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Electric Cooperative Managers' Strategies to Enhance Organizational Commitment to Increase Employee Productivity

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Abstract

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Commitment to Increase Employee Productivity

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MBA, Florida State University, 2002

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Lack of effective leadership strategies contributes to a reduction in employee engagement and productivity. Managers are concerned about the lack of effective leadership strategies because it negatively affects employee engagement and productivity, reducing organizational growth. Grounded in Bass's transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore effective leadership strategies used to enhance employee engagement and increase productivity. Five managers from an electric cooperative in Northwest Florida who implemented effective leadership strategies participated in the study. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and a review of organizational documents. Data were analyzed using Yin's five-step approach. The four emergent themes were teamwork, encouragement, leading by example, and rewards. A key recommendation is for business leaders to provide frequent, honest feedback, coach when needed, and provide appropriate training, allowing to succeed in a conducive environment. By nurturing and seeking advice from subordinates, managers show employees they are valued and contribute to the organization. The implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to create a safe, comfortable environment that improves social conditions by promoting their subordinates' worth, dignity, and development.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the one true love of my life—Amy. I want to thank you for all the prayers and your strength that has carried me through the rough times. Thank you so much for believing, with me, our Father's plan and will for our lives. I want to thank my son for challenging me to go for this doctorate and succeed. To my daughters, I want to thank you for being a new shining light in my life that has given me so much joy. To my parents and sister, I want to thank you for always being there to make sure I have the support and love. I hope my life's struggles and gains will be a shining light in my children's lives that they see good things come to those who are obedient to God and work hard.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Leaders need to comprehend the significance of implementing effective leadership strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. Small firms accounted for 64.5% of the net new jobs created in 2018 (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2019). There is a constant need for new information on best practices in the workplace. In this study, I analyzed the research data to address the research problem so that I could offer leaders proven leadership strategies to increase organizational commitment to increase productivity.

Background of the Problem

Leadership is the act of focusing on identifying factors and facilitating the implementation of innovation while motivating individuals to work toward a common goal (Farahnak et al., 2019). To be effective, leaders must communicate ideas to engage employees and evoke action to accomplish an organization's desired outcome (Porter et al., 2016). Scholars could argue that the success of a business relies on its leadership's behavioral and interpersonal skills as well as their ability to engage employees. In the United States, less than 33% of employees in the workplace are engaged (Adkins, 2016). Leaders recognize the importance of employee engagement, and implementing employee engagement strategies can increase performance and productivity (Albrecht et al., 2015). Employees' motivation, satisfaction, and engagement are productivity indicators (Shika, 2019). Most employees are engaged if they work toward positive objectives, stay committed to the organization, and represent the company. High engagement of an employee within the organization leads to various organizational outcomes, such as high

productivity and profitability, customer satisfaction, and reduced turnover of employees (Shika, 2019). Conversely, lack of effective leadership strategies reduces employee productivity (Shinm et al., 2015). A transformational leadership style has been proven to be a moderating variable with an effect on talent management and organizational performance. Almaaitaha et al. (2020) produced findings showing the significance of organizational commitment in achieving human resources performance goals.

Problem Statement

There is a weak but negative relationship between continuance commitment and job productivity when the leader's transformational behaviors are low (Sungu et al., 2019). Susilowati and Azis (2019) reported that 72% of employees surveyed indicated that organizational commitment had a significant role in employee performance and their decision to remain with the organization. The general business problem in this study was that diminished organizational commitment negatively affects businesses by lowering productivity, reducing job satisfaction, increasing employee turnover rate, and increasing employee disengagement. The specific business problem was that some rural electric cooperative managers lack leadership strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership strategies that rural electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. The population for this study included a rural electric cooperative CEO and their subordinate department managers, which

included a minimum of five individuals with offices located in rural Northwest Florida. The target population consisted of a single cooperative with proven strategies used to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. The implications for business change included the potential to encourage organizational commitment to increase productivity. The movement toward business change promotes better leadership strategies, which increase workplace engagement. The results of the study may bring about social change by improving employee working conditions by promoting their worth, dignity, and development.

Nature of the Study

The selected approach to this study was a qualitative, exploratory, single-case study. A qualitative approach is an efficient research method through which the researcher can gain insights into an existing business problem. Furthermore, Wilkinson et al. (2016) argued that qualitative researchers study a person, group, organization, or situation to gain new insight. The quantitative approach is appropriate if a hypothesis is testable when examining the relationship between theoretical constructs, variables, or the prediction of research outcomes (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012). A quantitative method is suitable when researchers seek to quantify data, present findings in a numerical or mathematical form, and generalize results from a sample of a target population. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods results in the mixed-method approach. Researchers who select the mixed method employ both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain new understandings of a phenomenon of importance (Palinkas et al., 2019). Neither a quantitative nor mixed-method study was appropriate

for this study because I did not intend to examine statistical relationships or group differences.

Case studies are useful for investigating occurrences, events, and individuals (Yin, 2017). Case studies can also afford the researcher an opportunity to ask open-ended questions to address *what, how*, and *why* questions regarding phenomena (Yin, 2017. Case studies are a common way to make a qualitative inquiry. A single case study design is appropriate when researchers study a person, group, organization, or situation over a period to gain a holistic understanding of the factors contributing to the problem (Keenan et al., 2015). Researchers use phenomenological design to explore participants' lived experiences as they relate to a phenomenon, which was not the intent of this study. Reeves et al. (2013) argued that an ethnographic design is appropriate to study social or cultural problems or document the customs, beliefs, perspectives, and practices of people, organizations, teams, and communities in their natural habitat. Natow (2019) described a case study as qualitative research regarding realities encompassing the interaction between self and environment, which requires collecting data from two or more sources such as observations, interviews, and documents (Natow, 2019). Researchers use narrative design to collect data from people and present findings as stories told by research participants (Yin, 2015). Scholars using narrative design construct a narrative rendition of the findings from a real-world setting and emphasize a sense of being there (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Because my objective was to explore effective leadership strategies that rural electric cooperative managers use in Northwest Florida, a case study design was the appropriate choice.

Research Question

What strategies do rural electric cooperative managers in Northwest Florida use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies have you used to improve organizational commitment?

2. What are the most effective strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?

3. What strategies do you consider the least effective strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?

4. How do you measure the effectiveness of strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?

5. What challenges have you encountered when attempting to implement these strategies?

6. How have you addressed those challenges?

7. Do you have any additional information to share about your strategies to retain entry-level employees?

8. What else would you like to share regarding strategies that electric cooperative managers could use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this qualitative, single case study was transformational leadership. Burns (1978) developed the transformational leadership

theory, and Bass and Avolio (1993) further developed components of the theory. Bass and Avolio's model divided transformational leadership into four components: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. McCleskey (2014) asserted that transformational leaders assist in increasing performance and the capacity of employees to overcome personal interests to increase productivity in the workplace. Transformational leadership addresses emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leaders are attentive to the needs and motives of followers and try to help followers reach their fullest potential (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leaders master organizational rules and norms and then create new visions and strategies to improve and transform the organization (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leadership theories are useful frameworks for understanding the importance of leaders involving employees in decision making (Wooderson et al., 2016). Transformational leadership theory can change an organization's culture and motivate employees to embrace the leaders' vision. Transformational leaders use employee feedback to improve organizational commitment to improving employee productivity. Transformational leadership is helpful in exploring the strategies that rural electric cooperatives use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. This leadership theory provided a lens through which I could explore proven strategies that electric cooperative managers use to increase employee productivity. Leadership is an integral part of an organization with a direct impact on organizational productivity and profit. A desirable leader is considered one who can get the best from employees to achieve

organizational goals. A leadership style that is appropriate for the needs of the organization has a positive impact on organizational performance. Karam and Tasmin (2020) conducted a study investigating the effects of transformational leadership on staff productivity using attendance and quality of work as the controlled parameters. The study revealed that employees were quite optimistic about the leadership, and they believed that their immediate team leaders had a significant role in improving their productivity (Karam & Tasmin, 2020). By using the propositions established by transformational leadership, the theory empowered participants to share their discoveries and acumen regarding leaders' transformational leadership attributes, which enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity.

Operational Definitions

The terms in this section are unique and concrete to the topic of the strategies used by electric cooperative managers to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. These definitions of the terms assist the reader in understanding the study. The following terms are implemented in the peer-reviewed literature.

Counterproductive behavior: Unethical, dishonorable, defiant, harmful, and corrupt acts are counterproductive behaviors that employees display when they are not satisfied. Counterproductive (destructive) behaviors occur when employees cannot conform and can be harmful practices such as revenge, aggression, and bullying that affect individual, group, and organizational outcomes (Boies et al., 2015).

Employee disengagement: Richards (2014) referred to disengagement with and among key stakeholders as the fourth deadly sin of innovation. A synonymous term used

to describe disengagement is *presenteeism*, which is the state in which employees are physically present but mentally or emotionally distracted or disengaged (Moore, 2012).

Onboarding: This term refers to a comprehensive approach that an organization uses to ensure that each employee is immersed in culture, quality, and operational systems to better serve the organization's customer base (Carter, 2013).

Organizational citizenship behavior: Organizational citizenship behavior is defined as a performance supporting the social and psychological environment in which tasks are conducted (Somech, 2015).

Organizational commitment: Organizational commitment is understood as an employee's sense of belonging, acceptance, passion, and pride toward their organization, which motivates them to work actively for the interest of the organization (Sanjeev & Rathore, 2014).

Transformational leadership: The process of motivating, encouraging, and inspiring followers to perform above their personal best (Northouse, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are a collection of inferred guidelines to direct a researcher through the course of a study and determine facts as true but unprovable (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Each participant provided open and honest responses to the interview questions. It was an assumption that the leaders offered in-depth data toward future research and business practices to increase organizational commitment to increasing productivity.

Limitations

A limitation is a potential weakness that may affect the external validity of a research study (Santora & Bozer, 2017). A limitation of this study had to do with the snapshot of the organization in time and what was occurring during the period. Participants selected for the study resided in a geographic area of Florida, limiting the sample size for collecting data to conduct the study. Another limitation was the unfamiliarity that the participants had with me causing them to be nervous. The availability of documentation to support the participants' interview responses limited the results of the study.

Delimitations

Delimitations consist of the boundaries or scope of the study (Thomas et al., 2015). I interviewed enough electric cooperative managers in Northwest Florida to reach data saturation. The bounds of this study consisted of the geographic location, which was restricted to Northwest Florida, and the sample consisted of managers in the electric cooperative who developed strategies to increase employee engagement to increase productivity. In this study, each participant had different qualifications based on years of experience, number of subordinates, degrees, specialized training, and job titles. Another delimitation was choosing leaders with different titles. By choosing leaders with different titles, I was able to gather different perspectives on how they leveraged strategies differently to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. I conducted semistructured interviews through Zoom, observed participants, and collected

company documents via email. I realize that this study may not be relevant to other industries.

Significance of the Study

The primary focus of this study was exploring leadership strategies that electric cooperative managers used to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. Leaders might decide to use this study as a tool to reevaluate their practices and organization. The results of this study could assist leaders by implementing leadership strategies that increase organizational commitment and increase employee productivity.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings of this qualitative single case study may contribute to business practice by providing information on leadership strategies to improve overall employee performance and organizational commitment. Managers could gain increased knowledge on various strategies for enhancing employee commitment through engagement and motivating techniques. Price and Whiteley (2014) asserted that developing and sharing core strategies positively affects employee engagement among all organizational members. Data from this study provide leaders with strategies to enhance organizational commitment and increase employee productivity. The findings in this study address a gap in business practices by identifying strategies to help managers enhance employee organizational commitment and productivity.

