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Sharing Strategies Between Higher Education Administrators and Their Information Technology Leaders

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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LaRita Brewster

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

Sharing Strategies Between Higher Education Administrators and Their Information
Technology Leaders

by

LaRita Brewster

MS, Western Governors, 2017

BS, Faulkner University, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2023

Abstract

Some senior administrators in higher education institutions lack strategies to share leadership decision-making with their information technology (IT) leaders in the quest to sustain and improve organizational performance, which is often of concern to leverage technology and improve organizational performance. Grounded in the Bolman and Deal four-frame model of leadership, the purpose of this qualitative, multiple-case study was to explore strategies used at four higher education institutions by four IT leaders and four senior administrators, to improve organizational performance in Alabama. The participants were four higher education senior administrators and four IT leaders in Alabaman higher educational institutions. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and a review of organizational documents. Four themes emerged from the thematic analysis: effective communication, organizational structural transformation, elimination of resistance to change, and cultural change. A key recommendation is for higher education senior administrators and IT leaders to implement a system of effective communication among senior administrators and technology units and to practice shared governance. The implications for positive social change include the potential for senior administrators and IT leaders in higher education to align systems to help build a culture of shared leadership that supports services for all stakeholders in higher education in their communities.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mother, Eunice Caver Parker, and my siblings, who all contributed to raising me to become the woman I am today. Their dedication to seeing me become a productive adult sparked my motivation to pursue a higher education degree and to my two exceptional children, Dameia and Damarious Brewster. They showed me constant love and support throughout this journey.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In the past, a leader was usually considered as an individual with the power, qualities, and position to influence people toward a specific aim or objective. This long-held belief; however, that belief has been altered in the contemporary settings of 2024. The demands on leadership are currently so high that heroic leadership is no longer able to meet them (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Organizations are confronted with rapidly shifting trends and tumultuous terrains. Ruoslahti and Trent (2020), noted that with the globalization of business, it is becoming clearer that an institution's success depends on having a strong executive team in place. There is a growing interest in leadership styles, wherein the emphasis is on sharing and distributing leadership responsibilities among a diverse group of people. The concept of shared leadership is one of them. To be successful in the contemporary and fast-paced business world of 2023, an organization must demonstrate agility and adaptability to negotiate operational challenges and uncertainty.

Background of the Problem

Shared leadership is defined as moving away from the leader-follower binary relationship, including different leaders throughout the organization; fostering shared leadership among multiple perspectives allows organizations to flourish (Zhu et al., 2018). Shared governance and leadership distribution in educational institutions are often based on academic performance and the needs of the organization. Shared leadership implies that there are a significant number of individuals within the organization with recognized expertise. Pooling this knowledge serves for the consideration of multiple

points of view rather than a singular one, in addressing and negotiating challenges the organization is confronted with. Employing this type of leadership allows education and information technology leaders to discuss and collaborate constantly.

Higher education leaders in the contemporary environment of 2023, face new challenges in a racial environment with sharp tensions and negative interactions. The need for new instructional models and technologies as well as changing population demographics call for greater leader effectiveness. Shared leadership consistently emerges as a critical feature for educational institutions to use to adapt to challenges and evolve (Linn, 2008). With significant changes in higher education now taking place, leadership skills are becoming more important for institutions. It is a growing concern that traditional leadership approaches in the educational field are ineffective in the current times.

Problem and Purpose

A primary cause of failed collaboration between higher education institutions and information technology leadership is the absence of shared strategies (Nordbäck & Espinosa, 2019, pp. 321–350). From a technological perspective, a lack of shared leadership in higher education institutions is responsible for a 20% reduction in productivity and efficiency within the organization (Schultz, 2017, pp. 41–50). The general business problem connotes that higher education institutions face performance inefficiencies due to ineffective shared leadership collaboration, resulting in decreased productivity. The specific business problem determined, was that some senior

administrators and IT leaders in higher education institutions lack strategies to share decision-making within their organizations', in the efforts of to improve organizational performance.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by higher education leaders to share leadership decisions between with administrative and information technology leaders to improve organizational performance. The targeted population consisted of four senior administrators and four information technology leaders in higher educational institutions in Alabama. These institutions have successfully used shared leadership approaches to advantageously leverage technology and improve organizational performance. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change as the invocation and application of the knowledge from it may be valuable to leadership in implementing strategies of collaboration in enhance the decision-making policies and improve. Successful leadership strategies could contribute to improving student success outcomes and increasing student skills.

Nature of the Study

Researchers may choose to use a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-method research methodology (Yin, 2015). I used the qualitative methodology in this study. The qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because the qualitative methodology entails focusing on developing a detailed understanding of human perceptions and experiences (see Cottrell & Donaldson, 2013). In contrast, a quantitative study is

primarily limited to examining the relationship between variable and characteristics therein (Hesse-Biber, 2018; Yin, 2015). The mixed-method approach was inappropriate for this study because it involves the concomitant use of qualitative and quantitative methods, however, would entail the complexities of analyzing different forms of data, higher costs in undertaking the research and the elongation of timelines to complete the study. The mixed-method approach necessitates combining qualitative exploration with statistical analysis of numerical data analysis; however, in this study I sought to gather qualitative data from human insights into behaviors, culture, and leadership strategies.

The important qualitative research designs include (a) case study, (b) phenomenology, and (c) ethnography. I used the case study design in this study. The case study design can be used to develop findings, identify themes, and support recommendations (Saunders, 2021, pp. 1–3). Using the case study design is conducive for the researcher to create and focus on understanding the operational dynamics of an organization in respect of contemporary realities (Northouse, 2018). Using a case study design, researchers can offer valuable information on exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive phenomena by comparing target populations (Yin, 2018). I chose a multiple case study design to increase the strength of the findings rather than use of a single case design. Yin (2015), using a single case study is better suited when the researcher wants to study a person or group. I did not select a phenomenological design because it is used to analyze the meanings ascribed, from the lived experiences of those innately associated with a phenomenon (see Saunders, 2021, pp. 1–3). The ethnographic design is employed when researchers are able to collect data through immersion in proximal settings to

phenomena in an individual culture of one or more groups (Saunders, 2021, pp. 1–3). Neither the phenomenological nor ethnographic designs were suitable for this study because the purpose was to explore the strategies that leaders use to decide on implementing shared leadership, not a specific cultural experience or personal experiences.

Research Question

What strategies do senior higher education leaders use to share leadership decision making with information technology leaders to improve organizational performance?

Interview Questions

1. What specific strategies do you use to implement shared leadership with your organization's information technology leaders?
2. What strategies have you found effective?
3. What leadership style has been effective for improving shared leadership with information technology leaders in the organization?
4. What collaboration method(s) did you find serve to improve shared leadership with the institutions information technology leaders?
5. How do higher education leaders involve information technology leaders to make technological decisions?

6. What else can you share with me about your organization's strategies for improving shared leadership strategies?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study was based on the Bolman and Deal's four-frame model. In this model, Bolman and Deal (1991) developed four viewpoints for understanding organizations and leadership: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Bolman and Deal's four-frame model is a task-based system model that connotes focusing on tangible goals, roles and responsibilities, and reporting achieved objectives and timelines. Bolman and Deal identified structural leadership as addressing fundamental concepts of developing effective results in (a) information technology, (b) organizational change, (c) shared leadership performance, and (d) empowerment. As applied to this study, the concept of shared leadership performance served to understand organizational change, in the value of building a partnership between senior administrators and information technology leaders focusing on shared leadership strategies, organizational change, and productivity while creating systems to increase organizational performance. The lens of the Bolman and Deal model also served to identify the formulation and implementation of strategy to catalyze leadership synergy between higher education leaders and their informational leadership teams.

Operational Definitions

Shared leadership: The act of leveraging the importance of leaders throughout the organization, not only those who hold office, and creating an infrastructure to benefit from multiple leadership (Zhu et al., 2018).

Leadership distribution: A type of leadership primarily concerned not with specific leadership roles or responsibilities but with leadership practice. It equates to a practice of joint, collective, and extended leadership that strengthens the ability to transform and develop (Hatcher, 2005).

Organizational culture: Linn (2008), organizational culture is not tangible, but it encompasses a wide range of assumptions, emotions, and values. Sabir (2021) defined organizational culture as a shared collection of values and beliefs that affect how people view, think, and act.

Innovation: A primary, new technological process, product, or service or a significant novel revision of the existing process.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations reflect the details on the parameters and scope of a study. Assumptions are structures that researchers conclude are correct but cannot disprove or prove (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). Limitations are constraints over which the researcher has little influence or control (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The researcher denotes the delimitations to define the limits within which the study will be undertaken (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Sutton and Austin (2015) noted that

qualitative researchers generally begin their work by recognizing that the researcher's position has a significant impact on the fundamental research in which a study's complete transparency starts with the identification of a phenomenon, issue, and scope.

Assumptions

Marshall and Rossman (2016) defined assumptions as factual and accurate but that have yet to be confirmed. I made three main assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that participants in this study would have the expertise, previous skills, and experience necessary to implement shared leadership. Another assumption was that participants would be sincere when responding to questions since this study's accuracy relies on participants' truthfulness. I also assumed was that participants would impart their organization's expertise and experience with adequate comprehension of those procedures.

Limitations

Limitations are possible factors of a study that the researcher does not control. Geography, time, and circumstances in which an analysis is carried out provide specific considerations and restrictions (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, there were two limitations. The first limitation was a sample size of four colleges due to a limited budget and lack of sponsorship. The second limitation regarding this study was identifying the success of shared leadership among top administrators of historically Black colleges and universities versus predominantly White colleges and universities.

Delimitations

Delimitations apply to the limits a researcher has set to justify the declaration of the issue (Cypress, 2017). There were two delimitations to this study. The first delimitation was that only historically Black colleges and universities were used as study sites. The second delimitation was that all four institutions are located in the state of Alabama.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Shared leadership is one of the most critical aspects of the organizational model for many organizations. Employees who desire to accept more responsibility in their job abilities can improve productivity within their organizations (Saunders, 2021, pp. 1–3). It is believed that a shared team concept, when applied to organizational leadership, will likely become the key to their effectiveness (Carson et al., 2020). The results of this study may contribute to improving higher education administrators' collaborative communication with information technology leadership to catalyze productivity throughout their organizations.

Implications for Social Change

New and improved strategies for information sharing and collaboration could lead to positive social change. The invocation and application of the knowledge and findings of this study may serve to improve existing shared leadership platforms and the general social transformation of organizational performance. The knowledge and results can also

if used, can be useful to facilitate positive social change, as the outcomes from the success of collaborative leadership management translates into empowerment of the community of students in institutions and their academic and professional success.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore shared leadership strategies higher education administrators and technology leaders use to develop collaboration skills to improve organizational performance. My goal in this literature review was to gain an in-depth understanding of the research topic by conducting an extensive academic review literature review of the main topics of effectiveness of shared leadership, organizational change, information technology, and leadership distribution. This literature review also includes an analysis of topics related to how leaders in higher education institutions use strategies to implement shared leadership practices.

To source pertinent literature for this review, I searched the following databases and search engines accessed through the Walden University Library: Widley, EBSCOhost, ProQuest Central, ERIC, Emerald Insight, Sage, Science Direct, and Google Scholar. The literature search process yielded a mixture of qualitative and quantitative peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and government websites. Table 1 displays information about the sources included in the literature review.

Table 1*Summary of Sources in Literature Review*

Title	≤ 5 years	$\geq \pm 5$ years	Total	Percentage
Books	2	0	2	2%
Government	1	0	1	1%
Peer reviewed	81	31	112	97%
Total	84	31	115	

I began the literature review with an exploration of Bolman and Deal's four-frame model before moving on to discussions of the foundation of shared leadership, shared leadership characteristics, impact of technology on leadership, leadership cultural dynamics, leadership performance management supported with empirical evidence of performance, and the characteristic of shared leadership related to technology leaders.

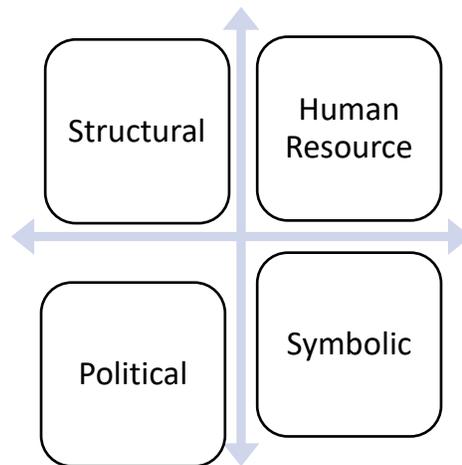
Four-Frame Model

I used Bolman and Deal's four-frame model as the conceptual framework for this study. In this model, Bolman and Deal (1991) developed four viewpoints for understanding organizations and leadership: structural, human resource, political and symbolic. Bolman and Deal's model concentrates on change, such as position title and rank changes, most of which occur in a task-based system (Wilson & Sy, 2021). The model focuses on tangible goals, roles and responsibilities, and reporting with achieved objectives and timelines (Bolman & Deal, 1991). With the model, Bolman and Deal also

identified the framework being composed of the fundamental concepts for developing effective leadership: the symbolic, human resource, structural, and political (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Bolman and Deal's Four-Frame Model



Note. Adapted from Bolman and Deal (1991), this figure as applied to this study shows the linkage in understanding organizations and shared leadership. The elements are self-explanatory and mutually exclusive. Each cell is independent of the other.

Fleming-May and Douglass (2014) noted, the structural frame of Bolman and Deal relates to how organizations govern themselves. This point of view is measurable because it gives an impersonal accounting of organizational assets, such as human capital, skill levels, capital, goals, and standard operating procedures.

