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Strategies That Weekly Print Newspapers Use in the Digital Age

Mia Alexander-Davis
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Mia Alexander-Davis

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Dr. Allen Endres, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Yvonne Doll, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

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Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
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Abstract

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MFA, Regent University, 2010

BA in Political Science, Fisk University 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

The development of Web 2.0 transformed the distribution of information in the United States and challenged the print newspaper business model to develop an online presence. As a result, some weekly print newspaper managers were forced to develop digital strategies to maintain the viability of their organizations in a changing market. Grounded in Kotter's change management model, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies weekly print newspaper managers used to create an online presence. The data sources were semistructured interviews with three weekly print newspaper managers and publicly available documents, including company archives, website data, and social media. The four themes resulting from thematic analysis were (a) active social media presence; (b) employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction; (c) localizing the news; and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and newspapers' websites. A key recommendation is for newspaper managers to implement a multiple-path communications process for catalyzing consumer interactions with the newspapers' products. The implications for positive social change include the potential to provide consumers with more relevant and timely information for improving the lives of communities' citizens.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my study to my son, Harper Wesley Miles Alexander, my grandmother Emma Chilton, and my Godmother Priscilla Crumpe. Thank you, Nana for always believing in me and making a way out of no way. To my dearest Harper, the best gift that I have ever received from God. Cil your love was like sunshine on a rainy day. I am grateful for everything. He gave me the strength to keep going when I could not find another word to type. I would also like to thank the angels that spent countless hours supporting me through this journey Myria, Cheryl, Kadija, Katrina, Roselyn, Candice, and Dr. Clyburn, I am grateful for the words and wisdom you poured into me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I pray that God continues to bless each of you richly. Anna, thank you for believing in me and pushing me to be great. Michael, Tony, and Rashida you were truly sent from heaven, thank you from the bottom of my heart! Thank you MiMi (Mom) for helping me with the last leg of my journey!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The internet has challenged the business model of contemporary newspaper publishers just as the owners of print newspapers in the 1920s and 1930s faced threats from new media that shifted advertising revenue and public influence (Stamm, 2010). The growth of the internet and the increased digitization of media has shifted the allocation of advertising dollars in the print newspaper industry. In response to the growth of digital media platforms, print newspaper managers have reexamined their business models and sought ways to diversify their offerings. Change and innovation are a natural part of the business cycle. Change and innovation can lead to profitable growth for organizations that leverage their talent and resources while welcoming change and innovation. In contrast, it can lead to the financial collapse of market leaders that refuse to cultivate a culture of learning, as evidenced by Blockbuster, Xerox, and Nortel. Innovation and a willingness to adapt to change allow firms to compete in new markets and grow their brand value. Consequently, innovation has become the preeminent requirement for competitive advantage, and thus survival, within the current challenging and dynamic global economy (Burdon & Dovey, 2015). In this qualitative multiple case study, I sought to explore the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers have used to compete and navigate change in the digital age.

Background of the Problem

Change is a natural part of growth across industries and has increased profitability for some organizations, while leading to closures for others. Innovation and technology have created, restructured, and eliminated industries dating back to the Industrial

Revolution (Howe, 2016). The development of Web 2.0 transformed the distribution of information in the United States and challenged the print newspaper industry business model. Web 2.0 has also created a space for innovative media firms to work in traditional print newspaper arenas, as evidenced by The Huffington Post, Craigslist, and Yahoo News. Firms offering disruptive innovations have undercut the traditional print newspaper business model for decades (Sterling, 2008). The speed, flexibility, and capacity of Web 2.0 has created a platform for niche news firms to grow profitable without the limitations of space and time. In the United States there was a 7% drop in adults who received their news from print newspapers between 2013 and 2016 (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). The decreased circulation required print newspaper leaders to retool their strategies for capturing and retaining paying consumers and advertising dollars in the digital age. Prior to digitization, traditional gatekeepers of media controlled the market, restricted access to paying consumers, and dictated what was provided and when it would be offered to consumers ("A New Democracy," 2016). In contrast, digitization ushered in consumer choice, participation, and free access to timely and historic information from varied sources.

Problem Statement

Changes in the media ecosystem have given rise to online newspapers since the mid-1990s, which has significantly transformed how people consume news while challenging the fundamental business practices of printed newspapers (Eriksson et al., 2016). From 2004 to 2015 more than 1,800 newspapers offices closed or merged, with the majority of weekly print newspaper affected (Reader, 2018). The general business

problem was that in the era of digitization, some print newspapers were negatively affected by outdated business strategies. The specific business problem was that some weekly print newspaper managers lacked strategies to develop an online presence.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to develop an online presence. The targeted population for this study consisted of three weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area of the United States who implemented successful strategies to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The findings may contribute to positive social change by equipping local print newspaper managers with strategies to develop an online presence that would prevent closures. This study may also help local newspapers remain open to serve as an economic, social, and political resource for their communities. Lastly, print newspapers are a cultural staple for communities that represent diverse perspectives in a way that catapults community involvement for supporting local businesses, political candidates, the arts, and local events (Yun et al., 2018).

Nature of the Study

There are three dominant approaches to research inquiry: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (McDonald et al., 2015). For this doctoral research study, the qualitative method was appropriate to answer the research question. A researcher selects the qualitative research method for the discovery and development of new processes in organizational development and output (Granek & Nakash, 2016). In contrast, the

quantitative method of research emphasizes numerical data, measurable variables, and a controlled setting to safeguard from variables outside of the study being mistakenly identified as explaining the relationships identified (Park & Park, 2016). I did not seek to understand the relationships between variables, so the quantitative research method was not selected. Lastly, the mixed-methods research method was considered but was not appropriate for this study. The mixed-methods research method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research characteristics (Brannen, 2005), but I did not seek to analyze numerical data.

The three research designs I examined were (a) mini ethnography, (b) phenomenological, and (c) multiple case study. The mini ethnography design is a smaller version of the ethnography design, which includes learning the feelings, beliefs, and relationships between people and their environment (Fusch et al., 2017); this was not in alignment with the intent of this study. The second research design considered for this study was phenomenological. The phenomenological research design is used to describe the meaning that people associate with their experiences, which was also not the aim of this study (Gill, 2014). The last research design considered for this qualitative inquiry was the multiple case study. The multiple case study design allows a researcher to investigate contemporary phenomenon using multiple approaches that are dependent on multiple types and sources of evidence (Killingback et al., 2017), which fit the aim of this study.

Research Question

What innovative strategies do weekly print newspaper managers use to create an online presence?

Interview Questions

1. How has globalization, mobile technology, and social media changed your strategy for developing an online presence?

2. What strategies did you use to develop an online presence?

3. What innovative strategies have you developed to differentiate your business offerings to compete with daily print and digital news outlets?

4. What strategies have you implemented to attract advertisers and consumers to your print and digital platforms?

5. How have your colleagues responded to your strategy for developing an online presence?

6. What technique did you use to assess the effectiveness of the innovative strategies?

7. What else can you share with me about the strategies your organization has developed and implemented to compete and navigate change in the digital age?

Conceptual Framework

John Kotter (1996) developed the theory of change management, which provides businesses with a set of strategies to guide their organizations through the change process (Kotter, 1996). Kotter (2009) asserted that organizational change requires individuals or groups to critically analyze an organization's competitive situation, market position,

technological trends, and financial performance. Kotter further developed an eight-step process for developing meaningful change within an organization (Kotter, 1996; Pollack & Pollack, 2015). The eight steps of Kotter's change management model are (a) create a sense of urgency, (b) form a guiding coalition, (c) create a vision, (d) communicate the vision, (e) empower others to act on the vision, (f) generate short-term wins, (g) consolidate improvements and producing still more change, and (h) institutionalize new approaches (Kotter, 1996). Kotter's eight steps of change management equips leaders and their organizations with a strategic roadmap for developing sustainable behavioral change while considering emotional factors (Calegari et al., 2015). Kotter's eight steps of change management theory was in alignment with my study because the strategies that business leaders implement to guide the change process can affect the creation of their organization's online presence.

Operational Definitions

Knowledge management: Knowledge management involves the creation of conditions for the acquisition of knowledge, sharing of knowledge, and the transformation of that knowledge into strategic decisions that will improve the functionality of an organization (Bitkowska, 2017).

Local newspapers: Local newspapers are the primary source of information about events and issues in communities, mediators of cultural identity, and the platform for social and political discourse in their communities (Skogerbo & Winsvold, 2011).

Strategic planning: Strategic planning is a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that firms develop and use when shaping an organization's identity, their strategic

direction, and the resources needed to achieve their overall goals (Bryson, 2011; Elbanna et al., 2016).

Traditional media gatekeepers: Traditional media gatekeepers are producer led managers in the book, television, and newspaper industry that controlled the market, restricted access to paying consumers, and dictated what was provided and when ("A New Democracy," 2016).

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Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

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Assumptions

A researcher's paradigm is a foundational perspective that carries with it a set of assumptions that guide the research process (Leavy, 2017). As I conducted my research on innovative strategies used by print newspaper managers, I made the following assumptions: (a) print newspaper managers understood all questions and responded in a truthful manner that enhanced the quality of my research; (b) print newspaper managers were interested in creating an online presence; (c) print newspaper managers had the capabilities to create an online presence; and (d) participating print newspaper managers had enough rich experiences to speak to the research question.

Limitations

The limitations of a study are elements that a researcher has no control over (Denscombe, 2013). In this study, there were three limitations. The first limitation that I may have encountered was weekly print newspaper managers did not recall all the strategies that they implemented to create a digital presence. The second limitation that I may have encountered was biased responses from participants that did not accurately

represent the strategies that led to the development of the participant's organization's online presence. The last limitation that I may have encountered was gaining access to weekly newspaper managers that created a digital presence for their organization in Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the elements in research that a researcher can control (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first delimitation that was applied to this study was the geographic location of participants delimited to the Washington, DC metropolitan area. The second delimitation of my study was that participant interviews only occurred with weekly print newspaper managers who had successfully implemented a strategy to create an online presence for their organization. The final delimitation of this study was that the scope of this study focused on the strategies that each participant used to develop an online presence for their organization.

Significance of the Study

The internet and smartphones have disrupted the media industry over the course of the last two decades (Winter & Alpar, 2017). The print newspaper industry unlike television and radio was substantially affected by the shift of advertising dollars and content creation. The rapid expansion of the internet led to several costly changes that affected media content development, delivery, and advertising dollars for the newspaper industry (Saavedra & Gonzalez, 2015). The findings in this qualitative multiple case study could help print newspaper managers develop and implement an online presence that increases readership, visibility, and advertising dollars. In addition, print newspaper

managers could use the data obtained in this study to become more reflective of their organization's response to emerging market forces, consumer demands, and competitor product offerings.

Technology driven firms such as Google, Uber, and AirBnB have ushered in new business models and methods that require traditional business leaders to learn and adopt new strategies that focus on customer experiences and feelings to remain competitive (Straker et al., 2015). Managers in the print news industry could also learn how to reduce costs and generate revenue from a viable competitive strategy that has been successfully implemented by other newspapers. Furthermore, the findings could help print newspaper managers create benchmarking strategies that work toward accomplishing specific goals. Lastly, print newspaper managers could learn how to use their organization's resources and capabilities to differentiate and leverage their brand offerings.

Further, print newspapers offer readers unique experiences that are connected to their needs and community. The mass closures of local newspapers in the United States has affected how readers access the news and engage with their communities. The results of this study could provide local newspapers with a specific set of strategies that will allow them to avoid closures by developing a strong digital footprint. The survival of print newspapers is deeply tied to the economic development of local communities, the celebration of story, and defenders of the first amendment (Mierzejewska et al., 2017). Newspapers promote political and social engagement (Yun et al., 2018). Therefore, by equipping print newspaper managers with strategies that will help improve their

performance, communities continue to have record keepers of history, provide independent oversight, and accountability of government officials and services.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Business practices in the print newspaper industry have been transformed as technology has provided citizens with greater access to information. This change created opportunities for some newspaper outlets and challenges for others. The innovators of digitization have been credited with transforming business practices across industries, which led to innovative approaches in developing and delivering news products and services (Nambisan et al., 2017). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers have used to develop an online presence. The purpose of this section is to provide readers with a critical analysis of scholarly literature that examined the impact of digitization on the print newspaper industry. The literature were reviewed through the lens of Kotter's eight steps of change management and the historic and current business practices of print newspaper organizations.

Literature Review Research Strategy

The articles used in this literature review provided support for analyzing the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers have used to develop an online presence. In this literature review, I synthesized data from various sources that included peer-reviewed journals, magazines, professional organizations, seminal scholarly books, and reports. I used a total of 158 citations, of which 53% are from the years 2016–2021, with the remaining 47% of sources ranging from 2015 to 1978. I used 113 peer-reviewed

journals, which totaled 91.08%. A total of 12 books and two other articles accounted for

7.64% and 1.27% respectively. The articles used in this study came from the following

Walden University databases: Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, Sage Journals,

Business Source Complete, ProQuest, Communications and Mass Media Complete, and

Dissertations and Theses. In addition, Google Scholar, Harvard Review, The Washington

Examiner, and the Pew Research Center were used to gather articles and statistics for the

query. The search terms used to locate peer-reviewed articles for the study included the

newspaper industry, change management, John Kotter, innovation, disruptive innovation,

digital media, social media, and *organizational change*. I also used a combination of

those terms to locate peer-reviewed journals that would align with my research topic. The

primary sources used in the research query came from peer-reviewed journals, reports,

and articles that were published between 1985–2021. The use of various scholarly

sources in the literature review addressed change management, digitization, and the print

newspaper industry. In the first section of the literature review, I explore Kotter's eight

steps of change management. In the second section, I discuss the significance of change

and how it has impacted the creation and delivery of media since the arrival of the Web

2.0. Lastly, I summarize the role of strategic planning during times of change.

Business Strategy

The primary goal of an organization is to increase its profitability and

sustainability in the market. Increasing profitability and sustainability require business

leaders to understand emerging trends, the impact of technology and how to navigate

change. When business leaders rely on previous successes to guide their future, leaders

run the risk of disruptive innovators shifting their stronghold in the market. In the print newspaper industry, digitization has altered business norms and required organizations to develop change strategies to prevent stagnation in the market and a lapse in innovative development.

Kotter's Eight Steps of Change Management

As access to digital technology increases and markets overlap, print newspaper managers will need to understand how to create lasting change to compete and remain viable. The conceptual framework that I used for this study was John Kotter's eight steps of change management that debuted in a 1995 *Harvard Business Review* essay and was expanded on in his book *Leading Change* in 1996 (Applebaum et al., 2012). Kotter's eight steps of change management has provided business leaders with a detailed guide for navigating organizational change. Kotter (2009) suggested that successful transformation in an organization requires business leaders to create, build, form, enlist, enable, generate, sustain, and institute their strategic vision in a way that includes stakeholder input. Kotter's theory of change management was appropriate for this study because it provides an understanding of how organizations evaluate and address their needs for change against their goals, market trends, and stakeholder resistance. In addition, Kotter's theory of change management provides a set of strategies for safeguarding change.

