. The findings of the current study indicated that training activities that allow employees to work through business assignments and projects that contribute to organizational outcomes are an effective method for building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and communication. This study extended the knowledge needed in talent development to assess digital skills and the process of developing digital competencies in an era of digital transformation.

Finding 2: Opportunity to Practice Skills Is an Effective Skill Development Activity

The second finding indicated that the opportunity to practice digital skills is an effective skill development activity because it enables hands-on experience. It is also beneficial to receive feedback from a coach or mentor during practice activities. This finding addressed the gap in what scholars have identified as digital skills required in a digital transformation and the process of talent development of employees during a digital transformation (Cardenaas-Navia & Fitzgerald, 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Sousa & Wilks, 2018; Van Laar et al., 2019). Adapting to new technologies requires a workforce culture of learnability and innovative methods of skill development (Ra et al., 2019). The current study revealed that when organizations implement new digital platforms, software, and technologies, employees need opportunities to practice their digital skills to obtain hands-on experience. Adapting to new technologies requires a workforce culture of learnability and innovative methods of skill development (Ra et al., 2019); having opportunities to practice using the new digital tools that impact an employee's work is significant to skill development and acceptance of the new technologies. This aligns with research conducted by Cichosz et al. (2020) who found

that the success factors of a digital transformation were connected to employee training and technology acceptance.

Finding 3: Employees Should Take Ownership of Their Development and Seek Resources to Advance Their Careers

The third finding suggested that employees are their own biggest barrier and should seek resources inside and outside of their company to advance their careers. The findings implied that a major barrier to digital skill development for career advancement is based on the perception of the employee. For some employees, learning new technology and adapting to new technological systems and processes can be challenging. Employee acceptance of the new technology is a major organizational barrier during transformation projects (Cichosz et al., 2020; Correani et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2020; Solberg et al., 2020). The current findings revealed that to overcome this challenge, employees should seek resources within their organizations, such as learning management systems and content management systems that include a library of training resources to practice and develop their skills. In addition, employees should explore resources outside of their organization, such as online blogs, articles, communities, and professional networks, to develop their digital skills. This finding extended the research that is needed in talent development to assess digital skills and the process of developing digital competencies during a digital transformation. It also supported the research that indicated that digital transformation is more about people than technology (Frankiewicz & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020).

The RBV was the conceptual framework for this study because it was essential to look at talent and technology as strategic resources that enable digital transformation. Considering the perspectives of RBV and dynamic capabilities, talent and technology are valuable resources and a major source of competitive advantage (Hoffer & Schendel, 1978; Wernerfelt, 1984). This conceptual framework was relevant to the research problem and addressed the research questions. The findings from the current study supported the rationale for using this conceptual foundation; therefore, it is necessary to link employees and digital skill development to value especially during times of digital transformation. Employee acceptance of the new technology and the ability to learn and practice new digital skills such as communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking contribute to the value and sustainability of an organization.

Limitations of the Study

There were two limitations in this study. The first limitation was the sample size. Due to the small sample size, the findings may not be generalized to include talent development strategies useful to other organizations because the data collected may be unique to participants in the study. The second limitation was that the target population and number of participants might limit transferability, and the research findings may not be generalized to other contexts. However, the small sample size was significant for the collection of in-depth, rich experiences. I engaged in prolonged contact during the data collection process, which resulted in richer and thicker data and a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. This helped to build credibility and transferability. To strengthen transferability, I purposefully selected a diverse sample of participants to

enhance generalizability to similar contexts. This qualitative multiple case study was conducted to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization.

Recommendations

Future research on talent development during a digital transformation could address the findings and limitations of this study. I used a qualitative multiple case study design to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. Data analysis revealed three findings and two limitations. The following recommendations suggest how researchers could further investigate the findings and address the limitations of this study.

First, research showed that communication is a critical digital skill needed during a digital transformation (Cardenaas-Navia & FitzGerald, 2019; Dean & East, 2019; Van Laar et al., 2019), and talent management practices must be implemented to develop the employee skills that support digital technologies and transformation (Guinan et al., 2019). Research also showed that the digital skill of communication is multifaceted and that self-directed learning contributes to higher levels of collaboration and problem-solving digital skills (Van Laar et al., 2019). This research studied employees; however, 80% of the participants were leaders who managed a team of employees, which was not

considered for this study. Future research could include a qualitative approach to explore skill development activities to develop the various levels of communication among leaders during digital transformation.

Second, talent development, talent management, and digital transformation are often studied from a qualitative perspective. Future research from a quantitative approach would enable a larger study population and a broader view of the topics. Future research could address the impact on business outcomes from the implementation of a talent development strategy to develop the digital skills of employees during a digital transformation.

Lastly, research on talent development during a digital transformation has often addressed the digital skills employees need from the perspectives of digital transformation experts (Mihalcea, 2017; Schwarzmüller et al., 2018). Ivancic et al. (2019) explained that employees and talent development human resource processes are key dimensions of the digital transformation strategy. Future research could address the perspectives of human resource management professionals on the development of digital skills during a digital transformation. More studies are needed that link human resource management to business outcomes (Delery & Roumpi, 2017).