Bolman and Deal (1991) based their framework on two tensions: how work is allocated and how those assignments operate together to achieve the organization's goals.

As applied to this study, shared leadership strategies can support organizational change by building a partnership between top administrators and information technology leaders that focuses on shared leadership strategies, organizational change, and productivity while creating systems to increase organizational performance. Johnson and Sobczak (2021) stated that the four-frame model perspective claims that organizational leaders should leverage four different vantage points while handling issues or opportunities. These frameworks can be utilized in individual, group, and organizational decision-making processes (Goksoy, 2016). In the model, Bolman and Deal, it may be inferred that the capacity to utilize these frames fluently leads to higher success, and the normal use of a frame alone will not be beneficial. The frames enable an individual to reflect on the behaviors required to lead through complex, uncertain, and ambiguous times (Goksoy, 2016). The human resource frame, referred to as the first frame, is about helping people connect and giving them the tools to accomplish their business (Reitz, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006). This frame aligns with research, training, and development on leadership that stresses the importance of relational approaches (Reitz, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006). The structural frame is the second frame, and it relates to the processes, policies, tasks, and getting the work done. People must be aware of their function, how work is done, and who has authority (Bolman & Deal, 2017). The third framework, political, concerns navigation systems and resource negotiations. This frame may connote that the framers of the model acknowledge the requirements of an organization or department, identifies potentially similar or conflicting areas strategically, and promotes and supports measures. The symbolic framework is the fourth and final frame. Storytelling is a typical

way of bringing people together, helping them to view a common goal, and inspiring them to move ahead. Symbolic frame leaders lead by instance (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Bolman and Deal have suggested, the ability to engage all four frames while in a leadership position is important for developing into a more successful leader capable of meeting today's issues; however, each person tends to utilize a specific default frame more often than anything else. An example: Individuals will lean more heavily on the human resources frame, limiting their ability to utilize negotiating and persuasive skills (i.e., the political frame). Rather than rely on a single frame, a leader should use a number of frames to boost their performance when faced with complicated and challenging circumstances.

Foundation of Shared Leadership

In the history of management thought and practices, researchers have often placed a premium on insights into what organizational leadership can do to effectuate desirable performance outcomes for both employees and leaders; therefore, leadership is seemingly a prominent factor in organizational management (Hunter et al., 2018). Other researchers have also identified a range of aspects of leadership theories and concepts that motivate employee creativity and improve productivity (Hunter et al., 2018). What is evident in this research is that the focus is on leadership from individuals in formal leadership positions (i.e., managers, team leaders, and supervisors). The focus on leadership may be unsurprising in that this is the kind of leadership that readily comes to mind. Farh et al. (2007) noted that leadership researchers have also indicated that teams may often lead

themselves independent of the hierarchical leadership they receive. Teams may engage in shared leadership, defined as an interactive influence process that dynamically transfers team members' leadership functions. Shared leadership theory suggests that team members themselves can also display the behaviors that are typically associated with individuals in formal leadership positions, with different members displaying different leadership behaviors, as the situation demands (Farh et al., 2007; Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020).

According to finding presented in several shared leadership studies, shared and vertical leadership from individuals in official leadership positions can coexist and independently affect team processes and performance (Sinha et al., 2021). A focus on shared leadership is not to argue against the influence of vertical leadership; instead, it is worth developing to complement the dominant emphasis on vertical leadership. In this study, I believed that initiating a shared leadership perspective is particularly worthwhile towards the organizational development of the shared leadership model, which completes the traditional vertical leadership model strictly based on the hierarchical model (see Sinha et al., 2021; Spreitzer, 1995). An additional value of shared leadership is that the structure creates favorable conditions for strategic management that, in essence, refers to the process of a team's (in the case of this study, higher education units) self-direction. Shared leadership's theoretical development perspective is drawn from psychological empowerment theory (Klasmeier & Rowold, 2020). Shared leadership theory espouses that self-direction gives meaning to work. In this context, giving meaning to work is defined as a fit between the work requirement's role and the leader's personal values;

therefore, shared leadership has a positive relationship to the psychological state of team empowerment because it can serve as a motivating factor.

Van Knippenberg (2019) concluded that adopting the concept of shared leadership in an organization (public or private) can be perceived as a key driver of creativity, strategic thinking, experiencing the meaning of work, and motivation in pursuit of high-quality work outcomes; however, in leadership management, there will often be individual differences in the extent to which shared leadership instills a sense of meaning to work. The more individuals value self-direction at work, the more shared leadership imbues the work with meaning and thus inspires creativity (Farh et al., 2007). Implementing shared leadership, a shared team process, may affect individual team members differently. The analysis led the researchers to develop the model to further include the moderating role of power distance, defined as a personal value reflecting the extent to which hierarchy and deference to authority are seen as appropriate and desirable. Dorfman and Howell (1988) measured a six-item scale for the study of power distance value in Taiwan (Rinuastuti et al., 2014). A sample item is: “Employees should not disagree with management decisions” (p. 3). Below is a brief analysis of the components of shared leadership.

Creativity (Strategic Thinking)

An assessment of creativity using Baer and Oldham’s (2006) four-item scale that was derived from Zhou and George (2001) and based on the consensually shared

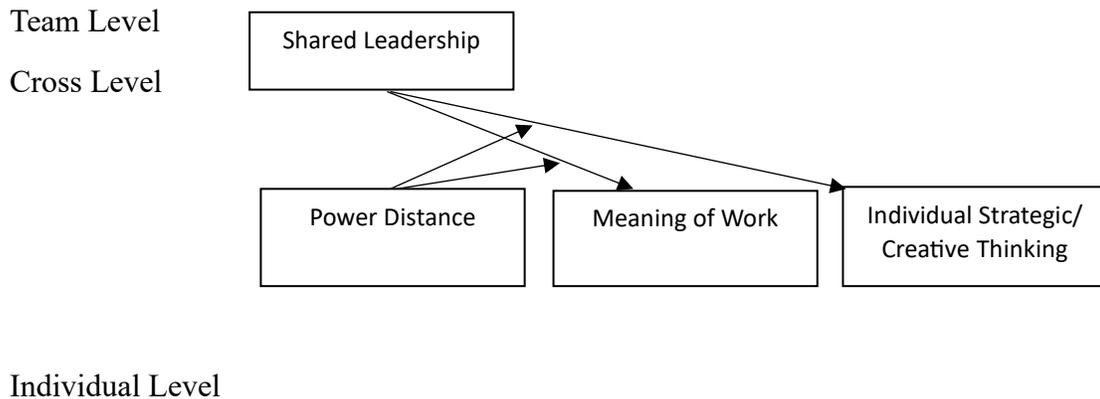
definition in the field of creativity as the generation of novel and useful outcomes. A sample item is “suggests new ways of performing work tasks.”

Meaning of Work

Farh et al. (2007) measured the meaning of work using a three-item scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). A sample item is: “The work I do is meaningful to me.”

Control Variables

Farh et al. (2007) constructed control variables for participant age as 1 = under 25 years, 2 = 25–29 years, 3 = 30–34 years, 4 = 35–39 years, and 5 = more than 40 years and education level as 1 = high school, 2 = technical college, 3 = bachelor’s degree, 4 = master’s degree, and 5 = doctoral degree. These control variables were selected established because age and education may reflect work relevant experience and expertise.

Figure 2*Cross-Level Influence of Shared Leadership*

Note. Adapted from (Liang et al., 2020).

The authors collected data from 34 companies in the south of China to validate the variables in the model on cross-level shared leadership. Farh et al.'s (2007) statistical testing was based on a set of six predetermined hypotheses along with the chosen moderating variable of power distance. The six predetermined hypotheses were:

Hypothesis 1: Shared leadership is positively related to individual creativity.

Hypothesis 2: Shared leadership is positively related to the meaning of work.

Hypothesis 3: Meaning of work mediates the relationship of shared leadership and individual creativity.

Hypothesis 4: Power distance acts as a moderator in the link between shared leadership and individual creativity; at a high level of power distance, shared

leadership has a curved, decreasingly positive relationship, but at a low level of power distance, it has a positive linear association.

Hypothesis 5: Power distance acts as a moderator in the link between shared leadership and the meaning of work; when power distance is significant, shared leadership has a curved, decreasingly positive relationship, but shared leadership has a positive linear relationship when power distance is low.

Hypothesis 6: Individual creativity is mediated by the interaction effects of shared leadership and power distance.

The data from the study indicated support of the six hypotheses, which speaks to the promise of the shared leadership perspective on all the variables in the model (see Figure 2). However, the authors warned that readers need caution not to claim the findings as merits of practical implications of the study. Still, shared leadership can be deliberately developed (Pearce & Conger, 2017). Higher education organizations may thus consider such a focus in the information technology unit or any team development efforts towards shared leadership (Acar et al., 2018). In further review of related literature, I explored studies of leadership projects and empirical research findings.

Sabir (2021) outlined the conceptual approach to leadership as being grounded in wholeness and well-being. Sabir concluded that leadership is also framed from the concept of emotion as inherent to the practice of leadership. Framed within findings from their research on well-being in schools and positive organizational scholarship, the

findings intentionally foregrounded virtues and positive human capacities as essential and vital to thriving for individuals' groups in organizations.

The authors reflected on the benefits and potentials of reorienting leadership toward the more life-giving qualities of work in higher education. They suggested that this generative reflection may counter the predominant stances of competition and scarcity mindsets that seem to pervade academia. Such a positive organizational stance toward leadership in higher education is timely given the increasing focus on encouraging well-being among administrators at all levels of the education system, especially in the proposed synergy between educational administrators and information technology experts in the current study (Liang et al., 2020).

Besides, leadership entails influencing others to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2018). Across various contexts and expressions of goals, formal leaders and managers influence their workplaces' emotional climate and wellbeing (Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017). Much has been written about leadership and emotion in the workplace, following on from Hochschild's (1983) seminal work on emotional labor. In education settings, the significance of emotions for leadership endeavors has been emphasized within higher education (Cherkowski et al., 2020). Furthermore, there has been broad interest in the psychological concept of emotional intelligence (EI) and its application to leadership and organizational studies (Lumby, 2018). The further argument is that emotions are necessary in understanding organizations, especially in leadership development and training (Sabir, 2021).

How emotions are embodied in personal practice of leadership is important because relationships are quite literally at the heart of education. The importance of emotions is as true for higher education as it is among other sectors of the workforce. Tanikawa and Jung (2018) stressed the need to improve working relationships through better intrapersonal and interpersonal skills between administrative leaders and faculty. The university setting is one where leaders' relationships with students, staff, and the wider educational environment often contend with a growing climate of management (Hutton, 2018).

Leaders in higher education are also often appointed with no or limited preparatory leadership training or professional development for their role mandates. These appointees are expected to learn on the job (Klaus & Steele, 2020). Ornstein and Nelson (2006) noted that emotional intelligence is predicted on the understanding that emotions act as a driving force for motivation and predict increased effectiveness in the workplace. The authors of this study have contended that leaders in higher education need to understand emotion, being self-aware, and interpreting social interactions should not just be seen as a competence but become an integral lens through which to view leadership.

Emotional intelligence can invariably contribute to success and promote wellbeing. Rosch and Priest (2017) noted that references to emotion are limited in educational administration leadership and literature. Framing emotion as inherent to the

practice of leadership are therefore frequently viewed in broad and encompassing terms, rather than separate from it, is critical in higher education.

From an exhaustive review of literature on leadership and wellbeing in schools (Cherkowski et al., 2020; Kutsyuruba & Walker, 2017), the inference drawn was that the benefits of paying attention to the role of emotions in leadership as a catalyst for cultivating conditions for flourishing in schools. They conclude that a sense of nourishing for leaders was related to positive emotions, which stemmed from belonging to a team of caring colleagues, enjoying the connections with colleagues at work, and a collaborative climate that fostered and supported innovation and risk-taking. All these experiences appeared balanced with negative emotions that often resulted from stress, challenges, frustrations, disappointment, and being overwhelmed (Anisya, 2021).

Central to the descriptions of flourishing in schools was the leader's important place, who helped create conditions for teachers to feel a sense of belonging, appreciation, affirmation of their contributions, and an awareness of these for others on the staff. It is also noted that work experiences were described from the perspective of professors in colleges and universities and are not generalizable across all educational work contexts. However, the case that these findings may affirm empirical research in positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship, where paying attention to the ways teachers experience positive relationships and emotions, meaning, achievement in work and life can lead to a sense of flourishing (Anisya, 2021; Spreitzer, 1995).

In the earlier foundation section of the review in the literature, I suggest that by capitalizing on the human desire for wellbeing at work, in higher education an individual can learn to attend to and craft one's work from a strengths-based, appreciative, and positive perspective, and that leadership plays a central role in creating conditions for this to happen more often. Dameri and Moggi (2019) argued that leaders in higher education should possess positive leadership attributes. In comparison, only modest considerations have been given to positive leadership and wellbeing in higher education thus far. Cherkowski et al. (2020) suggested that a recalibration or mind shift in our approaches to leadership in higher education would entail collaboration and the development of leaders of learning communities that are underpinned by academic rigor and humanity. These shifts offer new opportunities for engaging academics and university leaders in the creation of educational environments and relationships of wellbeing for sustainable instructional technology.

Information Technologist's Well-Being in Higher Education: Responding to Emotions

Higher education leadership is often situated within the realities of technology and innovation that are experienced as competitive, stressful, and challenging. Academic leaders have a major role in fulfilling within the administrative domain, including management of complex situations and stakeholders through effective planning, organizing, leading, and controlling (Bendermacher et al., 2017).