Implications for Social Change

Enhancing employee organizational commitment and productivity for rural electric cooperatives can contribute to the social well-being of the people and communities that they serve by improving efficient and effective power delivery to homes and businesses. Improving service to its members' rural electric cooperatives can increase members' satisfaction and strengthen relationships with staff. Increasing member value may have a positive social impact on communities by stimulating local economies. Through this added value, developers can more easily develop subdivisions and schools, which can create both present and future social benefits.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this single case study was to explore the strategies that rural electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. Transformational leadership theory provided the conceptual framework for the study and was used as a guide to examine related theories and concepts in the literature review. The primary purpose of the literature review was to examine the literature on leadership strategies, organizational commitment, and employee productivity. The literature used in this study was obtained from multiple online research databases. In the literature review, I used peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and dissertations. Keywords for retrieving the electronic sources included the following: *leadership strategies, leadership styles, employee commitment, organizational commitment, organizational leadership, employee performance, employee effectiveness, transformational leadership,* and *the relationship between leadership style and employee*

performance. I used Walden's electronic library databases, including ABI/INFORM,

Business Source Complete, Emerald, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, and

other related databases. Among the references in this single case study, 89% were

published less than 5 years from my October 2021 anticipated graduation. Walden

University's Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) doctoral research study requires

that a minimum of 85% of articles be peer reviewed, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1

Literature Review Source Content

Literature review content	Total #	# less than 5 years at February 2021	% peer reviewed less than 5 years from graduation
Peer-reviewed journals	295	263	89%
Books	16	8	50%
Non-peer-reviewed journals	0	0	0%
Older articles	23	0	0%
Total	334	270	

The literature review consists of six sections that address the following: (a)

leadership and leader-employee relationship, (b) transformational leadership, (c)

organizational commitment, (d) employee performance, (e) employee productivity, and

(f) engagement strategies. I outline the various leadership styles and strategies and how

they affect organizational commitment. Additionally, I attempt to show intrinsic and

extrinsic forms of organizational commitment concerning employee productivity.

Allowing open communication, developing employee empowerment, fostering employee

commitment, offering reward systems, and creating a safe business culture are types of

leadership strategies (Atmojo, 2015). By influencing followers, managers can accomplish

the organization's internal and external goals (Blomme et al., 2015). Boies et al. (2015) asserted that to improve employee and leader relationships, the management and employees must communicate. Throughout this literature review, the conceptual framework for this study, transformational leadership as developed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), is incorporated to justify and explain the perspectives of previous and current research.

Leadership and Leader-Employee Relationship

Being a supportive leader assists in building and maintaining effective interpersonal relationships (Elsaied, 2019). A manager who is considerate and kind toward people is more likely to win employees' loyalty (Farrukh et al., 2019). Employees find it more satisfying to work with a leader who is friendly, cooperative, and supportive than with someone who is cold and impersonal, or worse, hostile and uncooperative (Yao et al., 2019). According to Stouten et al. (2010), leaders who encourage a positive work environment—specifically, by communicating what is appropriate and ethical behavior—will positively impact employees through a supportive role.

Managers need to shift their mindset from managing tasks and planning to the role of focusing on people and their dreams, development needs, and emotions. Burns (1978) attempted to link the roles of leadership and followership. Followers who feel that they receive leaders' favorable treatment are likely to have positive, effective responses, such as job satisfaction. Fiaz et al. (2017) stated that an effective leader is needed in identifying and stamping out repetitive and negative behaviors. Leaders fail when they lack the motivation to be innovative and ignore changing times (Teece et al., 2016).

According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders provide constructive feedback to their followers, convince followers to exhibit extra effort, and encourage followers to think creatively about complex problems. With this mindset, followers will tend to behave in a way that facilitates high levels of performance.

Leaders must motivate employees, care for them, and apply proper strategies to make sure that they remain engaged (Northouse, 2016). Employee engagement is more than just knowing whether someone likes their job or not. Employee engagement defines how committed employees are to the business and its success (Turner, 2020). A lack of communication can frustrate employees and make them feel unimportant. Failing to provide useful feedback can lead to wasted efforts, increased error rates, diminished organizational commitment, and lower job performance. One of the most difficult challenges for any organization in 2021 is to find ways to effectively speak to employees. Communicating with employees regularly helps ensure that everyone understands the business objectives and goals, as well as their place in achieving them. Ultimately, organizations are more effective in operations when employees are highly motivated and highly engaged due to high-level performance. By implementing effective leadership practices, managers ensure positive leader-employee relationships, which ultimately increase productivity. Ricablanca and Abocejo (2020) posited that effective leadership ensures employee satisfaction, motivation, and productivity. Mitchell and Walinga (2017) asserted that leaders must think outside the box and solve problems quickly. Leadership styles affect organizational performance differently.

The transactional method of leadership promotes a high level of motivation and a low turnover rate (Basbous & Malkawi, 2017). Transactional leadership involves motivating and directing followers, primarily through appealing to their own self-interest. The power of transactional leaders comes from their formal authority and responsibility in the organization. The leader believes in motivating through a system of rewards and punishment. If a subordinate does what is desired, a reward will follow, and if they do not, a punishment will follow. Here, the exchange between leader and follower takes place to achieve routine performance goals. Employees who experience high job satisfaction are likely to exhibit more interest in their responsibilities and, therefore, pursue organizational goals (Ingusci et al., 2016). Leaders who display employee job satisfaction are more prepared to retain employees fitting their organizational needs (Ingusci et al., 2016). By implementing and motivating the proper strategies, leaders will sustain and enhance employee engagement.

Organizational leaders must reaffirm employees continuously while making sure that employees remain engaged. There are a variety of ways to achieve engagement, from open dialogue to honest feedback. Cook (2015) argued that managers have a positive behavioral outcome on employees' engagement when managers are committed to their employees. Providing feedback to employees through open, honest, and continuous communication may increase engagement (Beer, 2020). Communication between employees and business leaders may consistently increase employee value in the organization and, therefore, increase engagement (Sacher & Lal, 2016). Employees who are engaged at work are more likely to be productive on a consistent basis, which leads to

more revenues. Those employees who are engaged in their work are motivated and remain committed to their employer (Afsar & Umrani, 2020). This leads to achieving more business goals and helping to drive the organization forward.

Kovach (2018) claimed that leaders must implement the workplace approach of employee engagement to communicate organizational goals properly. The concept of communication from leadership keeps employees informed about changes (Hur et al., 2017). Leaders play a role in creating a flourishing environment to engage employees, but employees must also act. Engaged employees are committed to the organization's goals, understand how they make a contribution to the organization's success, and are committed to doing their best work. Communicators hold powerful positions by influencing the way that things are done at work—as managers or supervisors of their staff, and in communicating about good practice in employee relations, which leads to stronger employee engagement.

Managers are likely to influence an individual's engagement in the organization when trust is present. Naami et al. (2020) conducted a study that reflected that trust is a multidimensional concept that encompasses subjective, social, physical and psychological, and health-related behaviors. Leaders must exhibit fair and defendable treatment toward employees to gain trust across the workforce. Bhebhe (2020) posited that employees are likely to disengage if they perceive the unfair treatment of others, even if the employees themselves receive fair treatment. Mineo (2014) asserted that trust in management is a link to employee engagement and is vital for leaders to build trust to increase organizational benefits. A positive influence on organizational engagement

occurs when employees view higher levels of perceived justice (Atmojo, 2015).

Leadership in an organization is one of the most important factors, as it helps to create

and maintain trust in the work atmosphere (Grover, 2014). The term has been defined by

Demircan and Ceylan (2003) as the way in which an employee perceives the support

offered by the organization, as well as the employee's confidence in leaders or associates

to be honest and true to their word. Trust is now considered a key success factor in

modern-day work environments where teamwork, decentralized structures, requirements

for flexibility, innovation, and high levels of cooperation predominate (Costa &

Anderson, 2012).

      Leadership decision making should be sound for employees to buy into

organizational change. Engagement perpetuates when managers and leaders work

together to increase levels of engagement, thereby increasing performance (Berbary,

2014). Managers must be aware of their actions and behavior, as their decisions may

drive employee engagement. By making the proper decisions, the organization can move

ahead and work as a unit to reach common goals.

Transformational Leadership

      The transformational leadership style affects employee engagement because it

requires employees to become involved emotionally, and leaders provide a clear vision of

the future. Robbins (2020) asserted that employees are interested in managers who can

lead in a positive and encouraging manner. Kim et al. (2015) stated that transformational

leaders inspire and motivate employees to do their best every day while not losing sight

of the vision. Aviolo and Bass (1997) used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

(MLQ) to measure four components of transformational leadership: (a) idealized

influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized

consideration. Their research confirmed that employee engagement is positively affected

by a transformational leadership style. Berraies and Abidine (2019) confirmed

exploitative innovation by transformational leadership styles attributed to idealized

influence and contingent rewards. Idealized influence constitutes the emotional traits of a

leader's behavior, which motivates followers to feel positive about their work and

perform beyond simple transactional expectations.

Idealized influence means leading by example, showing a strong commitment to

goals, and creating trust and confidence in employees (Rana et al., 2016). Employees are

more productive when leaders ensure that employees clearly understand their role, lead

and motivate with their example, communicate, set high standards, and show

commitment (Pohl et al. 2020). Employees' productivity often rises as they follow

leaders who motivate them to strive for success. Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) stated that to

increase employees' productivity, one must increase their commitment. By learning what

employees value and communicating appreciation, team leaders gain the ability to focus

on strategies to sustain positive leader-employee relationships in a work environment.

Qabool and Jalees (2017) contended that when leaders build up employees' self-esteem

and offer them training to do their jobs, employees will strive to become future leaders.

Inspirational motivation refers to the leader's ability to inspire confidence,

provide motivation, and build a sense of purpose among followers. Wingerden and Stoep

(2018) explained that inspirational motivation is a leader's ability to inspire employees to

improve outcomes, communicate change initiatives, and foster a strong sense of purpose. Mittal and Dhar (2015) suggested that transformational leaders foster an ethical work environment with clear values, priorities, and standards. Transformational leaders also provide a clear vision and a sense of belonging, which encourage individuals to buy into the long-term objectives of the organization through idealized influence. Leaders use intellectual stimulation to create a diverse and open environment to encourage others to be innovative. Leaders who use transformational leadership also actively work to create a supportive environment where individual differences are respected and celebrated through individualized consideration. Hannah et al. (2015) conducted a review of the literature on transformational leadership, revealing that leadership behavior enhances business performance, and employees are the core resources at the center of a leader's vision for the organization. Individuals' commitment to organizational goals intrinsically encourages them to work harder to reach company objectives. Motivation enables leaders and employees to conquer adversity, develop stronger and more committed leader-employee relationships, enhance employee engagement, and stimulate employees' willingness to be more productive (Hirschi & Valero, 2017).

