

2022

## Strategies for Developing Call Center Employee Skills

Monica Almazni  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Monica Almazni

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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

Strategies for Developing Call Center Employee Skills

by

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MBA, Human Resources, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2021

MBA, Accounting, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2011

BS, Computer Information Systems, DeVry University, 2007

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2022

## Abstract

The lack of developing employees' performance has the potential for adverse business outcomes. Call center leaders must increase employee development skills as it is the number one predictor to improve organizational performance. Grounded in performance improvement theory (PIT), the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance. Five participants were call center leaders in Southern California who successfully implemented strategies to improve employees' skills and organizational performance. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, observations of body language, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, public and online libraries, organizational documents, and archival records. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Four themes emerged: (a) training, (b) effective communication, (c) employee engagement, and (d) proactive leadership. A key recommendation for leaders in the call center industry is investing in initial mandatory training, continual training, and job rotation training to enhance employee performance. The implications for positive social change include the potential to retain employees by developing their skills, keeping them motivated to be more productive, and improving their services to their respective communities.

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## Dedication

I want to thank my amazing heavenly Father, my God, and my savior Jesus Christ for His miraculous work in my entire life. Praise the Lord for His love and mercy that He gave me the wisdom and knowledge to continue this doctoral journey towards the end. Thank you, Lord, for giving me a fantastic family that supported me in overcoming all the challenges I faced to complete my Doctor of Business Administration program. My successful completion of this doctoral program is dedicated to my amazing husband and three children. My husband, Ali “Peter,” kept pushing me forward, supported me physically and emotionally, and gave me the strength to pursue my dream of earning a doctoral degree when I felt I should quit my study. He sacrificed a lot for me by working extra hours, helping with housework, and taking care of our children to give me the time to earn my doctoral degree. Completing this doctoral study would not have been possible without Peter’s continual support. I also dedicate this study to my amazing daughter Celine. She acted as a second mother to her sister Cindy and her brother David when I wasn’t available to take care of my kids due to reading, writing, traveling, or researching to complete my study. Thank God for my three exceptional children, Celine, Cindy, and David, for their understanding and encouragement to continue my study. Finally, I want to thank everyone else who encouraged me to continue my research or intimidated me into stopping my doctoral study as they got me to persist in continuing this challenging journey to prove to the world that it is worth it. The Lord blesses me with a fantastic family, a wonderful church, a great career, and an outstanding academic education; thank you, Jesus.

## Acknowledgment

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Organization leaders may experience limited organizational growth, low productivity, and high employee turnover when employees are not developed. Leaders are responsible for maintaining a skilled workforce through training and development of employees to increase their performance and productivity (H.Lee et al., 2019). Developing employees' skills might help leaders in attracting more talent, drive up the performance of the company, and increase employees' engagement and retention. Delery (2017) indicated that in the call center environment leaders lose talented employees due to the lack of quality relationship with employees and leaders' inability to develop employees' performance.

### **Background of the Problem**

The lack of developing employee talent may be detrimental to work performance and impact employee turnover (Nerstad et al., 2018). Many organizations suffer from low employee productivity, high retention costs, and unmotivated employees. Some call center leaders lack the strategies to keep employees engaged and develop employees' skills. Leaders who do not invest in employee development can lower employee performance and incur higher recruiting costs due to higher turnover (Svitlana & Nataliia, 2019). Companies that do not offer employee development opportunities to new and existing employees limit the individual's development and the evolution of the business (Delery, 2017). Employees who do not receive adequate training, coaching, and mentoring may have a difficult time meeting performance standards.

### **Problem Statement**

Organization leaders may experience high employee turnover and limited organizational performance when they neglect to develop employees' skills (Fang et al., 2020). In September 2019, 3.5 million employees voluntarily quit their jobs due to inability or unwillingness to perform their job duties (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). The general business problem was that some call center leaders face organizational performance difficulty because they are not developing their employees' skills, which is adversely affecting organizational performance. The specific business problem was that some call center leaders lack strategies to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance. The target population comprised leaders from two Southern California call centers who had successfully implemented strategies to improve employees' skills. The findings from this case study might effect positive social change by providing strategies to other business leaders about how to develop employees' skills, which might help to reduce employee burnout and workplace stress. The study findings might also improve the local economy by reducing voluntary employee resignations, which might reduce the local unemployment rate.

### **Nature of the Study**

Study planning began with consideration of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research approaches. Esensoy and Carter (2015) indicated that the qualitative method is a highly structured method in which researchers use a qualitative data gathering framework to solve a particular problem and identify strategies to overcome obstacles. Qualitative methodology was useful for gathering data relevant to the exploration of strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills. The data analysis from the qualitative method may provide strategic directions for leaders to retain talent by developing employees' skills and to reduce the turnover rate in the call center. Data analysis revealed ideas and plans that may be effective for similar organizations. Researchers use the quantitative method for deductive reasoning to form hypotheses and collect data to investigate a problem, share a conclusion, and provide evidence as to whether predictions are true or false (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). The quantitative method was inappropriate for the current study because the focus was on strategy identification rather than identifying or testing hypotheses. In a mixed-methods study, the researcher gathers both qualitative and quantitative data with a single investigation of inquiry (Shannonhouse et al., 2017). The mixed-methods approach was inappropriate for the current study about strategies leaders use to develop employees' skills because there was no need to examine the relationship between variables. According to Yin (2018), qualitative methodology is appropriate when researchers plan to investigate participants' experiences, responses, and results during the evaluation and interpretation process in order to understand a phenomenon. Using the qualitative method was appropriate for the

current study because I explored the strategies some call center leaders use to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance.

In this study, the case study design was appropriate because the research involved a deeper understanding of identified strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills. I chose a qualitative case study design to utilize multiple forms of in-depth data collection to identify strategies used to develop employees' skills. The purpose of a case study is to answer how and why questions about the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Conversely, researchers use the phenomenological design when they seek to understand individuals' lived experiences, which does not take into consideration perceptions (Kendrick, 2017). The phenomenological design is used by researchers to explore the topic from the views of people living the phenomenon (Wyk, 2017). The phenomenological design was not appropriate for the current study because the study was limited to exploring leadership strategies rather than lived experiences. Researchers use the ethnographic design to interact with participants in their real-life situation by using visual artifacts and documents (Comi & Whyte, 2017). The ethnographic design was not appropriate for the current study because there was no need to include visual artifacts or to investigate complex cultural phenomena. The content analysis of this case study focused on strategies used by two call center leaders in Southern California to develop employees' skills.

### **Research Question**

What strategies do call center leaders use to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What strategies did you implement to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance?
2. What challenges did you experience in implementing strategies to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance?
3. How did you overcome the challenges when implementing strategies to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance?
4. How did you evaluate the strategies used to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance?
5. How are training initiatives introduced and implemented in the organization?
6. What skillsets are targeted in training initiatives?
7. What benefits do you experience as a result of providing these training initiatives?
8. What additional information would you like to share about strategies used to develop employees' skills and improve organizational development?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the PIT developed by Swanson (1999). Swanson described the constant demand for high performance that affects the growth of an organization. Leaders need to measure employees' performance to assess their strengths and weaknesses (Sun et al., 2018). Swanson based PIT on improving organizational performance by knowing the vulnerability and the capacity of the organization and to train and motivate employees. The PIT includes providing



performance feedback, training, incentives, and support systems to improve the work environment (Roman et al., 2017).

The constructs underlying key concepts of the PIT are: (a) performance analysis, (b) cause study, (c) intervention selection, (d) design and development, (e) implementation and change management, and (f) evaluation (Swanson, 1999). Swanson (1999) asserted that practical findings from organizations and business owners could provide the basis of PIT for developing employees' knowledge and skills. Swanson added that the effects of the PIT are (a) increased output, (b) increased efficiency, (c) improved effectiveness of the process, and (d) increased effectiveness of the procedure. A central part of the performance improvement process is that organizations need to identify their staff's responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses, as well as current and future resources (Poell & Van Der Krogt, 2017). Swanson stated that mapping the employee development process includes feedback, active learning, coaching, and compensation. Therefore, the Swanson PIT was expected to align with the current study because improving employees' performance was the factor that might impact the ability to improve organizational performance.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Intervention selection:* Intervention selection includes actions that the employee can do to bring about changes in the job performance (Kilgus et al., 2019).

*Organizational citizenship behavior:* Organizational citizenship behavior occurs when the individual goes above and beyond the call of duty to make the working

environment run smoothly with a minimal connection to their current duties (Ismael & Yesiltas, 2020).

*Performance analysis:* Performance analysis is identifying the conditions necessary for the individual to become motivated and have high performance at work (Yan et al., 2021).

*Talent acquisition:* The talent acquisition department is a part of the human resources (HR) department where HR leaders are responsible for acquiring and hiring the best-qualified candidate for the offered position to improve employees' skills and develop employees' talents (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020).

*Talent management:* Talent management is a business strategy that involves the leadership talent to recruit, hire, retain, and develop internal employees to grow their professional and personal skills (Hussain & Amin, 2020).

*Turnover intention:* Turnover intention is an indication of whether the employee is planning to voluntarily leave the organization (Heponiemi et al., 2019).

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are speculations that are believed to be true and accurate without proof or validation (Davidson et al., 2017). One assumption in the current study was that the semistructured interviews would provide an adequate opportunity to identify themes related to developing employees' skills. Another assumption was that participants would respond to all interview questions openly and honestly and would share documents about the employees' development plan as a secondary data source. The last assumption was

that the multiple case study design was a suitable model to collect data related to the business problem.

### **Limitations**

Limitations of a study are possible weaknesses that are out of the researcher's control (Behm et al., 2018). One limitation in the current study was the leaders' ability to answer all questions truthfully without concealing confidential facts about the organization. Another limitation was that the call center leaders might have experienced discomfort in disclosing information about how they are working on developing employees' skills. The last limitation was that my previous employment as a call center employee might have influenced the research approach and analysis of the data collected.

### **Delimitations**

Delimitations are boundaries of the research study controlled by the researcher (Mousavi et al., 2017). The current qualitative multiple case study contained two delimitations that might have impacted the results. One delimitation was the geographic location of the study: call center leaders of two organizations in Southern California. Another delimitation was that only call center managers with at least 2 years of experience with strategies to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance were invited to participate.

### **Significance of the Study**

#### **Contribution to Business Practice**

The study findings might be of value to businesses, may extend the existing scholarship on employees' skill development, and may increase employee engagement

and productivity. This study may be significant because when employees are developed, individual and organizational performance is positively impacted.

### **Implications for Social Change**

This study might contribute to the effective practice of business and help leaders develop employees' skills which, might motivate employees by providing the tools and support needed to reach organizational goals. The results might contribute to positive social change by developing employees' skills. Employees may be more motivated, more productive, and happier at work, at home, and in their community. When employees are developed, they have more confidence at work and in their personal lives. Moreover, the results might reduce unemployment and improve the local economy.

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

This review of professional and academic literature contained a critical analysis and synthesis of peer-reviewed sources and seminal scholarly books related to the business problem. The literature review consisted of a critical analysis of literature related to the conceptual framework and existing bodies of knowledge regarding strategies for developing employees' skills in call centers. The references consisted of 202 sources used as evidence, with 187 (92.57%) scholarly peer-reviewed articles. A total of 175 references (86.63%) had publication dates within 5 years of the study's anticipated completion date of 2021.

The literature review contained search strategies, critical analysis, and synthesis of literature supported by peer-reviewed sources to ensure depth of the inquiry. Evertz and Sub (2017) explained that researchers use the literature review to organize the

existing literature completed by scholars and professionals to provide academic sources to the reader. The purpose of the current qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies call center leaders used to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance. I researched peer-reviewed articles from the Walden University Library databases, including GetCITED, Directory of Open Access Journals, JournalSeek, Taylor & Francis Online, Emerald Management Journals, Business Source Complete, Wiley Online, SAGE Premier, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. The review involved the following search terms: *Swanson PIT*, *call center*, *talent development*, *employees' performance analysis*, *intervention selection*, *developing employees' skills*, *performance improvement*, *organizational performance*, and *organizational commitment*. The Swanson PIT was the conceptual framework for this study.

### **PIT**

Swanson developed the PIT in 1999 and stated that the constructs underlying critical concepts of the PIT include performance analysis, case study, intervention selection, design and development, implementation and change management, and evaluation, which focus primarily on employees' development and improvement. Swanson based the PIT on improving employees' performance by investing in their professional development to enhance their skills and keep them more engaged. Swanson's performance improvement process might help organizational leaders improve employees' skills related to analyzing, proposing, creating, implementing, and assessing the organizational environment.

### ***Performance Analysis***

Analyzing employees' performance is a significant step toward improving employees' skills. Performance analysis is essential because it helps organization leaders analyze the employees' contribution to a specific assignment and track the company's spending (Swanson, 1999). Team leaders can develop a personal performance plan for their team members when they understand the team's strengths and weaknesses and learn about their team members. Swanson said that organization leaders must generate more income than they spend, contributing to their profitability and budget for performance improvement. Rana et al. (2017) indicated that leaders must work with their team members to develop a performance action plan as a tool that helps employees to overcome stressful work-related challenges and develop their performance. Asadullah et al. (2019) explained that team leaders must analyze and evaluate the PIT budget from collecting data to improve the team's skills. Lejeune et al. (2016) commented that leaders could develop an employment plan based on the organizational performance analysis to evaluate the team members' needs, struggles, challenges, skills, and overall company goals. Swanson concluded that improving the performance analysis is based on the organizational leaders who boost employee performance to increase productivity and revenue. Leaders can use the performance analysis to find how each team member needs help and to coach and mentor each member effectively.