Implications

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand the talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the

organization. The results of this study might increase awareness of talent development practices that may be used to promote the digital skills that employees need to support enterprise digital transformation. Organizational leaders may be encouraged by the findings to implement skill development activities as a part of their digital transformation strategy. Additionally, this study has implications for positive social change at the organizational level and individual levels.

This study revealed that employees could be their own biggest barrier when learning new digital platforms and technological processes. Therefore, at the organizational level, human resource management and talent development practitioners may use the results of this study to improve practices to overcome barriers to developing the digital skills of employees. In addition, I found that the opportunity to practice new skills was an effective skill development activity. The results of this study may influence talent management strategies that might positively impact talent retention, knowledge transfer, and training initiatives before and during a digital transformation.

At the individual level, there are positive outcomes when organizations invest in talent development to improve the skill set of their employees. Research indicated that investing in the development of employees results in a more engaged and motivated workforce and a more positive leadership culture (Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017). Employees may experience organizational purpose and meaningful work, and organizations may experience talent retention and commitment (Khoreva et al., 2017; Letchmiah & Thomas, 2017), which may enhance the well-being of employees and the organization.

Conclusion

This qualitative study addressed the experiences of employees in a talent development program to understand the talent development practices of building the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking of employees during the implementation of new digital technologies in the organization. The research findings revealed that (a) communication is developed by performing work tasks such as cross-divisional projects and assignments in a remote work environment, (b) opportunity to practice skills is an effective skill development activity, and (c) employees should take ownership of their development and seek resources to advance their careers. Future research could focus on a qualitative approach to explore skill development activities to develop the levels of communication among leaders during a digital transformation or a quantitative approach to examine the impact of a talent development strategy to develop the digital skills of employees during a digital transformation. In addition, future research could address the perspectives of human resource management professionals on the development of digital skills during a digital transformation. The current study showed that talent development is a valuable tool for employees and organizations. More studies are needed to better understand the scope of talent development and to link human resource management to organizational outcomes.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Before the Interview Session:

1. The individuals who agree to participate in the study, the interviewer will confirm a virtual meeting date with the participant. An Outlook meeting request with the interview date, time, and meeting link will be sent. The participant will receive a reminder email one day before the scheduled meeting.

2. In the meeting request, the participant will receive a link to answer demographic questions online through the Qualtrics platform. The online questionnaire should be completed prior to the virtual interview. The information in the online questionnaire will include place of employment, gender, job position, and years of experience. Also, the interviewer will obtain general information about their organization's digital transformation projects during the time of participating in the talent development program. This will include identifying digital technologies implemented during their participation in the talent development program and the length of time of their talent development program.

Day of the Interview Session:

Greet the participant and thank them for agreeing to the interview.

The interviewer will remind them of the research topic and the

interviewing process. In addition, the participant will be reminded that the

interview will be recorded. During this time, the interviewer will ask the

participant if they have any questions or concerns. After all questions and concerns are addressed, the interview will proceed.

Record Interview Logistics

Date and Time:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Start the Interview Session:

Interview Questions:

RQ1. What are the experiences of employees in a talent development program in different industries on developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving and critical thinking during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

IQ1: Please describe your experience of developing your digital skills in a talent development program during a time of digital transformation within your organization.

IQ2: While participating in the talent development program, what was your experience in developing the digital skills of communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking to support the digital transformation?

RQ2. What do employees in a talent development program perceive as effective skill development activities to improve digital skills during a time of digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

IQ3: While participating in the talent development program, which skill development activities did you find most effective in improving your digital skills during the digital transformation?

IQ4: Why were these skill development activities most effective?

RQ3. What do employees in a talent development program perceive as barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation of new digital technologies within an organization?

IQ5: What were the barriers to developing the digital skills needed for career advancement during a digital transformation?

IQ6: What activities or practices can be developed or implemented to help alleviate these barriers?

After the Interview Session:

The interviewer will ask if the participant has any additional comments and will record the comments. Also, the participant will be asked if there are any further questions; if so, the questions will be answered. The interviewer will let the participant know that they will be sent a draft of the transcript to review within three days. If the participant has questions about the transcript, the interviewer will schedule a follow-up meeting to review and clarify the information. Once the transcript is revised, the interviewer will resend it for the participant to review and approve. The interviewer will thank them for participating and remind them of their anonymity.

Appendix B: Demographic Questionnaire

Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Male ☐ Female ☐

Place of employment: Click or tap here to enter text.

Job title: Click or tap here to enter text.

Years of professional experience: Click or tap here to enter text.

When did you participant in your organization's talent development program?

- Dates of the program: Click or tap here to enter text.

- How long was the program? (days, years, or months) Click or tap here to enter text.

Which digital technologies did your organization implement while you were participating in the talent development program? (Examples may include online communication platforms, cloud software, mobile applications, etc.):

Click or tap here to enter text.