Berg and Seeber (2017) noted the growing sense of unwellness that they had recognized in themselves and the statistics among technologist/experts, as they described their idea and ideal of the stressed. Berg and Seeber (2017) named the persistent personal feeling of being unwell, overwhelmed, and exhausted at the seeming endlessness of technology work in a culture of educator's endless demands, hyper competition, and COVID-19 pandemic. The Information Technology manifesto may frequently convey what may be perceived as content which runs counter to neoliberal managerial policies and structures that they, along with others, believed had become the norm at universities worldwide. As technology leaders, many in academic have also experienced this sense of malaise, of never knowing if one were doing enough and knowing that there was always much, much more that could be done. In some instances, many in this domain have relied on defense mechanisms such as putting on masks, fear of competence, and stoically putting our heads down to pull the weight of the work and push through.

Adding to the stress and depletion in information technology work cultures in higher education is the seeming lack of collegiality and collaboration two aspects of IT work that can add richness and enjoyment, but that require time, attention, and relationships (Borr, 2019). As individuals work less and less together, they work less and well together. As more in IT maintain work routines that leave many feeling stressed out, overwhelmed, and on the edges of disease, the less is the tendency to seek out one another for contact, communication, or comfort. The danger often lies in becoming groups of individuals working alone and trying to do too much.

As the distance between personal desires for innovation and technology, including hard work and challenges with the exclusion of thinking times, planning times, and creating times and the increase of managerial drivers, isolated work patterns, and workplace dissonance grows, by finding personal wellbeing and steadily decreasing (Berg & Seeber, 2017). Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) suggested that the inconsistency between the work role demands and one's normative expectations for emotional labor negatively impacts wellbeing. Minimizing these emotional feelings in an IT work environment justifies shared leadership mentality advocates.

Final remarks on Leading with Emotions for Wholeness in Higher Education

As higher education leaders learn to notice and nurture flourishing in themselves and others, as part and function of their roles as leaders, and as a means of influencing their work cultures, there is a consequential turn to growth, improvement, and workplace engagement. Kawauchi et al. (2017) suggested that work engagement can be defined as a state of mind marked by vitality, dedication, and concentration in one's work. Similarly, Lai et al. (2020) noted, that engagement is a state of mind whereby faculty display behaviors consistent with the conversion of high energy into aspects of job performance (physical, cognitive, and emotional). Yawson (2019) and Lai et al. (2020) saw engagement as a situation where faculty and staff members display emotional connectedness with fellow employees. This engagement can be construed as a cognitive valiance and a high degree of passion for work that the following elements affect an employee's personal engagement: meaningfulness of work, psychological safety, and

psychological availability. Through engagement, leaders are able to inspire and guide others in an organization. Kawauchi et al. (2017) and Yawson (2019) viewed this as an essential trait of emotional intelligence. Higher education leadership positively influences, motivates, and directs others to achieve their full potential and thus meeting the institution's needs and situation or circumstance.

Rybnicek et al. (2019), described the work of paying attention to the emotional experiences at work as escaping. Borrowed from poetry roots, where the term referred to the invisible structures or essences of things. These authors referred to the essentiality of inferior experiences as integral to understanding exterior experiences, such as social innovations in organizations:

We define organizational escaping as the practice of surfacing the inner experiences of organizational members during the normal course of everyday work. By “inner experiences,” we don’t mean just emotions. We mean everything that makes up our inner lives: ideas and intuitions, aspirations and fears, values and memories. (p. 446)

As Rybnicek et al. (2019) suggested, escaping in an organization can infuse the system with life-giving energies and supports for a fully human experience, and this generativity leads to new thinking, new ways of connecting, and new ways of engaging together toward a common purpose by stating:

Work escaping brings energy and creativity to an organization. As people gain the freedom to express the hopes, fears, questions, and concerns that they have about

their work, the space for divergent thinking expands around them. What's more, because work in scaping fosters unusually frank relationships, people develop a nuanced and appreciative understanding of each other. (p. 453)

Escaping creates spaces for sharing inner experiences about what matters most to us and can cultivate exterior conditions for shifting toward new learning and innovation as the positive energies and diverse backgrounds and views combine toward new ways of thinking and being together, essentially toward transformation (Paddock, 2014; Rybnicek et al., 2019).

The extensive review for this research led to the assumption, that leaders in higher education have a role to play in the living ecosystem of the socially constructed workplaces of IT staff and administrators. The research indicated the emphasis of the human side of the sector and connoted, that the emotional dimension of humans being who they are must become a primary focus for those seeking to foster conditions for engagement in higher education (leaders). At the same time, there may be a propensity to privilege the mind and capacities of rationality and problem solving amidst the tremendous transformations and tensions in this education. The discourse in this paper may reflect, that attention to positivity, emotion, and engaging with others in ways that enliven a sense of belonging, appreciation, and meaningfulness at work is likely to account for our greatest prospects for nurturing and sustaining wellbeing and collective performance. This appreciation is especially pertinent in times of crises and

unprecedented change, which can bring about the worst of emotional labor resulting in stress, burnout, despair, depression, and decreased mental health in the workplace.

Power in Higher Education in Leadership

Many leaders in higher education have asserted a personal lack of power and that their actions are controlled by national policy, by those in the organization who hold authority over them by the resistance of those over whom they formally hold authority. Many views expressed and found in literature on leadership in higher education in the late 20th and early 21st centuries present a very different view: power is all too evident amongst leaders. Concepts of management, new public management, and performance in higher education cumulatively construct a negative view of leaders, primarily because, are usually viewed as inappropriately wielding power over academics and other workers (Phillips & Phillips, 2020). The use of power appears connected by some to the pursuit of self-interest or the interests of an in group in a narrative that reflects deplored power play: and may be realities of the real world. It may not be the world desired and utopia, nevertheless, a world that exists. Simply stated, wielding of power is counterproductive to the success of strategic plan implementation for the advancement of an institution.

The follow-up literature reviewed on the foundation of shared leadership reviewed, included studies in higher education, notably, Volume 44, No. 9, 2019. The article is titled “Leadership and power in higher education,” authored by Lumby (2018), who defined “Power” as an essential component of leadership, has many complex forms. Leaders’ orientation to power in an organization, especially when many disapprove of the

authoritarian misuse, renders its legitimacy questionable and ostensibly deficient (Lumby, 2018).

The analysis of literature revealed that leaders habitually use varying forms of power, even though this is denied or obscured by a range of strategies. The purpose of this positioning in relation to power is suggested to be not mere impression management but an adaptation that enables leaders to function effectively in an environment often hostile to leadership. Nevertheless, leaders and those responsible for their appointment and development need to encourage greater self-awareness so that ethical choices can be made about using power. Rational, psychodynamic, and political perspectives are suggested to be valuable tools to develop deeper reflection (Lumby, 2018).

Learned from a review of the work of Lumby (2018), is that power is omnipresent and essential to leadership practice, among other concepts. A better understanding of this complex phenomenon therefore would be advantageous to this study of shared leadership between educators and information technology professionals/experts among selected colleges and universities. The implication of the work of Lumby, is that this researcher ostensibly took a greater note of the identity tensions that leaders face in undertaking a leadership role and the pressure to obscure the use of power.

Shared Leadership Characteristics

Shared leadership is a management method in which a group of leaders or a single leader, with no monopoly on knowledge in resolving organizational issues, work together to make decisions together. It is likely that a group of technology or higher education

professionals will be in charge of making decisions for the company (Wei et al., 2016). The procedure will likely help the business avoid decisions that are either ambiguous or unpredictable (Carson et al., 2020).

Shared leadership is often therefore one of the most critical organizational model or transformation aspects for many organizations, including educational institutions. It is possible for employees who want to take on more responsibility for individual work performance to do so by embracing a shared leadership style. Organizational leadership is expected to benefit greatly from the implementation of a shared team model (Carson et al., 2020). Hutton (2018) noted, that given this current era of significant changes in higher education, there is also growing attention to understanding the leadership required to guide institutions successfully.

There is a growing concern that traditional approaches to leadership are ineffective among educational leaders. In the 1980s, researchers identified how Japanese companies outperformed firms from the United States (U.S.), because of their ability to innovate and change flexibly using quality management processes. For example, the management by objective concept (MBO) was introduced and adopted globally by corporations. Drucker, known as the father of MBO coined this technique in 1954. It meant delegating authority to employees to make changes, creating a culture that supported risk-taking and working in cross-functional teams to manage work processes in more holistic ways (Islami et al., 2018; Wheatley, 1999). In the subsequent years, researchers in the United States explored this (MBO) principles in U.S companies. The

following decades identified the practices that make organizations more adaptable and the type of leadership that supports organizations that can better learn, innovate, and perform. Among other attributes, shared leadership could make higher education more accountable to external stakeholders. Shared leadership enables institutions to create meaningful and lasting changes in the institutions' organizational structure; this often addresses external challenges to the institutions (Wheatley, 1999).

Above all, shared leadership often is conducive to builds institutional memory and creates co-ownership over strategic goals and objectives. In the absence of shared leadership, such strategies could vanish with labor forces and executive turnover. All previous studies on shared leadership agree that the rapid social change, political climate, economic and technological shifts that are taking place are producing greater complexity and an increase in organizational instability (Islami et al., 2018). Organizational leadership will become the key to their effectiveness (Carson et al., 2020).

Shared leadership is included in virtually every new leadership model, such as adaptive leadership by Heifetz (1994), leadership for complexity by Wheatley (1999), systems leadership by Allen and Cherry (2002), connective leadership by Lipman-Blumen (1996), empowerment model by Bolman and Deal (1991) and situated cognition practice model by Spillane et al. (2006). There are various definitions of shared leadership, which frequently share some common characteristics, as shown below:

- Leaders and followers are seen as interchangeable in talents and capabilities.

- Leadership is not based on ranked positions of authority within the organizational chart.
- Multiple perspectives, visions, and expertise are capitalized for problem-solving, innovation, and change management.
- Collaboration and interactions across the organization are typically emphasized.

Leaders with a shared leadership style, usually recognize the importance of the individuals' holding positions of authority. Shared leadership exponents usually focus on how those in a position of power can delegate authority, capitalize on expertise within the organization, and create infrastructure, which can enable the organization to capitalize on the leadership of multiple people. Leadership is a process—not an individual—and can be supported by professional development, access to information, team-based work, and incentives/motivation.

Extensive reviews of related literature on this topic revealed that shared leadership characteristics, technology leadership, and the role of the researcher are valuable to fulfilling organizational missions (Ghasabeh, 2020). A notable lack in research is however on the paucity of studies on collaborative and distributed shared leadership.

Higher education has undergone significant shifts and transformational processes over the years. Shared leadership between educators and technology leaders continues to emerge as a research topic. In parallel and not always directly associated with such

reforms, the leadership studies field has grown and perhaps influenced a partial conceptual reforming of leadership, beyond, yet is perhaps still inclusive of individualistic perspectives.

In the midst of these dual shifts, increased attention has been given to the distribution of leadership and collaborative configurations of work arrangements in higher education institutions. From the review of literature and analysis, it is argued that distributed leadership and other collaborative approaches to theorizing, researching, and developing the capacity to lead the academy are not sufficient in themselves.

The shift in the approach to understanding what leader, leadership, and leading constitute are significant because practices would take center stage rather than the leader. A central tenet of leadership-as-practice decentralizes leadership away from an individual, usually preestablished as the leader, and repositions leadership as human artifacts. Leadership as practice shifts our views more to practice as it unfolds, so the verb leading, rather than the noun leader, comes to the forefront of understanding (Bendermacher et al., 2017).

To support the argument for an alternative ontology, findings of shared leadership were reported across a range of research studies situated in higher education that focus on one or more of the following: distributed leadership, collaboration, academic leadership, and professional staff. Most studies were undertaken in Australia, with the others either the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States, or Europe (Bendermacher et al., 2017).

There have been significant shifts that have taken place within the leadership studies field and policy environments that shape a higher education environment with its multiple tensions. These shifts may provide the rationale for a critical exploration of distributed leadership in higher education with reference to some of the studies in the section that follows. In response to this critique, leadership-as-practice is presented in the fourth section as an alternative ontological position to understand leadership in higher education institutions, followed by the practice-based model for understanding organizations. In the final concluding section, the model is then drawn upon, to discuss the implications for researching and practicing collaborative approaches to leading the study.

Changing Times: Major Shifts in Leadership (Leadership as a Practice)

Leadership has grown in popularization and conceptual development, while higher education has undergone transformation through policies and managerial expectations brought by recent trend. It is adding to the growth of the education industry, and regarded as an international phenomenon (Bendermacher et al., 2017; Morrell, 2012). Leadership can also be positioned as a political project that incorporates managerial ideology through positioning institutional leaders as agents of reform in public services such as education. Morrell (2012) argued that there has been a departure from the notion of traditional leadership, to holding greater significance of leadership for economic performance.

This is perhaps because both leadership and NPM are associated with achieving expected organizational outcomes, where leadership seems to have become a kind of universal solution for any issue, irrespective of context (Alvesson & Spicer, 2014; Klaus & Steele, 2020). The conceptual development of leadership is also reflected in the growth of the leadership studies field into more than 60 theoretical sub-domains, and consistent through this development is a preferred ontology of leader(s). Followers and goals, though this ontology has increasingly come under greater scrutiny (Klaus & Steele, 2020). The emergence of distributed and shared leadership and the leadership as practice movement are part of several alternative approaches that challenge the leader follower-goals ontology.