### ***Case Study***

The team leaders can use the employees' statistics to identify the team's strengths and weaknesses and improve each member's performance. Swanson (1999) explained

that the organization could not have a long-lasting performance improvement plan without understanding the research records to consider a possible strategy to improve the individual, groups, and the organization. Mayhan (2017) recognized the PIT in the development plan by studying development needs, identifying goals, performing actions, measuring success, and watching the progress of the development process. Sanjeev and Singh (2017) explained that part of PIT focuses on leaders' need to study the company's goals and strategies for a structured talent management system to prepare employees to meet organizational needs. An essential part of the PIT focuses on corporate leaders' need to evaluate issues from prior cases and collect data for possible solutions or different approaches to overcome challenges (Mihaela, 2017). Rana et al. (2017) stressed the need for HR's involvement with PIT through data and trends to analyze individual performance change because of performance improvement plans. Swanson added that leaders must have a defined organizational process by studying the organizational needs and abilities to drive organizational performance.

Leaders should be aware of the company's mission and vision to coach their team members to improve organizational performance. Successful organization leaders identify mission and strategy, organization structure, technology, and HR to enhance organizational performance (Kirdina-Chandler, 2017). The use of PIT helps leaders to achieve organizational goals (Dodd, 2018). Swanson (1999) identified performance as the mission, goals, and strategies used to improve an organization's productivity and revenue. Turner and Baker (2016) explained that using the PIT might improve employee performance by studying employees' strengths and weaknesses to improve overall

performance. Dodd (2018) added that organizations use the PIT to improve their system performance and make informed decisions about improving performance using the appropriate system. A review of organizational records might help leaders develop proper development tools to enhance individual and organizational performance.

### ***Intervention Selection***

The intervention selection refers to strategies needed in performance improvement, which business leaders can take to reach the business goals. Swanson (1999) added that business leaders with lasting performance improvement must support the intervention with adequate practice. Mallin (2017) discussed the importance of using PIT for effective communication between leaders and employees to improve employee performance. Organization leaders should use various PIT techniques to enable individuals to understand the relationship between employees and leadership that underpin organizational development (Regts et al., 2019). Erkutlu and Chafra (2019) explained that leaders must find a tactical approach to coach employees using the PIT to develop a relationship and influence positive thinking. Poell and Van Der Krogt (2017) added that managers should consider different strategies and approaches to coach employees on more adaptive and constructive behaviors using the PIT rather than providing frequent negative feedback to ensure positive evaluations. Swanson added that leaders should address unforeseen circumstances by using business intervention strategies to develop new approaches based on the company's needs. Organization leaders can design employee development plans to set goals and strategies to improve employees' performance and organizational productivity.



### ***Design and Development***

Offering continual quality development to employees requires a good development plan and leadership support to improve employees' performance. Swanson (1999) indicated that performance improvement requires the leader to design a development system to improve employee performance that motivates individuals. Darrat et al. (2016) explained that when the competition level is high, organization leaders must focus on the employees' continual development by educating them and providing individuals with tools to be innovative in the workplace. Leaders should design a plan to engage employees in the development process and reach positive results (Mayhan, 2017). Roman et al. (2017) revealed that part of the PIT coaching plan is to listen to feedback from the frontline employees. Roman et al. explained that the feedback could help leaders in the coaching process by providing additional training to improve customer service skills. Gill et al. (2015) demonstrated that organizations with the highest absorptive capacity showed the most extensive PIT use. Putri and Gorda (2019) stated that organization leaders should follow the PIT by supporting individuals. Leaders demonstrate support by providing feedback and training to engage employees in the workplace. Putri and Gorda added that leaders must spend quality time with employees to discuss any work-related problems, provide additional training when needed, engage employees in new policies and procedures, and set reasonable goals and achievable expectations. Swanson concluded that the traditional development process focuses on evaluating performance results to heighten the intent of the PIT. Team leaders can use

employees' statistics for assessing employee performance and look for ways to improve employees' skills.

Organization leaders need to provide the opportunity for improvement and help individuals to advance their career position. Swanson (1999) explained that using the PIT helps improve the company's sales because of the increased attention and effort that leaders provide to enhance the individuals' performance. Schmidt et al. (2017) explained that managers use dedicated resources to improve organization-specific skills and enhance employees' commitment and effort to raise firm performance: several professions are committed to PIT, including HR development, management, and quality improvement. Roman et al. (2017) identified that the purpose of the PIT for leaders is to consider a systemic perspective to integrate structure, technology, behaviors, and processes that are part of the implementation phenomenon. Schmidt et al. (2017) added that it is essential for organization leaders to allow employees to advance their careers within the company and provide promotions to higher level positions. Gill et al. (2015) explained that PIT is an essential tool for achieving more effective and sustainable quality improvement. Change management happens when the leader is up to date on the company's latest technology and is willing to help employees develop goals and strategies for each team member to follow.

### ***Implementation and Change Management***

The team leader must have enough knowledge about what the company is offering to explain and coach their team members. Swanson (1999) demonstrated that the PIT starts with organizational leaders, followed by improving the process and

individuals' willingness to enhance their skills and change toward better results through the HR system. Savaneviciene and Vilciauskaite (2017) explained that talent management is a tool to help leaders train new workers and develop existing employee skills, which supports productivity and organizational goals. Savaneviciene and Vilciauskaite added that PIT is used to improve the talent management system to develop a strategy to overcome any HR issues. Brett et al. (2016) explained that managers who provide frequent feedback, especially if there is continual negative feedback, can be destructive.

In contrast, constructive feedback leads to positive results and higher employee satisfaction. Leaders should motivate employees and help those underperforming individuals develop and learn new skills (Lin et al., 2018). Putri and Gorda (2019) added that the leader should focus on benefits as part of the PIT to reduce turnover because it is an essential factor that many managers ignore. Wang et al. (2018) explained that leaders should lead people and have the ability to influence, motivate, and enable employees to contribute to organizational success. Absorptive capacity is the ability for organizations to apply innovative ideas. Li et al. (2017) explained that leaders might need to focus on innovation incentives and absorptive capacity development to ensure that employees are working in a collaborative and supportive team environment to improve the overall performance. Swanson (1999) added that a change management process requires leaders to apply changes to transition to a new project to meet the company's outcomes. Regts et al. (2019) stated that the PIT is an excellent tool for leaders to change management systems to drive the organization to reach its goals.

Norris et al. (2017) used the PIT to define the importance of performance improvement in schools. Norris et al. explained that performance could negatively or positively affect a person, people, or organization. Norris et al. described the importance of evaluating leaders' performance to motivate them and improve their performance. Rana et al. (2017) explained that the PIT is used to connect employees and their supervisors and clarify their required duties to achieve organizational goals. The team leader evaluates the employees' performance and knows the organization's products and services.

### ***Evaluation***

Evaluating employees' performance can help organization leaders determine the next step in the development plan. Swanson (1999) concluded that the final phase of the PIT is to focus on the evaluation of performance results. Poell and Van Der Krogt (2017) explained that using the PIT helps leaders provide constructive feedback in the evaluation process rather than only negative comments that lead to a stressful working environment and adverse outcomes. Lin et al. (2018) explained that leaders might educate self-motivated employees who model the PIT and desire to learn and improve their skills. Employees need support by understanding how to improve their skills through frequent coaching sessions and feedback from their leaders.

Cullen-Lester et al. (2017) focused on the need for organizations to enhance the PIT and their leaders beyond knowledge, skills, and abilities by evaluating employees' skills and supporting individuals to improve. Cullen-Lester et al. revealed the critical gaps between the science and practice of network-enhancing leadership development as

part of the PIT. Meena and Vanka (2017) explained that although offering compensation is necessary, employees will not perform better unless the leader provides constructive feedback. Providing training and coaching sessions and engaging employees in the company's policy to make employees feel comfortable are aspects of the PIT. Swanson (1999) concluded that leaders must make informed decisions about using the appropriate system that focuses on analyzing the individual's needs and improving the skills to research a desirable result for both the individual and the company.

The team leaders should work with each team member to enhance employee performance based on their needs. Identifying individuals' weaknesses might help team leaders in improving organizational performance. Dodd (2018) explained that the PIT links the business to society because the PIT is a tool that allows organization leaders to know what they should or should not do on performance improvement. Dodd encouraged leaders to begin discussions early, engage employees and stakeholders, and evaluate performance to make a positive contribution to society. Roman et al. (2017) explained that the PIT includes strategies for leaders to use by providing performance feedback, training, incentives, support systems to improve the work environment. Rana et al. (2017) explained that organizational leaders must develop a performance improvement plan to help employees improve their weaknesses and advance their career levels. Setting individual goals for each team member might improve the team's overall performance.

### **Other Theories Considered**

In addition to the Swanson PIT, researchers used several other theories related to developing employees' skills. One of the most common theories researchers used for

developing employees' skills is the McGregor Theory X and Theory Y (Lawter et al., 2015). McGregor (1956) stated that Theory A and Theory Y includes two aspects of people at work and two contrasting management styles. The PIT theory contains strategies to improve employees' performance to improve unsatisfactory staff members and employees' behaviors. Theory X and Theory Y includes what the employees' perspective of the company is and how they can change negativity in the workplace to increase employee satisfaction and performance.

### ***McGregor's XY Theory of Management***

McGregor (1956) developed contrasting theories about managers' belief of what motivates employees affects their management style: Theory X and Theory Y of human work motivation and management. McGregor explained that Theory X is the negative theory focusing on the assumption that employees are working solely for a sustainable income, which focuses on the company versus employees. McGregor indicated that Theory Y is a positive theory that assumes that employees can perform better when they learn to admit and recognize the responsibility. McGregor stated that managers' beliefs on performance improvement focuses on the organizational benefits but not from the employees' perspective (Lawter et al., 2015).

Theory X is a tool for the researcher to focus on why individuals tend to dislike their work due to their managers threatening punishment when they perform lower than expected (Frottas, & Nummelin, 2018). McGregor (1956) included that Theory Y is about the employees' skills and capabilities, including creativity and resourcefulness that leaders can use to solve organizational problems. Rohim and Budhiasa (2019) explained

that individuals do not feel connected to their organizations when they don't get rewarded for their achievements. The Theory Y might help leaders use current employees' skills and develop them to fulfill its purposes and mission (Kirdina-Chandler, 2017). Team members are willing to work harder and improve their performances when acknowledged by their leaders through the employee recognition and rewards program.

Frottas and Nummelin (2018) explained that there are other variables than in Theory X and y that are important in leadership, that concludes the attitudes and needs of the followers, the nature and structure of the organization, and the social, economic, and political environments. Leaders who use theories x and y might connect the employees' needs with the organizational goals to improve their performance (McGregor, 1956). The PIT concept indicates that social performance, organizational performance, team performance, and individual performance contribute to achieving organizational goals (Swanson, 1999). Theory X and y assist leaders in looking at the organization's human side of identifying the employees' behaviors towards the organization and its customers (Lawter et al., 2015). Frottas and Nummelin argued that the employees' behavior might swing from the x to the y theory with changes in the individual's mood and motives, leading to the working environment. Leaders who motivate the employee and provide frequent feedback can enhance employee performance. The PIT is different from the McGregor Theory X and Theory Y since it does not involve assumptions of what the employee thinks (Lawter et al., 2015). Instead, leaders use the PIT when analyzing and evaluating the employees' performance to improve their skills.

### ***Kirkpatrick Model***

Kirkpatrick created the Kirkpatrick model in 1959, including a four-level training model to improve the employees' performance: reactions, learning, behavior, and results (Kirkpatrick, 1959). Susanto (2019) stated that the Kirkpatrick model is one of the most influential leaders' training methods. The Kirkpatrick model concentrates on the effectiveness of a training program by evaluating the training process with feedback from training sessions (Heydari et al., 2019). The Kirkpatrick Model is an instrumental model for training employees in different steps. Simultaneously, the PIT is more than training employees, but instead keeping employees engaged and reducing the turnover intentions.

**Reaction.** Kirkpatrick (1959) explained that the first step in the model is the reaction, which contains how satisfied are employees with the lesson. Jonny (2016) identified the Kirkpatrick model's reaction stage and how it might impact the learner's emotional response to the course designed and the impact on the learning stage as practical to the learner. Heydari et al. (2019) explained that the reaction step contains how the participants reacted to the training and if the movement may or may not help the individual improve their skills. Susanto (2019) added that leaders must evaluate training programs to choose the best and easiest process for individuals to learn; the teaching and learning method is essential to help in the education intervention. Heydari et al. (2019) added that the training experience is vital because exhausting the employee can lead to negative results.

**Learning.** Kirkpatrick (1959) indicated that the second step in the model is the learning stage, which contains what the learners learned from the training model. Dewi



and Kartowagiran (2018) added that the teaching step could help leaders understand the outcomes and increase their knowledge and skills from the learning process. Susanto (2019) indicated that the learning step contains how the leader can improve the employees' experience and skills and change their negative attitude. Heydari et al. explained that leaders must learn to score and measure the effectiveness of the training step in the Kirkpatrick model as part of the training assessment.