Aviolo and Bass's (1995) third construct of transformational leadership theory is intellectual stimulation. Vargas (2015) stated that leaders who inspire and push employees personally and professionally exhibit higher levels of intellectual stimulation. Sulistiawana et al. (2020) stated that there are positive effects of intellectual stimulation, such as experimental and explicit knowledge sharing, which have a positive effect on employee productivity, and, in turn, employee productivity has a positive effect on

business performance. Thuane (2019) conducted a study that found a positive direct relationship between leader intellectual stimulation and follower creative performance. Intellectual stimulation enables leaders to challenge the status quo, aim for consistent innovation, and encourage employees' creativity. In recent years, a study by Yin et al. (2019) showed that there has been increased interest in sharing knowledge among leaders, especially in emerging markets. It is helpful when leaders share previous knowledge; employees can view situations from different perspectives while learning to be creative themselves. To secure employee interest and growth, leaders must share knowledge in ways that sustain employee motivation and productivity (Dwivedula et al., 2017).

The last construct of transformational leadership theory is individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 1995). Individualized consideration enables leaders to attend to employee needs, act as a mentor or coach to employees, and listen to employee concerns (Abu-Tineh et al., 2008). Individualized consideration revolves around the efforts of the leader to provide employees with emotional and social support to develop and empower them through coaching, mentoring, and growth opportunities (Martinez-Corcoles et al., 2020). Asencio (2016) asserted that employee perceptions and transformational leadership behaviors have a direct correlation to job satisfaction. Essentially, leaders listen, communicate, and encourage employees throughout their professional and personal journeys (Chua & Murray, 2015). By interacting with employees as individuals, understanding their needs, and listening attentively, leaders will enhance their net worth while increasing productivity and employee engagement.

The constructs of transformational leadership assist in the evaluation of employee experiences and perceptions. Leaders who are committed to ensuring employee productivity may employ a transformational leadership style to create and sustain a positive leader-employee relationship in a work environment (Choi et al., 2017). Researchers use transformational leadership theory to examine the influence of positive leader-employee relationships and employee productivity in a work environment (Coi et al., 2017). By using transformational leadership, electric cooperative managers can gain the ability to explore experiences and perceptions regarding characteristics tied to a strategy which increases employee productivity. Phong et al. (2018) who postulated transformational leadership has a significantly positive impact on employee's willingness to share their thoughts and knowledge. Peng (2020) attested the transformational leadership theory enables team leaders to employ comprehensive improvement in their understanding of positive leader-employee relationships to increase productivity, which could potentially place employees in a better economic position. Biggs et al. (2014) asserted a positive leader-employee relationship results in clarity around workplace requirements and roles for those involved.

Siangchokyoo et al. (2020) asserted leaders who possess a transformational leadership style inspire and encourage employees to increase productivity over a long period of time. Transformational leaders seek long-term solutions (Arifah & Nurnida, 2016). Leaders also seek short-term solutions and, as a result, employ several bargaining techniques to gain employee motivation and productivity in the work environment (Siangchokyoo et al., 2020). These bargaining techniques lead to an improvement in

employee motivation and performance (Arifah & Nurnida, 2016). The expansion of transformational leadership theory provides leaders with another channel to enhance follower trust, motivation, and empowerment.

Overall, researchers agree transformational leadership strategies encourage higher levels of employee satisfaction, which leads to improved performance. According to Schaufeli (2015), leaders use their characteristics, behaviors, and relationships to develop and motivate followers to realize extraordinary performance and passion for achieving the goals of the organization. Transformational leaders are acquainted to a constant state of change or future vision (Karambelkar & Bhattacharya, 2017). Transformational leadership is the most effective leadership style for improving the performance of followers, groups, and organizations, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Al-Malki & Juan, 2018).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the individual's psychological attachment to an organization. Afsar et al. (2020) stated organizational commitment is viewed as an organizational member's psychological attachment to the organization. The importance of organizational commitment derives from the notion an employee with a strong commitment to the organization will be productive, and will support the organization (Tindowen, 2019). Blanz (2017) declared employees' satisfaction with an organization can be accurately measured based on their content with the organization. Organizational commitment plays a role in determining whether an employee will stay with the organization and zealously work toward organizational goals. For the business to be

successful, the employee must be committed to the organization to ensure it properly performs (Joo et al., 2016). Leaders who are committed to employee satisfaction and high employee morale can assist in building organizational commitment (Zayas-ortiz et al., 2015). Kumar and Pansari's (2016) study revealed employees who are committed to the organization perform higher and meet the company's objectives.

Though each component of organizational commitment may affect other components, it is easier to segment and visualize the different types of organizational commitments in order to bolster them according to need. Scholars have confirmed the plausible correlation between transformational leadership and staff commitment (Candelarioa et al., 2020). Employee's commitment to work continues to gain attention for its immense prospective paybacks in institutions (Top et al., 2015). Some managers prefer transactional leadership styles because they feel the work has a direct correlation to the employees' happiness. Barron and Hulleman (2015) argued commitment to work is an essential element which promotes employee performance. While other managers promote transformational leadership where employees work together to create a vision for the organization to succeed. According to Olafsen et al. (2015), transformational leadership has a stronger relationship with organizational commitment versus transactional leadership. Olafsen et al. (2015) stated transformational leadership is more effective in motivating employees to commit themselves to the organization. The findings by these researchers indicate electric cooperatives should deepen their transformational leadership skills to increase employee commitment and to assist in increasing productivity.

Deci and Ryan (1985) conducted an influential study on employee engagement in 1985. Deci and Ryan (1985) expanded on early work by differentiating between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The scholars noted autonomy, psychological health and well-being, and competence are essential in meeting an individual's psychological needs, which allows for optimal function and growth. Na-Nan et al. (2020) posited employee engagement is an expression of a person's own preferred task behaviors which promote their relationship with work. The satisfaction of these basic needs can be directly related to the dedication of employees.

Organizational commitment is the topic of many studies conducted over the past few decades and is essential to examine regarding employees and employers (Yousef, 2016). Organizational commitment affects turnover intentions, attitudes toward changes in the organization, and job satisfaction (Yousef, 2016). Organizational commitment can affect an employee's decision to terminate their employment with the company. Employees tend to seek new employment when they become uncommitted to the organization. Yousef (2016) conducted a systematic literature search to study shortages among nurses in the United Kingdom due to lack of organizational commitment. Yousef (2016) study stressed the importance of organizations reassessing the influence of the employees' intent to leave and turnover. Leaders must reassess job satisfaction among employees.

Ongoing changes must occur throughout time regarding the sources which influence voluntary turnover intentions among specific populations, such as nurses in the Coomber and Barriball (2007) study. The controversy of whether organizational

commitment influences turnover has existed since the 1980s (Reichers, 1985). Reichers (1985) examined worldwide approaches which organizations had in place to observe their global ideas regarding organizational commitment. The purpose of the study was to determine how commitment can be reconceptualized. Reichers (1985) presented reconceptualization as a design to apprehend a person's experience of organizational commitment and drive the attention to the separate pieces of the construct. The foundational work provided by Reichers (1985) clearly outlines why future researchers should not just study the literature but ask the participants how they perceive organizational commitment. In order to develop research on the topic of employee commitment, researchers must understand commitment through the eyes of the committed. Reicher's advice focused on organizational commitment among the production and service sectors. Commitment has become increasingly critical to sustaining a healthy organization (Lemmetty & Collin, 2020). Reichers (1985) suggested organizational commitment is an intriguing paradox to examine among the 21st-century workforce. The employee's commitment to the organization affects the employee on an organizational level as well as on an individual level; whether high or low, the level of organizational commitment can influence the quality of work produced by the employee (Al-Fakeh et al., 2020). According to Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011), when employees are committed to the organization, positive behaviors increase. Their study evaluated the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) found the intent to leave had a negative correlation with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. The researchers stressed the importance

of organizations addressing organizational commitment among their employees.

Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) determined poor organizational climate could affect

organizational commitment. An effective way to predict turnover is by examining

organizational commitment, professional commitment, burnout, and job satisfaction.

Aydogdu and Asikgil (2011) concluded the lack of social support, increased burnout,

increased stress, and other factors are robust predictors of intention to leave. Many of the

studies conducted on organizational commitment have used the organizational

commitment questionnaire, developed by (Porter et al., 1974), to measure affective,

continuance, and normative commitment.

Organizational commitment has a significant influence on the effectiveness and

efficiency of the business. Leaders must realize how their employees perceive their work

conditions, engagement, and how committed the organization is to them in return. Choi et

al. (2016) posited leaders who motivate employees will increase employee commitment

and empower them to accomplish stated goals. Organizational commitment affects the

morale of the employee, short-term and long-term output, and the efficiency of the

organization. Several constructs in Porter et al. (1974) research, such as organizational

climate, staff turnover intentions, leadership, and voluntary turnover, are within a

behavioral health system. Persistence is fundamental to keeping employees engaged.

Organizations must engage employees early in the process and continue to keep them

engaged throughout their careers (Oliver & Vough, 2020). Organizations have integrated

a progressive talent practice to propel their business are characterized by actions around

proactive talent management, planning, diversity and inclusiveness and development of

individual careers (Piip, 2020). By keeping employees engaged, the organization will convey to the employee they value their contribution to the organization, therefore, increasing the opportunity to have employees commit to the goals and values of the business. Kim et al. (2020) stated personal growth regarding engagement will make the organization a more desirable place to work for future employees. Employees embody organizational commitment to have a more positive attitude toward the work they do and the organization itself (Porter et al., 1974). When the level of commitment is high, the employee identifies with the organization's vision, mission, and goals; their desire to stay with the organization increases (Porter et al., 1974). Studies linked to organizational commitment involve organizational behavior, job search activity, and turnover (Porter et al., 1974). Previous research concludes with the decline of innovative employee behavior and organizational commitment. Attitudes are shaped around how committed the employee is to the organization; therefore, when the commitment is high, the more likely the attitude toward the job is positive (Porter et al., 1974). Their study concluded organizational commitment was an antecedent to job satisfaction instead of an outcome (Porter et al., 1974). More recent theories and examinations of organizational commitment have evolved the meaning of commitment to fit with the 21st-century generation of workers. The most current definition of organizational commitment is a phenomenon which increases and decreases on account of the positive or negative experiences employees have on the job (Solinger et al., 2015).

Maia et al. (2016) added commitment naturally declines over time, specifically during the first few years on the job. Maia et al. (2016) acknowledged with older

(seasoned) individuals; the organization gains more commitment to the organization. Organizational commitment increases as the individual has positive experiences on the job and spends more time with the company (Maia et al., 2016; Solinger et al., 2015). Matsuo (2015) summarized empirical research on organizational commitment using 48 meta-analysis and 26 variables. The results of the work showed, the more challenging the job is to the employee, the higher their commitment is to the organization. The attitude an employee has is a psychological connection, which can affect how they align themselves with the strategic goals and values set forth by the organization (Alkahtani et al., 2020). The literature focuses on the relationship between voluntary turnover and commitment, job burnout, and stress (Peng et al., 2016). Peng et al. (2016) noted as an employee's sense of belonging and commitment to an organization rises, the chance of the employee leaving lessens.