Common to these alternative approaches is recognizing that leadership occurs beyond positions that have an institution wide or institutional subunit responsibility, namely senior leader, and middle leadership positions. There is ostensibly a shift in interest evident in many leadership studies field that decanters leadership from the individual only perspective where the leader is equated to leadership, to those embracing a more distributed, shared, and collaborative approach beyond these individuals (Claudet, 2016). In general, focusing on the individuals and preestablishing the occupants of leadership roles many researchers seek to study a more distributed and shared approach in contrast to applying a distributed perspective with this preestablishment of individual leaders within hybrid configurations (Claudet, 2016). Leadership as a practice approach starts first with practice and process, rather than the traits of individuals and structural assumptions informed by organizational role and work arrangements. These approaches

of practice and process, possibly decenter leadership from solely being associated with the individual also provide an opportunity to shift leadership beyond a managerial lens that favors individualism within higher education and opposes collegial academic practices (Claudet, 2016). It is also important to move beyond focusing only on a managerial collegial duality due to shifts in higher education that have undergone since the 1980s and have now blurred some of the distinctions that existed between academic and nonacademic work.

Distributed Leadership in Higher Education

The nomenclature distributed leadership or shared leadership can appear to be especially among educational administrators and IT units/experts. Distributed leadership is a possible remedy to the divisions and tensions that permeate higher education studies. If leadership is positioned as a phenomenon subject to influence and distribution associated with sharing, the focus becomes one of origin. If work labeled as leadership originates and is distributed by a few to many, distributed leadership becomes a functional tool of work activity and can continue to be valid and protect existing power structures.

Distributed leadership when evident, is when structure triumphs over agency, and the issues discussed in this literature review will continue to exist. If leadership is however equated less with the role and encompasses origins from anywhere within an institution, then this study is more likely to reveal the tensions and issues that pervade higher education institutions rather than uncritically gloss over these. When these two

perspectives are brought together, distributed leadership is not without its own issues, while it: may be used to enhance the sense of belonging and engagement in colleges and universities it may equally be utilized by those in positions of real power to give the illusion of consultation and participation while obscuring the true mechanisms by which decisions are reached and resources allocated (Daniel & Lei, 2019).

Distributed leadership as a point here, is that it can be used to bring about change is reflected in other literature, where distributed leadership is positioned as a framework and approach that embraces all employees and encourages them to participate and partner with each other to achieve change. Leadership of this style is often a provider of principles that can help overcome problems, capacity with specific challenges, and organizational environments (Cottrell & Donaldson, 2013). The implication here is that distributed leadership is a phenomenon that has agential properties. However, a closer reading of the findings in several studies referenced in this section have revealed, that so much more is taking place rather than a single phenomenon. The multi-faceted aspect of the phenomenon raises the question of whether reliance on the preferred nomenclature, distributed leadership, is all that helpful and whether a more pluralistic position should be promoted with distributed forms of leadership still reveal some of the issues and tensions.

A common theme found prevalent extensively in some of the literature reviewed, is recognizing and understanding sources of the initiative beyond those in formal leadership positions (Cottrell & Donaldson, 2013). Conjointly, possible barriers and challenges also emerge. For instance, researchers have revealed, that in practice:

- Staff can still be positioned as followers to those in authority, especially when they are only brought into the leadership process for advice or to implement ideas. Subsequently, the illusion of participation masks the more centralized power relations that inform decision-making processes.
- Formal budget holders may exert a disproportionate degree of influence compared to others in participative settings.
- There can be many delegations of responsibility amongst professional staff, yet authority stays with one formal leader or group.
- Shared approaches can be hindered by silos and hierarchical structures within the institution.

Some findings on distributed leadership literature have also revealed intentional actions that may serve to address some of these challenges, such as:

- nurturing spaces for communities of practice and for collaboration to emerge
- project teams building trust with decision makers outside of the team
- formal recognition and commitment to distributed practices from those in senior roles

Statement on Shared Leadership in General

The alternative position argued for in this section is not necessarily a new one for higher education institutions. Although, there has not been a coordinated call for a shift to a practice-based ontology as there has been in the leadership studies field, there is a

reference to shifting to a practice-based approach bubbling within some of the higher education leadership literature. For example:

- Leadership is viewed as a practice distributed throughout a higher education institution across five dimensions; personal, social, structural, contextual, and development.
- Communities of practice can help provide conditions conducive to collaborative work amongst academic staff across institutions.
- Academics from differing knowledge domains have distinct collaborative practices.
- Distributed leadership arises from interactions amongst diverse individuals.

The key to any further development towards a practice-based approach will likely be engagement with practice theory, because practice theories go beyond merely observing and describing what activities take place in an organization. The contention is that is since practice theorists recognize that when practices become stable over a period, leaders can unfold institutionalizing power to imprint and sustain norms, values, and knowledge (Daniel & Lei, 2019). Relying on description would disable any attempt to bring surface the tensions and issues discussed in this study. The nuances on distributed leadership and collaborative imperatives in higher education were sought to be understood in this study and may be valuable to future researchers/scholars on the subject.

Shared Leadership Culture and Performance

Achievement is often denoted as the human beings' ability to reach aimed-at targets and obtain preferred outcomes in their lives in harmony with the leaders culture environment and at tranquility with themselves. Administrative achievement is a performance indicator that precedes colleges and universities curricula in the process of school evaluation (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Curriculum development is significant to instruction, and its primary goal is to improve instruction, moreover; curriculum development is affected by IT units' involvement; however, other factors negatively affect institutional achievement: educational facilities, insufficient capacity, large class sizes, and ineffective instruction strategies (Paais & Pattiruhu, 2020). Gender differences, socioeconomic status, and employee motivation; furthermore, are all factors that affect institutional achievement. Kraft et al. (2016) established that school safety and academic expectations relate to technological skills achievement in colleges and universities. In the study, equality of educational opportunity, it was suggested that academic achievement was related more closely to IT unit backgrounds than to the resources of the college. The quality of educators has significantly affected achievement in a greater way than IT unit involvement (Youngs, 2017).

Academic Achievement and Gender Differences

Gender differences factor heavily in academic achievement, and the gender gap in academic achievement has become an issue. There is a discrepancy in research as to which gender outperforms in certain job areas. Bendermacher et al. (2017) argued that

female employees outperformed male employees in math and science related job. Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al. (2018) on the other hand, established that females scored higher in academic achievement, whereas males scored higher in mathematics and science. Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al. further argued that male students outperformed female students in math and science classes, and female students outperformed male students in literary subjects. Marcenaro-Gutierrez et al. also suggested that male students are prone to misbehave more than girls, and boys' academic achievement is sensitive to their technological.

Academic Achievement and Socioeconomic Status

Socio-economic status (SES) can influence academic achievement. SES is an individual's position in a hierarchy according to wealth, power, and social status (Ghasabeh, 2020). The poverty, and the lack of resources within students' families influence the academic achievement of students. Morrell (2012) suggested a positive relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement in IT. Another meta-analytic review also indicated a medium to strong correlation between technical knowledge and socio-economic status (Morrell, 2012).

Academic Achievement and Leaders' Educational Leadership Motivation

Academic achievement is affected by motivation; as leaders become informed about instructional technology, the importance of academic motivation increases as it relates to academic achievement. Educators can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation represents the pleasure and satisfaction of the experience,

and extrinsic motivation represents the performance of activities for a reward (Ricard & Pelletier, 2016).

Intrinsic motivation is an individual leaders' aspiration to become involved in shared leadership with IT, challenges, and learning opportunities because they are essentially rewarding. Nonetheless, extrinsic motivation is an individual leader's aspiration to engage in tasks that are beneficial to the person (Ricard & Pelletier, 2016).

Youngs (2017) held that supportive IT unit involvement in leadership impacts academic achievement by improving the educators' intrinsic motivation for shared leadership. Intrinsic motivation is linked to leadership success; however, extrinsic motivation is associated with disruptive leaders and IT units. The environmental influences such as college-wide involvement, which is found within the ecological theory, can enhance, or lessen intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in shared leadership performance findings also revealed a positive association between college administrators, IT socialization, and intrinsic motivation. In contrast, there are seemingly few studies on the relationship between educators' socialization and extrinsic motivation, and some which revealed that IT units who were rewarded or applauded by their administrators, which is considered extrinsic motivation, were more likely to succeed in their roles. IT units' motivation is an academic outcome of institutions. Educators involved in shared leadership with IT employees are more likely to be more motivated to learn and are more focused on the IT learning process. As IT units progress through institutions, they often tend to lose their motivation (Elias et al., 2012).

College Educators' Engagement

Educators' involvement in technology learning usually has a powerful influence on institutional achievement across all administrative levels. However, socioeconomic status, IT employees' educational level, and schedule conflicts are key factors affecting IT involvement related to the academic environment; nonetheless, the level of IT units' involvement decreases by the time of operation (Elias et al., 2012). However, educator involvement tends to decrease as IT leaders progress in technology function. All levels of education are important, and educators' involvement affects the achievement and motivation of all students. Lai et al. (2020) examined the effects of motivation related to IT units within the college. The key findings of Lai et al. revealed that administrator's involvement was a prominent indicator through a motivational mechanism. The IT motivation in addition is dependent on the administrator's involvement, which includes the technologist's perceptions of their capabilities (Lai et al., 2020). Further study indicated that school-based and home-based involvement are linked to positive outcomes for employee motivation. Controlling institutions on the other hand can undermine a student and decrease learning motivation (Rosch & Priest, 2017).

In the educational reform movement of 1995, a key element was to increase administrators' involvement in the academic lives of students. Islami et al. (2018) identified parenting as one of the main focuses of empirical research within education. IT unit's interactions with schools and with their students have been defined as promoting academic success (Phillips & Phillips, 2020). It is a determinant of a student's success and is usually related to academic performance and motivation as well. In addition, it was

also suggested that college involvement is related to academic success, especially in the first levels of schooling, and the presidents recognized that the greater the presence and participation of presidents in school, the greater the percentage of success. Academic achievement relates to the first levels of schooling, which occur within the ecological system theory through the student and their immediate environment (Caron & Belo Reyes, 2018). The students' immediate environment will consist of the parent and access to technology which further connects to the ecological theory and the hierarchy of needs to parents being involved in their student's education, whether it is home-based involvement or school-based parental involvement. Gokturk and Dinckal (2017) further recognized that students' stages of development and interest in peers could be a possible reason for the decline in parental involvement at the college level.

Gokturk and Dinckal (2017) noted, that parental involvement holds numerous benefits, of which increased academic success is considered one of the most beneficial characteristics of technological success. In a review of several studies, a notable finding, included the existence of a relationship between parental involvement and academic success (Boonk et al., 2018). Research further revealed that educators' and IT units' involvement promoted academic growth and social and skills growth.

Bhargava and Witherspoon (2015) identified three types of academic performance-based, school-based, and academic technology. Boonk et al. (2018) revealed that home-based parental involvement was associated with student achievement. Some researchers have showed that home-based parental involvement was not related to

changes in student achievement. The findings of researchers also indicated that all three types of parental involvement are related to academic performance. School-based parental involvement was not associated with college academic achievement; furthermore, another finding in a study established that there was an insufficient impact between IT units' participation and academic achievement to arrive at a supportable conclusion (Hutton, 2018). Although the association was established, it was not determined which type of parental involvement, educators and IT units were predictive of academic achievement, which indicated positive and sufficient evidence establishing the relationship between educators and IT units' involvement and academic achievement (Hutton, 2018).

Chauhan et al. (2020) found that academic technology as one of the most effective types of student involvement. Some researchers on studies involving college students have suggested that academic technology has a positive relationship with school involvement. However, types of involvement were established, classified parental involvement as direct behaviors and emotional tone. Direct behaviors include supervision of IT work, and performance includes the interest in technology learning. Involvement variables were furthermore revealed the correlation between academic achievement and academic performance. The most prominent variables that established the relationship between involvement and academic achievement are IT units' aspirations, and expectations, academic achievement value and innovation reinforcement, academic encouragement and support, educational discussions, control, and school involvement. IT unit has been positively associated with an influence on academic success (Carson et al.,

2020). All these variables, apart from IT control, have revealed a positive association with academic achievement.

Leadership Culture

With self-leadership, becoming the architect of your personal success and security within the confines of changing times has grown in importance. For example, most leaders' responsibilities are shifted to their followers (e.g., in scrum). Until recently, the idea of self-leadership was limited to the ability to reach personal or team goals and hence was unable to make an impact on a wider organizational setting. In this study, report, provides, is an enhanced conception of self-leadership, where added are three significant supplements to existing research. First, inserted, is a self-leadership dynamic, which may indicate, that employees who serve as directors for in respect of personal roles, individual ambitions and the larger organization. Secondly, self-leadership was seen as behavior that follows the most important and essential ideals. Construed therefore, as behavior that is both honest and sincere. Also explored at a deeper level, was by discussing the idea of self-leadership-culture (SLC), a concept developed from Schein's notion of organizational culture. The complicated relationship of SLC with context variables is explored in the second section of the research, looking at how leader-member interchange and organizational identity are affected (Lai et al., 2020). It is believed additionally, that SLC has produced benefits like increased job satisfaction, greater work engagement, improved performance, and increased inventive behavior. A study on SLC perhaps offers a much more comprehensive view than self-leadership and is usable by practitioners to create a successful collaboration.

Technology Leadership

This section represents the ongoing review of the literature Sharing Leadership Strategies Between Educators and IT Unit. The focus was on understanding the impact of technology on educational institutions with focus on shared leadership. Transformational Leadership, IT, Knowledge Management, Firm Performance and how these are linked. This study entailed linking a theoretical and conceptual building up of the relationship between transformational leadership, knowledge management, firm performance, IT, and performance measurement. Conceptualized herein, was a theoretical model and it may be emphasized that although past empirical research confirms the importance of such theoretical relationships for building any organizational performance outcome, the need to present needed theoretical links in an integrated mode persists (Ghasabeh, 2020).