**Behavior.** Kirkpatrick (1959) explained that the third step in the model is the behavior, which focuses on what the employee can apply in practice from the learning process. Ho et al. (2016) added that the Kirkpatrick model's behavior step determines if the training is making an impact on the daily behavior of the agent, which forces the trainer to engage the trainee in the process by participating in the training development. Heydari et al. (2019) explained that the behavior step might help leaders focus on how the training affects the employees' behavior and improvement and if their weaknesses are improving.

**Results.** Kirkpatrick (1959) concluded the model with the results step that focuses on the training model results on the employees' behaviors. La Duke (2017) added that the Kirkpatrick model's results stage concentrated on calculating the initiative's business impact, including the return on investment; testing the results frequently while the training is to ensure the individual's understandings and make revisions when necessary. Susanto (2019) added that the Kirkpatrick model's fourth step is the impact of the training to produce positive results. Dewi and Kartowagiran (2018) noted that the Kirkpatrick model's training results might help leaders uncover new strategies in the

training methods if the individuals' performance is not improving after attending the training intervention. Using different training models is an excellent tool for leaders to improve the employee's knowledge and enhance the employee's skills about the company's products or services.

### **Call Center Environment**

Call center employees must have in-depth knowledge of the company's product or services offered to answer customer's questions, make sales, and respond to consumer inquiries. Posey (2019) explained that when team leaders focus on the employee's performance improvement, they target an intense stressor for the call center representative, which is the main factor for job dissatisfaction. Hudson et al. (2017) explained the essential role of call center employees as they are the first to interact with consumers, making leaders need to work closely with agents to ensure the employees' satisfaction and engagement. Call centers are a division in the company where agents handle many customers' incoming and outgoing calls to provide support, handle inquiries, sales, and market research (Sato, 2018). Sato identified that a call center is a place where employees with a certain level of expertise gather the customer's information and inquire effectively as a base to acquire loyal customers and respond to concerns.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019), in 2019, there were 7,400 call center facilities across the U.S., with approximately 3.3 million employees. The call center usually contains multiple departments, including sales, marketing, customer service, quality assurance, technology, and employee relations. Zito et al. (2018) added that all center leaders must ensure their employees' well-being to increase

customer satisfaction since call centers are usually the first point of contact between the customer and the agent. Team leaders need to energize the work environment, improve the employee's performance, and increase employee satisfaction by providing enough tools and resources for team members to answer customer calls correctly.

Managers use technology-driven tools in the (PIT) to support sales, improve customer retention rates, disseminate information, and improve customer satisfaction to achieve higher employee satisfaction (Cosgrave et al., 2018). H. Lee et al. (2019) added that leaders offer lower wages in call centers when most workers are young with limited education. Still, higher pay might help motivate employees to perform better and increase productivity. Sato (2018) explained that the lack of training employees in a call center might cause dissatisfaction, disengagement, and higher turnover intentions. It is essential for call center leaders to ensure that the workplace is safe and employees are satisfied to increase employee productivity and support the organization's goals.

Aliyu and Nyadzayo (2018) identified four critical customer relationship management (CRM) dimensions useful for leaders to enhance employee job satisfaction: customer orientation, CRM organization, knowledge management, and technology-based CRM, which focus on improving the relationship between the leaders, employees, and customers. Effective coaching and regular training are essential to cultivating a capable team with the right knowledge about the company's products and services (He et al., 2019). Lockwood (2018) explained that the relationship between leaders and employees in the call center is essential, and leaders must possess excellent communication skills when coaching to improve employee skills. He et al. explained that coaching sessions are

a perfect tool for leaders to identify any work-related issues and improve the work condition and keep employees engaged. Ma et al. (2018) added that call center team leaders should have frequent contact with employees to identify any problems in advance and develop worker-community interaction opportunities. Ma said that call center employees are the company's front-line taking customer calls and interacting with management. Team leaders can work with employees to design a development plan to include frequent training to enhance employee skills. Incorporating the PIT in the call center environment is a tool for organizational leaders to use with employees to improve their knowledge about the products, services, and company initiatives.

### **Training and Development Using PIT**

Some leaders use the PIT to identify an employee's improvement areas; they train the employee in remediating these areas of improvement by developing the employees' skills. Li et al. (2017) indicated that many call center leaders focus on ensuring customer satisfaction and neglect employee satisfaction, conflict resolution, and regular training and coaching sessions, which leads to a higher turnover. Developing employees' skills starts with providing frequent training and coaching. Improving the employees' qualifications should include providing feedback, conducting spaced training sessions, and technology training (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Leaders can help low performing employees by addressing cross-training, shift schedule, days off, and break assignments across multiple service categories is proposed (Taskiran & Zhang, 2017). Aslam et al. (2018) explained that developing employee skills through training and education helps talented employees advance their career level and stay longer. Asadullah et al. (2019)

added that the training must focus on partial and specific cross-training to provide more flexibility in managing the workforce and helping employees learn new skills. Asadullah et al. indicated that it is more effective when leaders train their team members in-house because they have the experience and knowledge about the organization, which training from outside the organization lacks. Management can increase job satisfaction to reduce the turnover intention by developing the employees' skills and provide the necessary resources and training (Ro & Lee, 2017). Successful organizations use training as an effective way to establish employees' skills for future leaders with the company (Lacerenza et al., 2017). The PIT is a tool for leaders to use when evaluating the employees' performance to identify the best method for training each employee.

### ***Types of Training***

There are many strategies and types of training that the employer can use to develop the employees' skills (Johnston et al., 2019). Noe (2020) explained two types of training: formal and informal training. Prasetio et al. (2019) indicated that improving employee skills through formal and informal training is essential to enhance employee performance. Smith et al. (2019) added that formal training consists of cross-training, coaching sessions, on-the-job training, and online webinars. Informal training is unexpected training opportunities like conversations, online discussions, books, and other company resources. The team leader should use formal and informal training that aligns with individual team members' needs.

Formal training is the type of training that employers develop with specific goals and objectives to improve employee skills and enhance employee performance (Sparr et

al., 2017). The formal training consists of an orientation, job training, technical skills development training, soft skills development training, and mandatory training (Noe, 2020). The orientation is the employee's first training when they start in the company. The on-the-job training is ongoing training that employers should frequently provide to the employee to enhance performance (Ellstrom, & Ellstrom, 2018). Detsimas et al. (2016) explained that workplace technical and soft skills training is essential, and employees appreciate training in the development process to reach organizational goals. Griffith et al. (2019) explained the importance of corporate leaders investing in in-classroom training to improve employee skills. Atanasoff and Venable (2017) demonstrated that leaders could add educational programs in a classroom environment or online to enhance their technical and soft skills. It is essential for the team leader to pre-plan the formal training to ensure that the content is understandable and beneficial to employees.

Team leaders must use effective communication with their team members through informal training sessions. Informal training focuses on developing the employees' daily skills, including regular coaching and mentoring sessions, networking, job rotation, and on-the-work competition (Sparr et al., 2017). Ramovs et al. (2019) added there are many strategies that the employer can use indirectly to improve the employees' skills by exposing the employee to different tasks and projects, which also helps create a healthy working environment. Organizational leaders need to provide frequent mentoring sessions to enhance employee performance (Boçoc et al., 2019). Team leaders can use the employees' statistics to coach based on individual needs.

Team leaders can share their knowledge, skills, and experience with their team members through mentoring sessions. Leadership mentoring is essential as ongoing daily training improves the individual's performance to learn new skills and technologies to enhance the individuals' wisdom and job knowledge (Pham et al., 2019). Al-Romeedy (2019) explained that job rotation is an excellent strategy that employers might use to expose individuals to different job tasks in various departments to broaden their workplace knowledge from different views. Prasetio et al. (2019) demonstrated that the most effective strategy in improving employee performance involves the organizational leader's ability to conduct multiple cross-training sessions to enhance low performers' skills.

Leaders can create an employee development plan that includes a joint agreement between the employee and supervisor to achieve personal goals, long term career goals, organizational goals, and what the employee will do, including training, to achieve the goals (Lejeune et al., 2016). The employees' development plan might include developing the employees' skills from the entry-level position to encourage employees to move up to the higher-level role and seek promotions (Griffith et al., 2019). Ma et al. (2018) explained that some individuals tend to leave the organizations and look for elsewhere because of their low performance and lack of a development plan or opportunity. The employees' development plan plays a significant role in effective communication with other employees and customers and demonstrates management support and feedback to improve their performance (Cosgrave et al., 2018). Frequent meetings between team

leaders and their team members can help address any work-related problems and increase the employees' performance and job satisfaction.

Quality time between the team leader and each team member is essential to reducing turnover intentions and increasing employee engagement. Selden and Sowa (2015) concluded that organizational leaders lose talent when they do not invest in skill development, provide adequate compensation, and provide relevant training. Asadullah et al. (2019) explained that the call center jobs' complexity forces managers to create and spend more resources in employee training and development to improve their skills through practical training. Call center employees need to be well-trained because they are the front-line with many customers who request assistance on a wide variety of company products and services, which requires excellent customer service (Asadullah et al., 2019). Frequent communication between the team leader and each team member might help identify strategies and resources that team members can use to increase productivity and revenue.

Leaders can use the training evaluation to enhance the training process and coaching and mentoring sessions. Maity (2019) added that the leaders should carefully design training and development programs to engage the employees in the company's rules, products, and services and prepare the individual for the organization's future needs. Joe et al. (2018) explained that having a trained workforce helps the organization to improve productivity and reduce production time and time providing customer service. Anwar and Shukur (2015) demonstrated that investing in the employee through training and development will enhance employee efficiency and increase employee satisfaction.



Santhanam et al. (2017) added that training and compensation practices influence employee intent to leave. Oliveira et al. (2019) stated that additional training, benefits, and promotional opportunities would increase job satisfaction and improve organizational performance. Rotating team members in different departments is an effective way to train employees to work in various jobs.

### ***Job Rotation***

Al-Romeedy (2019) explained a direct connection between job rotation's effect on improving the employees' performance and motivating the employee to learn new tasks. Al-Romeedy also indicated that job rotation enhances the employees' skills, increases the employees' satisfaction, and improves employee job involvement, reducing burnout. H. Lee et al. (2019) explained that while leaders need to place employees in the best position based on their qualifications and skills to increase productivity, improving their performance comes from practicing different tasks to learn new skills. Brueton et al. (2017) indicated that skilled leaders would expose employees to different functional areas of the company to increase their engagement and improve their skills. Walsh and Cain (2017) explained that job rotation in the call center helps improve the employees' skills and increases career advancement while reducing voluntary turnover. Rotating team members in the different departments will increase the employees' interactions with other team members and increase the employees' knowledge about the company.

Kampkotter et al. (2018) defined job rotation as a transfer between employees' jobs to develop employees' skills by rotating individuals to different work functions. Rotating employees helps speeds up skill acquisition and allows employees to learn on

the job (Kampkotter et al., 2018). Asadullah et al. (2019) explained that it is essential to expose employees to a different position as part of the ongoing education. Tsoh et al. (2019) added that developing leadership skills through job rotation can significantly improve employee performance. Hastings (2016) identified that leaders could make employees feel like an asset to the company when they engage them in more tasks and expose them to different career opportunities within the company. Rotating individuals within the company give employees the feeling of security that increases job satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

Exposing individuals to different job tasks within the company might be a great way to teach individuals about its products and services. Thongpapanl et al. (2018) conducted a research study that indicated that job rotation promotes healthy and positive interdepartmental collaboration, enhancing the organization's performance. Thongpapanl et al. added that the individuals' performance improves when individuals are exposed to different departments and job tasks to help them gain knowledge about various departments and other positions. Liu et al. (2016) explained that rotating employee job tasks or promoting the individual to different functions increases the employees' job satisfaction and willingness to improve their skills and increase performance. Job rotation gives the employees new challenges and an opportunity to expand their current knowledge in different organizational aspects (Thongpapanl et al., 2018). Team leaders can frequently talk to their team members and develop a training plan, including training sessions, job rotations, and frequent coaching sessions.

### ***Coaching and Mentoring***

Coaching and mentoring sessions are a great tool that leaders can use to increase employee engagement, performance, and satisfaction. Pham et al. (2019) examined the impact of coaching and mentoring on improving employee performance and found that positive coaching sessions and leadership mentoring can significantly enhance the individual's performance and overall company productivity. DiGirolamo and Tkach (2019) identified coaching as a way for managers and leaders to engage with employees and develop an action plan for improvement and better working relationships. Tan et al. (2018) defined mentoring as a long development process between the leader and the team member to improve employee skills and build trust and mutual respect. Tan et al. added that mentoring is a more formal approach than coaching that makes a long-term relationship between the mentor and the mentee. Jang and Marshall (2018) explained that negative criticism from leaders could reduce the employees' motivation. Team leaders need to use constructive criticism and encourage employees to improve and retain talent.

Coaching and mentoring might be the best way for leaders to increase employee job satisfaction and retention rate and reduce turnover intentions. Carr et al. (2017) explained that both coaching and mentoring are great methods that provide employees with support and resources to improve employee skills. Billings and Kowalski (2019) identified the importance of having productive coaching conversations that focus on possibilities and collaboration rather than about authoritarian or orders from the leader. DiGirolamo and Tkach (2019) added that coaching sessions are more performance-driven than improving employee development; it makes both coaching and mentoring essential

to engage the employee and develop higher performance. DiGirolamo and Tkach explained that practical coaching sessions from a skilled leader or manager could encourage the employee to improve their performance, providing better opportunities within the company. Heponiemi et al. (2019) conducted a study and concluded that poor coaching sessions and disengagement between leaders and their team members are strongly associated with underperforming employees. Heponiemi et al. (2019) suggested that leaders work closely with employees through coaching and mentoring to remove barriers, increase employee satisfaction, and increase productivity. Frequent communication between team leaders and their team members is essential in the employees' development plan.