Proper leadership increases organizational commitment and employee retention (Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2017). Jackson and Wilton (2016) researched commitment and job satisfaction amongst leadership in the healthcare field. The researchers declared human resource departments drive commitment and loyalty (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). Dedicated human resource departments can have a substantial influence on employee and customer satisfaction (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). Similarly, when employees do not commit to the organization, the quality of services begins to decline, which can affect the organization and lower client satisfaction (Jackson & Wilton, 2016). Research in previous literature indicates high job satisfaction and strong organizational commitment are significant influences on employee turnover (Shuck et al., 2016). When an

organization lacks employees with commitment, it will be detrimental to an organization.

Nimon et al. (2016) posited employee engagement is a separate construct of job satisfaction, and it tends to relate to the work related positive psychological state of the employee. Poor performance, the reduced effort put into work assignments, absenteeism, and turnover are consequences of low organizational commitment (Khoreva, 2016). Poor performance at work increases as organizational commitment decreases, which results in a significant decline in the quality of services provided by the organization (Khoreva, 2016). When low motivation is present among a group of employees, the effort placed on work assignments becomes miniature; low motivation is significant for not having an organizational commitment (Khoreva, 2016). Khoreva (2016) stresses organizational commitment plays a vital role in the quality of services provided by an organization. When employees are confident in leadership, and are well trained, the level of organizational commitment can escalate. Empowerment, teamwork, and training have a positive and significant influence on transformational leadership and job satisfaction, and they further produce a significant impact on commitment (Khan & Shiaddiqui, 2020).

Three-Component Model

A prominent theory of organizational commitment is the three-component model. The three-component model of organizational commitment questionnaire was revised by (Lee et al., 2001). The three components are namely affective commitment (AC), normative commitment (NC), and continuous commitment (CC) and job satisfaction factor consider for pay fairness, pay size, promotion and overall job satisfaction of employees (Vachrajani et al., 2020).

Organizational commitment is most often defined as a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organization; a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organization; and a definite belief in, and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization, (Mowday, et. al., 1992). Organizational commitment means the degree to which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Robbins & Pearce, 2008). Affective commitment is crucial for employees to guarantee they adhere to organizational interests and goals (Anastasiades et al., 2020). Affective commitment is the emotional attachment to an organization by the employee (Albrecht & Marty, 2020). If the employee has a high level, they will enjoy their relationship with the organization and are likely to stay. Gupta et al. (2016) found affective commitment mediates the positive relationships between perceived organizational support and work outcomes.

Averin (2020) posited continuance commitment is the degree with which the employee believes leaving the organization would be costly. Continuance commitment is positively related with performance and quality of work (Park & Rainey, 2007). Organizational citizenship behavior is of no importance for employees who have high continuance commitment (Khan et al., 2016). If the employee has a high level of continuance commitment, they will stay with an organization because of the feeling they must stay. Mahto (2020) stated an employees' perceptions of the relative investments they have made in the organization outweigh the costs associated with seeking employment elsewhere. Neuhofer et al. (2016) proposed this form of commitment can be impacted by anything, which makes leaving the organization more difficult or costly to the individual.

Hadi and Tentama (2020) noted continuance commitment is based on a need to stay and not due to the organizational membership viewed as valued or pleasant.

Normative commitment is the degree in which the employee feels obligated to the organization or believes staying is the right thing to do (Thuy & Van, 2020). Normative commitment in employees is high, where employees regularly see visible examples of the employer being committed to employee well-being (Meyer et al., 2002). Normative commitment is higher in organizations which value loyalty and systematically communicate the fact to employees with rewards, incentives, and other strategies (Thuy & Van, 2020). An employee with more significant organizational commitment has a higher chance of contributing to organizational success and will also experience higher levels of job satisfaction.

Organizational commitment is the strength of the attachment an employee feels towards an organization (Grego-Palmer, 2020). Organizational commitment is measured by the degree to which an individual is ready to adopt organizational values and goals (Kim & Beehr, 2020). It may be measured by the degree to which an employee fulfills his/her job responsibilities. Hefny (2020) conducted a study which showed a positive relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment and a negative one between job satisfaction and turnover intention in the presence of ethical climate.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is related to dedicated and meaningful work, which allows employees to realize their value within the organization (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Self-determination theory (SDT) is a broad framework for understanding factors

which facilitate or undermine intrinsic motivation, autonomous extrinsic motivation, and psychological wellness, all issues of direct relevance to educational settings (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When employees understand their organizational importance, they are usually more engaged. Pouramini and Fayyazi (2015) asserted there is an opportunity for employee autonomy when SDT is leveraged, allowing employees to have the ability to influence those around them. The need for autonomy, intrinsic rewards, and influence are required to achieve employee engagement. SDT provides the concepts which guide the creation of policies, practices, and environments to promote both wellness and high-quality performance (Vasconcellos et al., 2020). By reviewing a continuum of types of motivation in the workplace, leaders can determine how support for employees' basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness drives their motivation (Rigsby & Ryan, 2018). Evidence shows enhanced need satisfaction can come from managerial climate, job design, and well-crafted compensation strategies, as well as being influenced by the perceived mission of the company (Doshi & McGregor, 2015). A focus on basic needs provides a practical basis for leveraging positive change and achieving goals from talent retention to workplace wellness**.**

Employee Performance

Employee motivation influences the performance of employees (Lee & Raschke, 2016). Highly motivated employees are competent, energetic, produce high-quality outcomes, and are productive. Sarma (2015) stated organizational productivity increases when employees experience motivation. Akkermans et al. (2015) stated individuals who perceive their performance as relevant tend to work to do their best because the job has

meaning. Organizations both in the private and public sector across the globe rely on their workforce for optimum productivity, which will in turn result to organizational efficiency. Khoreva (2016) asserted individual and group performance levels might be higher when employees are valued. Through motivation, managers are able to ensure employee job satisfaction as it becomes a matter of necessity to every organization. Organizational culture can improve employee performance through improved employee morale and motivation (Wilton, 2016). Clanton (2015) asserted organizations which have a performance-oriented culture emphasize achievement. Ferinia et al. (2016) mentioned in Pakistan, employees were facing challenges to prove their value to the organization's performance to justify the reasons for their existence in organizations. Leadership affects motivation, but leadership styles affect employee performance as well. Schwarz (2017) argued the examination of organizational leaders' behaviors at all levels is necessary to achieve their goals. Significant relationships between a leader's participative behavior and employee performance exist, in which different leadership styles have a close association with their organizational performances and outputs (Basbous & Malkawi, 2017). According to Anthony and Weide (2015), effective leaders set the stage so their followers can contribute to the organization's success and improve their followers' effectiveness by helping followers improve their performance, improve their peer relationships, and adapt to organizational change.

Leaders influence an individual or collective perception of the effectiveness of organizational performance through employment and feedback (Anthony & Weide, 2015). Oswick (2015) agreed managers obtain a higher constant level of performance and

achieve the active participation of the employees only through effective motivating of employees and coordinating the work. Job design (e.g., task structure, authority built into the job, work layout, procedural simplicity, equipment used, degree of task integration, performance feedback mechanisms, and resource input) covers nearly all significant factors affecting performance (Jaupi & Lliac, 2015). Workload, facilities, and expectancy hurt employee performance, but the working group, salary, job security, achievement, fairness, and the setting of goals had a positive effect on employee performance (Chen & Wei, 2020).

Rubin and Edwards (2018) proclaimed the performance appraisal is a search for more accurate and more cost-effective communication techniques for measuring job performance and job satisfaction. Farmer and Lundy (2017) asserted employee performance evaluation is a process of examining the contribution of personnel in achieving the assessed goals. Cogliano et al., (2020) stated the primary aim of performance feedback, which includes a personal dimension mainly oriented to employees, is to reshape behavior. Most organizations need to utilize performance evaluations more frequently because it can increase its effectiveness in managing employees. Matsuo (2015) added the performance appraisal helps employees to improve their performance by giving specific feedback about the need for development to help employees excel by giving positive reinforcement to motivate them. Low performance of employees may be a consequence of low levels of satisfaction with their salary (Ferinia, 2016). The consensus among researchers was highly motivated employees tend to be effective, produce high-quality outcomes, and work to do their best (Ferinia, 2016).

Most business organizations can achieve success through profitability and effectiveness of motivating employees (van de Heuvel et al., 2015). Ferinia (2016) asserted the growth of employee satisfaction and motivation reflects on the productivity growth and business results of the company. The owners of an organization cannot achieve their organizational objectives on their own because employees' performance has a significant effect on organization's performance (Ali & Faisal, 2020). Wilton (2016) argued emotional intelligence plays a critical role regarding organizational outcomes, such as job performance and job satisfaction, especially when the focus is on human interaction between employees. Working teams continuously cooperate to improve performance and access to a higher level of profiting (Du, et al., 2020). According to Osterman (2006), individual performance depends on motivation, whereas the performance of an organization is the sum of the individual performance of the employees.

Positive employee motivation and performance are basics which must be met for an organization to become leaders within their respective industries (Rueben & Edwards, 2018). Individual, structural, and macroeconomic productivity and performance include direct implications in the competitiveness of a firm and country (Lysova et al., 2015). The global competition and rapid technological change require organizations to make substantial changes to the way they manage their employees, making empowerment a popular idea in organizations (Ahlstrom et al., 2020). Sarma (2015) agreed managers who do not have enough time to control their employees because of the daily increase of competition in the present world implement the process of employee empowerment.

Employee Productivity

Productivity is a standard measure often used to assess organizational performance, and is defined by output, sales, profitability, work quality, and processes completed on schedule (Gosnell et al., 2020). Employees are major assets of any organization, and the active role they play towards achieving organizational objectives cannot be underestimated (Faridi & Baloch, 2019). As a result, equipping these unique assets through effective training becomes imperative in order to maximize their productivity. The connection between organizational commitment and employee productivity has the potential to affect overall organizational effectiveness (Bromley et al., 2015). To optimize human capital, leaders should understand how to motivate their employees to perform. Bromley et al. (2015) believed human resources management was not only an original factor in employee performance and well-being, but also career development and job satisfaction. Zhu et al. (2015) believed ethical leadership is the primary factor in employee job performance and retention. Factors like pay, leadership, environment, rewards, and recognition can also increase or decrease employee productivity.

Sun et al. (2014) believed an employee's perception of the organization depends on person-environment fit (PE fit). PE fit is the compatibility of similar characteristics between an individual and their work environment (Sun et al., 2014). PE fit determines how employees perceive organizational goals and influences employee behavior in the work environment (Sun et al., 2014). Many detriments can influence organizational commitment, but a lack of research on possible leadership strategies can adversely affect

employee productivity. Proper, and adequate use of behaviors could lead to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity (Massoudi et al., 2020). Leaders should know their employees and exercise leadership, which helps meet their needs and implements a strategy which can accurately measure their organizational commitment and productivity (Sun et al., 2014). Brandebo (2020) conducted a study which identified destructive leadership behaviors due to the lack of knowledge. The study concluded by addressing the lack of knowledge in effective leadership strategies which effected organizational commitment decreasing employee productivity.

Bryman and Bell (2015) defined employee productivity as employed workers' ability to meet or exceed agreed-upon job tasks with the provided set of tools, technologies, and procedures. Another primary organizational productivity indicator is absenteeism. Absenteeism is an employee's intentional or habitual absence from work (Mayfield et al., 2020). Some organizations utilize absenteeism as a means to measure productivity. Organizations' which utilize an assembly line stress employees' to be present to maximize productivity (Mayfield et al., 2020).