Kotter's eight steps of change management were designed to help leaders create lasting change by constantly checking the organization's pulse throughout the change process. Kotter's theory requires a firm's leadership to (a) create a sense of urgency, (b) form a powerful guiding coalition, (c) create a vision, (d) communicate the vision, (e)

empower others to act on the vision, (f) plan for and create short-term wins, (g) consolidate improvements and produce still more change, and (h) institutionalize new approaches as leaders implement change (Kotter, 1995). The steps outlined by Kotter should be followed in the order designed by Kotter to increase an organization's ability to withstand opposition and to communicate an organization's change goals. Kotter (1995) noted that the inspiration behind his development of the eight steps of change management derived from his observations of more than 100 organizations over the course of a decade and their attempts to implement strategies that would enable them to be better competitors. Kotter discovered that many organizations fail to implement the last change because an organization's leaders do not use a set of guiding principles.

Step 1: Create a Sense of Urgency

According to Kotter's eight steps of change management, creating a sense of urgency is the first step that leaders should follow when identifying that a change in their organization needs to occur (Kotter, 1995). Developing a sense of urgency in an organization requires leaders to acknowledge that a problem exists and that a systematic change needs to occur. Leaders who identify a need for change and communicate to their stakeholders the importance of change can then begin the process of implementing new business practices. The implementation of a change process requires a firm's leaders to examine the marketplace and competitive challengers for opportunities and threats (Kotter, 2007). Without market research to substantiate a need for change, an organization's leadership could face resistance from their stakeholders, who may not believe that change is needed. The creation of a sense of urgency is the most important

aspect of change management because it requires the aggressive cooperation of stakeholders (Kotter, 2007).

Once leaders have decided that organizational change is needed, leaders then need to design a plan that incorporates stakeholder buy-in. Stakeholder buy-in will drive organizational change. When stakeholders do not buy into the need for change, the cultural transformation that leaders would like to implement would fail (Kotter, 2007). Stakeholders are the individuals who implement an organization's change strategy. If a firm's leaders are resistant or unwilling to see the need for change, organizations will face additional challenges.

As an organization's leaders prepare to introduce the need for change, the organizations leaders should prepare for individuals who are resistant to change (Kotter, 2007). Resistance to change is natural, and leaders should plan for how to minimize opposition or work around it. Opponents of change could affect the morale, productivity, and profitability of their organization. Therefore, it is vital for leaders to develop a plan that incorporates stakeholder perspective. For example, excuses related to cost and organizational structure may be barriers. Some business leaders view change as costly (Varney, 2017). As a result, business leaders are resistant to change. In addition, some leaders may view change as unnecessary and out of step with long-standing organizational goals, which creates additional challenges to advocates for change. Kotter (2007) asserted that during the creation of urgency, leaders in a firm should not underestimate the difficulties of getting people to move out of their comfort zones. He also noted the dangers of becoming paralyzed by the risks associated with change.

To combat stakeholder resistance, leaders can complete a market analysis to determine how their products or services could be profitable and sustainable in the market and then present their findings as leaders champion for change. Organizations can complete a SWOT analysis, hire an external firm to do market research, or conduct an internal analysis of how best to meet shifting demands in the market. Once an assessment of the market has been completed, a firm's leaders are then tasked with convincing a majority of their leadership that a continuation of traditional practices would be more dangerous than the unknown (Kotter, 2007). Firms thus create a sense of urgency by providing stakeholders with clear evidence for the need to change based on external resources (Calegari et al., 2015). An analysis of the market would speak to the need for change and identify what competitors are doing and what demands consumers have placed on the market. Organizations that are unwilling to consider how evolution in the marketplace could affect their bottom line.

Organizational change often fails because the leadership within an organization have not created a sense of urgency (Haque et al., 2015). As leaders create a sense of urgency, leaders should appeal to the interest of stakeholders and the needs of consumers to enhance the creation of urgency for organizational change. Although creating a sense of urgency could be vital when implementing organizational change, it could also be essential for leaders to have a well thought out plan prior to engaging their employees. According to Kotter (2007) rushing through the first step of change management, applying too much concern to a manager's feelings about change and the fear of being blamed for creating a crisis within an organization could counter an organization's

change management strategy. Additionally, stakeholders could question their leaders when challenges during the change process arise if stakeholders have not been incorporated into the process of identifying the need for organizational change. Leaders who provide stakeholders with an option to change could threaten the change process. Leaders should allow employees the necessary time to accept new changes to prevent the derailment of change management efforts (Appelbaum et al., 2012).

Step 2: Forming a Guiding Coalition

While leaders develop their change management strategies, leaders will need a set of people to rely on during the change process. This set of individuals is known as the guiding coalition, which is the second step in Kotter's eight steps of change management model (Kotter, 1995). The guiding coalition will help an organization's leaders communicate the need for change. This role is critical because leaders cannot be in all places and do not connect with all stakeholders. Therefore, building a coalition of individuals that can carry the firm's new message has an increased chance of buy-in.

During the selection process of the guiding coalition, leaders should develop a list of characteristics and talents that each contributor will bring to the table. According to Kotter (1995), it is vital for firms to create a coalition of leaders that can lead and influence others to accept and participate in an organization's change efforts. The development of a coalition does not initially require a large group of stakeholders but individuals who are willing to implement the firm's vision for change (Kotter, 2007). A small group of faithful members of the coalition could carry the weight of the change message in contrast to a large group saturated with resisters. When leaders select their

guiding coalition members, leaders should consider the individual's ability to block

entities that are resistant to the firm's change strategy (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Blocking

entities that are resistant to the firm's change strategy may require leaders to select

individuals whom the leader may not like personally but are individuals that can achieve

the organization's overall goal of implementing change.

Inclusion and diversity are also fundamental when developing and implementing

a change management strategy. The development of a group of likeminded individuals

does not have to include an organization's top leadership but should consist of

individuals with titles that indicate expert knowledge, expertise, reputations, and

relationships (Kotter, 2007). Coalition members should also represent a snapshot of the

organization's demographics and various factions. While leaders are assembling their

core members of change, it is significant to note that a feeling of awkwardness may exist

among the newly developed coalition, because the coalition will be required to work

outside of their traditional roles (Kotter, 2007). As a result, leaders should cultivate

various relationships with coalition members to secure their relationship's longevity.

It is also essential for an organization's leadership to invest in the change effort to

safeguard against detractors. Kotter's (2007) change management strategy does not

advocate for a monarchical attitude but is rooted in support for change from the

organization's top leadership (Appelbaum et al., 2012). When employees observe leaders

resistant to change, the experience can influence their perspective of the need to change.

Leaders are often observed, and employees follow the behaviors and attitudes of their

respective leader, which could lead to the uprooting of change and give unwarranted

power to critics. Change is not easily implemented because it requires buy-in and commitment from individuals that are implementing the new plan (Hechanova et al., 2018). When individuals in leadership positions do not agree with the change process the unwilling members of leadership could derail change efforts by sharing their emotional perspective with subordinates.

Leaders who do not have a relationship with their teams or are considered uninvested in the ideas of employees will face challenges when it comes to employee buy-in. Some firms' failure to implement change in the second step of the process because the members within the organization do not have a history of teamwork in their firm (Kotter, 2007). The unsuccessful implementation of change by firms during the development of a coalition is associated with the lack of strong line leadership (Kotter, 2007). Change in an organization is guided by leadership, and the absence of leadership will derail change management strategies.

An organization's leadership should have a clear blueprint for the changes that leadership would like to see implemented and how leadership will implement those changes. Change in some organizations fail because a firm's leaders cannot develop a readiness for change within the organization (Haque et al., 2015). Individuals guiding the change should understand their organization's vision for change to ensure the navigation of change within their organization (Kogila, 2016). Individuals who are resistant to change are the largest group within an organization; therefore, the coalition for change has to develop an implementation strategy to reach this core group (Mento et al., 2002). When this process is not followed, change will not prevail.

Step 3: Creating a Vision

When organizations are formed, leaders create a vision to guide the organization therefore, the creation of a vision is a guiding light for an organization. The third step of Kotter's eight steps of change management is the creation of a vision (Kotter, 1995). An organization's vision should guide their decision making. At the onset of an organization's development, leaders create a vision and mission statement to guide their goals. It should be known to all employees and used as a measurement tool. Organizations that operate from the standpoint of their vision may need to re-align their goals to meet their vision. Kotter (2007) wrote that an organization's vision should move beyond numbers and clarify the direction that the organization needs to move. A vision will allow the organization to determine if employees are moving in step with leaderships proposed changes and overall company objectives. Kogila (2016) asserted that the vision of an organization should be expressed in a clear, focused manner. The vision of an organization should be able to be translated and understood by all stakeholders in a manner that will enhance the change management process. Firms that do not develop a strategy for reaching their vision tend to be less successful at implementing change (Kotter, 1995).

Clear communication is key when organizations are going through the change process. Communicating the vision of an organization is a process of teaching new behaviors; it requires business leaders to create buy-in by expressing an inclusive approach to the vision that will benefit all stakeholders, suggested Kotter (2007). In addition, Kotter (2007) noted that the vision of an organization should align with a set of

strategies to realize the stated vision. The strategies that an organization develops should be designed to incorporate stakeholders at every level of the organization and accountability checks. Appelbaum et al. (2012) referring to Kotter's (1995) writing that without a clear vision, an organization's objectives could fall into confusing and incompatible projects that do not align with the firm's vision for change. Therefore, leaders are charged with constantly evaluating how their change strategies are being implemented.

Leaders within an organization are frequently required to engage employees that are resistant and reluctant towards change (Hechanova et al., 2018). However, with the aid of the guiding coalition and active buy-in from stakeholders, leaders could create a culture shift in their organizations. The challenges to change within an organization can be overwhelming because shifts in culture are a disruption of processes that have traditionally been rewarded (Kogila, 2016). Employees become accustomed to the guidelines of achievement within an organization and do not seek to have their routines disrupted. Kotter (2007) warned that change management strategies have failed in organizations whose visions have been replaced without plans, directives, and programs. Furthermore, the absence of a plan creates a space for the emergence of changes that are in contrast to organizational goals and desired outcomes.

Creating a clear vision lays the foundation for change, but the coalition of leaders must develop a mechanism for communicating the vision to stakeholders. Change is not easy within an organization, but establishing a clear vision will help stakeholders buy into the change process (Kotter, 1995). The communication of a firm's vision, according to

Kotter (1995) is a process of teaching new behaviors by using multiple methods of message delivery. The use of varied methods welcomes stakeholders into the conversation. This could include team meetings, memos, one-on-one mentoring, and emails. The communication strategy that a firm implements to share their new vision could derail their attempts at change unless a large percentage of stakeholders are willing to make short-term sacrifices (Kotter, 2007). Short-term sacrifices could allow organizations to achieve long term goals that improve their overall brand value and culture.

As leaders implement change, leaders should create a system of rewards to help employees feel invested and valued during the change process. Kotter (2007) noted that employees will not buy-into the change process if the vision's communication does not appeal to them or is communicated in a manner that does not consider their value to the organization. Clear communication of the firm's vision to employees can reduce anxiety and resistance (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Clear communication can also create a sense of excitement and welcome challenges when handled with care.

Step 4: Communicating the Vision

Change within an organization is not easily executed but can be enhanced by incorporating Kotter's eight steps of change management. Organizations that develop a guide for implementing change will make clear references to their guide as challenges arise. According to Hughes (2016), Kotter's eight steps of change management are the reversal of an error commonly found in business practices. Kotter's eight steps of change management laid out a path for the distinction between leaders and their role of leading

organizational change versus managers whose work was suited for times of stability (Fisher, 2018). When the leaders of an organization misalign pivotal organizational roles, it could impact their change strategy.

The role of a leader is to share the why, the vision, and the reason stakeholders should care about the work that needs to be completed, especially in times of rapid and evolving change (Fisher, 2018). It is during the change process that employees monitor the actions of their leadership. According to Kotter (1995), leaders are required to work with various members within an organization to gather and synthesize information to improve methods of working and the delivery of information. Change within an organization is effective when leaders demonstrate their willingness to change. It is the responsibility of leaders to embrace change to effectively implement change and employee support (Kogila, 2016).

Employees will buy-in to the change process when employees believe that their leadership was invested. A critical element of activating change in stakeholders is to enable them to make an emotional investment in the change process by allowing them to see and feel the process of change (Kotter & Cohen, 2002; Su, 2016). According to Kotter (2014), appealing to employees requires an investment in how employees feel, not merely a presentation of data and facts. Appealing to employees requires an emotional tie with the organization. As leaders prepare to communicate their vision to their key coalition, leaders should select individuals that are open-minded, flexible, and collegial in their interactions (Seijts & Gandz, 2018). The key coalition will be the face of the change strategy. The guiding coalition provides the foundation of the change process as it relates

to stakeholder buy-in. The coalition will also help align stakeholders behind the new vision and motivate them to purposeful action (Fisher, 2018). Therefore, leaders should be selective and proactive in their selection of coalition members because coalition members can promote or derail change efforts.

Implementing change is a continuous process that requires the examination of success and failures against the new vision that an organization is working to achieve. When stakeholders create progress monitoring tools, stakeholders are able to determine if the changes established are aligned with their timeline or if new goals need to be established. The achievement of a shared vision requires effort and input across the strategic cycle from various members of an organization (Erikson & Fundin, 2018). Once stakeholders understand how employees and the greater community can benefit from the change process, stakeholders are more willing to invest their talents into the organization's vision. Kotter (2005) noted that targeted and coordinated activities that leaders engage could make the team's vision a reality. Continuously communicating a firm's vision will enhance the process of creating a sense of urgency, which is step one of Kotter's eight steps of change management (Burden, 2016). Additionally, Fisher (2018) asserted that a firm's vision would not penetrate an organization's culture if it is not articulated in a way that becomes intrinsic to stakeholders. When members of an organization believe in the vision they will invest their talents to help the vision materialize.

An important factor in developing and implementing organizational change is trust amongst stakeholders. Trust, according to Kotter (2005), is an essential element in

establishing employee buy-in during the change process. The absence of trust will derail change efforts and impact an organization's ability to innovate. It allows employees to feel safe with the decisions of their leaders. Employees and the public expect leaders to be honest in their communication strategies and relationships (Seijts & Gandz, 2018). When leaders are viewed as untruthful employees and the public judges their integrity against their actions. In many organizations trust is missing, and as a result, employees are not committed to the organization's vision (Kotter, 1996). Therefore, leaders need to cultivate an environment where trust and communication are a cultural norm.

Step 5: Empowering Others to Act on the Vision

The fifth step of Kotter's eight steps of change management theory is to empower others to act on the vision. The development of a vision within a firm is only a talking point if leaders are unable to get stakeholders to do the work needed to strategically advance the firm's work. Transformation within an organization requires hundreds if not thousands of individuals who are willing to share the firm's message while understanding that some short-term sacrifices might be required (Kotter, 1995). Short-term sacrifices could come in the form of department restructuring and technological shifts.

Resistance to change exist when new processes and ideas are introduced. As a result, the leaders of an organization should develop a roll out process to engage all stakeholders. Corporate leadership guides the interactions of employees and provides meaning to organizational perception (Dimitrovia, 2019). Leaders could create a strategic and innovative plan to navigate change within their firm, but this does not mean that employees will embrace the leader's new goals. Organizations rely on human capital and

the success of institutional change is contingent upon the willingness of its employees to support the new vision of the organization (Hechanova et al, 2018). Resistance can take on many forms, such as a delay in production, damaging morale, and high employee turnover. Kotter (1995) noted that obstacles to change could take the form of people, systems, or lack of information. No matter the form of resistance to change, the productivity and culture of a firm are impacted. Furthermore, Kogila (2016) asserted that no matter how detailed an organization's change management strategy is, resistance will exist at various levels within an organization. Therefore, getting buy-in, using change agents, fostering openness, and two-way communication, and providing transparency are strategies that leaders could use to counter resistance (Kogila, 2016).