Coaching sessions might help team members address any work-related problems before it escalates to job burnout. Jyoti and Rani (2019) conducted a study that directly connects a high-performance work system through leadership mentoring and the employees' intention to leave the company. Jyoti and Rani explained that extensive leadership mentoring could significantly reduce employee burnout and quit the company. Tan et al. (2018) demonstrated that supervisors' mentoring affects the employees' turnover intention by reducing the burnout symptoms such as emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Tan et al. added that psychosocial mentoring functions help serve as role models with appropriate attitudes, values, and behaviors. Billings and Kowalski (2019) added that the supervisors' mentoring builds the connection between management and employees, engaging more in the company to improve, gain exposure, and obtain promotions. Men and Robinson (2018) identified that when employees are involved in

the company through support and recognition of their hard work, it leads to higher productivity and lowers their intention of leaving the company. Low-performing employees without any leadership support are more likely to be disengaged from the company's goals and mission.

Leaders can use the coaching and mentoring session to provide clear expectations about the job entails and offer clear job direction and tools to succeed. Banerjee-Batist and Reio (2016) explained that the organizational commitment through leadership support by formal mentoring directly links to the employees' intent to leave. Banerjee-Batis and Reio identified that when the supervisor or leader engages more with the employee through extensive mentoring, they will be less likely to quit. Kim et al. (2015) explained that the mentoring activity is productive if it focuses on main functions, career development, psychosocial support, and role modeling. Kim et al. added that comprehensive mentoring programs could significantly reduce turnover intention and positively affect job satisfaction. Fogarty et al. (2017) conducted a study showing that supervisory satisfaction through extensive mentoring programs is strongly associated with boosting the employees' performance. Lejonberg and Tiplic (2016) conducted a study that contributes to how the training can positively improve the communication between leaders and their team members. The leader needs to provide constructive feedback that gives directions on how the employee can reach better results and improve their communication skills (Fernandez et al., 2016). The leader's coaching and mentoring sessions must include developing the employees' communication and interpersonal skills

to enhance organizational performance. Disengaged team members result from inadequate communication between the team members and their leaders.

### ***Communication and Interpersonal Skills***

Effective communication skills include listening and communicating professionally to convey important information. El-Huni et al. (2019) explained that improving the employees' communication skills help build the employees' interpersonal skills with customers, listening, and public speaking, and improve the employees' adaptability. Leaders can encourage employees to participate in training and learn new skills to overcome communication weaknesses and enhance speaking in public (Mitchell et al., 2019). Team leaders must work closely with each employee to develop the employees' communication skills, increasing employee productivity and performance.

Employees' input is critical in what the employee feels might help them improve their skills. Rauschenbach et al. (2018) indicated that effective communication training helps engage and coach employees. Rauschenbach et al. added that there are many resources that organizational leaders can use to improve the employees' communication skills. Effective communication skills training can improve the employees' interpersonal skills, increase the employees' feelings of confidence, and encourage individuals to participate in further development, which will enhance their productivity (Hesse et al., 2019). Mitchell et al. (2019) explained that open meetings and coaching sessions are some of the best ways' leaders can improve the employees' interpersonal communication skills. Mitchell et al. added that effective communication helps the employee learn to solve problems, handle communication conflicts, increase the employees' interpersonal

skills, and reduce the employee turnover intentions. Communication is an essential skill that all employees need in the workplace; improving their communication skills can significantly impact their success.

Employees with effective communication skills might be the future leaders of the company. Steffens et al. (2018) indicated that leaders must develop the employees' communication skills since investing in their skills is essential as they might be the company's tomorrow's leaders. Muldoon et al. (2018) explained that poor employee communication skills might be the reason for missed opportunities, conflicts, and low performance. Fischer (2015) added that effective two-way communication at the workplace is essential in improving the employees' skills by providing guidance and clarifying both personal and organizational goals. Shi et al. (2017) explained that an individual development plan should also improve their communication skills of reading and listening. Shi et al. indicated that leaders must engage employees at the workplace and offer constructive feedback to build effective communication skills. Sherman (2019) explained the art of providing negative feedback to the employee, building trust, promoting a growth mindset, and developing employee performance by making a development plan for improvements. Sherman et al. added that improving the employees' interpersonal communication skills helps the employee become an active listener and enhances the employees' verbal communication with consumers. Guo et al. (2017) indicated the importance of developing the employees' communication skills, including oral, nonverbal, written, and visual skills. Guo et al. added that providing developmental feedback might help adjust the employees' behavior and performance and improve the

employees' communication skills inside and outside the workplace. Developing the employees' communication skills is essential as part of the employees' development plan to enhance skills and increase productivity.

### **Employee Engagement Using PIT**

Utilizing the PIT might improve the employee's engagement by having loyal, committed employees to their organizational goals and values. Holland et al. (2016) explained that when leaders provide tools and resources to their employees, they are more engaged and committed to the organization, which leads to higher satisfaction and higher productivity. Men and Robinson (2018) explained that employee engagement is achieved when employees' knowledge and ideas increase employee productivity and services. Martins and Nienaber (2018) added that engaged employees are more committed to the company and can advance their careers through improving their skills. Bakker (2017) explained that engaged employees are motivated to work harder and willing to excel in their careers. Bakker added that coaching, meetings, and training sessions are the best ways to keep employees engaged, committed to the company, and improve their skills. Engaged employees are more likely to have higher performance and are motivated to align with their goals (He et al., 2019). Employee engagement has proven to increase employee satisfaction and increase employees' productivity.

Engaged employees are more committed to the company and are willing to improve their skills to advance their careers. Bondarchuk (2018) explained that investing in human capital will increase employee engagement, knowledge, skills, physical well-being, and mental abilities. Harker et al. (2018) conducted a study that shows that



meetings and coaching help employees engage in the development process to improve their skills. Vercic and Vokic (2017) explained that engaged employees are the ones that will be willing to take extra training and accept the coaching feedback to advance their career within the company.

Engaged employees produce higher productivity and are more innovative than others. Holland et al. (2016) explained that engaging employee is an essential part of developing the employees' skills since employees won't spend efforts to improve their performance if they have the intention to leave the company. Vercic and Vokic (2017) added that engaging employees at the workplace are an excellent way of building trust and improving employee satisfaction. Li et al. (2017) explained that employee creativity, higher productivity, and innovation come from engaging employees. Martins and Nienaber (2018) concluded that engaged employees produce higher productivity; they are happy and healthy inside the workplace and look for more opportunities to advance. The leaders' usage of the PIT might help employees influence their level of engagement, increase their chance of becoming emerging leaders, and commit to the organization.

### **Employee Turnover Using PIT**

The turnover intentions come from the lack of employee support through training, coaching, and continual development. The PIT is strongly associated with increasing the employee's engagement, improving the employee's performance, motivating individuals, and offering various training, which contributes actively to increase the retention rate and decrease the employee's turnover intentions (Holland et al., 2016). Ro and Lee (2017) stated that lack of training in call centers results in a high employee turnover rate from

conducting an extensive study of turnover intentions. Dhanpat et al. (2018) added that most individuals decide to leave the current job and look for another opportunity because they do not feel supported by the supervisor and are not adequately trained. Cosgrave et al. (2018) added that team leaders could reduce turnover by creating an employee development plan, including frequent training.

Organizational leaders must work closely with their team members to improve their performance and enhance their skills. Dhanpat et al. (2018) added that the team leader must address the employees' negative emotions through regular coaching and mentoring sessions, reducing employee frustration and improving customer service. Fernandez et al. (2016) explained that it is essential to develop employee skills from the first day of work because these individuals are the company's future leaders, neglecting to improve the employees' performance results in job dissatisfaction and employee turnover. Zhou and Li (2018) indicated that leaders could reduce the employees' intentions to leave the company by improving their performance and offering different training types to enhance employee skills. Satardien et al. (2019) indicated that when leaders invest in enhancing employees' skills via coaching and training, they are more likely to stay. When employees are developed and trained, they are more engaged and more likely to remain even in stressful environments such as call centers.

When employees' performance improves, employee satisfaction increases and they are more likely to stay. Zhu et al. (2019) explained that when the company invests in the employees' benefit resources like career improvement and satisfaction, they become more committed to their companies, and they tend to work harder. X. Lee et al. (2017)

explained that strengthening the employees' skills by offering various training programs allows employees to improve and increase the employee retention rate. Buck (2017) argued that having a development program is an essential factor in increasing retention and push individuals to enhance their performance. Krutsinger et al. (2019) added that leaders retain talent by providing coaching. Often, individuals want to improve their performance; some employees do not know how to unless their leaders direct them. Montani et al. (2020) demonstrated that employees tend to perform better when recognized for their hard work, they feel more compelled to continue working hard. Khalid and Nawab (2018) explained that workplace training and ongoing education have a more substantial influence on retention. Employees who are provided training opportunities are more engaged, and when an employee is more engaged, they are more committed to the organization and less likely to leave.

### **Transition**

Section 1 of this study contained the foundation for the proposed qualitative multiple case studies to explore strategies call center leaders to use to develop employee skills. Call center leaders to suffer from high employee turnover and workplace stress because of their low performance, which leaders should predict and take preventive actions (Valle & Ruz, 2015). The Swanson theory was the conceptual framework used for this study. Richard Swanson (1999) described that the constant demand for high performance affects the organization's growth to satisfy consumers. The study's significance might be of value to businesses to extend and contribute to the existing

scholarship about employees' skills development and increase employee engagement and productivity support by the academic peer-reviewed literature.

Section 1 included the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, and research question. Later in the section, I included the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and the study's significance. The literature review included intensive review of different categories: (a) the PIT (b) other theories considered, (c) call center environment, (d) training and development, (e) employee engagement, and (f) employee turnover. The literature review of the professional and academic literature included peer-reviewed journals ranging from 2016 to 2020 related to subtopics on developing employee skills in the call center environment.

Section 2 contains the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instrument, data collection techniques, data analysis, study validity, and transition and summary. Section 3 consists of an application for professional practice and social change implications. I started with the introduction, followed by a presentation of findings and application to professional practice. Later in the section, I focused on the implication for social change, the recommendation for action, recommendation for further research, reflections, and a conclusion to the research study.

## Section 2: The Project

Section 2 of this study comprises the reasoning for investigating, validating, and interpreting the challenges call center leaders face to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance in the call center environment. Section 2 includes the role of the researcher, description of participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical steps used by following the protocols of the Belmont Report, data collection instruments and techniques, organization and analysis of the data collected, and the reliability and validity of the study. Data were collected from virtual semistructured interviews with open-ended interview questions and a review of related company documents.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies call center leaders use to develop employee skills. The target population comprised leaders from two Southern California call centers who had successfully implemented strategies to improve employees' skills. The findings from this case study might effect positive social change by providing strategies to other business leaders regarding how to develop employees' skills, which might help to reduce employee burnout and workplace stress. The study findings might also improve the local economy by reducing voluntary employee resignations, which might reduce the local unemployment rate.

### **Role of the Researcher**

My role as the primary researcher was to select appropriate participants from whom to collect data. I also analyzed the data and reported the findings. Darmayanti et al.

(2018) confirmed that a researcher in qualitative studies conducts in-depth interviews with participants, chooses the appropriate data analysis method, and develops findings from a wide variety of resources. I gathered information and strategies from different peer-reviewed sources, conducted interviews with multiple participants, and gathered data from organization documents to ensure the quality of the study. I made sure to maintain the correct interpretation of the data to avoid false conclusions.

I have more than 12 years of call center experience in multiple positions from sales to management, but I was not working in a call center at the time of the study. I was not working for and had not previously worked for the participant organizations, and I did not have any personal or professional relationship with any of the participants. Wylie (2018) stated that the researcher should not bring implicit values and beliefs, draw inappropriate conclusions, generalize results, or otherwise influence the research process and outcomes. Cumyn et al. (2018) explained the importance of analyzing the perceptions of the researcher because they might influence the interpretation of the data. I avoided interrupting the participants when conducting interviews. Interviews were scheduled virtually using Zoom, Skype, or FaceTime because of the COVID -19 pandemic. I recorded the interviews and avoided adding my personal opinions to interview answers.

Adashi et al. (2018) explained that *The Belmont Report* is a great tool for researchers to use to ensure that ethical principles are followed in research that involves interviews or surveys. I followed the principles of *The Belmont Report*. Friesen et al. (2017) stated that it is necessary to separate research and practice and to follow *The Belmont Report* to ensure positive solutions and fair results. *The Belmont Report* was

published by the National Commission to provide an ethical framework in human research to set boundaries between practice and research (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). I followed the three ethical requirements stated in *The Belmont Report*: (a) respecting my participants and protecting their opinions, (b) doing no harm and minimizing the risks to participants, and (c) following justice by treating each participant equally.

I mitigated any personal bias by not inserting my personal thoughts and opinions from my call center experience and listening closely to what was being said by each participant. O'Sullivan and Schofield (2019) explained that the researcher could mitigate bias by collecting data from multiple resources and many participants to reduce error and to reduce the misinterpretation of collected data. The researcher must be able to ask the best questions and interpret the truth from the information and data collected (Darmayanti et al., 2018). Researchers should not have a preconceived position on the subject to mitigate any bias that may shift the results (Cumyn et al., 2018). I followed the interview protocol (see Appendix A), took notes to capture participant responses, and remained neutral and objective during data collection.