The study by Ghasabeh, (2020) fostered the value for more effective IT use and integration, which can positively contribute to the effectiveness of management, using data, information, and knowledge as a significant driver of organizational performance. Ghasabeh, concentrated on the value of setting highly desired expectations and inspiring IT units (technologist) to identify further opportunities in respective departments/ work units of different leaders. IT used as an internal resource to facilitate organizational communications and improve the search for knowledge could be developed by technology transformational leaders to enhance their effectiveness and performance (Canterino et al., 2020). The idealized influence aspect of transformational technology leadership can be considered an important facilitator of shared leadership, that enhances interactions among organizational members and IT departments (Ghasabeh, 2020).

The transformational technology leader in addition, is a leadership role model who is admired and respected by subordinates in an organization. Accordingly, it can be argued that information technology could be perceived as a strategic resource by organizational members because a transformational leader becomes a role model for them. Phillips & Phillips (2020) affirmed that IT management team are technology transformational leader that serves as a role model by highlighting the importance of the effective use of IT. Equally important, technological knowledge sharing itself can, develop a more innovative work climate and facilitate knowledge creation in organizations, especially in higher education.

IT can play a crucial role in improving knowledge creation and shared leadership ideology. It can thus be inferred that IT is an internal resource that develops and integrates organizational leadership as the most systemic and strategic factor of leadership training and organizational competitiveness. Information technology in addition can also be considered as a facilitator of the knowledge creation process by providing the essential infrastructures to store and retrieve organizational knowledge. It is apparent consequently, that information and communication technology can positively affect various knowledge management methods (Ghasabeh, 2020).

Significant functions for IT and communication technology enhance learning and leadership knowledge sharing by providing access to knowledge, stimulating new ideas, and knowledge generation. IT concepts can transfer individual skillsets to other members

and departments, thereby improving leadership skills, storing, and accumulating to improve organizational performance.

The information technology element ostensibly may contribute to enhanced shared leadership knowledge when underpinned by using a conceptual framework in developing more comprehensive understandings of the relationships between transformational leadership, knowledge management, IT, and organizational performance. The concept is very relevant to the topic of this study, I also suggest to other scholars to take these ideas and continue to conduct further research, using executives as the sample and focal point of the study to further explore the subject. In that case, educational leadership can empirically investigate the correlation among these factors and meet the needs of managerial implications at the top management levels of the organizations worldwide.

The subsequent literature review on technology shared leadership is from analyzing the work of Chauhan et al. (2020), titled Information Technology (IT) Transforming Higher Education: A Meta Analytic Review. It is an understatement to suggest that IT is rapidly transforming higher education leadership skills and IT unit outcomes and performance (Chauhan et al., 2020). The authors focused on an intensive review of 72 peer-reviewed articles on IT utilization in a formal classroom setting. The researchers concluded that:

1. IT highly enhances learning outcomes in education subjects.

2. Using IT unexpected, and in general, applications are more effective than other learning methods.
3. Using IT as a formal learning environment is more effective.
4. In IT, learning outcomes are higher for more extended intervention periods (more than 1 month).

The value of IT utilization regarding shared leadership in higher education has become more significant in this era of the global pandemics (COVID -19). Since social distancing and distance learning has become a channel of teaching and learning globally, applying meta-analysis for the study, Chauhan et al. (2020) posed four research questions and hypotheses, which guided the technological investigation, intervention, data analysis, and IT analysis, which are also restated below:

There is a dearth of meta-analysis studies investigating how con-textual factors of learning environment, subject (field of study), intervention period, and application type moderate the impact of IT on learning outcomes in higher education. Considering the discussion, the research was designed to address the following research questions:

1. Is the potential impact of IT learning outcomes of higher education subject to increased performance? If so, in what way?
2. How much of an impact does IT have on higher education's learning outcomes, regardless of the type of shared leadership application?

3. In what ways does the length of time that instructors spend in the classroom influence how effective IT is at helping students learn?

4. What effect does the learning environment have on the effectiveness of IT in higher education?

Amidst the upcoming challenges of COVID-19 pandemic time, a meta-analysis study of the empirical findings tested through these moderating factors is perhaps much more relevant and critical than ever. Several researchers in this domain also offer a unique opportunity for meta-analysis. The findings of the research can be categorized and statistically analyzed to provide credible evidence regarding the impact of IT on higher education according to each context (Arip et al., 2020).

The data analysis and findings of research studies reviewed, revealed three extreme effect sizes, which differed from the effect size by more than three standard deviations and were considered outliers. These research studies were therefore not considered for further analysis by Chauhan et al. (2020). It is also important to note that the assumption of the random effects model is that the population of each research paper had varying effect sizes from which each sample was extracted (Chauhan et al., 2020).

The limitation of the article as a researcher, is that, even though the study methodology (especially statistical analysis) was used in conducting and undertaking the meta-analysis, such data were mined from the prevalent online databases by making use of a set of coded keywords. There were many papers and, therefore, many different keywords which required cryptographers for each article to be analyzed. Other relevant

research papers might have been missed to make issues worse for the researchers because of various journals reviewed that were not part of the target database (Arip et al., 2020).

IT utilization in higher education has become more significant in this era of global pandemic (COVID -19) since social distancing and distance learning have become a channel of teaching and learning globally (Arip et al., 2020). Applying meta-analysis for the study, the authors posed four research questions and hypotheses, which guided the investigation, intervention, and analysis of the data and information.

Ghasabeh (2020), found, that the effect of technology on educational institutions is a development of ideological leadership models that are predicated on a critical assumption that there is one best way to lead. The researchers defined a study conducted, as a theoretical exploration of the relationship between transformational leadership, knowledge management, firm performance, and information technology. When it comes to organizational performance, prior empirical research perhaps validates the importance of such theoretical ties, however, have possibly failed to convey the necessary theoretical connections in an integrated way.

More effective use of and integration of information technology is consequently encouraged by (Chauhan et al., 2020). Data, information, and knowledge can be used as significant drivers of organizational success. The research also focused on understanding the imperatives and factors in creating high expectations and motivating followers (technology leaders) to uncover more chances in their respective departments/work units, among other things. Transformational leaders could use information technology as an

internal resource to facilitate organizational communication and improve the search for knowledge. A significant facilitator of information technology can be regarded as the idealized impact portion of transformational leadership.

Leadership Competencies and Performance

Prior studies on the questions of leadership competencies and performance are split along the lines of rationality versus culture/tradition. For example, emotional and cultural factors determine leaders' competencies and performance (Hutton, 2018). Economic reforms in socialist China and Vietnam have successfully defined employee worries and those from the Western culture of economic reforms. Both countries' economy has seen one of the most remarkable growths and developments in contemporary human history, contrary to their pessimistic assessments. Which leadership style was important in generating the miracle at the firm level, is a question that is rarely asked. Six studies on the theme of leadership and innovation in China and Vietnam are grouped together under the same umbrella topic, which deals with the question of leadership and innovation in the two countries and other East Asian economies (e.g., South Korea, Japan). The findings of these studies may show that transformative leadership requires a combination of traditional and cultural leadership styles as well as emotional and philosophical leadership (Borr, 2019).

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement of leaders often uses principals' leadership performance standards. The instrument consists of the demographics section, level of

education, and the number of years working. The other portion of the assessment instrument is made up of Likert scale items comprising high leadership performance criteria and leadership effectiveness. Experts frequently ensure content validity before applying relevant to leadership competencies such as high leadership performance standards and leadership effectiveness. Before using key leadership qualities, content validity is often validated by experts.

Transition

The purpose of this study was to provide an overview of how the study is conducted. Section 1 of the literature previously reviewed may denote the emphasis in the foundation of both academic and shared leader traits and characteristics. Section 2 holds an explanation in the study's goal, responsibilities as a researcher, and the type of research method and design used in this study. Ethical considerations were also discussed as outlined were details on the study's participants and population as well as its sampling process. I discussed the data collection process, which covered instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis. There are scholarly or foundational works to support each procedure or protocol in Section 2. An overview of the data collecting results and a discussion of the coded and developing themes are provided in Section 3. In this section, the research results are discussed in terms of their significance, limitations, and generalizability. This section concludes with a summary of the study's findings and recommendations for further research and views on the study and the findings.

Section 2: The Project

In the past, a leader was considered as an individual who had the power, qualities, and position to influence people toward a specific aim or objective. This concept has been a long-held belief; however, this idea has been altered. The demands on leadership are now so high that heroic leadership is no longer able to meet them (Geib & Boenigk, 2022). Organizations in contemporary settings are likewise confronted with rapidly shifting trends. Ruoslahti and Trent (2020) observed, that with the globalization of business, it is clear that an institution's success depends on having a strong executive team in place. There is a growing interest in leadership forms that emphasize the importance of distributing leadership responsibilities among a diverse group of people, and the concept of shared leadership is one such form of leadership. In today's fast-paced contemporary world, an organization needs to adopt leadership strategies successfully to be successful.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by higher education leaders to share leadership decisions with their IT leaders to improve organizational performance. The targeted population consisted of four senior administrators and four IT leaders in higher educational institutions in Alabama. These institutions have used shared leadership to leverage technology and improve organizational performance. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by providing the insights and knowledge generated from this study, which may be of value in addressing the leadership collaboration strategy to enhance the decision-

making policies and improve the joint administration of shared leadership to improve student success outcomes and increase student skills.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers who are accountable for assuring that their study adheres to specific norms, standards, and principles (Yin, 2018). Using the interview method, a researcher can acquire valuable insights from an in-depth investigation of the phenomena that have been observed by participants (Saunders et al., 2015). As the researcher, I was the data collection instrument in this study. I was responsible for establishing the technique and design; recruiting participants; informing each participant about the research procedures; collecting, evaluating, and analyzing the data; and presenting the findings. As the chief information officer of a higher education institution, I developed an interest in shared leadership, the importance of technology, and how top administrators view it. In this role, I became a change agent that promotes and supports a new technology management structure of innovation within the organization. This study served to personally evaluate how top administrators incorporate technology to aid in business processes and future student success outcomes.

Research initiatives, including the possible sharing of sensitive information with the researcher, must adhere to the strictest ethical requirements (Saunders et al., 2015). To meet the ethical integrity standards in this study, I adhered to *the Belmont Report's* protocols and procedures, which include respecting participants' autonomy, following the informed consent process, and treating all participants equitably (see U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services, 2021). I followed additionally, the National Institutes of Health's recommendations for proper conduct (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021) and Walden University's guidelines for securing participants' identities for a minimum of 5 years.

Case studies may lack reliability due to researchers' inherent biases (Yin, 2018). Following interview protocol and member verification are some of the approaches researchers use to account for and eliminate bias (Goodell et al., 2016). I utilized a variety of approaches, including note taking and keeping a reflective journal, to help me organize personal thoughts. Memo writing facilitated a revising of the facts I had gathered from the literature review and evaluate my interpretation of that data against preexisting notions (see Berger, 2015; Goodell et al., 2016). The technique of reflexive journaling allowed me to examine personal interpretations of the material in light of prior knowledge. Before conducting a study, Tufford and Newman (2010) recommended collecting preconceptions so that the researcher may self-check during data collection and avoid tying assumptions to their interpretation of the facts.

I ensured that the participants were experts in the fields of IT and institutional administration, so they would provide accurate information and data for analysis. Data collection processes and source validation mitigates researcher bias and misinformation. I employed an interview protocol furthermore, and strategies to screen the participants to ensure their credentials and experiences met the requirements to respond to the research

questions. The interview questions were tested for reliability and validity before administration. The interview protocol can be found in the Appendix.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of four senior administrators and four IT leaders in higher education institutions in Alabama. College and university presidents, educational leadership teams, and IT teams were the target population. I recruited participants in accordance with the *Belmont Report's* etiquette and privacy principles by expressing autonomy, minimizing harm, and promoting justice while also adhering to the Walden University Institutional Review Board's (IRB) framework for selecting participants. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, participants had to meet the following criteria: (a) work in a higher education institution, (b) be consenting individuals 18 years of age or older, and (c) successfully implemented shared leadership practices within the institution.

Alabama was the U.S location, which is in the Southern part of the United States for convenience regarding eligibility, strategic access, and working strategies. To gain access to eligible participants, I obtained copies of the selected institution's factbook and directories. These documents provided staff listing positions and ranks, email addresses, and phone numbers. Permission to use this contact information was requested from the college/university study sites.

Yin (2018) recommended screening participants that are willing and accessible to maximize the chance of obtaining meaningful data from qualified individuals. I solicited

participation from previous colleagues who were already familiar with me as a former coworker and who had indicated an interest in my research to establish their eligibility and desire to participate in the study. I communicated with possible participants via telephone, Zoom meetings, and emails during business hours to solicit participation in the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I used the qualitative method in this study to explore the synergy between the organizational leadership team and IT experts from colleges and universities. A qualitative approach is most suitable for a study that demands the researcher to dive deeper into their subjects' perceptions and understandings and any bias that may exist in issues comparable to the one examined in the current study (see Nelson & Ellis, 2018). Additionally, qualitative approaches involve a greater degree of open-ended inquiries, which assisted me in comprehending the implications and execution of shared leadership. When a researcher wishes to defend or refute correlations between independent and dependent variables, a quantitative technique is advantageous (Saunders et al., 2015). I was not attempting to test a hypothesis or to assess cause-and-effect factors in this particular research situation, which is the case with quantitative approach (Botella-Carrubi & Gonzalez-Cruz, 2019). Quantitative methods are not conducive to the exploration of diverse hypotheses and theories (Saunders et al., 2015). Because I did not undertake a quantitative study to examine the correlations or differences between variables or test any theories, the quantitative methodology was not appropriate for this

study. A mixed-methods strategy entails the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to address more complicated research problems that incorporate variable analysis (Yin, 2017). The mixed-method approach was not appropriate for this study because quantitative aspects of the data and pertaining to the topic were not the focus.