The change process will promote new ideas and new strategies within the organization when implemented in an equitable manner to all stakeholders. As the change process begins to take shape, employees will initiate new business approaches, develop new ideas, and provide leadership (Kotter, 2007). When systems fail during the change process leaders must quickly assess what went wrong and develop strategies to correct the error in a clear and transparent manner. When employees experience barriers during the change process, employees may seek comfort in traditional business practices. During step five of Kotter's change management strategy stakeholders begin to feel comfortable with the change process. Kotter and Cohen (2002) asserted that removing the obstacles that block change will empower actions. During this phase of change, members of the guiding coalition can step in to provide employees with needed reassurances.

Buy-in from leadership is critical to safeguarding the change process. Seijts and Gandz (2018) argued that obstacles to change also includes management. Managers have direct contact with employees and can sway corporate culture. Therefore, when organizations create their coalition of change agents, it is significant to evaluate the roles that current managers would play. Managers have the ability to derail or promote the organization's new vision. One pitfall of empowering others to implement the vision is not removing employees that are resistant to the change strategy (Kotter, 2007). Organizations that fail to acknowledge the power that leaders have over employees run the risk of undermining their longevity in the marketplace and their new vision. Firms who empower managers that inconsistently deliver the new vision, weaken employee's ability to support the new organizational goals (Kotter, 2007).

While a firm works through the eight steps of change management, leaders should develop safe systems for risk-taking. Kotter (2007) warned against organizational structures that forced individuals to choose been the firm's new vision and self-interest. When employees believe that organizational changes are in opposition to their self-interest employees could derail change efforts. Finding individuals who can bolster self-confidence in the organization is a good method of encouraging action (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). One method that firms could use to promote change is developing a reward system that acknowledges individuals who act on the new vision (Calegari et al., 2015). In addition, business leaders could also remove the barriers of change by displaying their vulnerability and willingness to embrace input from all levels within the organization. Many people resist change because people believe they will lose something of value and

that agreeing to embrace change means their previous buy-in was incorrect (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1989).

Step 6: Generate Short-Term Wins

When organizations seek to navigate the process of innovation and change, Kotter's sixth step in the change management process is essential. Change within an organization does not take place overnight and employees could become discouraged without small victories. These small victories are also known as short-term wins. Short-term wins are visible changes that move an organization's new goals forward (Wheeler & Holmes, 2017). The development of short-term wins helps to validate the need for organizational change (Pollack & Pollack, 2014). It adds to the viability and visibility of how change can be beneficial. In addition, encouraging short-term wins could create greater buy-in of the vision because employees could view and measure change results. Employees respond to tangible outcomes. In addition, short-term wins allow leaders to test their new vision against immediate conditions and adjust in real-time (Kotter, 1996).

When employees can see the benefit of change, it decreases their anxiety and their natural will to resist change. Kotter (2007) argued that short-term wins help maintain a sense of urgency and forces analytical thinking that can improve the overall vision of organizational change. One of the significant pitfalls of generating short-term wins is leaving short term-successes up to chance (Kotter, 2007). In contrast, remaining focused on the long-term change goal will decrease an organization's chance of viewing a short-term win as the primary goal. Therefore, leaders are encouraged to evaluate their visions through the lens of systems and structures during the short-term win process to make

needed revisions that meet the overall change goal (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Short-term

wins build morale and assist stakeholders to reinvest in the change process. The absence

of celebrating short-term wins could result in employee siding with the original

population who were resistant to the change process (Kotter, 1995).

Step 7: Consolidate Improvements and Producing Still More Change

The change process requires strategic implementation of goals towards an

organization's vision. Change cannot be successful without a plan (Kogila, 2016).

Identifying wins and outlining them to stakeholders is a vital element in the change

process. Identifying short-term wins allows employees to see that aspects of the new

vision have successfully been implemented. In step-seven of Kotter's change

management theory, he signals to leaders that it is important to consolidate improvements

and still produce more change after the short-term wins have demonstrated areas of the

vision that are working (Kotter, 1995). During the seventh step leaders should also

promote and develop employees who can implement the vision, according to Kotter

(2007). Providing employees with an opportunity to grow as a leader within an

organization will increase loyalty, trust, and a willingness to share the benefits of change.

Change is a process that takes time and should not be abandoned quickly after a few

short-term successes. The abandonment of strategy and coalition building after the sixth

step could undermine previous gains (Kotter, 2007).

Communication is also important in step seven. It allows mid-level leadership to

provide suggestions for improving their organizational structure and offer feedback about

changes that have not been supported by systems or people. Su (2016) suggested that

during step seven of Kotter's change management process, communication is key it helps

speed up the adoption of new organizational structures. A lack of communication could

undermine change efforts and empower resisters. Communication throughout the change

management process is essential to accomplishing long-term goals (Kotter, 2007).

Communication also helps to keep abreast of employees that have buy-in and the

reference points of resisters. Successful organizations take the credibility of short-term

wins to tackle more significant problems within their organization (Kotter, 2007). When

organizations declare victory before their overall vision has been implemented leaders

could create barriers to their change efforts (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1989). Once barriers

to the change effort have been erected leaders and coalition members are faced with the

challenge of getting team members to continue to move towards the primary change goal.

Maintaining the vision is essential but developing accurate measures of success is critical.

During step seven, leaders should further develop organizational structures that would

enhance the organization's strategic vision, while understanding that change is a

revolving process (Wheeler & Holmes, 2017). Organizations that do not continue to

analyze their signs of progress will not be able to leverage their short-term gains.

Step 8: Institutionalizing New Approaches

The last step of Kotter's eight steps of change management is institutionalizing

new approaches. Leaders should communicate the connections between new

organizational behaviors and corporate successes in the eighth step of the change

management process (Kotter, 1995). When employees understand how their change

efforts have positively impacted their organization's goals, it creates a sense of ownership

and silences resisters. Leaders need to show stakeholders how the new approaches, behaviors, and attitudes have improved performance for change to be maintained in their organization (Kotter, 1995).

During the last step of Kotter's eight steps of change management, leaders should develop mechanisms to maintain their new organizational structures. In the final stage of change management, the primary goal is to institutionalize the change and embed it into an organization's culture (Calegari et al., 2015). The final step of Kotter's change management strategy could be one of the hardest to accomplish because it signals that a change has occurred in the culture of an organization. Change in an organization has taken root when it becomes the norm for how things are done in that organization (Kotter, 2007). In addition, a shift in organizational culture will be evident when the protest of resisters is greatly minimized.

While leaders are guiding their organizations though the change process, leaders need to ensure that the organization's vision is protected against resisters. Leaders could protect the firm's new vision by forming collaborative team-building opportunities for feedback and succession planning. An organization's leadership could also use print and verbal communication to spread the positive messaging about the short-term wins associated with the new vision. Leaders maintain clear and frequent communication with stakeholders to protect the organization's new vision suggested Heckelman (2017). Guiding the narrative of change would allow leaders to minimize false stories and the influences that resisters could have on the new culture.

Employees will trust and follow consistent leaders, who are able to accept fault and openly adjust to change. Leaders should provide transparency throughout the change process because if employees feel as if leaders are manipulating them, employees will not respond well and the actions of leaders could undermine previous progress (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1989). Allowing employees to feel a part of the change process will encourage them to feel empowered and give them the transparency needed to trust the process. Implementing a leadership development plan to maintain the integrity of the organizational structure by encouraging employees to take chances with new ideas (Wheeler & Holmes, 2017).

The Significance of Change

Change is the vehicle that keeps businesses alive and viable in shifting and growing markets. Since Kotter's eight steps of change management model was developed, it has been used by business leaders as a guide for effective and innovative implementation of change management (Appelbaum et al., 2012). Organizational leaders who understand how to leverage the change process can disrupt markets and increase profit margins. Firms such as Apple, Uber, and Starbucks have leveraged change to differentiate themselves from competitors and reap the rewards of financial growth. Euchner (2013) noted that Kotter's eight steps of change management model is influential in managing organizational innovation because it requires business leaders to factor in variables beyond the financial and technical risks associated with change. Developing a change management strategy requires organizations to draft and implement new approaches to market trends, while incorporating stakeholder's perspectives.

Change does not occur overnight but requires gradual steps to ensure lasting effects, which should align with an organization's goal of sustainability and profitability in the market. Kotter's eight steps of change management model was rooted in avoiding major errors in the change process (Mento et al., 2002). When leaders do not establish check-in points, monitor change, or rush through the change process, leaders run the risk of creating temporary change that could be undercut by detractors.

Leaders within organizations that seek to implement organizational change could benefit from the lessons learned by experienced business leaders. One of the lessons that could be observed from organizations that successfully implemented the change process is, that the leadership and stakeholders went through a series of phases that required a significant amount of time (Kotter, 1995). Skipping steps and making mistakes in any stage of the change process could have a negative impact, slow momentum, and negate hard-won gains during the change process (Kotter, 2009). When business leaders achieve initial gains towards their organization's change goal, it is still significant for them to identify potential threats to their gains. Organizations that do not expect and plan for change run the risk of losing their former gains in the market, as evidenced by Kodak.

Before an organization's leadership engages in a change management strategy, leaders should determine if their firm's need for change is being directed by creative tension or a need to solve organizational problems (Mento et al., 2002). Understanding the difference between creative tension and solving an organizational problem will have an effect on the outcomes of their change efforts and the methods leaders select. It will also affect how employees respond to leadership's requests for change. Change within an

organization that is vision driven and guided by engaged employees could impact change efforts (Haque et al., 2015).

Additionally, stakeholder buy-in is critical during the development, execution, and maintenance phases of organizational change. A critical component of Kotter's eight steps of change management is leadership and how leaders present change to their stakeholders (Pollack & Pollack, 2014). Leaders that develop an alliance with multiple stakeholders prior to implementing organizational change create a dynamic where various individuals can carry the change message and increase buy-in. Kotter's (1995) model required leaders to select individuals who would willingly buy in to the change process and effectively execute the leader's vision. This process helps to eliminate the appearance of a top-down change strategy. Strategic change would be defined by an organization's incorporation of modifications in strategy, structure, power distribution, and control systems (Dominquez-CC & Barros-Castro, 2017). Therefore, organizations should seek to enhance business practices by developing structured protocols to improve sustainability.

Traditional Media

The rapid growth of Web 2.0 has transformed how consumers receive information and their expectations of the media industry. Before digitalization, the media sought to inform communities worldwide about local, national, and global events by delivering content via print newspapers, radio, magazines, and television. Traditional media platforms, such as print newspapers, have concentrated their efforts on delivering hard news that aligns with local and national television reporting. Additionally, traditional

media platforms have been viewed as an outlet for community advocacy and pride. Local newspapers are the backbone of civic engagement and community protection (Shaker, 2014. Locally printed newspapers provide communities with an outlet geared towards meeting their specific local needs.

Print newspapers have actively engaged with consumers across platforms for nearly a century, as evidenced by radio broadcast (Roberts & Saint, 2015). Print newspapers were the primary source of information used by citizens for over a century in the United States. Newspapers were the primary vehicle for information sharing, public discourse, advertisement, and advocacy. Citizens trusted their local newspapers and used the data to guide their political, social, and economic decisions. Print newspapers were vital to an informed citizenry and a healthy democracy (Westlund & Fardigh, 2014).

Globalization shifted traditional business relationships and practices between consumers and organizations in the print newspaper industry. In 1995 about 2% of American adults accessed news online a minimum of three times a week, in comparison to 46% in 2010 (Chyi & Tenenboim, 2017). Traditionally consumers turned to print news outlets that were operated by seasoned professionals. However, the growth of the internet has given birth to amateur writers and reporters, which have eroded the role of traditional news outlets (Karimi & Walter, 2015). As a result, leaders in the print newspaper industry have been required to develop new strategies to attract and retain consumers and advertisers in a foreign domain.

According to Karimi and Walter (2015) globalization, millenialization, prosumerization, business virtualization, and platformization have changed society and

our perception of news delivery and the value of news. Presently, consumers welcome

the perspectives of amateur reporters and writers. The concept of who is allowed to report

the news has changed as technology has created a platform for diverse perspectives to

emerge. The impact of digital communities on the newspaper industry could not be

overlooked or under-estimated (Robinson, 2017). Therefore, understanding the various

dimensions of media and how consumers impact this evolution is critical to determining

the strategies that print newspaper managers could use to navigate change and compete in

the digital age.

As consumers became more reliant on technology, traditional business strategies

had to be adjusted to include an internet adoption policy. The shift to internet focused

business strategies have disrupted the business practices used by print newspaper

managers. During the 2000s, popular media outlets argued that the internet would lead to

the death of the traditional newspaper industry (Cho et al., 2016), In response to this

assertation the print newspaper industry, leaders adjusted their reporting, marketing, and

advertising techniques to keep up with consumer consumption of media. Print newspaper

publishers began to experiment with taking their news offerings online as a necessity to

avoid competitive advantage (Alpar, 2017).

Multiple innovative disruptions have challenged the print newspaper industry.

These disruptions are not only inclusive of advancements in technology but also

consumer driven preferences. Mierzejewska et al. (2017) noted that disruption in the print

newspaper industry has taken different forms throughout history. One example is the

growth of news-based magazines. Although news-based magazines did not directly

compete with daily newspapers, news-based magazines challenged print newspapers to increase their graphics and scope of reporting to include a national reach. Throughout history, there have been technological threats to the print newspaper industry, including broadcast radio and television (Stamm, 2010). As each innovation shifted consumer behavior, the print newspaper industry was forced to create new sustainable and profitable practices to attract and retain consumers.

New Methods of Content Delivery

The delivery of news content has adapted to change throughout history. At the core of journalism is a set of values attributed to reporting, including timeliness, significance, unexpectedness, conflicts, and famous people (Hong & Pae, 2017). Although these fundamental premises of reporting still exist, the advent of the internet has shifted the priorities of print newspaper producers. No longer is hard news, the only acceptable method of content production. Instead, newspaper producers have to balance soft and hard news that will engage consumers and attract advertisers. Hard news is considered breaking news, and soft news is not restricted by time (Hong & Pae, 2017). The growth of digital platforms has increased the delivery channels of media content, shifted the behaviors and patterns of users, and the boundaries between various media outlets are not clearly defined (Erikkson et al., 2016). The lack of boundaries that the internet affords users has challenged the principles of traditional news reporting and lead to widespread closures.

The print newspaper industry has been forced to adapt to several disruptors. The biggest challenges to traditional newspapers, according to Erikkson et al. (2016), are

Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Twitter, Snapchat, Apple, and Microsoft. These media outlets

provide the rapid updating of news and the flexibility of re-writes that traditional

newspapers do not offer consumers. To compete with these outlets, Erikkson et al. (2016)

suggested that traditional media outlets integrate their content into ubiquitous information

environments such as iTunes, Readly, and Spotify. When traditional print newspaper

diversifies their delivery platforms, traditional print newspapers could also risk losing a

bulk of their customer base and advertising dollars.