Sandhya and Suphey (2020) asserted there are a universal correlation between employee engagement and productivity. Ozyilmaz (2020) recommended the most effective way to promote a productive service climate in the organization is to hire employees with a record of job engagement. Mentari and Ratmawati (2020) stated organizational leaders hire employees who desire purpose, fulfillment, and the ability to advance, they simultaneously build engagement within the company. Employee engagement remains a foundational cornerstone which promotes productive service

climates and favorably influences the provision of service. Thomas et al. (2015)

conducted a study to scrutinize the influence employee engagement has on organizational

performance. The results indicated employees who engage tend to maintain increased

work quality and commit fewer errors, uphold a higher organizational commitment, are

more willing to go beyond their daily job description, and are more likely to stay with the

organization (Thomas et al., 2015). Engaged employees can complete a diverse range of

work assignments and are more likely to perform better in the workplace (Sekhar et al.,

2018). Employee engagement links to a variety of positive outcomes, but researchers

have given little attention to its antecedents concerning engagement. Keating and Heslin

(2015) suggested engaged employees perform vigorously, experience enhanced levels of

satisfaction in their workday, and absorb themselves mentally in their work. Sekhar et al.

(2018) asserted engaged employees demonstrate more energy because they are more

connected to their work. Employees who engage are more apt to step beyond the bounds

of their defined assignments and involve themselves in work, which causes them to

produce more than disengaged employees (Sekhar et al., 2018).

Additionally, engaged employees are likely to work more intensely for more

extended periods; therefore, engaged employees produce 15% more than those

employees who lack engagement (Gupta & Shukla, 2018). Employees such as these

become more than physically involved with their work; they remain cognitively alert,

attentive, and emotionally invested in their performance (Keating & Heslin, 2015).

Researchers indicated when comparing organizations in the same industry, those who

optimize engagement experience higher growth rates in earnings per share in comparison

to those organizations which do not take measures to enhance workplace engagement

(Lather & Jain, 2015). In this study, I addressed the gap in possible key determinants of

leadership strategies catalyzing employee productivity.

Management Support and Communication

Researchers define management as a process where individuals influence a group

of the workforce to achieve a corporate goal (Schwarz, 2017). Popli and Rizvi (2015)

examined the relationships between distributive justice and employee engagement.

Management must support frontline workers to ensure they understand the factors which

may lead to high levels of employee engagement (Schwarz, 2017). Employee

engagement lowers the employee turnover rate in most organizations (Goodall &

Pogrebna, 2015). When managing the workforce, it is necessary to improve and

implement changes when necessary, in the employee engagement process. Managers

realize they must determine the reasons or for a lack of employee engagement in the

workplace, which attributed to productivity (Choi et al., 2015). A leader should mobilize,

influence, train, and engage their employees to achieve their goals (Mikkelson et al.,

2015). Leadership strategies are essential in encouraging an innovative system in the

organization where there is a team environment (Mau, 2016). Effective management is a

higher-order, multidimensional construct consisting of self-awareness, the balance of

information processing, transparency, and internalized moral standards. Kriger and

Zhovtobryukh (2016) stated effective leadership encompasses the ability of a leader to

have employees work toward a common goal. A leader who is working toward the

success of organizational change needs to add to the value of organizational productivity (Mohamed et al., 2019).

The ability of management to communicate effectively creates a basis for employee engagement (Georgiades, 2015; Jeve et al., 2015). Jaupi and Llaci (2015) wrote a lack of, or poor, communication is one of the most common problems within an organization. The proper relationship between workers and leaders requires consistent and honest communication (Basbous & Malkawi, 2017). Jaupi and Llaci (2015) found the frontline and upper management of the organizations who communicate effectively strongly impact employee engagement. Georgiades (2015) noted the fundamental idea of internal communication is to improve productivity by changing the performance of all employees, including managers. Albrecht et al. (2015) examined the effect a manager's feedback and support have on engagement and communication. Transparent leaders build an environment of trust and loyalty among their employees (Nienaber et al., 2015). Albrecht et al. (2015) found continuous communication and exchange of ideas between employees and leadership enhance employee engagement with an organization and increases employee productivity. Active employee communication aids employees in understanding their role and influence in the workplace (Jaupi & Llaci, 2015). Frontline managers recognize poor communication is the most common problem in both small and large businesses (Georgiades, 2015). When employees are continuously informed about organizational activities, employees will feel valued and more involved with the job assignment, which will drive productivity (Basbous & Malkawi, 2017). When employees are well-informed with a clear set of goals, teams are more inclined to engage with each

other (Han et al., 2016; Jeve et al., 2015). The employees then remain engaged when they have all the tools to do their job, such as training and stakeholder development (Georgiades, 2015).

Academic scholars identified training and career development as another significant factor which could improve employee engagement since it helps the employees to concentrate on roles and responsibilities (Bearss et al., 2016). Their research showed a relationship between training and employee engagement. Ahmed et al., (2015) found training has a positive impact on individuals, leaders, and all industries in which employees engage. It required employees to modify their behavior and emotions to improve their abilities and competencies when adequately trained. Having more skills which are available through training contributes to employee involvement in the achievement of organizational goals (Ahmed et al., 2015). Ahmed et al. (2015) argued employee training could significantly enhance employee engagement. Leadership training adds to employee engagement and improves productivity within organizations (Ahmed et al., 2015). Organizational policies, procedures, and communication allow leaders to determine the length at which employees will engage in company activities and ultimately determine the level of overall productivity. Ahmed et al. (2015) conducted a study demonstrating why a two-way relationship is needed between the employer and its workforce. Devi (2009) asserted the importance of organizational policies and procedures which best support flexible work arrangements and assist in balancing employee work-life balances; organizations who have such provisions are more likely to have engaged employees (Cesário & Chambel, 2017).

Transition

Leadership strategies that enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity is a research topic discussed by leaders in the workplace. Past studies and academic literature contain background information regarding organizational commitment to increase productivity while scholars extended the research to understand the overall dynamics of effective leadership strategies. The objective of this qualitative single case study was to explore those strategies. In Section 1, I discussed leadership theories, styles (transactional and transformational), leadership and leader-employee relations, organizational commitment, three-component model, self-determination theory, and management support and communication. Based on the academic review of literature, leadership strategies leaders use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity was an appropriate research topic to explore. Some electric cooperative leaders may lack the leadership strategies needed in the workplace. By implementing positive leadership strategies, leaders may increase organizational commitment while increasing productivity. A transformational leader can change the way an employee behaves, thinks, and responds to challenges.

Within Section 2, I present and discuss the components in this single qualitative study. The selection of a single qualitative case study analyzes strategies electric cooperative managers use to increase employee productivity. The data collection technique advertises my intent to conduct ethical research and describe the process, ensuring validity and reliability. Section 3 contains a summary of findings, implications for social change, application to professional practice, recommendations for action and

future research, and a reflection on my doctorate experience at Walden University. In

conclusion, Section 3 includes an informative narrative of my single case study and the

existing outcomes.

Section 2: The Project

The information in Section 1 included a thorough background. I identified the conceptual framework, leadership theories, and styles (transformational leadership) surrounding my research topic of leadership strategies used to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. In Section 2, I present the research methodology of the study; my role as the researcher; the participants; the research method and design; population and sampling; ethical research considerations; data collection, organization, and analysis; reliability; and validity. Furthermore, Section 2 contains a discussion of the guidelines and retention of data required by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). It was my hope that electric cooperative leaders would find the results of this study beneficial by helping them select a leadership strategy that enhances employee engagement to increase productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership strategies that rural electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. The population for this study included a rural electric cooperative CEO and their subordinate department managers, which included a minimum of five individuals with offices located in rural Northwest Florida. The target population consisted of a single cooperative with proven strategies used to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. The implications for business change include the potential to encourage organizational commitment to increase productivity. The movement toward business change could promote better

leadership strategies that increase workplace engagement. It was my intention that the study bring about social change, improving employees' working conditions by promoting their worth, dignity, and development.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data analysis and collection (Goffnett et al., 2016). I identified the degree of sensitivity with the data that I collected, viewed, and analyzed. As the researcher, I listened conscientiously, attempted to ask the right questions, completed parallel tasks, examined the collected data, and showed dedication to the study. It was prudent that I safeguarded the participants' information, thus keeping it confidential; there was no prior association between the company, its members, and myself. I collected, interpreted, and synthesized research data from a group of managers to understand how and why distinct strategies enhanced organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity in an electric cooperative.

My interest and experience with leadership strategies increasing employee engagement to increase employee productivity came from previously working in the electric industry for 23 years and observing different managers using various motivational approaches with employees to achieve company goals. As a previous employee of an electric cooperative, I pondered how an electric cooperative leader approach impacts employees' organizational commitment to increase productivity. After receiving a master's in business management from Florida State University, I had an interest in researching the different strategies that electric cooperative managers use to

increase organizational commitment to increase productivity in the workplace. Watching

employees grow, guiding managers to build positive relationships, nurturing my personal

growth, and desiring to become an effective manager influenced my decision to pursue

my DBA focusing on leadership.

Throughout this study, I maintained the ethical standards of the Belmont Report

(U.S. Department of Human Services and Health [HHS], 1979) and the IRB (HHS,

1979). The Belmont Report (HHS, 1979) underlies the guidelines, ethical principles, and

application in which the researcher applies human subjects to a study. The three basic

ethical principles of research are (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice. I

adhered to the Belmont Report and the guidelines for conducting ethical research at

Walden University. The Belmont Report is the framework used by IRBs to assess

research regarding the ethical handling of human subjects (Miracle, 2016). This study

involved human participants; therefore, the Walden University IRB had to review my

research application prior to the collection of data and analysis.

As the researcher, I had a personal responsibility to the participants in my study. I

respected the confidentiality, ideas, and statements of the participants and accurately

reported the information that they provided. All participants reviewed and signed a

consent form to ensure that they understood the boundaries and practices, ethical

principles, and application of this qualitative study. This study was completely voluntary,

and each participant was given the opportunity to withdraw without penalty at any time.

To improve a study's reliability and validity, when using surveys, a researcher should use

appropriate questions that are not biased or leading (Sargeant, 2012). I reviewed all questions for clarity and used previously validated instruments.

I attempted to listen carefully to, record, and capture the participants' beliefs and opinions while mitigating any bias I had to conduct the interviews. By keeping a transparent and open mind and concentrating on the participants' management expertise, I did not allow personal biases or opinions the opportunity to be injected. I observed and decoded data, identified themes and patterns, and drew conclusions to mitigate biases.

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure the elimination of personal bias (Bengtsson, 2016), which can arise at any stage of the research process. Researchers' personal experiences, viewpoints, beliefs, or opinions will impact areas of the research process, such as data collection and analysis, if precautions are not taken (Quick & Hall, 2015). I was conscientious about each participant's time, secured a location to conduct the interviews in a neutral site, and asked for clarity on responses if I was unclear to alleviate my personal biases. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, we followed all CDC protocols to protect each other. To protect each participant, I conducted all interaction through Zoom. By listening to participants' responses, repeating the information back to them, and asking if my interpretation was correct, I improved accuracy and eliminated biases. In this study, my objective was to eliminate potential biases by understanding the research process and have an open mind without inserting my personal perspective.