It was critical for me to choose the best interview questions and to ask the same questions to each participant to answer the research question. I asked for clarifications when needed, and I used an interview protocol with participants to have a consistent interview process to promote the research study's reliability. Yeong et al. (2018) explained the need for the interviewer to ensure alignment between interview questions and research questions to improve the interview protocol and ensure reliability and

validity. Jimenez et al. (2019) indicated that interviews provide in-depth information about participants' daily experience and the issues they experience, which can contribute to existing literature. Friesen et al. (2017) indicated that the interview process is essential to gain evidence about people's perception and what can be done to solve the problem.

### **Participants**

I selected the participants based on their experience implementing strategies to develop employees' skills in the call center environment. Salterio et al. (2017) explained that an essential part of a qualitative study is collecting data from participants through interview-based research to give added depth to the interpretation and experimental results. Yin (2018) stated that researchers could use multiple participants in a qualitative study to collect and analyze data. I purposefully chose five call center leaders from two Southern California organizations. The eligibility criteria for the study participants included (a) over the age of 18, (b) have been in a call center leadership position for at least 2 years, and (c) have implemented strategies to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance. To gain access to research participants, I used the Directory of Call and Contact Centers in Southern California. The Directory of Call and Contact Centers is a public list for call centers located in Southern California. The directory includes the company's name, address, phone number, fax number, email address, and website.

Heslop et al. (2018) explained that a researcher could establish a relationship with a participant to improve the study, build trust, and protect the participant's anonymity and confidentiality. I emailed each participant an invitation to introduce myself and the study



purpose, describe the criteria to participate, and offer some sample questions. Glegg (2019) explained that it is essential to safeguard participants' well-being by adhering to standard ethical principles and respecting the participant's privacy and confidentiality. In the current study, it was essential to inform each participant that the information shared would be confidential and any company data and personal information shared would be protected to avoid any harm to the participant and to the company. I maintained honest, respectful, and professional communication with each participant and avoided infusing personal bias.

### **Research Method and Design**

There are multiple research methods available for the researcher to choose from based on the case study and the best technique to investigate the research question (Yin, 2018). I chose qualitative methodology with a multiple case study design to explore strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills. I selected the qualitative method because my intent was to explore strategies that call center leaders use to develop employees' skills through open-ended questions.

### **Research Method**

The three research methodologies are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2018). Bansal et al. (2018) explained that researchers use the qualitative method to focus on an in-depth understanding of social phenomena and the why and the what of the case or phenomenon according to human experiences. Vat et al. (2017) explained that researchers use a qualitative study to explore strategies that can contribute to the current study and research. The qualitative method was the most useful in my study

because I conducted interviews with open-ended questions to understand the what and why of strategies used by the participant leaders from multiple organizations. Mijovic et al. (2018) described qualitative methodology as that which is used to analyze words instead of numbers in the data collection.

Quantitative researchers use statistical and mathematical approaches to provide evidence and results (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). Goode et al. (2018) explained that researchers use the quantitative method to collect numerical data from a large sample and compare two or more variables to interpret results to explain a particular phenomenon. Freche et al. (2018) indicated that researchers use quantitative methods to confirm a hypothesis about a phenomenon. Rutberg and Bouikidis (2018) explained that the quantitative study might be complicated because it involves more time to perform the analysis and the data collection is often more expensive compared to qualitative studies. The quantitative method was not the best choice for the current study because I did not test a hypothesis or compare variables to explore strategies participants use to develop employees' skills.

In mixed methods, the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Yin, 2018). Researchers collect data related to quantitative approaches and conduct interviews using qualitative methods to provide a more thorough understanding of the results (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Sozpsychol (2017) explained that mixing qualitative and quantitative methods is more time-consuming and complicated because the study may require more resources to collect both types of data.

The mixed-methods approach was not appropriate for my study because I did not examine the relationship between variables using statistical analysis.

### **Research Design**

I considered the four qualitative research designs: phenomenology, ethnography, narrative design, and case study. I chose a qualitative multiple case study design to utilize multiple cases for a deeper understanding of the problem. Alwi et al. (2018) explained that skilled researchers use the phenomenological design to uncover the truth from the participants' perspective. Wyk (2017) stated that the phenomenological design is used to gather data from different individuals and their experience related to a phenomenon. Researchers use the phenomenological design to understand individuals' lived experiences, beliefs, or attitudes and do not take into consideration perceptions (Groenewald, 2018). The phenomenological design was not appropriate for the current study because it was limited to participants' use of strategies, not their attitudes or beliefs about the study subject.

Pilkington (2018) explained that ethnographic research is used to observe the participants during in their daily experience and real-life situations. Comi and Whyte (2017) described ethnographic research as an in-depth investigation by observing participants in their natural environment, not only from the participants' answers. The ethnographic design may require a certain period in the field for data collection (Yin, 2018). The ethnographic design was not the best choice for the current study because I did not observe participants in their natural environment. The narrative design includes stories from individuals and their personal experiences about a specific phenomenon

(Pilkington, 2018). The narrative design was not appropriate for my study because I did not collect individual stories.

Researchers use single and multiple case studies. Vergel et al. (2018) explained that the single case study is the most basic form of case-oriented research that involves repeated measures and manipulation of an independent variable. Von Borell de Araujo and Franco (2017) described the single case study as a way for researchers to explore and describe a phenomenon rather than to determine the cause and effect or to make predictions. The multiple case study involves several instrumental cases to explore multiple data collection methods; it is more powerful than the single case study because it provides more extensive description and explanation of the problem (Von Borell de Araujo & Franco, 2017). The multiple case study was the best choice to explore the current problem from a broader perspective through the use of multiple cases.

I collected data from interviews and company documents to validate the study's outcome. Data saturation occurs when the researcher has information on what they need, and no new information can be collected (Tran et al., 2017). Hancock et al. (2016) explained that the researcher reaches data saturation when there is no new information found and the collected information is enough for the reliability and dependability of the study. Farrugia (2019) added that the researcher could reach data saturation by conducting interviews from at least five participants. The current sample was collected from five participants from two different companies. I was prepared to add more participants until no new information was collected and I achieved data saturation. Performing additional interviews might have been necessary if further data collection was

needed for the study to achieve data saturation. I planned to continue with additional interviews until saturation was met and no new codes occurred in the data. I did not add additional interviews because no new information emerged.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population for this study consisted of five leaders from two call center companies located in Southern California who had successfully implemented strategies to develop employees' skills. Farrugia (2019) explained that the researcher could guide the sample size by the study's research questions, and it is essential to identify the population to create a sampling strategy. Vasileiou et al. (2018) found that the sample size of a qualitative research study should be large enough to obtain more in-depth information. The sample size that I used was appropriate to provide data and information on how to develop employees' skills. I did not conduct additional interviews because no new information emerged. At that point, I stopped the interview process.

Yin (2018) identified that the researcher must select participants, identify the type of sampling, and determine the sample size. Purposeful criterion sampling was beneficial in this case study because it was an appropriate method to select information-rich cases related to the research question of the study. In this case study, each participant had a set of characteristics and knowledge about the research topic. Yin explained that the population consists of participants with similar characteristics based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information related to the study's research question. Likewise, Moser and Korstjens (2017) stated that purposeful sampling is a technique that is useful in a qualitative study that involves identifying and selecting individuals with knowledge

or experience about the research topic. Moser and Korstjens added that purposeful selection is a sampling technique that is useful in providing the researcher with the justification to analyze the information and data from the sample that the researcher is studying. Benoot et al. (2016) described that purposeful sampling provides a new perspective to the line of argument to show how the results are conceptually aligned with the study's purpose. Yang and McNair (2019) indicated that one of the disadvantages of using purposeful criterion sampling is the limitation of the small sample size despite its extensive use because the researcher can reach the population quickly. However, Palinkas et al. (2016) explained that purposeful criterion sampling helps the researcher to gather sufficient data regarding a phenomenon or experience.

I selected participants who met the following qualifications; (a) over the age of 18, (b) have been in a call center leadership position for at least 2 years, and (c) used strategies to develop employee skills and improve the organizational performance. I choose participants from the Directory of Call and Contact Centers in Southern California. Marshall et al. (2016) explained that the interview site should be comfortable and quiet to ensure the quality of the recordings and avoid distraction. Bakker (2017) noted that the interviewer must attempt to eliminate interruption during the meeting and provide a quiet location for the privacy of the participant. Using online or mobile video meeting helped each participant to conduct the interview from their best location for their confidentiality and reduce any chances of being distracted. At the end of the interview, I thanked participants for their time and for participating in this research project. I transcribed each interview response and shared it with each participant to review confirm

accuracy before I compile the data into themes. Each participant reviewed and verified their responses from their interview summary to ensure I accurately captured their responses.

Yin (2018) stated that in a qualitative research study, the researcher reaches data saturation when the addition of new data no longer provides any new information and the interview process ceases. Data saturation is an essential methodological element in the research work, and it is used when the researcher discontinues collecting data (Saunders et al., 2018). Tran et al. (2017) stated that determining the point of data saturation is complicated because the researcher is collecting data from the same sampling, which forces the researcher to use a formula to make this determination easier. I achieved Data saturation by conducting five interviews and found no new information emerged. Multiple participants and a well-structured interview were necessary to reach data saturation and gather enough information about the research problem.

### **Ethical Research**

Walden University requires all researchers conducting data collection to obtain institutional review board (IRB) approval before the data collection can begin. Once I received my IRB approval number 06-11-21-0675280, I began the interviews and the data collection from my participants. Participants were informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me through email or telephone to explain their wishes to withdraw from the study. Participants were informed that the study offers no direct benefits to individual volunteers. The informed consent form (see Appendix B) includes: (a) explanation of the research study, (b) invitation to consent to the study, (c)

explanation about volunteer participation, (d) risk and benefits of the study, (e) confidentiality, (f) explanation of the knowledge gain from the study, (g) withdrawal procedures, and (h) exchange of contact information. Each participant replied to the consent form stating “I consent”, understanding the study and wish to volunteer, before the interview is scheduled. Participation in the study is voluntary and there were not any incentives given for participation in the study.

Ethical standards are essential in the research study to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants by removing any sensitive information related to the individual and the company. Surmiak (2018) explained that the researcher must have an approach to ensure the confidentiality of the participant when collecting data or when sending e-mails. Researchers should safeguard the privacy by not disclosing any sensitive information in the study and take the consent from the participants to use the collected data in the study. Turcotte-Tremblay and McSween-Cadieux (2018) added that researchers must respect participants by developing a strategy to protect their information while they sometimes show sensitive results. I complied with Walden University’s ethical standards and the Belmont Report by respecting and protecting participant’s opinions, minimizing any risks, and treating each person equally.

Participant’s information was kept confidential as well as the company’s data through the use of unique identifiers such as: CO1 and CO2 for companies and participants as PT1, PT2, PT3, PT4, and PT5. All information was kept confidential to avoid any potential harm to the participant which might result in a loss of employment to ensure ethical protection of the participant. Domingo-Ferrer et al. (2019) added that



maintaining confidentiality depends on how the researcher manages to store the information. Personal and sensitive data must be securely stored to protect participant's, the researcher must be aware of the privacy issues and how to ensure the safety of the participant's and their companies (Wyburn, 2018). I kept an electronic copy of the recorded audio interview on a USB drive, all notes, copies of the informed consent forms, and company documents in a locked in a file cabinet in my home office. The locked cabinet is a password-protected jump drive that only I have access to. After 5 years from my graduation date, all paper documents will be shredded and the USB drive destroyed. Upon receipt, I included the Walden IRB approval number, 06-11-21-0675280, and the expiration date of June 10, 2022, in the informed consent form.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Data collection instruments are the tools used to gather and analyze data in a qualitative research case study. The researcher is a primary method for data collection (Yin, 2018). I was the primary method for data collection in this study. Buist et al. (2019) indicated that the semistructured interview method is used to collect data because it includes a clear set of instructions to the participants, which results in reliable and comparable qualitative data. I conducted semistructured interviews with participants with open-ended questions, collect data from any organizational documents like company policies and procedures related to training, employee's development surveys, and research peer-reviewed sources to ensure the quality of the study. Lukyanenko et al. (2019) explained that the data collection method in qualitative research that it shapes the direction of the research study. Yin (2018) demonstrated that the researcher should use

multiple sources of evidence when collecting data and guide data analysis. I conducted semistructured interviews, take notes and observe changes in tone and body language, and review organizational documents as my data collection.

Following the interview protocol for each participant is essential, along with following the ethical requirements stated in *The Belmont Report*. Consistent process to achieve the reliability of the research study requires including the interview protocol with each participant (see Appendix A). Each interview consisted of open-ended questions in an audio recorded session. Exchanging information with the participants was essential in case of questions or any follow up clarification needed. Udod et al. (2017) added that the interview process is essential to gain evidence about peoples' perception about the study, and to look for different strategies to reach the reliability. Member checking and methodological triangulation with multiple data sources were used to decrease bias and increase the validity and reliability of the findings of the study. Ensuring the reliability and validity of the research is important, along with reducing bias by setting aside my personal experience to avoid any favoritism or preferences in the study. I represented the information without adding my personal opinions from my prior call center experience. Naidu and Prose (2018) explained that member checking in qualitative research helps the researcher to establish credibility and trustworthiness.