Changing Media Landscape

Various obstacles have affected the newspaper industry. Specifically, how

customers access news content. For example, the emergence of smart phones and tablets

have shifted reader access portals. Smart devices not only provide readers with additional

access but increased consumer frequency and demand for a 24-hour news cycle (Winter

& Alpar, 2017). In addition, platform diversification, reallocation of advertising dollars,

and reader engagement habits have affected the economic positioning of print

newspapers in the era of digital media. Digital media has created new markets for news

reporting that does not require the same overhead as print newspapers. It has also

provided opportunities for greater customer penetration.

The digitization of news has created unique challenges for the print newspaper

industry, which includes revenue decline and readership. The biggest threat to traditional

newspaper outlets has been access to free news content online (Saavedra & Gonzalez,

2015). Some print newspaper leaders have not developed a strategy to combat the

existence of free content. As a result, free access to news content has impacted

subscription revenues, which has hurt local newspaper distribution (Saavedra &

Gonzalez, 2015). Traditional newspaper outlets must therefore, develop news ways to

attract and retain consumers in the era of digital production. In order for print newspapers

to effectively compete with online publications, print newspapers should create two

digital platforms: one platform that focuses on interacting with consumers and an

additional platform for business transactions (Karimi & Walter, 2015). The development

of two platforms could enhance reader consumption for print newspapers moving to

digital platforms.

Technology has created opportunities and obstacles. The researchers of "A New

Democracy" (2016) noted that technology has changed power dynamics between

consumers and media vanguards. Consumers are not restricted to the timelines and

platforms, once generated by media giants that created a 24-hour news cycle. The

gatekeepers of media no longer have unrestricted control over who accesses media,

which is attributed to advances in technology. The authors of *A New Democracy* (2016)

noted that consumers have the power to generate media through blogs, online social sites,

and a host of devices to meet their specific needs, which has forced media leaders to

create new media models that maintain profit growth. When print newspaper managers

cannot innovate, print newspaper managers lose their standing in the market and are

forced to close. Nearly 40% of newsroom staff across American been 1995-2015 have

experienced a decline (Wolfe, 2017).

The integration of multiple platform delivery may be what is needed to save print

newspapers in the digital age. Traditional publishers such as *The Washington Post*, *New*

York Times, and *USA Today* have successfully leverage their offerings online. The delivery of news content to various devices could also be an essential strategy for traditional print newspaper that are seeking to cultivate their digital consumer base (Erikkson et al., 2016). Multiple platform delivery could include mobile devices, tablets, and small screen televisions that appear on gas pumps. Mobile devices have influenced news consumption, creation, and delivery (Westlund & Fardigh, 2014). Easy and instant access to news is a driving force for consumers that prefer smart devices to access the news. Print newspapers cannot compete with smart devices due to their traditional constraints. Adding to the discussion, Mangani and Tarrini (2017) noted that digital publishing has several benefits for consumers and editors, but it does not ensure profit growth. The internet can provide publishing firms with exposure, but in order to increase profit margins, publishing firms have to develop strategies that will attract and retain consumers.

When print newspapers initially began producing online content, it was merely a copy of their print content (Hong & Pae, 2017). The lack of diversification on the part of print newspapers did not prove to be successful because online news outlets were able to provide live updates on local and world events. Consumers demands therefore, started to shift the power dynamics of news reporting as readers sought out communities that catered to their interests. Although, some print newspapers moved to online platforms some print newspapers failed to create characteristics that would allow for a two-way communication strategy between consumers. Print newspaper strategies also did not contain any original content that could not be found on similar sites (Hong & Pae, 2017).

As a result, new producers of news were able to fill a void in the media industry that combined hard news with soft news.

The traditional pyramid of news reporting included the parameters of walking around observing and meeting people which contained elements of great story telling, displayed toughness in the face of attacks, and had excellent writing (Hong & Pae, 2017). Individuals that worked within the realm of traditional newspaper reporting were often trained professionals. Traditional journalists were guided by a set of principles in reporting that required fact checking and accuracy. However, as online news developers began to grow, the rules of reporting shifted away from fact finding and accuracy. Hong and Pae (2017) noted that online news content producers do not align their writing with the traditional pyramid of news production, but instead use a storytelling method.

Change From Intended and External Forces

Innovation and technology have created, restructured, and eliminated industries throughout history. The print newspaper industry and the development of the printing press during the Industrial Revolution transformed the distribution of information in the United States of America. Before its' inception the newspaper industry was limited in scope and access. This advancement in technology helped to bolster the print newspaper industry. As new developments in technology arose the print newspaper industry faced many challengers and profited from technological innovation. To date, the print newspaper industry's biggest disruptor has been the internet. Van der Burg & Van den Bulck (2017) noted that the emergence of online content was tailored to niche

communities, versus a traditional broad stroke of data points which added to the print newspaper business model's breakdown.

Web 2.0 is considered one of the most significant technological innovations of the 21st century. It provided safe passage for digitization to emerge as a new platform for new business transactions. Digitization, which is also referred to as e-commerce, is the process by which businesses and consumers offer a set of goods or services across multiple additions to the marketplace increased user strength and weakened the print newspapers' ability to influence and control the market. Digitalization's impact extends beyond e-commerce and includes the transformation of digital platforms (Hagberg et al., 2016). This method of digitization has created a space for new industries to emerge and for traditional business models to be disrupted. These physical products into digital services, consumer input in social media, and the incorporation of digital devices into the transaction process.

Digitalization disrupted the tools and methods that govern consumer purchasing habits and practices. It created a space where brick-and-mortar stores were forced to compete with online retailers that offered a wider variety of offerings, often at a discounted price. The emergence of the internet created a series of exchanges that could take place between consumers and businesses that did not require brick-and-mortar stores (Hagberg et al., 2016), The new exchanges between consumers and business owners forced traditional businesses to take their goods and services online to remain competitive. It also shifted community practices and strategies that traditional firms had previously used to engage consumers. The increased popularity of e-commerce and

innovative shifts in technology brought about third-party communications, which had to be factored into business models (Hagberg et al., 2016). As a result, traditional newspapers were encouraged to accept a user facing approach to marketing, creation, and delivery of content strategies. Technology could create dynamic shifts in the market, requiring firms to adjust their business strategies to remain competitive (Allison, 2017).

Digitization and internet growth forced the print newspaper industry to restructure the previously used business model. The new vanguards became bloggers, social media sites, and hybrid reporters of news content because the new vanguards offered increased access, availability, and free content, which consumers preferred. Consumers were no longer interested in merely news delivery but also wanted to be participants in the news making and delivery process. Media consumers are selective and active participants in the production and generation of media content, which has challenged traditional media models that focused on creating and delivering media in a structured environment (Skogerbo & Winsold, 2011).

The internet has become a driver of business. Companies no longer have the option of not using the internet to communicate with consumers because a lack of interaction and transparency could result in a loss of brand value and profitability (Dovleac, 2015). The internet has also afforded consumers the opportunity to express their needs in communities that can penetrate an organization's bottom line. For print newspapers, this means consumers are acquiring news content from purposefully sought sources. Consumers enjoy a wide variety of available media platforms, but the variety of platforms offered come at a cost to traditional media outlets (Robinson, 2017). The cost

that traditional media outlets could experience is a lost in advertising revenue. Therefore, it is essential for business leaders to learn how to use social media as a driver for international interaction and knowledge management (Roberts & Pillar, 2016). In addition, brands should develop strategies to co-create with customers a product or service that meets the consumer needs (Roberts & Pillar, 2016).

Innovation

Newspapers are one of the oldest commercial activities in the United States of America. The existence of the print newspapers in the United States of America can be traced back to 1690, Boston, MA. Throughout the course of history, the print newspaper industry has experienced a lot of technological changes, with some innovations threatening the existence of the industry (Allison, 2017). Innovation has been examined as a luck of genius for some firms and a reward of hard work for others. However, Engel, et al. (2015) noted that the firms such as Ferrari, 3M, Whirlpool, Coca-Cola, and Volkswagen have proven that innovation can be a repeatable process. Developing and executing innovation requires a dedication to the process of creating something new, with the understanding that it might fail. It takes a lot of effort on the part of businesses to ride the wave of innovation because their initial investment in resources may not turn out to be profitable, and that their new products or services may not fit within the product line of their firm (Gans, 2016).

Acknowledging the need for change will impact the organization's innovation process. The opinions held by a firm's leadership will determine their willingness to associate change with innovation and sustainability. Leadership style and innovation are

not different business strategies but are working complements (Yu, 2013). When leaders

embrace innovation, leaders create a culture that embraces trial and error, the free flow of

ideas, and the change process. Innovation within a company not only takes the form of

technology but also includes leadership, human resources, communication, marketing,

and organizational structure (Taneja et al., 2016). Business isolation is not innovation

(Yu, 2013). In the case of Steve Jobs, he incorporated various groups of users and

developers on a multi-sided platform, which cultivated the growth of new business

concepts, while expanding Apple's brand.

Firms that look to remain viable in a competitive market should optimize the

value of their innovation portfolio by diversifying their offerings. When business leaders

optimize a firm's portfolio, business leaders engage various stakeholders and are

welcome to new ideas (Engel et al., 2015). As leaders embrace the change effort, leaders

should create smart and strategic goals that align with their firm's mission. When firms

can establish an increase in innovation, efficiency, and speed firms often work cross-

functionally to simultaneously manage and leverage innovation (Engel et al., 2015).

Digital Strategies

Web 2.0 has proven to provide rich opportunities for business growth and failure.

When optimized, the internet serves as a viable tool for businesses to promote their goods

and services. When underused, it can hinder growth and hurt market sustainability.

Newspapers should develop strategies for leveraging value to readers and advertisers

(Erikkson et al., 2016). In addition, Van der Burg and Van den Bulck (2017) proposed

that print newspaper publications find positions within the newspaper industry that are

not saturated and attempt to penetrate those areas. Funding undersaturated areas could include adding columns written by various experts, embedding broadcasting techniques into online content, or focusing on stories not covered by mainstream media.

Shaker (2014) studied the decline of print newspaper and learned that the reallocation of advertising dollars from print to digital platforms has played a key role in affecting print newspapers survival rates. Advertisers want to get products and or services before the largest audiences possible, and their move to digital platforms is an indicator of the value advertisers have placed in digital markets. The development of a multiple platform approach to print news delivery requires strategic execution and planning. As print newspapers seek to diversify their offerings, print newspaper managers have to understand how to use the internet and websites as branding tools to reach potential customers. Business leaders should understand the value of website visibility as a strategic tool for increasing profitability (Wang & Xu, 2017).

An additional digital strategy that print newspapers could use to digitize their offering is to incorporate quick response (QR) codes. According to Roberts and Saint (2015), QRs are barcodes that print newspapers attach to their papers, which will allow consumers to use their smartphones to direct them to the newspaper's online publication. QRs also provide users with multiple options for accessing the contents of their print newspapers. The uses of mobile devices and the internet have altered consumer behaviors and expectations, which has created a vacuum for new businesses to emerge and satisfy the needs and wants of consumers (Hagberg et al., 2016).

Although print newspapers face a unique set of challenges in the digital age, there are increasing opportunities for financial growth when maximized. Communication barriers between consumers have been dismantled because of Web 2.0, which has provided organizations with greater access to a wider pool of purchasers (Huang et al.,). Consumers are no longer bystanders of product developers. Consumers are now also seen as influencers that could use the power of social media to advocate for brands that consumers personally like or sway the marketing campaigns of businesses that do not align with their ideologies. Technologies such as smartphones, tablets, and easy internet access have dramatically altered how people view and interact with media. Consumers can now decide what they want access to, opt out of things they do not want, and save money to access the things they do want ("A New Democracy," 2016). User options have changed the marketplace and placed new demands on traditional media organizations to adopt new strategies or face the threat of closure.

User Perspective

Digitization has increased the diversification of news offerings worldwide, which has shifted the user perspective of news delivery expectations. In addition, the internet has created a space for untraditional delivery mechanisms of news that allows users to interact, share, and research published offerings in private and online communities. The internet has also removed the delay in information updates. Consumers are currently able to receive real results in real time. Online communities have created an outlet for consumers to collectively influence brand culture and shift the business practices of firms (Schembri & Latimer, 2015).

The internet has also challenged the traditional vanguards of news and provided Buzzfeed, Huffington Post, and Reuters platforms to flourish upon. As the world continues to embrace a digital content-driven future, the internet may be credited with changing consumer conception of what constitutes a newspaper (B. Srivastava & A. Srivastava, 2015). Accessing the news is no longer bounded by word counts and print production. Furthermore, digital media producers do not have to release a full story in one setting, but are able to release a teaser of a story to draw readers to their site or publish multiple short updates of a story throughout the day. The diversity of online content offered by digital news producers allows consumers to gather information from multiple websites without the loyalty of a subscription.

Leaders and Change

Leadership and innovation are key drivers in helping an organization create and maintain a sustainable advantage over its competitors. Once an organization's leadership has developed a vision for their organization, leadership should assemble a team of individuals who will accomplish their goals with minimal oversight and efficiency, as outlined in Kotter's eighty steps of change management strategy (Kotter, 1995). Establishing a trusted team of individuals to carry out a leader's change management strategy is vital when an organization seeks to innovate its business offerings. Strategic change requires leaders to shift their perspectives by entering new roles and empowering their employees (Dominique-CC & Barroso-Castro, 2017). An organization's leadership is a strategic tool that can be linked to a firm's successes. Many organizational leaders

understand the importance of creating a strong presence in the global marketplace in the era of digitization and the leaders that owners select to guide their firms.

Leaders that seek to have their organizations remain viable in the age of technology can no longer rely on their historical successes to sustain their brand in a global market. Firms such as Kodak and Blockbuster have proven that a lack of change can lead to failure. Leaders are change agents who can transform organizations by getting employees to buy into their ability to lead, set strategic goals, and encourage followers (Toor & Ofori, 2008). As the business world continues to evolve, quality leadership impacts an organization's brand value and its ability to respond to change.

Implementing change in an organization is not easy and can take many forms depending upon the individuals at the helm. The requirements of a leader may vary during periods of instability and change (Hechanova et al., 2018). Which is especially true for the publishing industry, where change is rapid and constant. Organizations that can thrive and compete in a rapidly changing society must have strong leaders guiding their firms through the change process (Landis et al., 2014). Leaders that incorporate knowledge sharing, learning, and subject matter experts at the center of their business growth strategies increase innovation and stakeholder buy-in. However, Haque et al. (2015) noted that although a firm's leadership is critical during change, it is how employees respond that determine if change will be successful.

Advances in technology and global competition have shifted traditional business strategies from a top down approach of management, to one that is more inclusive. Organizational leaders that foster a community of open learning understand that the

opportunity for their employees to engage with peers and new technology constantly enhances the culture and sustainability of their organization. Businesses across the world have been challenged to become more responsive to changing expectations and their competitive standing in the world (Hechanova, 2018). Leaders that effectively guide their organizations through the change process are guided by a clear vision, integrity, and knowledge of the market place. Global competition, increased customer expectations, and constant change are major challenges faced by organizations in the 21st century (Dominigues-CC & Barroso-Castro, 2017).