Qualitative researchers use interview protocols to assist them in collecting data, which help minimize any personal bias and ensure consistencies in the data collected to

answer the research questions (Ranney et al., 2015). Using the interview protocol (see Appendix A), I asked the participants questions that aligned with the overarching research question. Each interview was conducted in the same manner to ensure that the interview protocol was followed. By asking open-ended questions during the interview, I generated in-depth feedback to achieve saturation. The participants and I did not have an existing relationship prior to conducting the study; this assisted with eliminating biases. Researchers identify biases, collect valuable data, and improve the reliability of a study by following sound interviewing protocols (Amankwaa, 2016).

Participants

Potential participants had to meet the following criteria for this study: (a) be in a management position at an electric cooperative, (b) use engagement practices, and (c) manage at least four subordinates in the cooperative. In qualitative studies, researchers might experience problems accessing participants, depending on the target population. When I communicated with the CEO of the cooperative, they provided the names of the managers within the organization, and contact information of the candidates for this study. Purposively sampling permitted me to have access to potential candidates who volunteered for this study. It is the researcher's role to select participants who are willing to participate (Jug & Vilar, 2015). I also sought permission to research the cooperative headquarters. To gain access to the participants who met the criteria of the study, I delivered a letter of agreement that described the study (Appendix B) to each participant. The letter included steps for communicating with the participants and answered any questions or concerns that the participants had about the study.

Building a working researcher-participant relationship is essential to successful qualitative research. I did not have any prior relationships with the participants of this study. Using the contact information provided by the cooperative, I contacted the participants in an email with information about the study. I gave the potential participants 5 days to respond to their invitation letter. Once the members agreed to partake in this study, I communicated consistently with the selected participants to establish a good working relationship. A researcher maintains integrity by representing correct positions and statements (Yin, 2011). I was honest and clear with the participants about my position, intentions, principles, and position. Once the members agreed to participate in the study, they reviewed and signed the consent forms. I communicated with the members through phone calls and emails. During the interview process, the nature of the questions, active listening to the participants, and attention to detail determine the quality of the data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

The qualitative research interview is arguably the most popular method of inquiry across the human and social sciences (Brinkman, 2016). To establish rapport and trust with the cooperative participants, I thoroughly conveyed the interview process, the purpose of the research study, and the value of the research findings via Zoom. To build rapport with each participant, I informed them about their protection and confidentiality, as stated in the consent form, and the benefits of the research findings for them and their organization.

Research Method and Design

The research method and design component are extensions of the nature of the study. Fusch and Ness (2015) asserted that selecting an appropriate research method aligning with the proposed research question is essential. There are three types of research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Gile et al, 2015). In this study, I used a qualitative research methodology with a single-case study design. Forber-Pratt (2015) asserted that researchers utilize qualitative methods to answer questions of what or how rather than to test hypotheses. The purpose of this study was to explore effective leadership strategies while enhancing organizational commitment to increase employee productivity and to add to existing academic literature.

Research Method

The selection of the research methodology and design for this study was derived from the conceptual business problem and associated research questions. A qualitative research method and single-case design used to explore the lived experiences of the participants revealed vital determinants of effective employee strategies necessary to enhance organizational commitment to increasing productivity. Coussement et al. (2017) explained that qualitative research involves open-ended questions requiring comprehensive data collection. This method and design were used for researching the problem statement. Researchers using the quantitative method test hypotheses and analyze statistical data (Willgens et al., 2016). A quantitative study's purpose is to emphasize the link between two variables or analyze statistical data (Raheim et al., 2016). Barnham (2015) formed inferences using statistical data and compared relationships

between variables following a cause-and-effect-type logic to test hypotheses. The qualitative approach is unlike the quantitative research method because it does not include themes or involve asking open-ended questions (Yin, 2015). The focus of my study was exploring leadership strategies that rural electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. A mixed-method methodology incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods (Willgens et al., 2016). Mixing methods strengthens behavioral studies through the descriptive value of social phenomena data sets. Lewis (2015) stated that using mixed methods can provide complementary interpretations or expand on a past theory. I did not measure statistical data, ask structured questions, or study how variables impact one another. Thus, the mixed method or quantitative approach would not have benefited this study. I wanted to identify and gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies that electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity.

I used a qualitative study research methodology to study strategies that electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. A qualitative method is a type of measurement that serves to identify new problems and explain why occurrences happen. Additionally, qualitative researchers are concerned with improving organizational development practices and performances through collaborative social inquiry (Gergen et al., 2015). Gergen et al. (2015) asserted that qualitative researchers could reveal causation through using the full description. I was seeking to define strategies. Thus, I used qualitative research methodology. A

qualitative, single, in-depth case study method of an exemplary organization is applied to better understand a business (Tate et al., 2017).

The purpose of this study was to examine strategies that electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. I created an in-depth understanding of the central research question. Dahl et al. (2016) maintained that qualitative research is appropriate for collecting in-depth knowledge of a topic. Bone et al. (2017) asserted that quantitative research methods tend to be positive approaches used to aggregate, measure, and analyze causal relationships between variables. Mixed methods studies combine qualitative and quantitative data collection in the same study. The premise of this study was to contribute to the perspective on leadership in electric cooperatives, determining how leadership styles are used to enhance the organizational commitment of employees, leading to increased productivity.

Research Design

This qualitative single case study's purpose was to explore and understand strategies used by electric cooperative managers to enhance employees' organizational commitment to improving productivity. A case study research design is suitable for examining a current and complex real-life phenomenon or bounded system and uses multiple data collection sources to develop a great depiction and analysis of the case (Yin, 2014). A qualitative case study research design is flexible compared to other qualitative designs. Bodoh et al. (2015) asserted that researchers use case studies to explore unique experiences. Case studies are useful for exhaustive and thorough descriptions of complex social phenomena such as those found in organizations.

Qualitative studies can take the form of (a) ethnography, (b) phenomenological study, (c) historic model, (d) narrative, and (e) case study.

The ethnographic qualitative design focuses on immersive data collection within a culture-sharing group over a time. Ethnographic researchers are interested in studying an entire group as its members form, share, and maintain a common culture (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The ethnographic research design was not suitable for this study because the study focused on a single electric cooperative and not its culture.

Phenomenology refers to understanding the lived or shared experiences of groups or individuals, and the researcher looks at large samples (Akar & Ahi, 2020). Amade-Escot and Bennour (2016) explained that a phenomenological design involves human experience, which researchers use to provide empirically driven information. A phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study because phenomenological design is geared toward managers of electric cooperatives only, and the study references their strategies for enhancing organizational commitment to increasing productivity in the electric industry and not the lived experiences of people. Yin (2014) asserted that case studies give the researcher a way to explore smaller groups using multiple approaches that rely on multiple sources. Yin reported that case study researchers investigate a phenomenon and triangulate the evidence from multiple data sources. In turn, this case study could be either multiple case or single case.

Single case qualitative designs must be bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period (Stake, 1995). Yin (2014) stated that case studies are valuable for

inspiring new ideas and explaining new theory development, especially for new theory

extension or new theory generation. This study was about the electric cooperative

managers' motivational strategies for enhancing organizational commitment to increasing

productivity. I conducted a single case study because of its convenience in gaining

concrete, contextual, in-depth knowledge about the specific real-world subject. The idea

of the study was to explore the evidence presented through participants' interviews and

corporate information signaling the completion of the study. The results of the study may

also assist in adding to the limited knowledge of motivational strategies and techniques

that management uses for enhancing employees' organizational commitment to

increasing productivity. The intent was for this single case study to increase

understanding of social phenomenality surrounding the electric cooperative industry and

the precise population studied. The name *case study* draws attention to the question of

what is learned about a single case (Stake, 1995).

Population and Sampling

Sampling in a qualitative study includes using a small number of participants or

locations to collect information to generalize the findings to a limited geographic location

(Silverman, 2015). Sampling involves selecting a transparent case, which allows a

researcher to learn about a phenomenon. The selection of participants is based on their

ability to provide accurate and reliable information concerning the phenomenon (Li &

Titsworth, 2015). Selecting a suitable number of participants depends on the scope of the

research topic and volume of data collected (Yin, 2015). The technique that I used to

select the participants was a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is used to identify

or select participants who will meet the study's qualifications to begin conducting the research (Michel & Tews, 2016). Those who participated in this study had to meet recommended qualifications to participate. An electric cooperative leader's industry knowledge and field expertise about leadership strategies enhancing organizational commitment to increase productivity addressed this study's overarching research question.

The components of a sampling plan include the target population, parameters of interest, sample frame, sample method, and sample size. The target population for the study consisted of senior management in the electric cooperative industry located in Northwest Florida, who have been in leadership for a minimum of 5 years. Liu et al. (2013) asserted researchers must outline criteria for selecting study participants. I selected the participants for this study based on being an electric cooperative manager with a minimum of 5 years' experience. These participants did not receive any compensation for participating in this study. Researchers have utilized case studies to explore and conduct comprehensive analyses of experiences, which promotes a better understanding of real-world contexts. Case study researchers have interviewed a small select group to obtain a more in-depth understanding of an issue (Maxwell, 2016). One of the goals for this research was to accurately identify management strategies which could increase organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity. Researchers utilize case studies to focus on a specific issue to understand the phenomenon within a situation.

I sought an electric cooperative in Northwest Florida for this study. The intent was to select an organization that represents the average electric cooperative allowing leaders of other electric cooperatives to relate. I first sought a pool of possible organizations and spoke to the CEO of each to gauge their interest and narrowed my search based on our conversation about leadership strategies. I selected 5 electric cooperative leaders, a small sample size, to participate in the study. Clapton-Capto et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative case study using five participants and used semistructured interviews to achieve data saturation. I used semistructured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of how leadership strategies enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. Selecting an adequate number of participants is important, and not selecting enough participants limits depth, while too many participants produce unnecessary amounts of data (Yin, 2015). A researcher can achieve data saturation from a small sample size (Yin, 2015). Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain enough data to sufficiently describe the phenomenon of interest and address the research questions. The goal of qualitative researchers should be the attainment of saturation. Saturation occurs when adding more participants to the study does not result in additional perspectives or information.

The target population for this study was leaders in the electric industry. I conducted member-checking after I completed the data analysis through semistructured interviews 10 days after the interview to verify interpretations and accuracy of participant responses. I developed themes by identifying the common ties between the participants responses, which will follow the member-checking process. Hamilton (2020) declared

member-checking is the method of examining the credibility of research findings. Natow (2019) stated triangulation is the process of examining multiple data sources expanding and the possibility to explore different data collection methods. I used triangulation to combine and compare common themes developed through the data collection process using semistructured interviews, documents, and observation.