In a qualitative study, researchers need to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected from the participants. Lukyanenko et al. (2019) explained that reliability is the appropriateness of the researcher's tool. Li et al. (2017) added that reliability refers to the exact replicability of the process and results. The sample size of selecting five leaders

from two call center companies, and the data analysis from semistructured interviews and organizational documents were carefully chosen to ensure the validity of the study. The data collection method, interpretation, and analysis were carefully analyzed to avoid misinterpreting the participant's response. Tran et al. (2017) explained that the researcher should continue to gather information and data until no new information can be collected to ensure data saturation. To ensure consistency, I asked participants the same questions in the same order and continue with interviews until no new information emerged and data saturation is achieved. To ensure reliability and validity, I actively listened to the participants, take notes of body language and tone, and collected any relevant company documents.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The data collection techniques included audio recorded semistructured interviews using the interview protocol (see Appendix A) with open-ended questions, direct observation of body language, organizational documents, and archival records from peer-reviewed articles on employee development. To prepare for the interviews, I called each participant or send a text message a day before the meeting to confirm the date, time, and the location of the interview. Each participant was provided a copy of the consent form to reply "I consent" to it; I answered any questions they may have about the process before the start of the interview. The consent form (see Appendix B) includes information about the study purpose and scope, the interview process, that participation is voluntary and without compensation, identify how the participant can withdraw from the study, explain the confidentiality of the research study. I planned to conduct semistructured interviews

with 5 participants to find strategies call center leaders use to develop employee skills and improve organizational performance. Recording each interview is essential using the virtual interview recording features and taking additional notes to capture body language, tone, and mannerisms. The audio recorded interviews were transferred to a USB drive which is essential to easily refer back to when needed. Collecting archival records from government sources like the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics was another essential source to use along with collecting data from public and online libraries which might include books, reports, and organizational files about strategies call center leaders use to develop employee skills.

An advantage for structured interviews as a data collection technique was the two-way communication with the participant to answer interview questions. Buist et al. (2019) explained that the use of semistructured interviews gives the participant the freedom to express their views, which support the study with reliable and comparable qualitative data. Udod et al. (2017) explained that some of the disadvantages of conducting a semistructured interview are that there is only one chance for interviewing the participant, and the quality of the data might be affected by the participant's personal opinions. Taking notes to capture changes in body language was essential along with noting the tone, and other mannerisms during the interview.

I used member checking and methodological triangulation for multiple data sources to ensure the validity of the research and mitigate any personal bias. Each participant received an email containing the transcribed rough draft of the interview summary to review and ask participants to review it and identify any misinterpretation to

make the necessary correction. To ensure validity of the research I revised the interview summary and document notes based on how the participant changed their response. Tran et al. (2017) added that the researcher must have good judgement and experience to determine the point of data saturation based on the information on what the researcher have found. I planned to continue with more interviews if further data collection was still essential to achieve data saturation. I organized the data by reviewing the entire data set, creating a code table, separating data into groups by categories, organizing responses from the interviews, interpreting the data, and developing conclusions and findings from the study.

Castleberry and Nolen (2018) explained that it is essential write down impressions of the participant to find meanings. Collins and Stockton (2018) added that the researcher's role in organizing and interpreting the data is essential because misinterpretation can mislead the reader and result in a faulty conclusion. Using the member checking helped to improve the accuracy, validity, and credibility of the study. Organizing the data were necessary to connect ideas, responses, strategies, identify patterns, and make connections. Brear (2019) explained that member checking is a very important technique for the qualitative researcher to ensure the validity of the study by checking the interpreted results with participants. The member checking process is essential to engage the participant in the study by providing the collected information is accurate and to expand or amend any comments or answers in the interview data (Glegg, 2019).

### **Data Organization Technique**

In a qualitative research study, the data organization is as important as the study to maintain interview responses, audio recordings, handwritten notes, and organizational documents. Canter (2019) explained that researchers must develop a qualitative data structure when conducting a study to collect data and adequately organize it for analysis. Adams et al. (2017) explained that qualitative researchers produce a large amount of detailed information that result in rich understanding. Davidson et al. (2017) stated that in a qualitative study, the researcher must choose the most appropriate data collection method and plan to record and properly store the collected data. I used a computer-based qualitative data analysis software with NVivo to organize, analyze, and find insights from the semistructured interviews. Wilk et al. (2019) explained that NVivo is a software that researchers use to organize articles, social media, and web connections to help review the data more easily and quickly. Wilk added that NVivo is valuable for data analysis, managing, labeling, coding, and navigating data. Robins and Eisen (2017) explained that NVivo is a powerful tool for qualitative researcher to use to reach efficiency, multiplicity, and transparency in the research study.

In a qualitative study, coding is a way for researcher to collect data to quickly locate the information and find relations between the collected data. I organized the data by reviewing the entire data set, creating a code table, and separating data into groups or categories to better organize the participant's responses. Vaughn and Turner (2016) explained that to have a practical analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher must use a systematic process to organize and highlight meanings by using a coding system to

organize the data in a patterns or themes easily and systematically. Collecting and storing data were essential to having accurate, well organized, complete, and accessible data. Wyburn (2018) explained that personal and sensitive data like names, dates, locations, and sensitive topics must be securely stored to protect the participants information and their companies. Keeping an electronic copy of the recorded audio interviews and the transcript on a USB drive was essential, all notes, copies of the informed consent forms, and company documents locked in a file cabinet in my home office for 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred all paper documents and destroy the USB drive.

### **Data Analysis**

In qualitative studies, a researcher starts to analyze the collected data after the data collection is finalized and no new information can be collected. Darmayanti et al. (2018) explained that qualitative researchers conduct in-depth interviews with participants and choose the appropriate data collection from different resources. Vaughn and Turner (2016) added that sorting and coding data are the most complex aspects of qualitative research and that researchers must be able to handle a large volume of information using the best tools. Canter (2019) indicated that the researcher must prioritize the data collected to locate the data and report accurate results. For this study, I used methodological triangulation to examine the data from different sources. Joslin and Muller (2016) indicated that researchers use methodological triangulation to show that collected data from various sources are consistent to improve the research's validity by combining different techniques in one study.

Yin's 5-step approach to data analysis is used to analyze technique to interview data (Yin, 2018). Yin's (2018) five steps of analyzing data include: (a) compiling the data, (b) disassembling the data, (c) reassembling the data, (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data. I put the data into groupings, the collected data were coded based on the frequency of the words used in answers. I disassembled the data to reduce theme of the phenomenon, I reassembled the data into core themes. Checking the pattern to interpret the meaning of the data collected was essential to have my final conclusion of the data. After analyzing the data, a conclusion can be made based on the findings from the data analysis and the literature review (Yin, 2018). Comparing and aligning the literature findings and the data collected and represent my findings from the data analysis was essential. I continued to research and review recently published literature related to developing the employee skills up to the present time.

Researching new themes is part of my plan to align any new theme it to my study and research question. Emailing each participant, a copy of the summary review from the interview was essential to provide them with opportunity to review their response and email me back their feedback if everything is fine or if they want to make any changes to the transcript. I revised the interview summary and document notes based on how the participant changed their response. I took notes during each interview to transcribe each participant interview and I used NVivo computer-based software to organize, analyze, and find insights from the semistructured interviews. Vaughn and Turner (2016) explained that to have a practical analysis of the qualitative data, the researcher must use a systematic process to organize and highlight meanings by using a coding system to



organize the data in a patterns or themes to easily organize a large amount of qualitative data systematically. Researchers use NVivo because it is a great tool to analyze the big, text based, online information, and recorded audio for comprehensive review (Wilk et al., 2019). I used NVivo software to identify themes or patterns in the data collected and code the data collected. Greenwood and Shields (2017) explained that the researcher must use data cleaning to maintain transparency through careful documentation of the process to ensure reliability of the study.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Mohajan (2017) stated that validity and reliability are the two most essential features in evaluating any good research measurements. Yeong et al. (2018) explained that reliability is about the study's consistency, while validity is about the accuracy of the study. Udod et al. (2017) added that reliability and validity are closely related, but they have a different meaning to assess the quality of the collected data in the study. To achieve reliability, it was crucial to set aside personal experience to avoid favoritism in my research and the data collected. Member checking and methodological triangulation provided more valid interpretation of the data collected. Reporting accurate answers from participant interviews was necessary for reliability and validity. Kilicer et al. (2017) stated that qualitative research's validity and reliability indicate consistency and trustworthiness when collecting data and interviewing participants.

### **Reliability**

Spiers et al. (2018) stated that reliability in qualitative research is rooted in the idea of data adequacy, which shows how consistent the data collected is with participants

and research outcome. Mohajan (2017) explained that reliability is faith in the data obtained, which involves organizing the research's data and consistency. Yin (2018) noted four steps to achieve reliability: (a) dependability, (b) creditability, (c) confirmability, and (d) transferability. FitzPatrick (2019) explained that dependability in a reliable study means if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and same participants, similar results would be obtained. I approached each interview in the same fashion and asked participants the same question in the same order. I conducted member checking and have each participant review my interview summary for dependability.

Emailing each participant, a copy of a rough draft was important to identify any misinterpretation and approve the precision of the data collected. Each participant reviewed my summary of their interview to ensure that I accurately captured their responses and increased my study's dependability. Five semi-structured interviews were scheduled, but if data saturation is not achieved, I had a plan to continue with additional interviews until no new data or themes emerge. Reaching data saturation improved the dependability of the study. My interpretation of the data collected were shared with each participant to review their interview summary for accuracy, which was vital to increase the study's dependability.

### **Validity**

Mohajan (2017) explained that validity includes what an instrument measures and how well the instrument tool reflects the research topic. Joslin and Muller (2016) stated that researchers could use data triangulation by researching multiple perspectives to

promote validity. I analyzed the collected data from the semistructured interviews, taken notes from personal observations during each interview, and collected organization documents. Naidu and Prose (2018) stated that credibility involves the internal validity of the data collected by trusting the researcher's reported data and interview answers. Naidu and Prose added that the lack of credibility could make it difficult for other researchers to benefit from the study and determine the study's findings. I used my handwritten notes and listened to the audio recordings to transcribe the participant's interview. Taking notes was vital to share the summary review collected after each interview with each participant to make any corrections to the reported answers to ensure credibility.

Moser and Korstjens (2017) explained that transferability in qualitative research provides the readers with evidence and that the research could be applicable at different times, situations, and populations. Constantinou et al. (2017) stated that the researcher needs to assess the qualitative study's transferability by explaining the phenomenon explored and contents used to allow the study to be safely applied to other similar cases. Constantinou et al. (2017) also indicated that the researcher could provide the reader with evidence that the data could spread to other studies. I gave a thorough description of the research context and the study's assumptions and limitations to allow transferability of the study.

Abdalla et al. (2018) explained that it is essential for the researcher to ensure confirmability of the study by verifying the findings with the participants to ensure using the participant's narrative and words rather than the researchers' biases. Ellis (2019) stated that confirmability in a qualitative study is to verify that the findings are shaped by

participants more than it is shaped by the researcher's view of the study. Confirmability was achieved through member checking. My interpretation of the data collected were shared with participants for accuracy and any revisions made if needed. Data saturation occurred when the researcher collected all the required information, and no new information can be collected (Tran et al., 2017). Trans et al. indicated if researching data saturation is an indication that the researcher has sufficient information for the research study. If data saturation was not met within the first 5 interviews, I planned to continue with interviews until no new themes emerge. I achieved data saturation when no further information or themes emerge during the semistructured interviews.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 2 contained the purpose statement of my study, a detailed explanation of the role as the researcher, criteria, and a description of the participants. Section 2 also contained the research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, the data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization technique, data analysis, and the steps to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. Section 3 contains the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, the implication for social change, the recommendation for action, recommendation for further study, and a conclusion of the research.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies call center leaders use to develop employees' skills. The target population comprised five leaders from two Southern California call centers who had successfully implemented strategies to improve employees' skills. The data came from semistructured virtual interviews using Zoom and from company documents. Each participant provided in-depth information about their experience and the issues they experienced in developing employees' skills. I transcribed the recorded data and conducted a member checking process to decrease bias and increase the validity and reliability of the study's findings. I used NVivo software to organize, code, and analyze data to find insights from the semistructured interviews. In addition to the discussions, I reviewed company documents that included the employee handbook, training structure, benefits package, and statistical reports. I also used a reflective journal from the observations collected from the interviews. The data analysis revealed four themes: training, effective communication, employee engagement, and proactive leadership.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The overarching question for this study was the following; What strategies do call center leaders use to develop employees' skills and improve organizational performance? After receiving IRB approval from Walden University, I began the interview process in my study. I selected five participants from two call centers located in Southern California based on their experience with strategies to develop employees' skills and improve

organizational performance. I chose participants from the Directory of Call and Contact Centers. I sent an invitation email to participants to explain the purpose of the study, the criteria to join, and some sample questions. Before scheduling the interview with interested participants, I provided them with consent forms and noted that their participation would be voluntary. I recorded the audio interview on a recording device; after conducting the interviews, I transferred all recorded interviews to a USB drive to transcribe the data collected. I used the member checking process to ensure accurate interpretation of the interviewee's answers and establish credibility and trustworthiness. After participants validated the data, I compiled my data into themes using NVivo. The identified recurring themes from the interviews and company document include training, effective communication, employee engagement, and proactive leadership. To protect my participants' identities and their company's information, I used a code structure. I labeled my participants P1 through P5 and the call centers CO1 and CO2.