When business leaders develop and implement their employment branding strategy, leaders should position their firms as an organization that grows leaders. An organization's achievements are connected to its leadership and its ability to innovate in a changing market (Vroom & Jago, 2007). When organizational leaders prepare for change and look for new leadership, an optimal leadership choice should be to promote members from within their organization that have been nurtured and trusted with previous goal specific projects. Leaders of organizations should position their firms as the place where the best come to invest and innovate, it could change their application pool. It could also shift their organization's toolkit of innovative strategies.

Strategic Planning Cycle

Leaders should develop strategic goals that could be implemented strategically. An organization's ability to grow, innovate, and survive are directly linked to the appropriate strategies that the organization's leadership choses to adapt and implement (Agyapong et al., 2016). The systems that leaders of organizations and groups use to

establish their objectives, goals, and results should incorporate the use of their human resources, finances, and technology (Ali et al., 2015). Furthermore, through the strategic management process, an organization will examine how external factors such as market trends, changes in technology, and customer demand will impact the strategies that leaders establish and implement (Dyer et al., 2016).

Leaders should develop a strategic plan for implementing change based on their firm's short and long-term goals. Organizations in the public and private sectors have used strategic planning as a vehicle for making decisions (Al Darmaki, 2015). Every successful business model is unique, and therefore, it is hard to identify a standard algorithm for accurately creating business innovations (Bereznoi, 2014). However, organizations can work through the strategic planning cycle to establish a competitive advantage. The strategic planning cycle begins with an organization establishing their mission and a clear understanding of which markets to enter. An organization's mission statement outlines its core values (Dyer et al., 2016).

The second step in the strategic planning cycle is evaluating an organization's internal and external environment. An organizational assessment could be accomplished by analyzing an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Before an organization could create goals for establishing a competitive advantage, the leaders within the organization must understand the market, how to utilize their resources, and areas that the leaders of an organization are not prepared to enter without long-term planning and financial investment. The third step is for an organization to

develop strategic objectives for creating a competitive advantage based on its SWOT results (Giraudou & McIarney, 2014).

Developing a strategic path for achieving a competitive advantage is valuable to an organization because it allows for progress monitoring, identification of potential revenue streams, and opportunities to innovate. The final stage in the strategic planning cycle is to implement a strategy for accomplishing organizational goals. Having a goal is of no value to an organization if a clear path to achieving that goal has not been clearly established by leadership. Information has an economic value for organizations (Buck, 2016). Therefore, an organization must utilize data to guide their decisions for strategic change.

Long-Term Benefits of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning helps an organization understand how to effectively differentiate their products and services from their competitors by analyzing how their strengths and weaknesses impact their ability to increase firm value. The purpose of long-term strategic planning is for an organization to define, validate, or redefine the vision, mission, and direction of their organization (Kachaner et al., 2016). Long term strategic planning also allows an organization to study potential markets to enter, which reduces risk and the use of valuable resources. In addition, long-term strategic planning will enable resources for large investments to be allocated over time.

Leaders of an organization need time to establish goals that will best utilize their resources to create a competitive advantage in a constantly changing market. Implementation of new business strategies requires careful planning and execution by top

management (Berenznoi, 2014). In addition, an organization's ability to focus on a long-term goal helps them remain focused on their primary objectives while avoiding the pitfalls of inaction. In Kotter's sixth step of his change management theory he encourages leaders to establish short-term wins, but warns against the dangers of losing focus on the long-term goal (Kotter, 2009). Implementing change not only requires the examination of successes and failures by leaders, but demands that leaders remain open to new ways to achieve their stated vision.

Potential Hurdles of Implementing Strategic Planning

Leadership is essential to innovation, which is guided by strategic planning. The strategic planning process of an organization is often aligned with the management style of an organization and its leadership (Giraudou & McIarney, 2014). When leaders of organizations select managers that are unable to allocate resources for studying other markets, promoting communication, and investing in technology leaders limit the growth of their organization. Poorly performing managers also could potentially impact the implementation of strategic goals of an organization.

Business leaders who establish diversity and inclusion in the workplace increase an organization's ability to generate ideas that are more inclusive of global markets. In addition, a diverse group of stakeholder voices enhances the strategic planning process (Kachaner et al., 2016). Flexibility and buy-in by employees and upper management are also essential to implementing a strategic plan. Additional hurdles that organizations may experience when attempting to implement their strategic plan are the discovery that their goal does not align with current market trends and that it lacks organizational processes.

Lastly, according to Dyer et al (2016), a lack of resources can also create challenges for an organization's strategic plan.

Strategic Planning for a Competitive Advantage

Strategic planning within an organization leads to growth. However, an organization can benefit from not using strategic planning in the case of emergent strategies. Successful companies implement a combination of well-developed strategies and plan for unexpected opportunities that arise through serendipity (Dyer et al., (2016). The strategic planning process can also wrongly focus on analyzing current market trends and competitors, instead of searching for or anticipating new disruptive entrants or business models (Kachaner et al., 2016). In addition, an organization's strategic plan may not incorporate the appropriate use of technology to increase firm value and innovation. Whereas, having an open position on technology that is constantly evolving may benefit an organization. For example, an organization may have incorporated social media growth in its strategic plan, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but their plan did not allocate resources for new social media platforms such as Snapchat and Flick.

Value of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is an essential component of business practices. Having a strategy is a fundamental aspect of sustainability for an organization (Ali Mahdi et al., 2015). Just as strategic planning helps an organization understand its position in the global market, establishment of short-term and long-term goals helps an organization maintain its engagement during the change process. It requires the collective efforts of an

organization's shareholders and the creation of a learning culture. Organizations that create metrics for evaluating how their resources can be used to differentiate their products and services from competitors will find longevity in their industry.

Strategic planning is not a one size fits all solution to gaining a competitive advantage. It requires an organization to establish specific, realistic, manageable, actionable, and time appropriate goals that will create firm value. Nothing in business or life remains the same; therefore, it is essential for businesses to be innovative and think outside the box as leaders seek to guide their organization into new competitive markets (Tierney, 2013). Leaders should also understand how their organization's talent can be maximized to create unique value in the marketplace.

Transition

Members of the print newspaper industry have been forced to manage mass closures, declines in print readership, and the rapid expansion of new media on digital platforms. In response to many of the print newspaper industry's challenges, the literature for this study noted that the emergence of digital media was not the first threat to the print newspaper industry. Radio, television, and magazines have pushed the owners of print newspapers to restructure their offerings to meet consumer demands and changes in innovation. For this qualitative multiple case study, I explored the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area used to create an online presence. Section 1 of this study outlined the significance of this qualitative study and included the following elements: (a) background of the problem;(b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) nature of the study; (e) central research

question; (f) interview questions that aligned with the central research question and conceptual framework; (g) conceptual framework; (h) operational definitions; (i) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; and (j) significance of the study.

The literature review for this study included a body of knowledge from authoritative and seminal works that: (a) provided a chronological analysis of disruptive innovation theory; (b) identified the significance of innovation in the print newspaper industry; (c) expressed the impact of digitalization on the print newspaper industries; and (d) the impact that an organization's leader had on their innovation strategy.

In Section 2, there is an in-depth explanation of: (a) research method and design; (b) the role of a researcher; (c) population and sampling; (d) data collection methods, techniques, and tools; (e) data organization, analysis, and reliability and validity; and (f) other strategies used to complete this study. In Section 3, there is: (a) a presentation of the findings; (b) application to professional practice; (c) implications for social change; (d) recommendations for future research; and (e) a reflection of the research.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I explain the methodology used to conduct this study about the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to create a digital presence. Section 2 consists of a restatement of the purpose statement, an outline of the role of the researcher, the participant selection and qualification requirements, a review of my study's research method and design, a discussion about ethical research, the data collection instruments, techniques, organization, and analysis used in this study. Section 2 concludes with a discussion of reliability and validity, credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, data saturation, and the transition to Section 3.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to develop an online presence. The targeted population for this study consisted of three weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area of the United States who implemented successful strategies to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The findings may contribute to positive social change by equipping local print newspaper managers with strategies to develop an online presence that would prevent closures. This study may also help local newspapers remain open to serve as an economic, social, and political resource for their community. Lastly, print newspapers are a cultural staple for communities that represent diverse perspectives in a way that catapults community involvement for supporting local businesses, political candidates, the arts, and local events (Yun et al., 2018).

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I was the principal data collection instrument for this qualitative multiple case study. People are the best instrument for collecting data geared towards gathering understanding, critical awareness, meaning, and deconstructing thought (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because a qualitative researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and cannot separate themselves from the data collected, they need to identify their personal biases (Jackson, 1990; Fusch & Ness, 2015). The identification of personal bias helps a researcher understand how their bias might impact the credibility, reliability, and validity of their research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The data gathered are influenced by the researcher's bias, and the researcher's presence during data gathering could affect participant responses (Anderson, 2010). As the data collection instrument for this study, it was essential that I have a firm grasp of my biases to not influence the data collection and analysis process.

The four types of researcher bias in qualitative research are questions, sampling, conceptual, and anticipated outcomes (Morse, 2015; Morse & Mitcham, 2002; Wadams & Park, 2018). A researcher can bias their results by the questions they select and the order they are shared. In my study, I avoided researcher bias in questions by ensuring that the questions aligned with my research topic, and I did not attempt to guide the participant to respond in a specific manner. The second researcher bias in qualitative research is sampling. The individuals a researcher selects to participate in their study could negatively impact the data generated if the participants are chosen based on

convenience. A researcher can avoid biases in sampling by using a purposeful sampling technique to secure participants (Wadams & Park, 2018).

The next type of researcher bias is conceptual. Conceptual bias is when a researcher misuses their data to display a specific outcome (Morse, 2015; Morse & Mitcham, 2002; Wadams & Park, 2018). I displayed transparency in my data collection techniques and analysis. Lastly, the fourth type of researcher bias is anticipated outcomes (Wadams & Park, 2018). When a researcher develops a specific idea about their topic, the researcher could look for their data to confirm a specific idea (Wadams & Park, 2018). In my study, I avoided researcher bias by using member checking, multiple sources of data, and following the guidelines to ensure objectivity, validity, and confidentiality.

Also, important to note is that I resided in the metropolitan area where I conducted my research, but I did not have any professional relationships with individuals that work in the print or digital newspaper industry. Additionally, I studied journalism while attending film school, with a focus in field production. But I did not have a working knowledge of the processes that direct or impact the print or digital newspaper industry. I obtained participants for my study who had direct knowledge and experience with my research question by using purposeful sampling. In qualitative research, the method of identifying and selecting information-rich cases is referred to as purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Researchers are also tasked with collecting data in an ethical and professional manner that ensures the integrity of the data collected and the participants' privacy. One

of the first steps in ensuring that a researcher complies with ethical standards of data collection is by reviewing and following the *Belmont Report*. The *Belmont Report* is a set of guidelines that researchers must follow to comply with the study of human subjects (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1978). In this study, I followed the *Belmont Report*'s three ethical principles of human subject research: (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Adashi et al., 2018). In applying the principle of respect for persons in my study, I (a) maintained participant confidentiality, (b) created coded identifiers for each participant, (c) provided participants with an interview protocol and consent form, and (d) allowed participants to receive a summary of their interview during their member checking interview. Before contacting potential participants, I received institutional review board (IRB) approval from Walden University to conduct my research (approval no. 06-11-21-0633276). The IRB process is a measure for beneficence, which ensured that my risk-benefit assessment was aligned with ethical research. Lastly, I adhered to the principle of justice by creating procedures that ensured that the participant selection process was free of biases.

As the researcher, while collecting data I used an interview protocol, which is a procedural guide that helps new qualitative researchers navigate the interview process (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Before conducting a qualitative interview, a researcher should develop questions that are grounded in research about their topic, use a script from beginning to end, ask open ended questions, start each interview with small talk, begin with easy questions and increase in complexity, develop questions that allow for

expansion, use prompts from the interviewee, and manage the length of the interview (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). My interview protocol can be found in Appendix and follows the guidelines outlined by Jacob and Furgerson (2012).

Participants

The participants for this qualitative multiple case study were selected using a purposeful sampling technique. Purposeful sampling allows information rich case participants to highlight the research question under study (Patton, 1990). In addition, the participants' experiences should align with the research question or questions (Frels & Onwuebuzie, 2013). The individuals selected for this qualitative multiple case study were weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area who had successfully developed an online presence for news organizations.

In qualitative research, the reasons for selecting study participants must be in alignment with the purpose and goals of the study, which will allow a researcher to find participants with the desired characteristics under investigation (Arcury & Quandt, 1999). The print newspaper managers selected to participate in this study met the following criteria (a) managers were able to outline their organization's online development process, (b) managers had experience developing a competitive strategy in the digital market for at least 3 years, (c) managers were able to identify various strategies that had increased their organization's visibility and profitability in the digital market, and (d) managers were able to address the strategies they used to attract advertisers and consumers to their digital platform. Developing participation criteria supported useful data collection (see Yin, 2017).

In a qualitative study, a researcher's process to locate and recruit participants is critical for controlling bias and for carefully obtaining a representative sample (Arcury & Quandt, 1999). In my study, I identified potential participants from publicly available information, such as company websites and Linkedin. The strategies that I implemented after receiving IRB approval from Walden University included (a) researching weekly print newspapers in the Washington, DC area that had developed an online presence, (b) sending out an email to potential organizations to determine if the potential organization allowed student researchers, (c) sending out an email to specific managers based on the organizations that allowed student researchers, (d) scheduling a time to conduct a Zoom meeting with interested managers to go over the basis of my study and to review my consent form if applicable, (e) scheduling a Zoom meeting with the participant that was secure and convenient for the participant, (f) sending out a confirmation email to my three participants with the interview questions, and (g) scheduling a member checking interview with the participant using the Zoom platform that was convenient and secure for the participant.

The strategies that I used to develop a working relationship with my participant was to contact them by email using publicly available information. I used an email script. The script outlined my study purpose and inquired about their willingness to participate. Once an individual agreed to participate in my study, they received a consent form. Once the consent form and interview dates were secured, all participants received a confirmation email.

I used the meeting website Zoom. One week before my scheduled interview, I emailed my participant the Zoom link for our meeting. I also sent out a Zoom link reminder 24 hours before our scheduled meeting. I arrived at the Zoom meeting 10 minutes before the time I had scheduled with my participant to set up my two recorders and note taking supplies. Prior to each interview, I engaged in small talk before each interview, as a researcher is tasked with establishing a foundation of genuine trust to make participants comfortable enough to share their authentic opinions (Kornbluh, 2015).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

A researcher needs to understand the distinguishing characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research methods to develop an appropriate data collection and analysis process. The primary distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is establishing how consumers think versus what consumers think (Barnham, 2015). Qualitative researchers are interested in the beliefs, experiences, and meaning systems from the perspective of the people (Mohajan, 2018). In contrast, quantitative researchers use statistical methods to generalize relationship patterns (Aastrup & Halldorsson, 2013). The third research method is mixed methods, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Researchers using the mixed methods approach believe that their research question can be answered using a multi strategy design that integrates the qualitative and quantitative methods (Stahl et al., 2019). A mixed methods design approach was not appropriate for my study because it uses measurement instruments, statistical processes, and describes the lived experiences of groups or individuals, which

my study did not seek to accomplish. In this doctoral study, I selected the qualitative method because it was appropriate for exploring the strategies that print newspaper managers use to develop an online presence. The qualitative method allows a researcher to explore the meanings that groups and individuals associated with a social or human problem through the collection of data in a familiar setting (Oun & Bach, 2014).