Ethical Research

As the researcher, ensuring the protection of each participant and following proper protocols for ethics was important in conducting my research. The informed consent form was written in language easily understood by the subjects, it minimized the possibility of coercion or undue influence, and the subject was given sufficient time to consider participation. However, informed consent is not merely a form that is signed, but is a process in which the subject has an understanding of the research and its risks, and it is tightly described in ethical codes and regulations for human subject research. I collected data for this study under the proposed study by the Walden University IRB (04-07-21-0631232). The board works to ensure the study's methods comply with all ethical standards regarding participants (HSH, 1979). The consent form must be executed by participants before the interviewing process can occur (Issac & Raza, 2018). I had the participants read, acknowledged understanding, and accepted the research protocols outlined in the consent form. Yin (2015) acknowledged the consent form contains clear expectations of the research participants can properly understand. I had all participants execute a consent form to be part of this study. I gave the participants one week to review the information in the consent form, such as the intent of the research and their rights by

executing the consent form. All participants had the right to withdraw should they be uncomfortable. The information given to participants explained their rights to withdraw from the study at any time by contacting me via email, text, or phone. Bengtsson (2016) stated researchers must guarantee research confidentiality and inform participants participation is voluntary. Participants were provided a written statement agreeing to the research guidelines per Walden's IRB guidelines. I kept high ethical standards with this study, so I did not give any participants an incentive to participate.

There are many ethical considerations to consider when researching and securing confidentiality information while respecting the participant's privacy. The prevailing ethical standards in contemporary research suggest concise and fair treatment of research participants' data (Thomas & Rowland, 2014). Bengtsson (2016) stated by following the code of ethics and ensuring participant confidentiality, helps researchers maintain the quality of the research by improving validity. Walden University requires data collect to remain in a secure location for a minimum of 5 years to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participant data. Thomas (2016) explained ethical confidentiality is the primary role of the researcher. I identified the participants confidentially and identified participants using labels such as P1 and P2. Smollan (2015) declared by labeling the identity of the participants, and the data is an adequate safeguard. I notified participants and explained research procedures, allocation of time, and confidentiality clause.

I followed the code of ethics by ensuring the confidentiality of participant data such as the company or leaders' name identifying the business or individual to ensure

confidentiality as suggested by (Smollan, 2015). Ramney et al. (2015) stated the code of

ethics is not only applicable to researcher conduct, but to the research process such as

participant selection, forms of data, data collection, and research guidelines. All the data I

collected was used on this case study and nothing else. All data will remain in my

possession in a locked safe, and also on a secure, password-protected flash drive for 5

years to protect all the rights of the participants. The data will be destroyed after the 5

years to ensure my ethical obligation to the participants and the study. Once my standards

were approved, I included my approval number from Walden IRB to conduct this study.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument because I actively interacted with

participants in the environment and conveyed their experiences of the observed

phenomena. When researchers find themselves as the primary data collection tool, they

often use interviews with general information (Thomas, 2015). By asking open-ended

questions, researchers can position participants to possess the opportunity to provide

comprehensive answers.

I collected data from the participants utilizing the guidelines from the Center for

Disease Control and Prevention. I asked open-ended questions to collect the necessary

data regarding the research problem using zoom. Dube et al. (2014) asserted researchers

who conduct qualitative studies need to limit the interview to less than 1 hour when

possible, to make sure the participant stays engaged. I kept the interviews under 45

minutes. I allowed each participant to stay engaged and share their strategies to enhance

organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity. The use of general

open-ended questions allows the researcher to collect information on increasing

employee engagement in an unbiased manner (Silverman, 2015). The interview protocol

(see Appendix A) with the participants has six steps: (a) an opening statement, (b)

semistructured interview questioning, (c) probing questions, (d) participants verifying

themes noted during the interview, (e) corrections to any themes noted by the

participants, and (f) a recording of the notes the researcher dictates. Park and Park (2016)

asserted the overall interview protocol contains interview questions designed to answer

the researcher's research question. By following an interview protocol (see Appendix A),

researchers can ask participants questions addressing the research question and other data

sources relating to the research topic (Smith et al., 2020).

Using the documentation method, I received archival documents from the

company to assist with this study. Yin (2015) proclaimed by reviewing documents,

researchers can acquire more information relevant to the research topic and determine

common themes from the information. Qualitative researchers use documents to assist

with the interviews to make sure the phenomenon is understood (Nicolaides, 2016). As

the researcher, I am encouraged the data I collected aligned with the overarching research

question for the study: What strategies do rural electric cooperative managers in

Northwest Florida use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee

productivity?

Boies et al. (2015) stated as the interviewer, establishing a positive relationship

and gaining the trust of the participants is important to the study. Researchers use

member-checking to give participants the ability to validate the researcher's interpretation

of the interview. Busetto et al. (2020) stated through member-checking, the researcher gains the participant's validation, which increases the trustworthiness and credibility of findings. By member-checking, I made sure there were no gaps left open, and the study is better understood. After I transcribed the open-ended interviews, I sent all participants via email my analysis and their information about his or her specific interview to make sure I thoroughly understood their responses. Researchers should always allow participants the opportunity to verify and confirm the interpretation of their responses (Amankwaa, 2016). By using member-checking, the credibility and trustworthiness of the study will increase (Bassurto & Speer, 2012).

Data Collection Technique

Brinkmann (2014) asserted when conducting survey research interviewing, researchers pose semistructured questions that are open to qualitative procedures. In a semistructured interview, the researcher allows room for the respondent's more spontaneous descriptions and narratives (Brinkmann, 2014). I followed the interview protocol outlined to conduct semistructured interviews for this study via zoom. I took notes during this process to make sure I was clear and concise with recording their responses. Semistructured interviews are useful for uncovering factual data about topics associated with understanding the research questions of the study while asking probing questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As a researcher, I listened to the participants, made sure the questions I asked were relevant, and collected their data accordingly.

The advantage of using interviews was they help gain insight and a perspective of the study. The interview process has a better response rate than mailed questions and

allows people who don't understand the question the opportunity to seek clarification. Another advantage is the interviewer can judge the non-verbal behavior of the respondent. Making direct observations of simplistic phenomena can be a very quick and effective way of collecting data with minimal intrusion. A disadvantage of this process is participants become vulnerable to biases within the interview. Prior to Covid-19, conducting interview studies could be seen as time consuming and costly as it related to travel. Another disadvantage is interview studies provide less anonymity, which is a concern for some respondents. I made sure all interviews were planned around the participants' schedules and conducted the interviews at a location comfortable for them. The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of all participants. I utilize zoom to assist me in the interview process. I scheduled the semistructured interviews for less than 45 minutes and none lasting over 1 hour. Klenke (2016) claimed interviews are the most popular method of collecting data for qualitative research. Cairney and St. Denny (2015) asserted utilizing interviews allows the researcher to gather the information they cannot collect through observation. After I conducted the semistructured, zoom interviews, the participants were able to share any corporate documents which may further enhance my research. As with interviews, relevant documents and direct observations are also helpful in a study (Yin, 2013).

During case study research, data collection could occur using multiple sources (Yin, 2009). Resources such as interviews, documentation, archival records, direct observation, participant observation (i.e., site visits), and physical artifacts are useful for collecting data (Yin, 2011). I utilized cooperative documents including policies,

memorandums, monthly magazine, and reports the participants shared during the process. By analyzing the consistencies of concepts uncovered in the interviews and the documentation provided, I obtained insight into practical strategies for enhancing organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity. Document analysis is more efficient and less time-consuming than other research methods. (Bowen, 2009).

Document analysis also assists the researcher in responding to the concerns related to reflection (awareness), or the lack of it, which is essential in other qualitative research methods (Bowen, 2009). A noted disadvantage of review could be the documents do not provide adequate information to answer the research question (Bowen, 2009). I saved all the completed interviews, which was transcribed in a password-protected Microsoft Word file.

Qualitative research requires an unparalleled degree of immersion by the researcher as the instrument of data collection (Padgett, 2016). The researcher must be a sensitive instrument of inquiry capable of flexibility in writing a qualitative study. Padgett (2016) asserted the dynamic tension between flexibility and serendipity on the one hand and rigor on the other makes qualitative case studies exciting and challenging. A pilot test is not a requirement for a case study when the researchers probe for additional information during the interview process, which may offer the same results. Instead of conducting a pilot test as the research suggests for this study, I asked probing questions utilizing member-checking follow-up interviews. Asking probing questions and conducting member-checking using a small number of interviews are appropriate when the researcher asks direct research questions to resolve problems. Thomas (2017) claimed

the use of *member-checks* improves the credibility of qualitative research (Thomas, 2017). Member-checking, also known as participant or respondent validation, is a technique for exploring the credibility of results (Birt et al., 2016). By following up and using member-checking interviews, I was able to transmit the credibility and integrity of the information, which I relied on the participants authenticating the accuracy of the data and interpretations. Member-checking happened within 10 days after the interview via email to each participant. Published literature mentioning member-checks will be reviewed to identify the purposes and procedures for seeking feedback from research participants as well as outcomes reported from member-checks (Thomas, 2016). Data or results were returned to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences.

Member-checking is often mentioned as one in a list of validation techniques. Birt et al. (2016) asserted member-checking addresses the co-constructed nature of knowledge by providing participants with the opportunity to engage with, and add to, interview and interpreted data several months after their semistructured interview. The member-checking process helps the researcher verify the participants' information without including the researcher's personal biases. Conducting member-checking interviews developed through the application of evidence-based interview practices increase representation and legitimation of data. To make sure the information the participants provided was accurate, I clarified their responses, restated, and questioned the members throughout the semistructured interview. I asked probing questions during the interviews until I reached data saturation. The results should reflect the spectrum of the participants'

perspectives, which can be achieved through member-checking, sending preliminary findings to participants for feedback and comment, investigator triangulation involving multiple researchers in the analysis, and reflexivity acknowledging and addressing the researchers' potential biases which may have influenced decisions in the study (Tong & Dew, 2016). After I reached saturation, I organized all the data, analyzed it, and included any changes requested by the members.

Data Organization Technique

As I collect data, I must realize the significance of management and secure the stored data. Yin (2018) asserted the researcher must maintain access to the collected data, the research materials, and the data analyzed during the interviews to protect the integrity of the data. During the data collection process, the researcher should record their interpretations of the data. A core function of research is data process, data analysis, and data collection (Won Gyoung, 2017). My interpretations of the data collected will be recorded utilizing reflective journaling. Researchers use reflective journals to improve the reliability and validity of the data (Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015).

As the researcher, I identified concepts through reflective journaling. I organized the data utilizing NVivo 12 and within documented folders in Microsoft Word and Excel. All interviews were recorded, saved, and transcribed to ensure I accurately account for the data collected. As the participants and I interacted, I utilized a journal to collect my thoughts to develop ideas and analyze the data later.

Reflective learning through journaling can lead to critical thinking during data analysis (Bahmani, 2016). I created a log to keep track of each participants' responses

during the zoom interview, member-checking follow-up interviews, and my reflective notes as part of the research. The importance of noting the date, time, and other applicable information is crucial during semistructured interviews. I developed specific codes and themes during the data gathering of each participant to develop the themes. The intent was to create a database for all the data, codes, and themes within the NVivo12 software. All audio recordings were entered in the NVivo12 by date and time for easy access.

Arnold et al. (2016) used the comparison technique using archival documents and transcripts to explore transformational leadership. I reviewed, identified, and documented commonalities during my data analysis of corporate documents such as the employee handbook. I established a filing system for the documents outlining and combining common document themes.