The conceptual framework for this study was the PIT developed by Swanson (1999), who described how the constant demand for high performance affects an organization's growth. The findings from the interviews summary, observation notes, and the company documents confirmed the findings of the literature review on the importance of investing in employees' training, having effective communication, keeping employees engaged, and having proactive leadership. The finding from this study contain emphasis on how essential the positive interactions between employee and leader are to strengthen the company, especially when leaders help develop their employees' skills because doing this can strengthen employee performance and dedication to the company.

Training is an essential aspect of developing employees' skills. Leaders in the current study mentioned different training methods, including the crucial initial training and continual training to enhance employees' performance. Having effective communication between employees and their leaders is essential to identify any problems faced and to solve work-related issues. Keeping employees engaged is another essential element to motivate individuals and recognize their hard work by showing appreciation to top performers. Proactive call center leaders work closely with their employees, set realistic goals and expectations, learn from the employees, and communicate effectively with employees to support them and reduce employee burnout. The data analysis resulted in four major themes (see Table 1).

**Table 1***Themes and Subthemes Found Through Interviews*

Theme	Number of times counted in transcript	Subtheme	Number of times counted in transcript
Theme 1: Training	47	Mandatory (initial) training	21
		Continual training	13
		Job rotation	13
Theme 2: Effective communication	43	Coaching	26
		Leadership feedback	17
Theme3: Employee engagement	39	Motivation	12
		Recognize (appreciation)	22
		Support	5
Theme 4: Proactive leadership	24	Set goals and expectations	14
		Problem-solving	10

*Note.* Most frequently used words identified within the interview transcripts developed with NVivo.

**Theme 1: Training**

The first theme that emerged from the study was training. This viewpoint aligns with PIT under the design and development concept. Each participant stressed the importance of providing frequent training to employees. Training employees is a continual process that includes educational coursework, mentoring programs, soft skills training, and career development through job rotation (Naizm et al., 2021). Training employees keeps them engaged in the company and motivated to perform their job well to advance their career level and be the company's future leaders (Deepa & Rajasekar, 2021). The findings from this theme support findings from Saira et al. (2021) that training



employees helps identify the employee's weaknesses and allows leaders to provide a framework to develop strengths for better performance. Current participants' responses also confirm the research conducted by Anwar and Shukur (2015) on the importance of investing in employees' training to increase employees' efficiency and satisfaction.

### ***Mandatory Training***

In response to Interview Question 6 on how training initiatives were introduced and implemented in the organization, all five participants discussed the importance of having a well-structured initial training that includes everything that company offers and what is expected from the newly hired employee to perform their job to the best of their ability. Sparr et al. (2017) explained the importance of initial mandatory training to prepare employees to fulfill their job duties, understand the company's policies and procedures, and start being productive. Naizm et al. (2021) explained that training employees impacts their creativity in the working environment, enhancing the company's performance. In the current study, P4 said

leaders in our company see the initial mandatory training to be like the contract between the company and the newly hired employee. We set clear steps in this training, starting from our company's history and going over what we offer to our customers and what the employee expects to be successful. We have a specific time each day to train employees on our software to enhance their skills. This introductory training helps our employees know what they will be doing to perform their duties correctly.

P1 also shared

we focus on the soft initial training skills to improve the employee's technical knowledge about a specific tool or software. If I see an employee struggling in any category of our monitoring metrics, I can recommend this employee for additional training. We have many online training models that we use to improve the employee's performance to be the top performers of the company.

P5 also stated that "the initial training is a way for employees to know more about the company's values, goals, mission, and vision." P2 said "the mandatory training is an opportunity to have social learning and motivate new employees to have group interactions." P5 added that "employees could not represent a company without knowing the essentials about it." P3 mentioned "there is a huge need to have an official classroom training to see the employee more and provide individual support to individuals." P1 added "the initial training helps leaders evaluate the employees' abilities to do the job by testing their abilities to learn quickly and support those struggling in any category of the monitoring metrics that company leaders track." Participants from both companies invested in employee classroom training by having a set curriculum during the initial training, including an online webinar, live online meetings, and recorded sessions to watch.

### ***Continual Training***

All five participants stressed the need to keep training employees and continue to educate employees about new skills or update their existing skills to improve employees' productivity. Prasetio et al. (2019) explained that employees' continual training is essential to reduce repeated mistakes, improve low-performance issues, and improve

employees' reaction. Taskiran and Zhang (2017) explained that continuous training programs are an excellent way for leaders to enhance employees' knowledge and skills and help individuals get over their weaknesses by learning from their repeated mistakes.

P1 claimed

we have such frequent changes in our products and services if the employee has enough knowledge about our products and services, they will explain it well to our callers and more minor errors will happen. We also focus on always having patience when talking to callers as we occasionally get unhappy callers. Having a positive attitude can help employees deal with irate callers, show empathy, and solve our callers' problems [to] have the best customer service rate.

P2 also added

continual training is essential to keep the employee's skills improving. I train my employees in every coaching session; I tend to find the areas that need improvement and train my agents to improve them. I send my agents to the training department if there is a significant area that needs improvement. I also teach my employees online by giving them some time off the phone to view videos and listen to webinars conducted about their struggling areas.

Prasetio et al. (2019) stated that continual cross-training is essential to enhance low performers' skills, increase employee retention, increase employees' loyalty to the company, and boost the company's productivity. P5 mentioned "continuous training could help lower the voluntary turnover intentions; when the company keeps investing in the employee's development, employees will feel more loyal to a company that cares

about their success.” P3 explained that “cross-training is a great tool to reduce the stressful working environment by making employees more knowledgeable in their industry and push them to perform better in the future.” P2 added that “improving the employees’ skills through continuous training will increase their satisfaction and productivity.” P4 said “continual training improves the employee’s knowledge and skills along with allowing them to uncover their strengths and weaknesses.” During my observations, I found that all participants spent considerable time discussing the need for continual trainings to employees. It was apparent that the participants care about their team members’ performance through continual education to reach the top performers stage.

### ***Job Rotation***

Job rotation is another method for organization leaders to expose employees to different departments and tasks as part of the training and development. Al-Romeedy (2019) explained that exposing individuals to additional duties in various departments helps broaden employees’ knowledge about the company from different views. H. Lee et al. (2019) added that improving employees’ performance comes from practicing other tasks to learn new skills. P5 said

the company’s leaders focus on motivating employees through job rotation to broaden their skill sets and extend their boundaries. Our callers enjoy talking to educated individuals who know their job and have a general knowledge about different departments in the company. Job rotation is a tool to increase employee engagement, improve performance, and keep employees loyal to the company.

Employees feel like an asset to the company when they feel engaged in many tasks and have the opportunity to advance their career level. P1 stated that “rotating employees is a great way to broaden their skills and motivate employees to explore different jobs within the company.” P2 added that “when we rotate employees, we challenge them to learn new strategies and work with different managers to improve their soft skills.” Thongpapanl et al. (2018) explained that job rotation promotes healthy and positive interdepartmental collaboration to improve employees’ performance by exposing individuals to different tasks to help them gain new knowledge and skills. P4 explained that “job rotation is an excellent method to train employees to work in different company areas by rotating individuals to perform different duties to practice various tasks and responsibilities.” P3 added that “we observe that rotating employees to be a great way to reduce the stressful working environment by doing a variety of work rather than doing the same task over and over.”

## **Theme 2: Effective Communication**

The second theme that emerged was effective communication. Effective communication at the workplace involves providing team members with directions and tools to follow. The findings from this theme confirm the research conducted by Mallin (2017) that explained the importance of using the PIT for effective communication between leaders and their team members in coaching sessions to reduce workplace conflict and enable a good communication plan. All five participants in the current study mentioned the importance of consistent coaching and leadership feedback with employees to improve their performance. The findings from this theme also support the

study conducted by Regts et al. (2019) that effective communication mitigates conflicts by reducing misunderstandings and miscommunication for better communication and higher employee engagement.

### ***Coaching***

The purpose of coaching employees is to have effective two-way communication and develop a performance plan to maximize employees' strengths and improve their weaknesses. P1 stated

an essential method to improve the employee's strategies is to have effective communication with all employees. Being approachable is necessary to solve the employee's problem and keep employees more engaged in the company to be future leaders and perform better. I like to be an example for my employees to follow; having effective communication with my team members will improve their communication skills and help my team overcome any objections to be the top performers of the company.

Roman et al. (2017) explained that part of the PIT is having a good coaching plan to address performance objectives and helps in finding strategies to develop employees' skills. P2 added that "coaching sessions are one of the best opportunities for the team leader to get engaged with their team members to find areas that need improvement and train agents on how to improve them." Coaching sessions are small training sessions for employees who already have the knowledge and skills but lack some strategies. P3 said

we work so hard with our agents to ensure their satisfaction and work closely with everyone through coaching and mentoring to improve their performance and keep

them engaged in the company. I set goals for my team members and provide all tools and resources to reach this goal. I set a personal goal for each individual based on the employee's current performance and skills. If my agent needs additional training, I provide quick coaching; if I still see my agent needs more training, I send a request to the training department to schedule additional classroom training.

Billings and Kowalski (2019) explained that it is crucial to have a productive coaching session that focuses on the possibilities and collaboration instead of just giving orders for better revenue. Effective coaching sessions should include the tools necessary for employees to perform better and advance their skills. P4 mentioned that "in a coaching session, the leader should provide the individual agent with directions on how to improve their performance by explaining the way and providing the necessary tools for the employee to follow this development plan." P5 shared,

We look at coaching sessions as an opportunity to learn from the employee and provide the individual with constructive feedback. It is a great way to keep my team members engaged in the team's current project and goals set with due dates. I also use these coaching sessions to motivate my team members and encourage employees to learn from top performers' recorded phone calls and share new vocabulary to increase customer satisfaction.

During my observations and the interviews, it was apparent that all five participants are dedicated to their job as they all cared about meeting their team members daily or being very approachable to coach and provide constructive feedback to each individual.

### ***Leadership Feedback***

Leadership feedback is essential when coaching employees, as constructive suggestions can help improve their performance and enhance their skills. Poell and Van Der Krogt (2017) explained that leaders use the PIT to coach employees with more adaptive and constructive behaviors. There is a significant impact from the feedback that can get the employee to learn a new method by shedding light on something they never knew about or thought of to learn and change incorrect behaviors. P1 shared,

Our leaders should have two or three coaching sessions daily with different employees and monthly meetings with all employees. We use effective communication in our coaching and mentoring sessions. The team leader can identify their team members' strengths and weaknesses when running the employee statistics. Then the team leader provides constructive feedback to employees to overcome any challenges they have.

Pham et al. (2019) explained that leaders should provide their feedback in a way that is not offensive, argumentative, or authoritative. Instead, using impact feedback empowers the employees and increases the chance to accept the message. P5 mentioned that "leadership feedback needs to be specific, not too vague, by precisely explaining the action and changing it to productive behavior." P4 added that "leaders must encourage individuals by providing more positive than negative feedback when the agent tries their best to learn and advance their skills." P3 said,

Employees get lost when they don't know what is expected; providing clear instructions and continual feedback is essential to ensure that everyone is on



track. Asking an agent not to go below these statistical data isn't enough; we should provide directions and tools for agents to follow their goals and advance their career level.

During my observation, participants stressed the importance of taking enough time to ensure that every agent is on track by looking at the employees' statistics and provide feedback on possible improvements and recommendations.

### **Theme 3: Employee Engagement**

The third theme that all participants confirmed were employee engagement. Employee engagement comes from the leadership motivation and recognition to recognize those hard-working employees and provide the support needed for the employees' success. The findings from this theme supports the research by Pham et al. (2019) as it explained that leaders should keep employees engaged in producing higher quality and higher productivity results. Yan et al. (2021) also added that keeping employee's engaged helps improve the organizational performance by having dedicated individuals working for the company. He et al. (2019) added that engaged employees would work hard and perform better since they are motivated to do the work. P5 shared,

We work hard to keep employees engaged in our company by encouraging individuals to advance their career level and be the company's future leaders. We appreciate those hard-working employees through a variety of incentives programs throughout the year to motivate employees. We allow employees to get creative and celebrate those agents that exceed expectations through the employee recognition program.

Keeping employees engaged is proven to increase productivity, satisfaction, physical well-being, and mental abilities. There are different ways that leaders can use to keep employees engaged in the development process. Leaders must allow employees to grow, support, encourage individuals, and recognize their efforts when they show dedication to the company.

### ***Motivate***

Leaders should recognize and show appreciation to those employees that meet and exceed expectations. Many employees do not want to work harder since their leaders are not motivating them and recognizing their hard work. Bondarchuk (2018) stated that leaders should invest in keeping employees engaged in increasing their knowledge and skills and allowing employees to be more innovative. P4 mentioned that they motivate employees through running monthly incentives and reward those high-performing employees. P3 stated that “it is essential to work closely with each team member by encouraging individuals to advance their skills by participating in the training, coaching, and mentoring opportunities.” P2 added that “leaders should not expect the employee to do better unless they keep pushing their team members by supporting and motivating each one; this can be done through setting goals and offering incentives to those achieving their goals.”

### ***Recognize***

Recognizing the employee for a job well done is essential as appreciated individuals feel compelled to continue working harder. Montani et al. (2020) explained that employees perform much better when leaders recognize their efforts and hard work.

P2 explained that “the company appreciates those hard-working employees and provides the tools necessary to improve their performance to continue being the best.” P3 added that “we recognize those hard-working individuals by offering monetary rewards, prizes, vacation packages, and certificates of achievements.” P1 said, “we appreciate those dedicated employees by thanking them publicly in front of the entire office, taking them out to lunch, throwing a party to celebrate them, and offering significant rewards by the end of the fiscal year to those top performers.”