Research Design

Researchers using a qualitative approach can employ ethnographic, phenomenological, or case study designs (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers employ a single case study design when there are exceptional or deviant situations that emphasize unique circumstances that may indicate unique problems or the inverse (Saunders et al., 2015). The single case study design was not suitable for the current study because it would have limited the quantity of data, I could collect to draw conclusions from. In contrast, researchers employ a multiple case study design to examine a situation and provide a rich context for comprehending and developing conclusions about a phenomenon (Llerena et al., 2019). I conducted a qualitative multiple case study to better understand top executives' shared leadership strategies across numerous institutions. Ethnographic research is concerned with the lives, customs, and circumstances of a specific group or society (Yin, 2017). Conducting an ethnography was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore culturally specific social relationships. Scholars employ the phenomenological design to better understand the subject's lived experiences, events, and occurrences associated with a certain phenomenon (Yin, 2017). The phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because I did not explore a unique phenomenon through the lived experiences of participants.

To validate the study's validity, I ensured data saturation by collecting data until there were no new data points to cover. Saunders et al. (2017) stated that data saturation has gained general support in qualitative research as a methodological guideline, and it is frequently interpreted to mean that, on the basis of already obtained or analyzed data, more data gathering and analysis is not necessary. Saturation, in general terms, is a criterion for stopping data gathering or analysis in qualitative research. I supplemented data saturation by collecting multiple forms of evidence, such as peer-reviewed articles, books, and other resources.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study was college and university senior administrators and IT leaders located in Alabama. In any research sampling strategy, consideration must be given to various subgroups' sampling size and anticipated size to address the actual total sample size that is reflective of the population of the research and whose population will be analyzed (Taguchi, 2018). A consideration for adopting a sampling method for any study is the affordability of conducting a randomly selected sample size and other resources necessary to follow the interview protocol planned for the study. This basic research assumption about sampling also justifies the choice of sampling strategy. The underlining research assumption was that the researcher has the freedom to draw the sample elements independently, without outside influence (Taguchi, 2018). Adams and McGuire (2022) suggested that qualitative research requires careful consideration of the population in which a phenomenon occurs within the selection of a sample from that population. When a participant is difficult to locate, researchers can use snowball

sampling (Griffith et al., 2016) or convenience sampling (Adams & McGuire, 2022). Both these methods help the researcher to identify potential participants and allow others to help recruit subjects to participate in the study; however, all participants should be made aware that they are under no obligation to submit the names of any further individuals. I applied the snowball sampling method until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation happens when data collection and analysis are merged into a single process (Yang et al., 2019). When doing a qualitative study, data saturation is not a guiding concept because it can occur at any time (Griffith et al., 2016). I mitigated bias in sampling by having participants review the results, verifying data sources by implementing triangulation, and reviewing the findings with peers.

Using a sample size of at least eight participants is ideal for a qualitative case study design to meet the criteria of obtaining the necessary information and offering more profound insight into the study (Adams & McGuire, 2022). Interviews with a minimum of eight participants were conducted to ascertain the concept of shared leadership and leadership's capacity to adopt digital technologies. The purpose of choosing leaders in higher education was to select people who could best contribute to understanding the issues surrounding shared leadership strategies and who were informed about technological techniques. The participants were contacted via an introduction or notification email outlining the study's background and purpose along with a link to the instrument (see Yin, 2018). I was also able to make an adjustment to the estimated sample size if the expected result was equal to 5% or more of the population sampled.

Ethical Research

Research conducted with a high degree of credibility and reliability is regarded as ethical research; however, ethics are in the eyes of the reviewers and to some extents are a subjective judgment. An ethical researcher must follow ethical standards to protect the dignity, rights, and well-being of participants during the study process. Any research project will inevitably encounter ethical concerns, and it is the researcher's job to recognize and resolve these issues as needed (Surmiak, 2020). Throughout this study, I adhered to all applicable ethical regulations and standards. I also followed the three basic ethical principles of the *Belmont Report*: (a) respect for persons, which recognizes people are entitled to an opinion; (b) beneficence, which refers to protecting people from harm; and (c) justice, which references taking a proactive approach to differentially and equality to protect the participants of the study. To guarantee that this study was conducted in accordance with ethical norms, I obtained authorization from the Walden University IRB to conduct the study. After IRB the approval was granted for this qualitative study, I adhered to the policies and procedures set forth by the Office of Research Ethics and Compliance, the IRB's for ethical standards in research, and the IRB's policies and procedures.

To comply with Walden University standards, all study participants were required to complete an informed consent form prior to any interviews taking place. Individuals interested in taking part in this study was sent an email asking them to complete an informed consent form to which they had reply with the words, "I consent." The informed consent form included an explanation of the study's purpose, my obligation for

preserving their confidentiality, and a list of documents that could be collected. Harris and Atkinson (2018) suggested that researchers provide the informed consent form in writing, noting that it should include (a) the researcher's name and institutional affiliation, (b) the purpose of the research, (c) potential risks, (d) anticipated benefits, (e) right to withdraw from the research study, and (f) right to refuse participation in the research study, among other things. The option to notify me by phone or electronic written communication was available for participants if they no longer wanted to take part in the study. I did not provide any incentives to the participants for taking part in this study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Yin (2018) stressed the importance of ensuring participants' privacy and confidentiality by securing private information throughout data collection and analysis. I saved all research data and notes on a password-encrypted data drive in a secure file location where I will keep it for a period of 5 years to protect the confidentiality of the participants. After 5 years, I will destroy all written documents by shredding and incineration of paper data, and programmed deletion of computer files, to ensure participant confidentiality and protection of information.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are tools that assist researchers in collecting data, identifying themes, and appropriately coding evidence to complete their research project. A variety of instruments can be used to gather data to support qualitative research; for example, it relies primarily on interviews, documentation analysis, and observation (Saunders, 2021).

For this study, I was the primary data collection instrument. The researcher is the primary data collector in qualitative research since they hear, sees, and evaluates the data (Yin, 2018). This study consisted of one personal interview instrument. This qualitative study entailed the documentation of electronic interview questions for the chosen IT specialists and senior administrators. The instrument was analyzed qualitatively using appropriate tools. All data collected and information was from selected colleges and universities. These institutions the source of information /data on shared leadership between institutions, educators, and IT units. Yin (2018) described that collecting and reviewing institutions' documents can be a time-consuming endeavor. Yin also pointed out that researchers often have trouble accessing company documents, which is a common disadvantage. I asked each research participants to assist by providing relevant documents to the specific business problem or question. Qualitative research usually uses semistructured interviews and focus groups, and direct observation as a data collection technique. I utilized a semistructured interview consisting of one overarching research question with six interview questions to collect the data doe this study. Sutton and Austin (2015) noted that semistructured interviews are easy to use and facilitate the interchange between the researcher and the participants. Semistructured interviews are more flexible than traditional ones since they allow the interviewer to rearrange the questions, they ask in order to get more information (Saunders et al., 2016). Interviews are a great approach to get information from those who have really experienced the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Additional probing questions can be asked of participants in semi-structured interviews, allowing for a deeper and more complete data collection (Saunders et al., 2015).

Participants were identified by using deliberate sampling, as previously mentioned. Aside from member checking and document analysis, the researcher will be able to uncover themes and proper coding if employing these methods (Saunders et al., 2015). I gathered available documents from the institutions' website as a second source in addition to participant interviews. I also utilized resources provided by the organization such as strategic plans, governance policies, and procedures.

The enhancement of the reliability and validity of the instruments was by conducting member checking follow up. Member checking is the process of researchers sending participants a draft copy of the case summaries for evaluation, with the option to offer comments or make corrections (Thomas, 2017). Researchers use member checking to guarantee the validity and reliability of the data collection instrument that the replies of participants are accurately interpreted (Birt et al., 2016). Research participants were given the option to verify and validate the researcher's results and to avoid the researcher's bias. To increase the reliability and validity of the data collection, employed for this study, were member checking and data triangulation. I followed the interview procedure (Appendix). Yin (2018) argued that utilizing an interview protocol (Appendix) ensures the validity of the study and reduces researcher bias during data collection.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers gather data from research to have a better understanding of a phenomenon (Yin, 2018). I used two methods of data collection, semistructured interviews and organizational documents. Qualitative researchers obtain data through

unstructured, semi-structured, or structured interviews (Parker, 2014). There are both positive and negative aspects to the interview method. Yin (2018) advised, that using the interview technique in case studies is conducive for researchers to focus on the particular instance under investigation while also gaining valuable information from the participant. The interview methodology restricts discussion to issues pertinent to the study and makes interviews more systematic and exhaustive (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020). The semistructured form of interview question was amenable to modification of questions, and the used of additional follow-up question, based on the circumstances and made it possible to request additional clarity to ensure that all responses were grasped and recorded accurately and appropriately. Close attention was paid to responses and prompted, where needed to verify to solicit further information, or seek details to enhance the accuracy in the collection of the data. The potential flaws include the possibility of bias, inability to remember what the interviewee has told them, and the interviewer's desire to hear what he or she wants to hear (Yin, 2018). In order to mitigate these potential issues, I recorded and transcribed each participant interview for member verification. In addition to interviews, the advantage and disadvantages of documentation consisted of having information readily available via organizational website and other printed material. The disadvantage is that the material may be of outdated, and therefore these considerations were implemented and ensured.

The process for collecting data on shared leadership entailed the used of the overarching question: What strategies senior higher education leaders use to share leadership decision-making with their information technology leaders to improve

organizational performance? The data collection process commenced upon receiving approval from the Walden University's IRB. Referring to the interview protocol entailed using semi-structured interview questions and organizational documents to collect data from eight senior leaders from colleges and universities participating in the study.

After completing the data analysis, participants were sent summaries to the participants through email. Each participant was given a second opportunity to review, make improvements or ideas, and provide additional feedback. I implemented member verification to ensure the correctness of the data collected, improve the quality of the study, and make the study participants feel like valued contributors to the research. Member checking is a technique used to validate findings and interpretations by comparing them to data acquired through interviews and documents with the participants (Azungah, 2018).

Data Organization Technique

Data and information collected for this study was analyzed qualitatively. The application of applied personal judgment and an informed decision-making process served to analyze the data and to arrive at the findings and conclusion of the study. Yin (2018) endorsed the advantages of having a database as it is conducive for a critical reader to inspect raw data that had led to the findings of the study, and the researchers' interpretations of data enhances the reliability of a study. The process of collecting, retaining, and safeguarding primary data for 5 years is critical to keeping in conformity with Walden University and maintaining the credibility and transferability of findings

within of this study. I will keep track and have saved all research data in a database and notes on a password-protected hard disk in a secure file location for a period of 5 years to ensure the participants' confidentiality. I will catalog all files by each institution and participant last name. After 5 years, I will destroy all records by shredding and incinerating paper filed and using programmed deletion of computer files pertaining to the study.

Data Analysis

Qualitative researchers employ a variety of techniques to acquire a thorough understanding of a phenomenon. A vital stage in the research process is the difficult chore of data analysis (Yin, 2018). Gibbs (2018) defined data analysis as the process of data transformation. Chambers (2018) described data analysis as the exploratory process researchers use to thoroughly examine raw data, establish links and patterns, and provide a visual representation of their results. The data analysis method is used by researchers to discover, understand, and describe problems based on replies gathered from participants in a phenomenon (Saunders, 2021). Renz et al. (2018) asserted that data analysis is a critical phase in qualitative research because it enables investigators to delve into the processes or causes of a phenomenon.

Validation of the research findings through methodological triangulation, possibly enhance the reliability of this study. Triangulation refers to the practice of researchers utilizing numerous data sources or approaches to establish the credibility of a research study (Wilson, 2019). Triangulation, Wilson (2019) described as the technique of

utilizing various approaches throughout the research process to elicit more robust evidence to substantiate the study conclusions. Triangulation is a technique used by researchers to ensure the validity of their findings. Wilson identified four distinct types of triangulations: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) methodological triangulation. Data triangulation entails the utilization of several data sources or the collecting of data at multiple times, locations, and with multiple persons (Wilson, 2019). To advance knowledge through theoretical triangulation, researchers must examine facts through the lens of several ideas (Wilson, 2019). Finally, methodological triangulation entails the employment of various data collection techniques that qualitative researchers frequently employ triangulation using observations, field notes, or interviews (Renz et al., 2018). Undertaking methodological triangulation entailed using semistructured interviews, member checks, institution documents, archival records, books, and any other item used in a participant's daily ritual (Jamie & Rathbone, 2022).

Data and information collected in this study was analyzed qualitatively. Applying personal judgment and an informed decision-making process helped to arrive at the findings and conclusion of the study. Following data collection, transcribing and interpreting the data entailed revisiting interview transcripts, handwritten notes, and audio recordings. The use of manual coding scheme served to apply Yins five-phased cycle to give the data analysis process structure (Yin, 2018). Listed below are the five phases of the cycle:

Compilation

Precedes analysis and requires researchers to begin by organizing handwritten notes from field interviews. In the compiling phase, the use of additional data sources, interviews, journaling, and other physical artifacts became necessary in the quest for holistic analysis.