Research Design

This qualitative study was conducted using a multiple case study design to explore the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to compete and navigate change in the digital age. A qualitative multiple case study design was selected because it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The case study design is a first-hand study that allows a researcher to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, specifically when the lines between phenomenon and context are not evident (Yin, 2003). The case study design also allows a researcher to explore a phenomenon from a multi-faceted approach by utilizing different data sources to reach analysis (Yin, 2013; Killingback et al., 2017). Multiple case studies will also allow a researcher to examine multiple perspectives from different organizations and how various participant perspectives intersect.

Through this design, I was able to reach data saturation. Data saturation has been reached in a qualitative study when there is enough data to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Walker, 2012; Fusch & Ness, 2015), when no new information can be

obtained from the data, and additional coding is not viable (Guest et al., 2006; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Population and Sampling

This qualitative multiple case study's target population was weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area who had successfully developed an online presence for their organizations. This study was limited to three print newspaper managers that met the following criteria (a) managers were able to outline their organization's online development process, (b) managers had developed a competitive strategy in the digital market for at least 3 years, (c) managers were able to identify various strategies that had increased their organization's visibility and profitability in the digital market, and (d) managers were able to address the strategies they used to attract advertisers and consumers to their digital platform.

For this qualitative multiple case study, I used purposeful sampling. This allowed me to select information rich participants that yield in-depth understanding versus empirical generalization of an experience (Bennot et al., 2016; Patton, 2002). Using the purposeful sampling technique allowed me to select print newspaper managers who were knowledgeable about developing an online presence for weekly print newspapers. In addition to subject matter knowledge and experience, it is vital for participants to be available, have a willingness to participate, and the ability to articulate their experiences and opinions in a way that is articulate and reflective (Bernard, 2002, Palinkas et al., 2013; Spradley, 1979).

A researcher should use a sample size that will allow them to reach data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). For my study, I interviewed three weekly print newspaper managers in the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area. There is no set number of participants required in a study to reach data saturation in qualitative research (Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2017). I was able to reach data saturation from my sample size. Data saturation has been reached in a qualitative study when during the data collection and analysis stages, no new information generated addresses the research question (Guest et al., 2020). Further, I collected thick data, which are layered, intricate, detailed, and nuanced (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Researchers using the case study method could use interviews as a primary data collection tool (Yin, 2009). I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews with all participants via Zoom. Before all of my interviews with participants were conducted, I emailed to communicate with participants to confirm: (a) the scope of my research study, (b) their interest in participating in my research, (c) date and time of the scheduled interview, and (d) confirmation date and time of member checking. Participants received an electronic $10 Starbucks gift card after our member checking meeting for their willingness to participate in my study. I scheduled all semistructured interviews and member checking based on the availability of each participant.

Ethical Research

I outlined the voluntary nature of my study by having my participants electronically sign a consent form. Informed consent requires a researcher to obtain permission from the participant by expressing the nature of the study, its purpose,

methods, requirements, risks, difficulties, results, and distribution of data (Pertovic, 2017). The consent form outlined (a) participant procedures, (b) sample interview questions, (c) voluntary nature of the study, (d) drop out procedures, (e) risk and benefits, (f) payment, (g) privacy, (h) transcription details, and (i) researcher contact information. Hammersley (2015) noted that when researchers are conducting ethical research, participants should sign a consent form that records that participants' consent, be allowed to withdraw or modify their participation at any time, have their privacy respected, and allow participants to request that their information be destroyed. The foundation of ethically responsible research with human participants is voluntary informed consent, which ensures that participants' confidentiality is safeguarded as outlined by the law, according to Ross et al. (2018). Researchers are also tasked with providing participants with assurances that participants will not be identified in the study based on the data that the participant shares (Walton, 2016). In addition, researchers must also ensure that participants' physical, social, and psychological well-being are not affected by participating in the study (Walton, 2016).

During the data collection process of a research study, a researcher needs to follow the ethical requirements of data collection by safeguarding the participants' dignity, welfare, and rights. Ethical principles in research include minimizing harm, respecting autonomy, preserving privacy, and acting equitably when conducting research that uses human participants (Hammersley, 2015). Prior to students conducting any form of data collection at Walden University, the IRB approval must be given to a researcher. The primary aim of the IRB is to ensure that students comply with the university's ethical

standards, and federal regulations that protect the welfare of human participants. IRBs are charged with ensuring that respect for persons, beneficence, and justice are followed by researchers, as outlined in the Belmont Report of 1978 (Ross, Iguchi, & Panicker, 2018).

For this qualitative multiple case study, I took the following measures to comply with respect for persons, beneficence, and justice: (a) created criteria for eligible participants, (b) emailed an invitation to participate letter outlined the details of the study (c) prior to participating in my study, I sent all participants a consent form electronically in which all participants responded with the words I Consent in order to participate. All participants were instructed to save a copy of the consent form (d) used codes to hide the identity of participants and organizations by using P1, P2, and P3, (e) removed all identifiers of participants and their organizations, (f) should a participant feel uncomfortable answering a question they had the option of not responding by stating that they would not like to respond to a specific question (g) allowed participants to withdraw from the study at any time, (h) secured all data on a password protected USB that was stored in a lockbox for five years and only then to be destroyed. Participants who may have wished to withdrawal from the study were informed they could do so through email. I provided participants with an email that contained all my contact information at the conclusion of our interview. All participant names were coded using P1, P2, P3, which also served as their identifiers.

Data Collection Instruments

For this qualitative multiple case study, I the researcher was the primary data collection instrument. A researcher is a primary instrument for collecting data in

qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The first data collection instrument I used

for this study included an open ended semi-structured interview using an interview

protocol (Appendix). Jacob and Furgerson (2012) noted that an interview protocol guides

the interviewer with a script of what to say before an interview, at the conclusion of an

interview, prompts to collect informed consent, and informs the participant about the

information a researcher seeks to gather. Using an interview protocol for my semi-

structured interviews served as a procedural approach to interviewing. In-depth

interviews are ones that pose open-ended questions and follow-up probes designed to

understand a participant's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge

(Rosenthal, 2016).

To enhance the reliability and validity of my semi-structured interviews I

conducted member checking interviews with all participants. The process of member

checking involves providing participants with a written copy of my interview

interpretations and allowing them to provide feedback that accurately represents their

perspective. Member checking allows participants to certify the accuracy of the

researcher's data (Cypress, 2017). The member checking process also allows the

participant to elaborate on any points made during their initial interview.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, I reviewed my participants'

organizational documents that specifically addressed my research question.

Organizational and instructional documents had been used as a staple in qualitative

research for several years (Bowen, 2009). The documents that I examined included

organization reports, meeting minutes, and public records. Documents used in this study

were in print or electronic form. The various documents collected in a qualitative study may include advertisements, agendas, minutes of meetings, background papers, press releases, or program proposals (Bowen, 2009).

The documents that I collected were aimed at gaining an understanding of my research question. I obtained the documents used for this study from publicly available information. The documents that I reviewed included company archives, website data, and social media presence. The collection of company documents in case study research is often used to corroborate and augment evidence from additional sources, including historical documents that organizations collect over their existence (DeMassis & Kotlar, 2014). The use of company documents for this study provided me with greater insight into the organization's historic digital footprint and strategy.

Data Collection Technique

In qualitative research, the phenomenon is observed and interpreted within the participants natural setting (J. Park & M. Park, 2016). I used the qualitative research method. The qualitative research method allowed me to collect data using face-to-face semi-structured interviews and a review of my participant's company documents such as training documents, internet documents, and website information. Mohajan (2018) observed that in qualitative research, the data is collected in the form of interviews, observation records, and documents, and the data is analyzed inductively. I used an interview protocol to conduct my semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The interview protocol used for this study can be found in the appendix. The interview questions that I used for my semi-structured interviews can be found in the appendix. Conducting semi-

structured interviews will allow a researcher to explore a phenomenon in detail (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). All semistructured interviews were captured using two audio recording devices. I manually transcribed each participant's interview.

After each interview, I conducted member checking with each participant. I provided each participant with a written interpretive summary throughout of their responses by email at the beginning of our face-to-face meeting on the Zoom platform. During this meeting, participants had the opportunity to confirm, correct, or add to the interview summary. Member checking ensures that a researcher captured what the participant wanted to communicate (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I also reviewed my participants' organizational documents that were found through an internet search and a review of the organization's website. Yin (2014) noted that the process of reviewing documents involves examining and interpreting data from pre-existing documents to achieve understanding. Furthermore, the process of document analysis increases rigor and includes documents such as operational manuals, financial records, and annual reports (Phillips et al., 2017).

Researchers use data collection techniques to obtain triangulation (Yin, 2014). The data collection techniques that I used were semistructured interviews and a review of the company's documents. The data collection techniques that I used were not without disadvantages. One disadvantage of semi-structured interviews is the amount of time that it takes a researcher to transcribe an interview (Opdenakker, 2006). However, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher an opportunity to build a relationship and elicit richer responses (Opdenakker, 2006).

An alphanumeric coding system was used for this study to protect the names and organizations of each participant. Data anonymization obscures participant identities and identifying details (Ross et al., 2018). I categorized information to identify emerging themes. All of the data that I collected was secured in a fire-resistant lockbox and will be kept for a period of five years. All of my recordings, typed interview notes, and company documents are secured on a password protected USB device, stored in a lockbox, kept for 5 years past graduation, then destroyed.

Data Organization Technique

I used two audio recording devices to capture the data from my semi-structured interviews. I used an alphanumeric coding system to protect the identity of each participant by using P1, P2, and P3. The audio captured during each semi-structured interview was transcribed manually and uploaded to Microsoft Word and Excel documents to create a database of the transcribed interviews. The data that I gathered from company documents was scanned into Adobe PDF reader and uploaded to a password protected file. I manually categorized and visualized my data. I created separate folders for each theme with the respective alphanumeric code. Researchers using the qualitative case studies method should use various research tools to aid in the comprehensive view of the data within its appropriate context (Gustafasson, 2017). All data is stored in a lockbox for five years and then destroyed in alignment with IRB requirements.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the systematic process of examining, evaluating, interpreting, and describing data to extract useful meaning. Data analysis allows a researcher to find patterns, themes, and common descriptions in their results (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The data analysis used for this study was the thematic analysis outlined by Yin's (2017) five steps of data analysis which included (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the data and, (e) drawing conclusions from the data. Data analysis allowed me to group common themes and ideas into categories to extract useful meaning. Marshall and Rossman (2016) noted that data analysis allows a researcher to find patterns, themes, and common descriptions in their results; it also limits researcher bias. Data from my semistructured interviews and company documents were manually coded and organized into themes. Researchers should play with their data to discover patterns, insight, or concepts (Yin, 2017). I developed a list of categories from the key themes that emerged from the data. In qualitative multiple case study analysis, the data should be collected, coded, and stored by each individual case (Demassis & Kotlar, 2014; Yin, 2014).

Each case in a multiple case study consists of a whole study in which similar evidence is sought from the data gathered (Yin, 2003). My goal was to understand the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The data that emerged from this case study provided an in-depth understanding of the print newspaper industry from the semi-structured interviews and company documents. Researchers should start by examining the questions and then

identifying the evidence that aligns with their question when researchers begin to analyze

their data (Yin, 2017). For this multiple case study, I organized all the responses to my

semistructured interviews under the headings of each question. I then did the same thing

with the organizations' documents. For a qualitative case study, the unit of analysis

should relate to the research question (Yin, 2009). The themes that emerged from my

semistructured interviews and company documents were categorized in relation to John

Kotter's eight steps of change management.

For member checking purposes, the follow-up interviews took place face-to-face

on the Zoom platform with the interviewee and included (a) providing each interviewee

with a written summary of their responses emailed prior to our meeting, (b) time for the

interviewee to correct or add any additional information to the summary and, (c)

acknowledge that all data captured was represented accurately. If the participant needed

additional time outside of the member checking time frame to correct or add any

additional information, a second face to face meeting with them on the Zoom platform

was scheduled. Member checking in qualitative research is a suitable method for

enhancing rigor and adding credibility to a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

When a qualitative researcher begins to organize their study, reliability and

validity should be considered during the design, analysis, and quality examination stages

(Cypress, 2017). Reliability in a qualitative study refers to consistency in the

researcher's practices. Reliability is enabling the precise replicability of a researcher's

processes and results asserted Leung (2015). Reliability and validity in a qualitative study

are measures used to evaluate studies' quality.

Dependability

Dependability also helps evaluate the stability and consistency of a researcher's

data gathering and analysis process. As researchers determine the various instruments to

be used in their study, there should be a focus on quality and trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness is required to test the quality of the research design (Yin, 2009). A lack

of trustworthiness will undermine a researcher's findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted

that external audits also foster the validity of a research study. As researchers conduct

their qualitative study, researchers should seek to have both rich and thick data. Rich data

is a large quantity of data, whereas thick data is layered, intricate, detailed, and nuanced

(Fusch & Ness, 2015). Dependability was established in this study during the data

collection process. I used member checking, and an interview protocol, to ensure that

dependability was ensured.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research references the appropriateness of the tools and

processes used (Cypress, 2017). When evaluating validity in a qualitative study, the

researcher is seeking to account for the methods used and the interpretation of their

findings, which leads to trustworthiness. Cope (2014) noted that Lincoln and Guba

(1985) established that the presence of credibility, dependability, confirmability,

transferability, and in 1994 authenticity in qualitative research would lead to

trustworthiness in the study results. In this study validity was established by collecting

and comparing findings from multiple sources of data to authenticate the findings in this study.

Credibility

In a qualitative study, credibility is essential because a researcher is not relying on hard numbers to substantiate their findings. To establish credibility for my study, I provided in-depth descriptions based on the data I gathered. I worked with the faculty and staff from Walden University that are skilled in qualitative research and have been assigned to ensure that appropriate protocols were followed throughout my study. In addition, I used member checking and triangulation of my data to add credibility to my study. A researcher's actions matter because researchers are connected to the credibility and ethical integrity of their research argued Adalla et al. (2018). Member checking is the process of allowing participants to review and respond to the interpretations of the data collected by a researcher to certify accuracy (Cypress, 2017). The member checking process allowed me to correct or add to the data I collected from the participants' feedback on the data that the participant shared.

Transferability

In addition to credibility, dependability, and confirmability, transferability is an essential element of qualitative research. Transferability or applicability is the degree to which a researcher's analysis can be applied or generalized to other contexts or settings (Boesher et al., 2013). To ensure transferability for my study, I described how the findings in my study can be applied in a different setting. As researchers compile their inquiry process and outline the nature of their study, researchers are strongly encouraged

to include as much data as possible about their study in case it is repeated by another researcher (Yin, 2014). Transferability has been met once the results of the study have meaning to individuals outside of the research realm, and readers can apply personal meaning to the findings in the study (Cope, 2014).