### *Support*

Supporting the employee by providing enough tools like training, coaching, mentoring, and meeting with employees is vital to keeping all team members on track. Lin et al. (2018) explained that leaders need to support their employees through communication to empower them and build their strengths. P1 explains that “effective communication through coaching and the mentoring session is a great tool to keep employees engaged.” P2 added that “providing enough training and tools for success will increase customer service skills, leading to better performance and a higher engagement rate.” P4 stated,

I enjoy listening to my employees and offer my help and support to those individuals struggling with any part of their duties. My feedback and support through coaching and training help my employees grow their skills and advance their careers.

Supportive managers will set goals, motivate individuals, recognize achievements, support, and assist employees in advancing their skills and giving them

room to grow. Leaders should work closely with their team members to strengthen them and support those in need by utilizing available tools and resources within the company. During my observation, I witnessed a phone call from the team lead to one of my participants, my participant took time to explain steps and lead the situation even after the working hours.

#### **Theme 4: Proactive Leadership**

The fourth theme discovered from the study was proactive leadership, which reflects the importance of the leader to take enough time to identify risks, goals and work on problem-solving. The findings from this theme confirms the research by Jyoti and Rani (2019) and by Yan et al. (2021) as it explained that proactive leaders inspire their team members by having clear goals, provide tools, respect employees, have plans to solve problems. P1 shared,

I have a proactive approach when evaluating the effectiveness of my strategies in developing the employees' skills. I tend to look at the statistics and see how each employee is doing; I set goals for each employee, even high performers, to continue improving. I train, coach, and mentor my employee to reach these goals. I keep track of the employee's performance and assist those struggling with any aspect of their duties.

Proactive leaders spend time thinking about the big picture by learning from the past to improve the present and better plan for the future. P4 explained that using the company's statistics can help set realistic goals according to trends and data recorded. P5 added that "leaders must hold some skills to lead by example; one of the essential traits of

a proactive leader is to stay in control in difficult situations.” Proactive leaders need to set realistic goals, support the development plan, trust their team members, stay calm within the storm, and always have a backup plan (Huang et al., 2020).

### ***Set Goals and Expectations***

Proactive leaders must have a clear plan that includes achievable goals, motivate individuals to reach their goals, and communicate desired results (Jyoti & Rani, 2019). P4 mentioned that “it is essential for leaders to provide constructional feedback and help employees struggling to achieve their goals by offering suggestions and use tools for improvement.” P3 added that “leaders should keep motivating their team members by inspiring individuals with high commitment and performance.” P2 added that “leaders should collaborate to develop their team members by setting beneficial goals for the company and providing the directions for employees to achieve these goals.” To set goals and expectations, the leader will need to identify the team’s strengths and weaknesses to choose areas for improvement and set a road map to achieve these goals. P1 mentioned that “the employees’ statistics are a great way to identify the team’s strengths and weaknesses to find improvements.” P4 said,

I create a list of goals that my team is looking to achieve then I sent a plan for every team member to achieve these personal goals. I use the S.M.A.R.T system by having specific goals, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. I keep editing the S.M.A.R.T goals and might modify them to prioritize some goals over others. When I’m ready to answer any questions and have a complete plan, I explain these goals to my team members with guidance on how to follow it.

During my observation of the company's document, I found in the objectives of CO1 the importance of having a clear set of goals and objectives for their employees and how the company works hard with their employees to accomplish these objectives.

### ***Problem-Solving***

One of the essential traits of a proactive leader is to be comfortable with problem-solving. Effective problem-solving is a critical attribute in the leader to gain respect from every team member and keep employees loyal to the company (Mitchell et al., 2019). Proactive leaders do not guess solutions but take the time to research, assess the situation, and look for a way to get back on track. Solving work-related issues on time can reduce any stress at the workplace and increase the employees' satisfaction rate. P5 shared,

We face some challenges when there are conflicts between team members and with their team leaders. After identifying the issue and understanding everyone's interest, I list possible solutions to fix this problem. I evaluate my options and document them. I communicate promptly with both parties involved, and we look for common ground by agreeing on solutions with possible contingencies. I always keep monitoring the situation to ensure that it is not happening again.

Employees can learn and advance their skills from their leaders when they witness them solving the problem, as employees need to know to solve problems with customers. Putri and Gorda (2019) explained that leaders need to talk to employees and discuss work-related issues to solve them as employees learn to use the same skills to be better problem solvers. Often, employees quit working in the company because of their leaders' activities and actions; being a better leader will increase the chance that employees will

be loyal to the company and committed to better performance. Employees feel engaged and strongly connected to develop their career within the company when their leaders are setting a great example of guidance, behavior and inspiring everyone to be a better performer.

### **Performance Improvement Theory**

Swanson's (1999) PIT was the conceptual framework for this study. The comprehensive view of the PIT is based on improving organizational performance by providing performance feedback, training, incentives, support systems, and improving the work environment (Roman et al., 2017). The findings from the research and interviews extend knowledge to the peer-reviewed studies and the PIT used in this study. One of the key concepts in the PIT is performance analysis by identifying the performance plan for the team member to identify strengths and weaknesses (Swanson, 1999). Studying statistics to identify teams' strengths and weaknesses and using the intervention selection to develop strategic plans for performance improvement are essential parts of the PIT.

The performance plan in the PIT includes a leadership design and development to improve the employees' performance by using the tools provided to be innovative (Darrat et al., 2016). Team leaders in the PIT should implement a change plan to enhance the employees' skills and produce better results (Savaneviciene & Vilciauskaite, 2017). The final step in the PIT is an evaluation; in the evaluation step team leaders evaluate employees' next stage in the development plan and set higher goals to continue improving employees' performance (Lin et al., 2018). The study findings help me extend literature with specific examples for how proactive leaders use their expertise when

setting goals and expectations along with problem-solving proving these skills are inspirational to their employees and contribute significantly to high performance and a long-term employee commitment to their company.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

Organizational leaders in call centers can apply the study findings to explore different strategies to develop employee skills, improve organizational performance, and reduce turnover intentions. The findings of this study support previous research on different strategies to promote employee efficiency and performance. Based on the research results, multiple training methods, effective communication, keeping employees engaged, and proactive leadership are essential elements for continual employee development. Svitlana and Nataliia (2019) stated that the organizational and development process includes workplace coaching, mentoring, apprenticeship, motivation, incentives, rotation, and numerous practical professional trainings. Investing in improving the employees' skills keeps employees engaged, enhances employees' skills, attracts more talent to join the company, and helps the organization expand and grow.

Call center leaders implementing strategies to develop the employees' skills could increase the employees' retention rate, higher satisfaction rate, and increase employee engagement. Findings from this study may be helpful to managers who have been unsuccessful in developing employees' skills and improving organizational performance. One way leaders can encourage employee engagement and satisfaction is when they set clear and realistic goals and expectations. Leaders can improve organizational performance when they assist employees and solve their work-related problems to reduce



any burnout. Jyoti and Rani (2019) stated that organizational leaders need to set achievable goals and provide the directions and assistance for their team members to achieve these goals. Utilizing strategies to improve employees' performance might help leaders to retain talented employees, increase productivity, and keep employees motivated to advance their careers.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings from this study may contribute to positive social change by developing employee skills, keep employees motivated to be more productive, and encourages employees to advance their career level to be the future leaders of the company. Offering different types of training, is essential to continue the employee development process. Effective communication between the leader and each team member is vital; to boost teamwork to project collaboration. Effective communication can be done through coaching and providing adequate feedback to support the employee's improvement plan. Leaders should keep employees engaged in the company is vital to continue motivating employees for their hard work, appreciate their efforts and support their improvements. Proactive leadership is important as the leader is the one who guides the individual to set realistic goals and expectations along with solving any work problems to reduce the stressful working environment, which sometimes leads to a higher turnover intention (Jyoti & Rani, 2019). Rohim and Budhiasa (2019) stated that individuals feel more connected to their companies when their leaders acknowledge their hard work and motivate them. Motivated individuals tend to be energy-driven, evident by their work ethic; they seemed committed to improving company revenue, and appear

socially happy (Lin et al., 2018). Highly trained employees recognized by their leaders are likely to stay with the company; the results might reduce the unemployment rate, stabilize communities, and improve the local economy. When employees are happier at work, they are also socially more pleased with their homes. Individuals who are more confident at work is often depicted in their personal lives.

### **Recommendations for Action**

The following recommendations for further action to improve employees' skills and increase the company's performance arise from the study findings. Call center leaders must invest in training employees by offering mandatory initial training, continual training, and job rotation to expose employees to different tasks that is proven to enhance employee performance. Investing in the employee's development may improve the employee's daily work, resulting in better outcomes, such as enhanced organization performance. Effective communication between leaders and their team members is essential to keep coaching, mentoring, and provide feedback to employees to improve their skills. All participants in this study explained the need for leaders to motivate and appreciate employees for their hard work and improvement persistence. Leaders must find the best method to encourage employees, recognize those hard-workers and provide the support needed for struggling employees to keep everyone on track. Proactive leadership is crucial to solve employee's problems promptly and reduce any stressful working environment. Setting realistic goals and expectations from the leaders to their team members is vital to keeps the employee's motivation up and encourage individuals to improve and level up their performance.

Upon completion of the research, I plan to disseminate the findings from this study by sharing a copy of the presentation of the findings with my participants. In addition, my study findings will be published by Walden University in the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database. My goal is to present the findings from this study by participating in academic and professional conferences, and business seminars sponsored by organizations. I also plan to gain approval to share excerpts of my study findings within the Human Resources Management Journal, Journal of Management Development, and the Journal of Leadership Education.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

This qualitative multiple case study aimed to explore strategies call center leaders to use to develop employee skills and improve organizational performance. Initially, one of my limitations was the leaders' ability to answer all questions truthfully without concealing confidential facts about the organization. I addressed that by going to the website to confirm some of their answers and by verifying the organizational documents provided by the participants. Secondly, another limitation I listed was the participants' discomfort in disclosing information about how they are developing employees' skills. Since I used the virtual meeting format, participants were comfortable stating facts without any pressure otherwise evident if they were in face-to-face meetings. My last limitation was that my previous employment as a call center employee might have potentially influenced the research approach and analysis of the data collected. Therefore, I recommend that the researcher not have prior experience in the call center for future research I mitigated any personal bias by not inserting my personal thoughts and opinions

from my call center experience and listening closely to what is being said by each participant

The research study findings were limited to the target population comprises leaders from two Southern California call centers. The research study does not include other geographical regions or other types of business other than a call center. My recommendation for further research is to study different strategies to improve employee's performance in different types of business other than call centers, and to broaden the geographical areas to include more regions. Another recommendation for further research is to consider using the quantitative method and gather the experience from a large population of participants in a more expanded geographical area.

### **Reflections**

Earning a doctoral degree was one of my dreams since I was young. I faced many challenges to pursue my dream when I worked full-time and became a mother of three children. However, my dream goal to continue my education and earn a doctoral degree was always in my mind as a goal that I will need to finish one day. My amazing God was leading every step of my way. Despite the much criticism I received from some family members to focus on my full-time job and stop my education after my Masters' study, God had a plan for me by using my beloved husband and my amazing older girl to support and encourage me throughout the study.

Walden University Doctor of Business Administration program made my dream come true. My study at Walden University equipped me to learn from a set of classes aiming directly at the field I am studying. I was able to have a comprehensive view of my

specialization, improve my research styles, writing skills, paraphrasing, interviewing participants, and link theory to professional practice. The Doctor of Business Administration program was challenging, and very rewarding as I learned many skills. I learned to avoid bias by having any prejudiced beliefs about call centers from my prior experience. After this in-depth study, I see myself equipped with many skills and strategies to improve employee performance from the participants' responses and literature reviews. I will use my prior experience and the findings of this study to advance my future profession.

### **Conclusion**

Improving employees' skills is an essential aspect in enhancing organizational performance. Improving employees' skills is critical to a better profit, organizational growth, higher productivity, increased engagement, and an improved retention rate when employees are well developed by following a strategic development plan. The development of future call center leaders requires a proactive approach. Proactive leaders are significant contributors toward the success of their organizations. Additionally, proactive leaders work closely with their employees providing the appropriate tools and support needed for employee improvement. Leaders from the two chosen call centers in Southern California participated in semistructured interviews. Four main themes emerged after collecting and analyzing the data: (a) training, (b) effective communication, (c) employee engagement, and (d) proactive leadership. The findings from this study indicated that the leaders who use these development strategies improve employees' skills and enhance the company's performance.

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## Appendix: Interview Protocol

- i. Arrange a quiet place to conduct the interview.
  - ii. Introduce myself to my participants.
  - iii. Explain the privacy, go over the consent form, and obtain permission to audio record the interview.
  - iv. Begin the interview with an introduction statement, provide instructions to the interviewer and the purpose of the interview.
  - v. Use a script for the beginning and the end of the interview.
  - vi. Ask open-ended questions, paraphrase as needed, and record the participant answers.
  - vii. Ask for any additional clarification regarding the interview process.
  - viii. Reiterate contact numbers for the member checking process.
  - ix. Thank the participant(s) for their part of the study.
  - x. End the interview.
  - xi. Share a copy of the succinct synthesis with each participant during the follow up meeting.
  - xii. End the follow up interview
- End interview protocol.