Disassembly

In the disassembling phase researchers begin breakdown and fragment the data. They can begin to sort data sources and identify themes.

Reassembling

During the reassembling phase, researchers begin reorganizing and arrange data in graphic format by using patterns and context analysis.

Interpreting and Concluding

The final phase interpreting and concluding involves researchers' formulating conclusions by providing new concepts, and theories of human and social behavior providing a pathway to future research.

Following manual analysis, the use of the NVivo 12 qualitative data analytical software served to evaluate coded themes, sort and arrange data, confirm themes, and acquire new knowledge. NVivo 12 is a data analysis application developed by QSR International for qualitative researchers that want the ability to examine nonnumerical data (Brandao & Brandao, 2015). The process involved connecting the key themes to the

conceptual framework and the literature review. After the data are analyzed, using the features and capabilities of NVivo 12 software served to validate how key themes are connected to the literature, newly published studies, and findings. Each theme dictated how the data are organized. Each participant in the study was assigned a unique, encrypted identification number. The participant's personal information was not included in these identifiers. An identification for each company's name and location was assigned a number value. Having personal and sole access to participant information and data is a safeguard to ensure participant information is safeguarded and protected. The provision in place is by personally storing encrypted data is stored separately and securely from the rest of the data, will ensure appropriate data protection. Incineration of paper data and purging computer files with data after 5 years from the completion of this study, will secure responsible and confidential data protection, safeguards and storage. A three-way approach of identifying each person to keep track of their interviews and identities is a measure enacted in this study.

Reliability

Dependability

In research from Birt et al. (2016) dependability is a measure of how well data collection, data analysis, and member checking of data interpretation all work together. Dependability is linked to how consistent the results are. Since many qualitative methods are tailored to the study situation, there are specific ways to collect data, analyze it, and figure out what it means. Ensuring and enhancing dependability involved using triangulation and member checking. Triangulation is another way to improve the

dependability of data by making sure that the weak points of one way of collecting data are made up for by using different ways to collect data. The most important part of good qualitative research is that the results can be trusted (Joslin & Müller, 2016). Member checking, which is also called participant or respondent validation, is a way to find out how reliable the results are, and more importantly using approaches to ensure the same. The data or results are sent back to the participants so they can make sure they are correct and fit with what they have been through. Member checking is often mentioned as one of the ways to make sure that something is correct (Wilson, 2019).

Validity

Credibility

Cypress (2017) explained that participants' lived experiences is obtained by prolong involvement and persistent observation to learn the context in which it is embedded as well as minimize distortions that might enter into data. The interview protocol, transcript review, and data triangulation are ways to establish credibility and trustworthiness (Callaghan et al., 2019).

Transferability

The transferability of a study is determined by the ability to apply its findings to other groups without altering its circumstances (Malterud et al., 2016). A researcher cannot demonstrate conclusively that findings are applicable to other investigations (Carnevale, 2016). In this study, I documented the interview questions, procedures, designs, samplings, and used techniques endorsed by notable research exponents.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a study is determined by the degree to which its findings can be verified by other scientists (Johnson et al., 2019). Yin (2018) recommended that researchers record and securely store all the documents to be utilized during an intended research project. Confirmability means that the data and interpretations of the conclusions are generated from data and are not influenced by the researcher's biases or misunderstandings of the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). In addition to data interpretation and review of documents, I asked participants for any extra materials relating to the study issue. When a researcher has exhausted all accessible resources and no new information can be gleaned, it is likely to have reached data saturation (Connelly, 2020). In order to minimize personal bias, I maintained an in-depth reflective notebook throughout the research. This approach enabled to the collection of preserve participant comments.

The goal of this study was to explore how senior administrative leaders effectively develop and implement shared leadership strategies to meet organizational objectives. Higher education institutions in the southern United States were the target population for this study because they have successfully developed shared leadership development programs to meet organizational goals. In Section 2, I discussed shared leadership traits and characteristics, the researcher's role, participant information, and the research method and design. Also, were the study's reliability and validity, as well as ethical research methods, data collection instruments, and techniques.

Transition and Summary

Section 3 will include a summary of the study's results, the relevance to professional practice, recommendation for action, the conclusion, and how empirical finding might lead to a paradigm shift on social change.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies used by higher education leaders to share leadership decisions with IT leaders in the institution, to improve organizational performance. The data were collected through semistructured interviews with higher education administrators and IT professionals from colleges and universities in Alabama. The findings revealed strategies used to implement shared leadership to increase productivity and vertical communication within the organization.

Presentation of the Findings

The idea of shared leadership is not new in the field of educational administration, but it has received renewed interest in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. To help navigate through this transition, school officials are looking for new ways to lead. Shared leadership is achieved and sustained through interactions between team members and their leader.

I conducted this study by using semistructured interviewing of four higher education administrators and four IT leaders via Microsoft Teams and Zoom to answer the overarching research question: What strategies do senior higher education leaders use to share leadership decision making with their IT leaders to improve organizational performance? The semistructured interviews were transcribed and coded using NVivo software. Member checking was performed at the conclusion of this study by providing

the participants with an electronic link to the completed study. After conducting the data analysis, the following four main themes emerged: effective communication, organizational structural transformation, elimination of resistance to change, and cultural change. The themes were validated by comparing them to the literature review and against the model enshrined in the conceptual framework, notably, the Bolman and Deal's four-frame model. The interviews confirmed the association between Bolman and Deal's model and the effectiveness of shared leadership. The finding of this study may indicate some congruence with existing literature, on the strategic imperatives to improve the efficiency of organizations, specifically by implementing shared leadership strategies, which is linked back structural frame of the four-frame model.

To protect the identity of the participants, entailed substituting personal names with the codes of P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8. The semistructured interview responses of all eight participants and the other organizational materials (including strategic plans and website content) they provided, were used to compile the data for analysis in this study. In the following subsections, the emergence of major themes using a process of constant comparison is discussed.

Theme 1: Effective Communication

The first theme that emerged from data analysis was effective communication. Nwabueze & Mileski (2018) noted that in higher education, the term shared governance refers to the systems and procedures that is conducive to facilitate the collective input from faculty, professional staff, administration, governing bodies, and even students and

staff. To effectively communicate, a leader must guide with clarity and set clear and transparent goals when relaying a message to others (Nwabueze & Mileski, 2018).

Effective communication aids in establishing clear expectations for both employees and students.

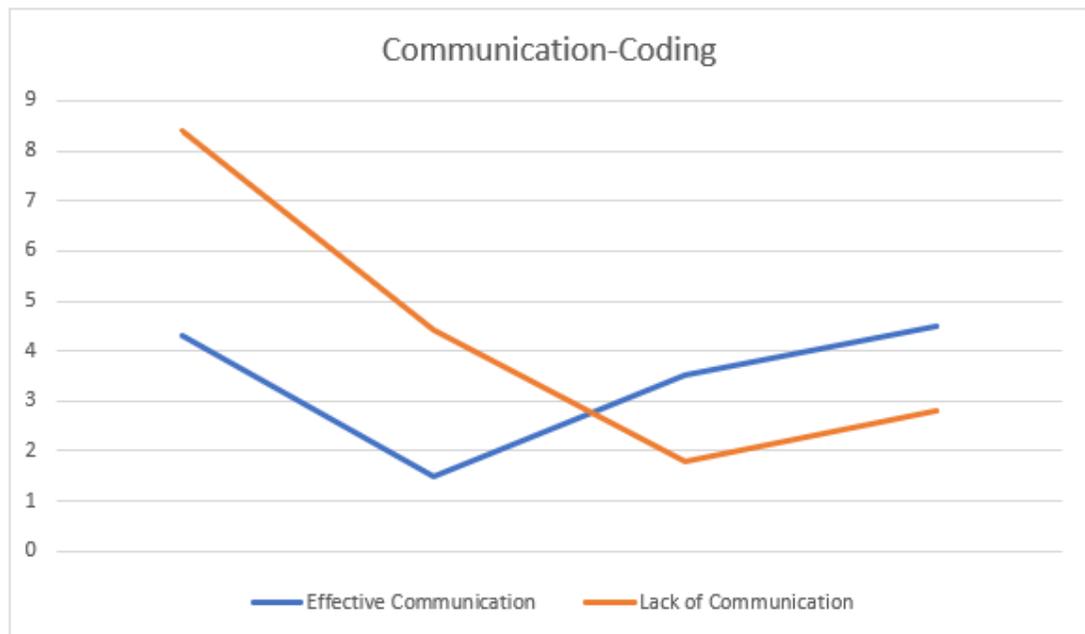
All participants agreed that there is room for communication development. P1 remarked that “my experience has shown that if you have a pleasant attitude, employees will listen and not oppose.” P5 also added that “having a strategic vision to improve communication derives results by having a formal plan of communication in place, like internal memos and dashboards like Microsoft SharePoint.” Nwabueze and Mileski (2018) stated that considerable research has been conducted to examine the implications of factors, such as IT, efficiency, and innovation, on an organization’s performance measurement. Within the human resource frame of the conceptual framework, leaders share a grater purpose for organizational and cultural change that addresses people’s needs for personal growth and job satisfaction (Tsoy & Staples, 2021).

An organization’s success depends on excellent communication, particularly in a multicultural and competitive global market. The types of successful communication that influence competitiveness have not been thoroughly studied. Although institutions are aware of the importance of communication, promoting the usage of good communication within and outside the organization receives far less research attention than other issues. In undertaking the literature review, technology transformational leaders a clear finding indicated, have the potential to improve the efficiency and output of their organizations

through the creation of IT utilized internally, as serves to streamline internal communications and boost the discovery of relevant information.

Most people's first thoughts about the primary modes of communication in higher education are face-to-face meetings, email, telephone calls, and video conferences. P3 expressed that "face-to-face communications allows the openness of body gestures." This study's findings extend to the current literature by examining how an individual being self-aware about their preferred method of interpersonal communication can help determine whether the style they are exhibiting is appropriate for the given circumstance. It can be challenging for leaders to maintain authenticity if unaware of personal preferences and feel others should change to accommodate them. In contrast, team members are more likely to be at ease, expressive, and ask numerous questions before committing to anything. This behavior is because they may be hesitant to make decisions without more information. The best way to get to know someone is to spend time with them; therefore, it stands to reason that the more face-to-face time a person spends with a coworker, the greater the chance that the two will develop a close working relationship.

Researchers have also highlighted that shared leadership is based on understanding and lived experiences of authentic leaders included open communication, leadership based on principles, leadership that prioritizes people, and business success (Nwabueze & Mileski, 2018). Figure 3 illustrates the conceptualization for the need of effective communication within all participants' organizations.

Figure 3*Internal Effective Communication*

Note. This model shows the connection between lack of effective communication within participants' organizations and study recommendations.

Theme 2: Organizational Structure Transformation

The second theme to emerge was organizational structure transformation.

Changes in the business environment toward digitalization have had a profound effect on all market participants, particularly businesses. An organizational structure is a system that specifies how various operations within an organization are directed to meet its objectives, included in these activities may be regulations, positions, and obligations (Tsoy & Staples, 2021). Organizations in the contemporary environment are usually

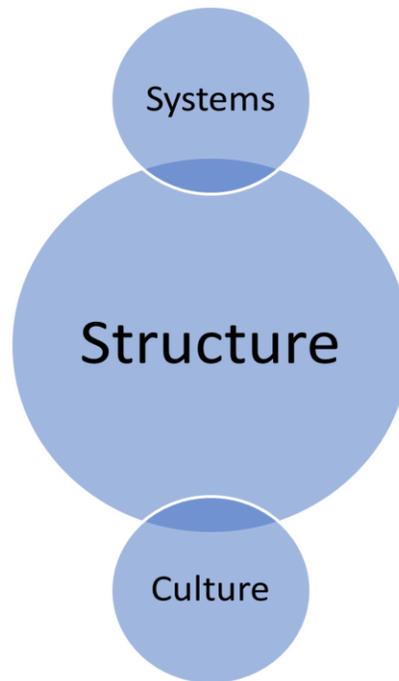
compelled to adopt new business models and implement creative organizational solutions intrinsic to the modern digital age to operate effectively.

In several instances in the literature review, conducted for this study, it was found that every business, regardless of size, market, history, tradition, location, number of people, and number of customers, recognizes the need to be more digital in terms of agility, flexibility, and responsiveness to shifting customer wants and expectations (Tsoy & Staples, 2021). Some of the most common organizational barriers to shared leadership with administrators and IT leaders are that there is an unclear vision and a lack of management understanding on the transformation of technology. Technology is rapidly changing every day. P8 replied that, “everything we do involves technology.” In addition to P8’s response, P4 stated, “with the rapid changes in the business environment, students’ needs require an adequate response from the college. Bringing in IT on project developments at the initial phase will bridge the gap between business processes and use of technology.” P3, P6, P4, and P5 concurred with the above statement that developing a proper organizational structure and strategy for change will contribute to the successfulness of the institution.

This study finding potentially adds to the current literature on the importance of exploring how individuals in charge of implementing changes to an organization’s structure should have a vision. Most participants agreed that leaders could inspire their teams by sharing their vision but that doing so required clear and compelling communication in addition to boundless energy and determination. P2 emphasized that

“effective leadership requires the ability to get people to see what you see and accomplish what you desire.” P5, P6, and P7 also suggested that organizations need a leader with greater vision and more drive. Even though vision was identified as a crucial trait of leaders in the literature analysis, the results in the current study came as a surprise and highlighted the need for additional research. Many respondents also noted the importance of effective communication in conveying that vision to others.