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to the objectivity and auditability of a researcher's data. Audit trails, triangulation, and reflexivity are methods for establishing confirmability in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Audit trails display how a researcher obtained and analyzed their data in a transparent way. An audit trail in qualitative research is an account of how the study was conducted and how the researcher made specific conclusions based on their data (Carcary, 2020). The use of an audit trail for my study allowed me to demonstrate that a logical path was followed during the analysis process. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a researcher audit trail should incorporate and detail why the researchers made specific decisions at various stages of the research process. The six categories established by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, material relation to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information (Amankwaa, 2016). For my study, I followed the audit trail established by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Confirmability can also be established by triangulation. Triangulation is the process of examining various data sources to enhance understanding (Amankwaa, 2016). Reflexivity is also a method used to establish confirmability. Reflexivity is an

examination of a researcher's practices, beliefs, and decisions at each step of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lastly, confirmability in qualitative research is a critical component because it allows for an in-depth examination of a researcher's methodological description to be scrutinized for integrity (Ali & Yusof, 2011). Triangulation was established by comparing the data collected from participants' interviews with their corresponding participating organization's publicly available information.

Data Saturation

Qualitative researchers use methodological triangulation to check for validity in their research question by using multiple sources of data. The sources of data that a researcher uses could include direct observations, company documents, focus groups, surveys, and photographs. Triangulation involves the use of multiple methods of data collection and data analysis (Denzin, 2012). Furthermore, triangulation is a method used by researchers to examine a phenomenon using various levels and perspectives of inquiry, which guarantees that the researcher's data is rich in-depth (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data triangulation is a way to get to data saturation asserted Fusch and Ness (2015).

Triangulation adds depth to a researcher's data (Fusch et al., 2018). Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that the triangulation of data is a practice that qualitative researchers use to enhance the credibility of their research and accomplish data saturation. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources to examine a phenomenon (House, 2018), which allows the research to widen their understanding of their findings (Abdalla et al.,

2017). The triangulation of data could be achieved through focus groups, in-depth interviews, direct observation, document review, note taking, and surveys. The use of multiple data collection techniques ensures the validity of the researcher's study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation was reached when participants began to give the same responses during their semistructured interviews and no new information was presented by participants.

Transition and Summary

Print newspaper circulation is no longer the primary source of news content delivery in the digital age. Consumers can get their news from multiple social media platforms, news platforms that were born online, and from peer creation. The diversity of news offerings available to consumers has caused traditional newspapers to expand their offerings to online and mobile platforms. In this section, I restated the purpose of the intended qualitative multiple case study, which is to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to create an online presence. The population and sampling criteria for selecting and recruiting managers in the weekly print newspaper industry are outlined in this section. As well as the research method, design, and ethical data collection practices. The data collection instruments, techniques, and organization strategy have been detailed in this section to align with university and IRB standards of data collection and security. Additionally, the proposed method of data analysis, study validity, and reliability have been detailed in Section 2.

In Section 3, I will present the findings of the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers have used to compete and navigate change in the digital age by exploring the common themes that revealed in the data.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to develop an online presence. I used Kotter's (1995) change management theory as the conceptual framework to explore my research question. I collected data from semistructured interviews and a review of the participating business leaders' organizations' publicly available documents. I interviewed three weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area who successfully developed a competitive strategy in the digital market for their organization. Participants responded to open-ended semistructured interview questions based on the interview protocol (Appendix) after giving their consent to participate.

I used Yin's (2017) five steps of data analysis, which includes (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the data and, (e) drawing conclusions from the data. The resulting four emerging themes were (a) active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; (b) employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction; (c) localizing the news; and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and their organization's website. The themes I identified represented recurring commonalities in weekly print newspaper leaders' strategies to develop an online presence.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was "What innovative strategies do weekly print newspaper managers use to create an online presence?" The data collection process included interviewing three business leaders in the print newspaper industry who worked in the Washington, DC metropolitan and successfully developed an online presence for their organization. Eligible participants were (a) at least 18 years of age, (b) had at least 3 years of experience working with print and digital news platforms and, (c) had successful experience developing a competitive strategy in the digital market for at least 3 years. I coded participants as P1 through P3. Each participant's organization was coded from O1 through O3 to correspond with each participant. I conducted all interviews between July 10, 2021, and August 26, 2021. Each participant answered seven open-ended questions that referenced the strategies they used to compete and navigate change in the digital age. I used an interview protocol (Appendix) to conduct each semistructured interview. All interviews and member checking interviews were conducted on the Zoom platform. I informed each participant that their interview would be recorded and manually transcribed.

After each interview, I thanked participants for contributing to my study. I informed each participant that I would contact them to schedule their member checking interview after manually transcribing their interviews and provided them with a summary of my interpretations of their responses. Upon the completion of each interview, I emailed participants a Starbucks gift card. I then manually transcribed each interview and synthesized the interview data to provide each participant with an interview summary for

their clarification. I used member checking interviews to ensure the accuracy of my

interpretations of each participant's responses and clarify any questions that arose after

the manual transcription of each interview. Each member checking interview occurred on

the Zoom platform due to the ongoing Covid-19 virus pandemic. Additionally, I reviewed

publicly available information from each organization's website and social media

platform to explore the strategies they implemented to navigate change in the digital age.

In alignment with the consent form, all audio recordings, digital consent forms, notes,

transcripts, member checking documents, email addresses, and phone numbers were

transferred to a secure password-protected USB drive and stored in a lockbox to be held

for 5 years and then destroyed.

I collected data from conducting semistructured interviews (Appendix) and

reviewing publicly available company documents that demonstrated the strategies that

each participant implemented to build their organization's digital presence. Following

Yin's (2017) five-steps of data analysis: (a) compiling the data, (b) disassemble the data,

(c) reassemble the data, (d) interpret the data and, (e) drawing conclusions from the data.

I manually transcribed each interview, organized the responses and company documents,

which included archival articles, website data, and social media presence into categories

to determine which recurring themes emerged, interpreted both datasets, and drew

conclusions of my data. From an analysis of my data, four main themes emerged: (a)

active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; (b) employee training

and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction; (c)

localizing the news; and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through

newsletters and their organization's website. The print newspaper leaders' responses brought forth the five emerging themes as their driving strategy for creating a robust digital presence while maintaining their print products.

The conceptual framework that I used for my study was Kotter's (1995) change management theory. The responses of the leaders that participated aligned with Kotter's eight steps of change management: (a) create a sense of urgency, (b) form a powerful guiding coalition, (c) create a vision, (d) communicate the vision, (e) empower others to act on the vision, (f) plan for and create short-term wins, (g) consolidate improvements and produce still more change, and (h) institutionalize new approaches as leaders implement change (Kotter, 1995). Participant 1 shared that their organization's first step in developing an online presence was to determine if they are, "maintaining relevance," and once that question was answered a plan to implement organizational change was initiated. Additionally, P1 asserted that the individuals working at Organization 1's response to building an online presence was, "It's been good." Participant 2 noted that in communicating Organization 2's vision for developing an online presence and empowering others to act on the vision that colleagues, "love it." Furthermore, P2 acknowledged that although building a digital expansion can be intimidating, "they've never shied away from doing it." Lastly, in alignment with Kotter's (1995) sixth step of change management, plan for and create short-term wins. Organization 3 has created collaborative partnerships with other newsrooms to help build their digital audiences that take place during two annual reporting projects. "We started to build a lot more content

sharing partnerships and that's also been incredibly helpful in that we again, we build

partners," noted P3.

In the following headings, the four themes that emerged from my data are

explored in greater detail and connected to previous literature and/or the conceptual

framework of change management by Kotter (1995), and their relevance to addressing

research question. For each theme identified in my research, I outline how my findings

confirmed, disconfirmed, or extended the body of knowledge of change management as

illustrated in the literature review and the updated peer-reviewed articles examined since

writing the proposal. Participants' quotes are used to support my key findings.

Theme 1: Active Social Media Presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram

As identified by all participants, the first theme related to the strategies that

weekly print newspaper managers used to create an online presence was an active social

media account on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Theme 1 emerged from Interview

Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Because of the significant number of social media users, 91% of

businesses have embedded social media practices into their business model (Guttman,

2019; "Social Media Fact Sheet," 2019). In this study, all participants expressed how

consistent interaction with their social media platforms has increased engagement.

Participant 2 asserted that O2 has "Done several social campaigns for people to follow us

on Instagram, follow us on Twitter, but also campaigns as sort of engagement tools that

just get people involved on our social media platforms itself." Participant 1 noted that one

of the ways that O1 has remained relevant is by creating an Instagram account:

But with Instagram, you can post a photo and say, hey, go to our website and

check out other great photos of the 4th of July parade or whatever it may be. It is

amazing the following there is already on par with whatever our following is on

other social media.

In addition, Participant 3 also concluded that "Social media has allowed us to connect

with a lot more people."

Social media platforms created new opportunities for businesses to share their

products and engage with consumers. Social media has also provided an outlet for

companies in all sectors and people working in all trades to interact and publicize their

business offerings (Yang et al., 2021). Participant 1 noted that many of O1's products

"Began as print initiatives, but we are attaching digital solutions to them, to break into the

new world." Furthermore, social media provides rich data sources concerning consumer

behavior and preferences, allowing organizations to make strategic business decisions

(Kim, 2021). For example, the social media platform Facebook has allowed O2 to

develop a large international following, which has affected their news reporting

strategies. Participant 2 noted that "With social media, we've been able to really reach

out in an international way and have international audiences. And I think it's cool

because the history of our organization is that we are a local paper." In addition, "It's

allowed us to specifically looking at the globalization piece to report on things and events

and crises," concluded P2. The use of social media is critical for small businesses with

limited advertising budgets and a limited geographic presence (Kim, 2021). Participant 3

agreed that "Social media has allowed us to connect with a lot more people, and through search engine traffic through Google and other search engines."

The participants concluded that digital media has fundamentally changed how they produce news. Participant 3 asserted that although O2's business model is based on selling their print product, "Some of what we use social media for is what we don't have the capacity to cover as a weekly publication when we want to get information out faster than we have." Digital technology has shifted how news is consumed and produced, which has provided news organizations with multiple digital options (Cheng & Tandoc, 2021). Participant 1 additionally expressed that the role of journalists has transitioned from mere writers to multimedia journalists:

I have started using platforms like Zoom to host interviews to do interviews, and then, I just put it on a different way. Rather than read a story, watch a Youtube video, listen to it on Youtube in the background while you do other things.

Participant 2, in alignment, expressed, "I think our hook for our audiences and developing larger audiences is the fact that when we go live and have the people involved in our reporting." Hence the strategies that each organization implemented to develop their online presence were grounded in bringing their audiences into the news making process by creating opportunities for dialogue and access to news content on various platforms which are digital media strategies. In addition, each leaders' decisions aligned with Kotter's (1995) building a guiding coalition, developing a vision, and institutionalizing new approaches as leaders implement change. The participants' responses relevance to the research question was that one of the tools used to create an

online presence was the development of an active social media profile on multiple sites. Utilizing Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allowed each participating organization's leadership to increase their reach to audiences beyond their print newspaper distribution. Using these media platforms also allowed for two-way communication with their followers, unlike their traditional communication strategies. Lastly, the active use of social media allowed participating organization's leaders to reengineer how they tell a story using pictures, 180 characters, and video which are the key elements of an online presence.

Theme 2: Employee Training and Mentorship to Support Digital Content Development, Delivery, and Interaction

The second theme that emerged from the data collected in this study was employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction. It is vital for organizations to communicate their vision to stakeholders and provide methods for them to be successful, noted Kotter (1995). The leaders that shared their digital strategies expressed the significance of employee training, support, and encouragement. Mentorship can be a tool to promote skill development, career advancement, and increased productivity (Cree-Green et al., 2020; Farkas et al., 2019; Sambunjak et al., 2006; Weavind & McGrane, 2018). According to Participant 1,

> There are people on staff who have been writing journalism for a long time, and they can't branch out as well. They may not know how to use technology, or they may not know how it correlates with a successful business. So, you try to teach them little bits at a time or help them master things that they can.

Participant 2 echoed that the members of O2 have been proactive in that:

> It's been really key for us to be active learners throughout our process of digital
>
> expansion. We have done and participated in tons of accelerated programs,
>
> workshops, classes, the whole nine to continue our digital expansion.

In the age of network publishing, the expectation for online journalists is to produce multimedia projects, write articles, take pictures, and record and edit videos for multiple platform delivery (Puijk et al., 2021). Similarly, P2 noted that the development and delivery of digital content:

> It's a little intimidating, but it's not so intimidating that they don't want to jump in
>
> and I think that's really, really it's been amazing. People love the tutorials; people
>
> love the trainings just because they want to get better.

Participant's 1, 2, and 3 shared that empowering and enabling others to act on their new vision was a key factor in helping their organization's pivot their news offerings depending on the social media platform or digital output, in alignment with Kotter's (1995) change management strategy. Thus, media innovation requires knowledge sharing among various stakeholders (Westlund et al., 2021). Knowledge sharing is democratized and essential for individuals and professionals (Hossayni et al., 2021). Participant 3 echoed the sentiments of P1 and P2 by stating, "So our reporters have in general embraced helping us share content and get it out." However, Participant 3 also noted that staffing challenges had impacted O3's digital presence, "We didn't have a communication staff person, so it was just whenever editorial had the extra time to do social media or when we were able to get volunteers to help us do it." With respect to

addressing the research question, the creation of an online presence required each participating organization's leadership to develop employee training and mentorship of digital content development, delivery, and interaction because the technological levels of employees varied throughout their organizations. Some employees were familiar with some social media platforms but did not understand how to optimize all of the capabilities of other digital media platforms. Hence to utilize the talents of their workforce the leadership of each participating organization created means for employees to learn how to leverage their online presence.

Theme 3: Localizing the News

The third theme that emerged was the significance of localizing the news. The participants emphasized creating print and digital products that were tailored to their specific demographics while understanding the limitations of being a weekly newspaper. National newspapers share the larger world with readers, whereas local newspapers are able to connect citizens to their communities and one another (Bruce, 2014; Olsen & Solvoll, 2017). Each participant asserted that their objective was not to break the news but to digger dipper. Participant 2 noted that "My supervisors make it very clear that we are not trying to compete with the daily news outlets in the sense of we're weekly, particularly with the paper." Participant 3 echoed the sentiments of Participant 2, "We know that we're not daily, we're a weekly publication, and so that gives us the luxury that no one is expecting us to report breaking news."

Participant 1 noted that consumers have multiple digital news options and, "It is hard as a local community paper to stay connected with the people. So, what we try to do

is tailor our stories to be as specific to and as impactful as possible." Participant 2 also noted that "Telling a different part of the story, I think, is the way we differentiate ourselves by hyper localizing, hyper personalizing, and understanding that, particularly with these big national and international stories, we're not breaking it." Despite the growth of the digital media community, newspapers are viable resources to the communities they serve (Smith & Schiffman, 2018). Participant 3 expressed that as an organization:

> Our overarching strategy is just to embrace that we're not going to be daily, but we can aggregate daily folks who have written about our issues. And we can provide stories you won't find anywhere else because we've taken extra time to connect other sources and to provide, again, a deeper look at each issue we cover.

In support of Theme 3, Smith and Schiffman (2018) concluded that community journalists focus on hyperlocal coverage at small daily news organizations. Aligning with Kotter's (1995) change management theory of consolidating improvements and produce more change as each participant found success in differentiating their news offerings, they continued to develop niche products to expand their visibility and reach.