The structure frame of Bolman and Deal’s (1991) four-frame model postulates ostensibly to the importance in understanding of how to determine what structures exist in an organization and concentrates of strategy and measurable goal. Figure 4 illustrates the alignment of structure.

Figure 4*Organizational Structure*

Note. This model alignment implies a holistic or systems-based perspective that identifies the optimal fit among all organizational elements.

Theme 3: Elimination of Resistance to Change

The third theme that emerged was the elimination of the resistance to change.

There are a variety of manifestations of resistance to change. Pardo del Val and Martínez Fuentes (2019) cited one definition of resistance to change, is the reluctance of an individual or group to accept or implement novel ideas or methods. This reluctance is not limited to just people in intimate relationships or corporate structures. Although there are numerous contributing factors, one primary cause of resistance is fear of the unknown. All participants stated that they had experienced resistance to change within their organization. P2 implied that,

the resistance to change is a crucial issue with my institution. Whenever we implement new technologies, users don't like adapting to it even if it makes their process better. The older I get, the more I understand the importance of accepting rather than rejecting change.

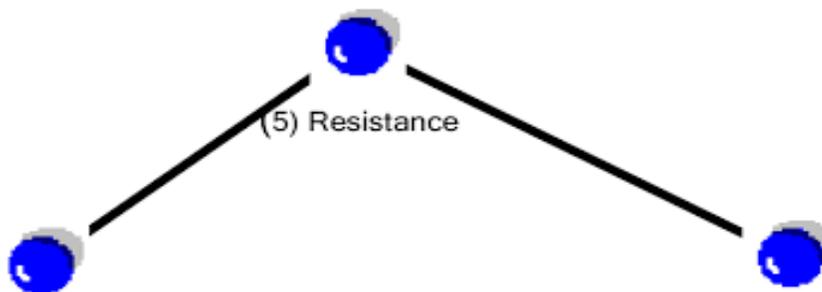
P1 added that, "incorporating an incentive plan can motivate the employees to embrace the new change." P2 warned that, "if top leaders do not embrace the change themselves others will not. It starts from the top down."

A lack of trust in the leadership team or the organization as a whole is one cause of the resistance to change. A lack of trust can affect both employee turnover and employees' willingness to give leadership the benefit of the doubt when problems do develop. Employees who oppose a change initiative are frequently reacting more to the person in charge than to the change itself. P5 and P3 both agreed that all systems are interconnected groups of tasks or activities that facilitate the organization and coordination of labor. Emotions and the lack of trust are a part of a person's resistance to change. As outlined in the literature review and the conceptual model, problems of individuals and interest groups with hidden agendas can cause conflicts within the organization. The political frame of Bolman and Deal's model emphasizes conflict resolution and coalition building to support power-base leader initiatives. Change itself is a difficult process, and this study's findings extend the concepts of Bolman and Deal's (1991) theory based on building trust, developing a clear vision, ensuring a strong and consistent implementation, and supporting the change with consistent follow through. All

participants emphasized that these four basic elements could help administrators reduce the amount of resistance encountered and provide ongoing frameworks for preventing and overcoming resistance. Resistance to change occurs when persons in leadership positions have not yet earned the trust of their subordinates, such as when a new leader has been appointed. This resistance can also be the outcome of past events that have prompted employees to mistrust leaders in the workplace. Top administrators can overcome resistance to change by communicating early about necessary why a change is needed and helping employees understand the organization's goals and objectives to improve performance.

Figure 5

Resistance to Change



Note. This model shows the high point of the participants' responses to resistance to change.

Theme 4: Cultural Change

Adapting to change proves difficult for many higher education institutions. Each organization's change process will look different depending on the specifics of the company, the industry, the company's culture and values, the management and leadership

style, and the employees' conduct and attitude (Abdul Rashid et al., 2004). Cultural change was an overarching theme for all participants. P4 acknowledged that "change cannot succeed without the meaningful involvement of all people throughout the organization." P7 also added that, "when implementing change all stakeholders must be fully involved for the change to occur. There must be consistency." Changing an organization's culture to make it more flexible and creative is often the most difficult component of that process. Organizational cultures have traditionally prioritized operational excellence and efficiency, but innovation requires new behaviors from executives by taking a look through a different lens." P3 added that "incorporating a change management strategy early in the planning phase you will considerably enhance the success of the execution." The symbolic frame of the Bolman and Deal model is used to look at an organization's decision-making process, shared assumptions, beliefs, and values.

This theme adds to the current literature in exploring cultural change in higher education institutions by examining shared leadership practices. Pearce (2018) explained that the fear of loss rather than of change is what really keeps people from making positive changes in their lives. In the context of higher education, it can be especially challenging to implement change due to considerations, such as the presence of various stakeholders, the size of committees, the complexity of institutional structures, and the visibility of public institutions. These characteristics, in addition to the long-standing value of tradition at institutions and the reality that individuals are typically more loyal to their department or unit than the university, make change extremely challenging in higher

education. Leadership competencies and performance as implied in the literature review, may reflect the importance of addressing people's need of purpose while inspiring vision and celebrating performance. These competencies may denote, that a leadership style, such as transformational, requires a combination of traditional and cultural leadership styles to inspire authenticity and independence (Tsoy & Staples, 2021). Top administrators should consider culture change as a dynamic property that facilitates responsiveness to a changing environment.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this research can contribute to the present set of organizational leadership techniques by demonstrating the significance of effective team communication. The views and findings from an exhaustive body of literature and practices of shared leadership in higher education, held great relevance to the discoveries and knowledge, as evidenced from the findings in this study. The expansive body of literature potentially also adds to the knowledge of organizational structural transformation, education administrative culture, and best leadership practices of higher education administration. Higher education administrators engage in shared leadership with information technology experts when effective communication integration of IT experts in the decision making, and organizational transformation are practiced in higher education institutions. Leading educators and IT experts can benefit from their cross functional relationships in executive decision-making in the management of higher education practices. The four themes (effective communication, organizational structural transformation, cultural change, and elimination of resistance to change) that emerged in

this study and gleaned from semiconstructed interviews may contribute to professional practice by the invocation and application by educational administrators and IT experts in the practices of shared leadership in higher education institutions. The participants acknowledged that lack of effective communication usually adversely affects organizational performance. Shared leadership happens when all members of a team are fully involved and are not afraid to influence and guide other team members to reach full potential.

Implications for Social Change

The knowledge and findings of this study may contribute to positive social change through judicious and appropriate application in strategies aimed at the improvement of shared leadership strategies, effective communication, and organizational cultural transformation within higher education institutions. A leader is someone who has the ability to motivate their employees to alter their actions in order to accomplish important goals. For better or worse, leaders set the tone for what is valued, what is tolerated, what motivates employees, and how open they are to change.

Higher education institutions are constantly challenged by introducing modern technologies and methodologies, which they often fight against. Pearce (2018) reported that change in leadership is a common cause of resistance to change. Leaders may recognize the need for change and advocate for it, but their responses may reveal that they are having difficulty adjusting to the very change they are advocating for.

Being agile and constantly changing is crucial to the sustainability of any organization. As usual, change makes people uncomfortable, which is also why shared leadership is fast becoming a core competency for business leaders and their organizations, to help their people adapt to and adopt the ever-changing changes. If leaders do not embrace shared leadership and cultural transformation, it leaves others feeling that they can ignore the difference as well. Therefore, shared leadership is one of the main and most important factors in driving successful change in any organization.

Recommendations for Action

In this study, higher education administrators and technology leaders will likely find the results, conclusions, and recommendations of this study to be very useful in their practices of leadership. Pursuant to undertaking this study, Higher education administrators, and IT leaders are offered the following recommendations from the study: Distributed leadership otherwise known as shared leadership is meant to bring about transformational organizational structural change which is reflected in the previous literature review. Shared leadership is positioned as it relates to the conceptual framework and approach that embraces all top leadership management administrators and encourages them to participate and partner with each other to achieve change. The principles of shared leadership can help overcome management problems, capacity build-up with specific challenges, and promote organizational productivity (Ghasabeh, 2020). The overall recommendation is that distributed leadership is a phenomenon that has numerous properties.

The four major highlights of this study recommendations are abstracted from the semi-structured interviews conducted with education administrators and IT leaders. The recommendations for action with this study's findings are:

- Colleges and universities should implement a system of effective communication among top administrators and technology leaders, as practices of shared governance in managing institutions. Colleges and universities will also establish openness and policy awareness among college and university communities such as faculty, staff, and students.
- Colleges and universities' organizational structural must be transformed for easy flow of information among education administrators and IT. A well-structured organization promotes shared leadership decision-making and reduces bureaucratic mentality among various levels of management.
- Cultural changes are a matter of time. Education administrators and IT leaders will experience acculturation because of shared leadership practices. Human behaviors, habits, traits, morals, work ethics, attitudes, and ego are elements of cultural change that could happen because of shared leadership (Ghasabeh, 2020).
- Resistance to change occurs as a result of shared leadership implementation. Strategic measures such as employee incentives, motivation, promotion, and positions/ranks recognitions could be constructed to enable the adoption of shared leadership practices.

The applicable dissemination of the findings associated with this study may be a suitable means for higher education institutions towards a practice-based approach of shared leadership. This study's findings and recommendations will be disseminated/shared with the public during conferences, seminars, and workshops. Most importantly, the dissemination will be distributed via higher education publications outlets, journals of higher education, journals of business management, and journals of social sciences.

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative multiple case study's goals were to investigate the methods higher education executives use to communicate their strategic choices to their IT executives in order to enhance organizational performance. In this study, I acknowledge two possible limitations. The first limitation was the lack of sponsorship due to COVID-19 and the desire to keep a great distance from one another. Allowing the interviews to be conducted via Microsoft Teams or Zoom made it possible to conduct personal interviews without being panic-stricken about contracting a communicable virus. The second limitation was identifying the success of shared leadership among top administrators of historically Black colleges, and universities verse predominantly White colleges and universities. Historically, Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have operated at the helm of their founding fathers which is heavily influenced by church affiliation that promotes traditional hierarchy whereas traditional White colleges and universities are governed by one executive sharing the responsibilities with other employees within the organization without oversight or command. Due to the nature in which HBCUs are

governed, it is recommended that top administrators evaluate the cross reference vertical theory of leaders and shift the paradigm toward a team-based approach to foster interdependence and creativity within the organization.

As for future research, because the global COVID-19 pandemic and Hurricane Ian which devastated the Florida Panhandle occurred during the data collection phase of this study, it is possible that more attention was paid to the current state of events than the overall strategy for implementing shared leadership. Because of this, it would be vital to undertake this research once the pandemic has subsided and organizations are back to using their prepandemic procedures, but perhaps this is the new norm.

Reflections

My time spent earning my DBA has provided me with invaluable opportunities to grow as a student, an expert in my field, and a more well-rounded human being. I now have a deeper appreciation for the impact of generational differences in the workplace and beyond. Exploring different perspectives and developments of shared leadership practices has given me new ideas for management techniques and the path I hope to follow in my professional life. I am now capable of both receiving and giving helpful feedback. Furthermore, I am becoming more receptive to the professional and academic goals of others.

My time in the DBA program and subsequent research taught me how to analyze data without imposing my own values or biases on the results. The program has given me a renewed sense of purpose in both my professional and personal life, moreover; the

DBA program has made me more seasoned, perceptive, mature, and determined to succeed in my professional and personal endeavors. I can think more critically, write better academically, and understand more complex texts.

Conclusion

The professional literature and previous research on shared leadership were developed when organizations were thought to be normal. A lack of shared leadership in higher education institutions is responsible for a 20% reduction in productivity and efficiency within organizations. As more knowledge work is done in teams, conventional notions of management and direction are being called into question (Pearce, 2018). HBCUs are struggling the with implementation of shared leadership conversely due the foundation on which they were founded. Vertical leadership, in which one person is in charge and everyone else just follows orders, has been the dominant paradigm for a long time. When developing a shared leadership model, it is necessary to take into consideration two crucial criteria. To begin, the vertical leader is the one who is responsible for the design of the team, this is an essential function if shared leadership is to be successful. Second, the primary duty of overseeing the management of the team's limits falls on the shoulders of the vertical leader.

This study and its results may bring light to the sustainability of shared leadership. To effectively practice shared leadership, institutions must be willing to embrace change and as a result of implementing change, it is more important than ever to have effective

communication, organizational structural transformation, eliminate resistance to change, and change of organizational culture.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Guidelines

1. The interview will take place wherever the participant desire via Microsoft Teams or Zoom.
2. The interview consists of 30–60 minutes of uninterrupted time.
3. I will show interest, care, and concern for all research participants.
4. I will use interview skills so that participants may share their experiences.
5. I will have a journal to write down critical information.
6. With the participant's approval, I will record the interview.

Opening Script

My name is LaRita Brewster. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore the strategies used by higher education leaders to share leadership decisions with their information technology leaders to improve organizational performance. The interview will consist of a brief conversation about the research purpose and getting your consent to proceed with the remainder of the interview. I would like you to feel comfortable while answering the questions. There are no right or wrong answers. If it is ok with you, I will be recording this interview, as stated in the consent form (I will start the recording).

Interview Questions

1. What specific strategies do you use to implement shared leadership with your organization's information technology leaders?
2. What strategies have you established to be most effective?

3. What leadership style has been most effective for improving shared leadership with your organization's information technology leaders?
4. What collaboration method(s) did you find best to improve shared leadership with your organization's information technology leaders?
5. How do higher education administrators involve information technology leaders in making technological decisions?
6. What else can you share with me about your organization's strategies for improving shared leadership strategies?

Closing Script

Thank you (Name). This study can add value to your organization's shared leadership strategies. I will be providing you with a link to the final study for your review.