In addition to localizing the news, the participants emphasized that their digital products were an extension of their print products. The weekly print editions of their newspapers have a rich history in their communities, create jobs, and highlight the accomplishments of local individuals, expressed the participants. Participant 3 expressed the importance of "bringing everything back to our print product. We remind people in every instance that we can, what or model is, what our mission is, and how they can support our vendors." In

addition, Participant 2 asserted, "We still have people that want the hard paper, of course." The theme's relevance to the research question was identifying that the differentiator that each participant found important to their strategy for building an online presence was to localize their news offerings. The leaders in this study placed emphasis on creating a digital space for their communities to be informed of local issues, events, and celebrations, while sharing the news with global audiences. Localizing the news was a key strategy for building out their online presence because they could cater to their loyal followers by making news more accessible and technologically forward.

Theme 4: Connecting with Readers Multiple Times a Week Through Newsletters and Their Organization's Websites

The fourth theme that emerged from the participants and their companies' documents was connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and their organization's websites. Unlike social media that allows for two-way communication between customers and businesses, websites and newsletters are able to leverage their products' relevance in a sustaining manner that is guided by news producers. Websites follow a traditional model of one-way communication which focuses on content variety, format, and customization (Guo, 2015). In essence, an organization's website and newsletters provide unique user experiences that are guided by news content creators.

Each participant expressed the importance of using their social media platforms and print products to advertise their print and website offerings. Participant 2 noted, "Social media, again, has been really key in helping us with the website itself and driving

traffic to the website itself." Kim (2021) suggested that organizations could increase their consumer reach and follower knowledge by linking and promoting their social media accounts with their websites. Participant 1 shared that O2 sends out a digital newsletter 4 days a week to their email subscribers, a list that P1's organization was able to accumulate over the years from various communications with individuals who have shown an interest in their products. Participant 1 noted,

> One of the things that we have better than all those people is that we do have a reach to people's homes. We have email addresses of subscribers, former subscribers, past subscribers…people that just expressed any kind of interest in our paper because we do so many different things than just printed newspaper,

Participants expressed that the multiple touchpoints with consumers created a relationship and allowed each organization to connect with the interest of their respective demographics in a meaningful and ongoing way.

In addition to newsletters and website updates, P1 and P2's organizations create a special edition print product for their consumers, allowing them to engage differently. Participant 2 expressed, "Those special editions are truly coffee table editions. They have great artwork. They tell a different side of the story or different pieces of story that other organizations would not do." The relationships that community newspapers journalist share with their readers distinguishes their platform from larger news organizations (Smith & Schiffman, 2018). Participant 1 also noted that their niche publications had been a huge success in their community. Although the development of a digital presence was essential to each leader, they expressed the importance of their foundation as a print

newspaper and noted that their change process also included highlighting their print versions while embedding change. With respect to answering the research question, a key strategy the participants used to build out their online presence was developing a weekly digital newsletter and a website, which merged their digital and print options. The leadership of each organization used social media platforms websites and newsletters to drive consumers to their website offerings and to offer local and national perspectives to breaking news, which was not possible with their print offerings.

Company Documents

The company documents that were reviewed included each newspaper's online archives, website data, and social media presence. Organization 2, entered the digital space first by building a website. Their initial digital strategy was a mirror copy of their print product. Over time, the leadership at Organization 2 began to embed pictures and videos into their reporting. Additionally, their social media buildout was slow and interaction levels with consumers took several years of trial and error before a surge in followers was achieved. Organization's 1, 2, and 3 used their print platforms to promote their entry into the digital market. Each leader also used their newsletters to attract consumers to their digital platforms. Participant 1, expressed how their email subscription was a strategic tool in aiding their digital strategy. Organization 1's, utilization of social media has a strong video presence which allows consumers to interact with their product in multiple settings. Additionally, Organization 1's documents revealed that their digital strategy also sought to build opportunities for consumers to interact with multiple news publications. When mapping the leader's early social media interaction over 3 years they

have changed their people to people interaction, data delivery, and number of interactions.

Overall Findings Aligned with the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that I used for this study was Kotter's (1995) change management theory. The responses of the weekly newspaper managers that participated aligned with Kotter's eight steps of change management: (a) create a sense of urgency, (b) form a powerful guiding coalition, (c) create a vision, (d) communicate the vision, (e) empower others to act on the vision, (f) plan for and create short-term wins, (g) consolidate improvements and produce still more change, and (h) institutionalize new approaches as leaders implement change (Kotter, 1995). Participants expressed that their organization's leadership understood that digital media was shifting the print newspaper industry and that it was essential for their organizations to create a sustainable digital path forward. Each leader developed a strategic approach to building out their digital platforms, with an emphasis on user experience. Participant 2, asserted that developing a social media presence was only step one, but required the recruitment of colleagues. In sharing the vision Participant 1, developed a method of streamlining processes across digital platforms, to enhance productivity and profitability. The leaders also expressed that their digital strategies were not complete but fluid, because the needs of consumers and the rapid shifts of digital media require flexibility and constant change. Consistency and diligence are keys to success Kotter (1995); which was demonstrated by each participant's approach to building a digital presence.

Organizational change and collaboration are fundamental within a media firm in the era of digital media innovation (Westlund et al., 2021). The sustainability of local newspapers is directly linked to their ability to reinvent their business models in the digital age (Olsen & Solvoll, 2018). The shifting of traditional business practices requires all stakeholders within a news organization to actively build a new and sustainable product that can function across media platforms.

The participants discussed how training and mentorship were essential to helping senior reporters leverage their skills in a changing market. All participants expressed the importance of celebrating small victories as they continued to navigate the rapidly changing landscape of news production in the digital age. Implementing change is a monumental task that is not limited to just getting people on board but requires a change in an organization's processes and technology to yield results (Eisenberg et al., 2015). The participants did not restrict their change strategy to people actions, but built websites, created social media accounts, and shifted traditional print storytelling into multimedia productions. In essence, change was fundamental in their strategy for creating an online presence. Furthermore, the strategies that the participants used were measurable and embedded in their organization's culture, as evidenced by their growing followers and content "likes and shares."

Applications to Professional Practice

Weekly print newspaper managers could benefit from the findings in this study because they provide strategies for creating an online presence while maintaining their digital product. According to Kim (2021), 77.6% of small businesses use social media for

marketing their goods and services in the United States of America. The participants in my study expressed that social media was a tool they used to market their products to consumers. The findings of this qualitative case study affirm that weekly print newspaper managers can use social media as a strategy to increase their market reach in the digital age while maintaining their commitment to telling the stories that reflect and impact their communities. The strategies that weekly print newspaper managers could use are: (a) active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, (b) employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction, (c) localizing the news, and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and their website.

Additionally, study findings advance the body of literature that examines the changing landscape of print newspapers and how leaders in the industry remain relevant and active despite newcomers that exclusively create news products for digital markets. Although media firms have yielded control to social media gatekeepers, many continue to be profitable firms while the news media industry is confronted with the task of innovation for survival (Westlund et al., 2021). The participants confirmed that having an online presence was a valuable tool for extending their market reach and engaging with consumers to allow the consumer to feel a part of the newsgathering and reporting process. Participant 2 noted that going live on Facebook increased consumer engagement and allowed consumers to feel like part of the newsgathering process. Digital media is driven by consumer interaction with people, businesses, and products. People use social media as a tool for engaging in personal, professional, and group activities due to digital

media's influence on people's behavior and thoughts (Rainie, 2020). As a result, newspapers could develop organic opportunities for consumer interaction on their multiple platforms, increasing their market reach and brand value.

Implications for Social Change

Community print newspaper managers could benefit from the results of this study. The findings provide strategies for building an active online presence, the significance of being a life-long learning organization, leveraging local voices to differentiate product offerings and various engagement strategies for print newspapers with a digital footprint. The internet, specifically social media, has transformed people to people interactions, customer preferences, and access to information. Social media created a persistent and visible space for the range of human activities and emotions to be shared openly based on user preferences and algorithms designed to persuade and inform (Rainie, 2020). As a result, social media could be utilized by consumers and businesses as a tool of engagement, persuasion, and social advocacy. Social media can create positive interactions between consumers and organizations, provide feedback to organizations, and spur the leadership of organizations into social activism (Melancon & Dalakas, 2018).

The men and women who work at print newspapers are record keepers of local history, trusted storytellers, and change agents. As a result, developing a strategic approach to digital media is essential to the survival of community print newspapers and the voice they provide. Print newspapers are not information intermediaries but are monitors and watchdogs of potential wrongdoings in communities argued Kim et al.

(2021). Additionally, the digitization of information changed the exchange of information and social interactions among people and the tools used to access data (Rainie, 2020). Digital media has afforded consumers various mechanisms for retrieving national and international information. However, local newspapers can compete with digital news platforms because they tell stories that are not available in other spaces (Power et al., 2014). In closing, the strategies shared could limit the number of print newspaper closures. The absence of community newspapers and their reporters could leave a space for misinformation, loss of accountability of local leaders, and economic disadvantages for small businesses that depend on reaching local consumers through direct advertisement.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case studywas to explore the innovative strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to create an online presence. Print newspaper managers could utilize a variety of strategies to create an online presence. The recommendations outlined for this study's actions are in alignment with the literature review and principal themes. The recommendations for print newspaper managers are as follows: (a) utilize a social media posting service to optimize reach and engagement, (b) invest in social media branding and digital content composition training, (c) create a two-way communications strategy for greater consumer interactions with products, and (d) develop a niche product for their local demographic that could have a global reach. The recommendations provided could increase traffic to weekly print newspapers websites and social media platforms. The recommendations could also increase help print

newspapers develop an interactive digital platform that increases profit margins and expands their organizations' demographic reach.

I will share the findings of this study with print newspaper managers who are interested in improving their organizations' digital strategy. The method that I will employ to disseminate my study's findings includes sharing my findings with print newspaper managers located in the greater Washington, DC area. I will also share my results with niche news publishers, digital news content creators, and nonprofit organizations. I will also make my findings accessible on Google Scholar and publish my findings in an academic journal.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to create an online presence. Using Yin's (1995) five steps of data analysis, four themes emerged: (a) active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; (b) employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction; (c) localizing the news; and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and their website. This study had three limitations. The first limitation of this study was that weekly print newspaper managers might not recall all of the strategies they implemented to create a digital presence. This limitation could result in inaccurate data being collected and analyzed. The second limitation of this study was the potential for biased responses from participants. The participants for this study could have given false statements about their digital content creation progress and strategies, which would have skewed the data

collected. The third limitation of this study was gaining access to weekly print newspaper managers that created a digital presence for their organizations. The editorial demands of working for a weekly print newspaper could have prevented potential participants from sharing the innovative strategies that they used to create an online presence for their organizations.

The three recommendations for further research could include: (a) conducting a quantitative study to identify and examine key variables within strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to create an online presence, (b) conducting a mixed methods study with a larger demographic to identify and explore the strategies that daily print newspaper managers use to create an online presence and, (c) examining how senior citizens are navigating the multiplatform approach to digital media that local newspaper managers have taken.

Reflections

My knowledge of change management and the print newspaper industry's digital strategy has increased while conducting my study. In addition, my interest in organizational change and sustainability has grown. The transparency of the participants provided me with a greater appreciation for weekly print newspapers and how social media has increased their reach while sharing local stories in a global setting. Throughout my study, I remained objective and allowed each participant's responses and their public-facing documents to guide the results of this study. The literature review provided me with greater insight into change management and the tools required for change to become a part of an organization's culture. Furthermore, the literature review provided a

foundational understanding of the media and the disruptors that have pushed innovation and required organizational change.

The Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program has equipped me with the skills to recognize and identify my biases and how they could impact my research. As a qualitative researcher, my understanding of how to collect, categorize, group, triangulate, and interpret data has become richer and put me on a path for success as a future researcher. My matriculation through the DBA program has taught me time management, the value of peer coaching, and resilience. The most challenging aspect of this study was finding participants. As a result, I am humbled and grateful for the knowledge and time that each participant gave for me to complete my study.

Conclusion

The print newspaper industry has been a staple in the American media landscape for decades. Local journalism is vital to democracy and has withstood technological challengers (Heckman & Wihbey, 2019). The growth of digitization has changed the composition and delivery of news, requiring media leaders to quickly shift and develop strategies that align with the new demands of consumers and the multiple technologies available for reaching and interacting with consumers. Digitization has offered community print newspapers the opportunity to reach larger audiences while sharing their local stories through photographs, interviews, podcasts, and live streaming. Applying the theory of change management, the purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers used to create an online presence. The results of this study could help print newspaper managers create change strategies to navigate the

demands of building an online presence while maintaining their print product. The implications for social change are that print newspaper managers will gain greater insight into differentiating their product offerings and engaging consumers to remain viable in the age of digitization. Local communities could benefit from this study because the survival of local newspapers would allow for checks and balances in local politics, and a means for the recording of local history. Additionally, community newspapers provide jobs for its residents and allow small business owners to advertise their products, while contributing to local economies.

The data collected from interviewing three participants and reviewing their publicly available information revealed four themes: (a) active social media presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram; (b) employee training and mentorship to support digital content development, delivery, and interaction; (c) localizing the news; and (d) connecting with readers multiple times a week through newsletters and their website. In closing, the demand for, and consumption of, news has not disappeared. However, the platform used to access the news has changed. Consumers readily use their mobile devices, tablets, and computers to learn about local, national, and global events. American citizens have become accustomed to, and benefited from, easily accessing news, requiring print newspapers to innovate or close.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

The purpose of this study is to explore the strategies that weekly print newspaper managers use to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The targeted population for this study will consist of three weekly print newspaper managers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area of the United States of America, who have implemented successful strategies to compete and navigate change in the digital age. The findings in this study may contribute to positive social change by equipping local print newspaper managers with strategies to compete and navigate change in the digital age that may prevent closures. Print newspapers provide access to information to seniors and lower income residents who may have limited resources and understanding of digital technology, and to individuals with disabilities.

Interviewee: _____

Date:_____

Location:_____

Time:_____

Procedural Notes:

1. I will greet the interviewee and introduce myself.

2. I will provide the interviewee with a brief overview of my study and thank the interviewee for agreeing to participate in my study.

3. I will review the electronically signed informed consent form with the participant.

4. I will inform the participant that the interview will be recorded.

5. I will document on the recorder that the interviewee has signed the consent form.

6. I will explain to the participant that their participation is voluntary and that can stop the interview at any time.

7. I will tell them that the interview will be between 30-45 minutes.

8. I will begin each interview by recording the participant's pre-assigned coded name, date, time, and location.

9. I will begin asking the participant the interview questions and follow-up questions if needed.

10. At the end of the interview, I will thank the participant for their participation and time.

11. I will remind the participant that I will provide them with a summary of the interview and my interpretation of their responses for review and validation.

12. I will conclude the interview and provide the participant my contact information if the participant should have any questions.

13. The follow up meeting will be between 30-45 minutes. During the follow up meeting participants will have the opportunity to confirm, add to, or correct my interpretations of their interview responses.

Interview Questions

The following semistructured open-ended interview questions will be asked of weekly print newspaper managers that have successfully implemented strategies that helped their organization compete and navigate change in the digital age:

1. How has globalization, mobile technology, and social media changed your approach to business innovation?

2. How did you develop, organize, and implement change in response to digitization?

3. What strategies have you developed to differentiate your business offerings to compete with daily print and digital news outlets?

4. What strategies have you implemented to attract advertisers and consumers to your print and digital platforms?

5. What strategies have you implemented amongst your colleagues to navigate the digital age?

6. What tools have you used to measure and determine if a strategy has been employed successfully?

7. What else can you share with me about the strategies your organization has developed and implemented to compete and navigate change in the digital age?