Qualitative researchers use pseudonyms to protect the privacy of participants while enriching the information by adding quotes and examples to their study results from each of the participants (Goldberg & Allen, 2015). I utilized P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 to protect the names of the participants and D1, D2, D3 and so forth to protect the documents I used. Marshall and Rossman (2016) encouraged researchers to choose a pseudonym for participants and the organization to protect the privacy of the individuals and the organization. The participants' privacy was paramount. I stored all consent forms, confidentiality agreements, and research notes on a password-protected USB drive within a gun safe in my parents' home for 5 years after completing the research study. Carmichael and Cunningham (2017) noted the process of taking data from the interviews

and coding in segments could result in explanations and assertions of the data analyzed. As I sent and received emails from the participants and the organization, I used a password-protected USB drive to secure the data and secure it within a fireproof safe within my parent's home. At the end of 5 years, I will destroy all research records.

Data Analysis

I utilized Yin's 5-step approach to complete the data analysis research process. Saldana (2015) asserted the data analysis process involved exploratory methods in which researchers collect, label, code, examine, and categorize participant information. By choosing Yin's 5-step approach, I collected data, grouping the data codes and themes, subsequently assessing those themes, and develop conclusions. Yin's process has the following 5-steps: (1) compiling the data, (2) disassembling the data, (3) reassembling the data, (4) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (5) concluding the data. In step one, I compiled the data to develop groupings. For Step 2, I disassemble the data to reduce and eliminate invariant themes of the phenomenon. In Step 3, I reassembled the data and cluster core themes. For Step 4, I checked for patterns against the zoom interview transcripts, reflective journaling, and documents to interpret the meaning of the data. Finally, in Step 5, I summarized the data into individual structural descriptions of the experiences.

Yin (2015) stated by analyzing data, the research will include logical models, explanation building, or pattern matching. I evaluated the data by collecting my participants' information, developed themes, and correlated sources to recognize how leadership strategies enhance organizational commitment to increasing employee

productivity in the electric cooperative industry. According to Bengtson (2016), researchers must first analyze the information obtained in the data collection process to understand the meaning of data. I met this standard by analyzing transcripts from recorded interviews. I utilized the NVivo12 software to analyze data, codes, and themes from my research to triangulate each data source. I reviewed the participants' interview data and made necessary corrections where needed. I used the digital recordings to validate and decipher the participants' responses to make sure I understood their responses. I uploaded all-digital recordings through a dictation program and manually transcribed the data to make sure it was accurate. Lastly, I entered the information into Microsoft Word and triangulated the data by identifying the key themes from each source. According to Yin (2015), researchers utilize transcription to interpret and identify similar themes between data sources. I listened and reviewed the participants' interview data to seek common themes. Researchers improve the accuracy of deciphering participant responses by using digital recording devices (Ranney et al., 2015). I requested company documents and examined the information provided to identify common themes. As emerging themes developed, I compared information from all data sources until no new themes emerged.

According to Birt et al. (2016), member-checking as a participant validation or technique measures the trustworthiness and credibility of the study findings. I allowed participants the opportunity to verify the interpreted responses and provided feedback to ensure the information was correct. Another data collection technique I used was to review documents and observations, which included reflective journaling and field notes.

Researchers use reflective journaling during observations to maintain a comprehensive record of ideas and behaviors (Amankwaa, 2016). I examined company documents which assisted in identifying common themes. These documents were compared with other data sources to help identify and develop emerging themes. I consistently reviewed data and worked to identify keywords, patterns, or similarities in data sources. Quick and Hall (2015) asserted the data collection and analysis process is continued until no new information emerges. In efforts to grasp the completeness of the phenomenon, the researcher must apply the processes necessary to extract the data (Lewis, 2015). Hennink et al. (2017) asserted data saturation is reached by comparing data continuously. When my research became repetitive, and no new themes were presented, I achieved saturation.

By using the coding method, I categorized the data analysis. Bengtsson (2016) stated organizing data through the research process is beneficial to researchers making the process of coding and categorizing information more consistent. Soane et al. (2015) utilized coding in transformational leadership and performance study and coded two leadership constructs by reading and reviewing data. I reviewed data and sought patterns, keywords, or common themes in the data sources. Coding is an application of identifying common patterns and establishing a company or participant privacy (AlHussami et al., 2017). To examine coded data and sort the different themes, I utilized NVivo12. NVivo12 has a sorting function which is used to organize data in a spreadsheet (Smith et al., 2018).

Joslin and Mueller (2016) confirmed there are four methods researchers can use to perform data analysis: (a) triangulation, (b) methodological triangulation, (c) theory

triangulation, and (d) investigator triangulation. I am utilized methodological

triangulation to perform the data analysis in my research. The methodological

triangulation approach involves utilizing multiple data collection techniques (Franco &

Matos, 2015). These included semistructured interviews, observations, documents, and

questionnaires. Franco and Matos (2015) asserted researchers can acquire in-depth data

from participant lived experiences, establish themes, and cultivate a reflective journal of

the workplace environment and employee behavior during interviews.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

It is imperative researchers properly document data collection procedures to

strengthen the reliability of a qualitative study. Kihn and Ihantola (2015) asserted the

reliability is contingent on the results of the study and how it aligns with the data the

researcher collects. Amankwaa (2016) states the reliability of research is contingent on

the relatedness between data sources yielding the same results. To avoid the pitfalls of

leading the participant, I asked open-ended questions during a semistructured interview

process. Researchers improve dependability by reducing personal bias and ensuring the

accuracy of participant data interpretations (Bengtsson, 2016). I transcribed information

gathered during participant interviews, maintained accurate records, conducted member-

checking, and used triangulation to compare data sources to ensure I reached saturation.

Pashaki et al. (2015) utilized member-checking to ensure the interpretation of the data

collected reflects the phenomenon. According to Morse (2019), the dependability of a

qualitative case study's findings increases when researchers use member checking and

triangulation. Researchers have indicated there is a vast array of data quality dimensions. Yazan (2015) asserted relevant data dimensions include succinct and reliable representations, interpretability, accurateness, objectivity, reputation, ease of understanding, believability, and relevancy.

Bengtsson (2016) explained dependability, like reliability, reflects the stability of data change over time. I utilized the data source triangulation method introduced by Stake to increase the dependability in my qualitative case study. Stake's four strategies are data source, investigator, theory, and methodology triangulation (Yazan, 2015). To determine dependability, researchers must show or establish consistency with the research (Amankwaa, 2016). The concepts of reliability and dependability determine the trustworthiness of a study (Bengtsson, 2016).

Validity

Researchers validate the quality and accuracy of a study by the following factors: (a) credibility, (b) confirmability, and (c) transferability (Lub, 2015). Joslin and Mueller (2016) asserted, in a qualitative study, using triangulation to compare multiple sources of data, identifying common themes, and member-checking improves research credibility. Lub (2015) proclaimed validity aims to sensitize a reader's own paradigmatic assumptions about evaluation research and the application of qualitative information within the evaluations.

Credibility is vital to qualitative research (Baskarada, 2014). Simpson and Quigley (2016) explained a researcher uses credibility to evaluate if there is a connection to the originating data source and the researcher's interpretation. Credibility ensures the

authenticity of the researcher's findings from the perception of the participants (Yin, 2015). I allowed the participants to review the data for accuracy using member- checking, which reinforced accountability throughout the research process. Gordon and Gordon (2016) asserted participants add to the credibility of a study by reviewing the data, correcting, and adjust the researcher's interpretation. Liao and Hitchcock (2018) added accuracy and accountability attributes to the creditability of the research.

I utilized methodological triangulation to help ensure this study was credible. Triangulation is a method used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings. Credibility refers to the trustworthiness and how believable a study is; validity is concerned with the extent to which a study accurately reflects or evaluates the concept of ideas investigated. Triangulation allows the researcher to combine theories and methods, or observers can help ensure which fundamental biases arise from the use of a single method. I reviewed the transcripts, identify similar themes, and crosscheck data sources to make sure no other themes emerge. Triangulation can enrich research as it offers a variety of datasets to explain different aspects of a phenomenon of interest (Noble & Heale, 2019).

Transferability (external validity) is not whether the study includes a representative sample, but instead, how well the study made it possible for another researcher to decide if similar methods could succeed in their situation through a thorough understanding of how it occurred in the context of the original research (Yazan, 2015). Qualitative researchers gain transferability through in-depth examinations and documentation, such as note-taking, member-checking, and digital recordings (Palinkas

et al., 2015). I included detailed descriptions in my findings to enable readers to focus on the potential transferability appropriateness. Salmona et al. (2015) stated, the alignment of the processes used for the research allows the reader to follow each step in the study.

Confirmability refers to the impartiality and correctness of the information (Simpson & Quigley, 2016). I documented all procedures in this study to ensure confirmability. Amankwaa (2016) asserted, reporting accurate data, verifying interpretations, and approving modifications help researchers achieve confirmability by improving the trustworthiness of the study concluded. I had the participants verify the transcripts and confirm the accuracy of the data interpretations from the interviews. The updated transcripts, based on the participant's feedback, increased the correctness and credibility of their feedback. Member-checking allows participants to verify and modify researcher interpretations for accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). I used member-checking in this study to ensure confirmability.

Data saturation is a concept which is synonymous with qualitative research methodology. Ranney et al. (2015) stated saturation is the comparison of data collection sources producing redundant information until no new information emerges. Data saturation is an essential methodological concept for qualitative research (Yin, 2014). The sample size should be large enough, where the researcher can attain repetitive responses (Yin, 2014). Data collection should cease when the researcher is confident there are no new themes (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). I used data saturation by analyzing the participants' responses until no new information or themes developed.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I described and quantified the purpose of this single case qualitative study, my role as the researcher, and the criteria for recruiting each research participant. I have also outlined how data collection will take place and the inclusion of an ethical protocol. I explored the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, technique and analysis, and reliability and validity while researching this qualitative single case study. I also explain how I obtained access to the study participants in my research. Section 2 examined the ways I identified the study topic by utilizing the qualitative method of research and a single case study design. Each element of the research process parallels the qualitative case study's overarching research question: What are the strategies electric cooperative managers utilize to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity? Section 2 describes the justification used on the sample population. I explained data collection techniques and the organization process, documents, participant interviews, triangulation of the data, the software, and the method of analyzing the data expressed. Participants in my study had a minimum of 5 years of experience as a manager and had experience in enhancing organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity in the electric industry. Section 3 reflects a review of the study's purpose and an accurate presentation of the findings. Additionally, Section 3 includes the (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations to advance research, (e) reflections, and (f) relevance of the findings.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. I captured data from five electric cooperative managers who had worked in their position for a minimum of 5 years by conducting semistructured Zoom interviews, journaling observations, and reviewing company documents. The participants answered eight open-ended questions regarding the leadership strategies used in the workplace. I used methodological triangulation to compare the different data sources. The leadership strategies outlined by participants aligned with Bass's (1985) transformational theory used for the conceptual framework. Section 3 includes the following: (a) presentation of the findings, (b) applications to professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for action and further study, (e) reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

In this qualitative single case study, I intended to answer the overarching research question: What strategies do electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity? To accurately answer the central research question of this study, I conducted Zoom interviews with five electric cooperative managers in a rural electric cooperative located in Northwest Florida. The four themes that appeared from the data were (a) teamwork using effective communication, (b) encouragement, (c) lead by example, and (d) rewards.

I used a process of collecting and analyzing data that had five steps, as indicated by Yin (2015): (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding. Each participant answered the same eight questions. I asked follow-up questions as necessary, compiled a verbatim transcript of each participant's responses, reviewed documents that the participants provided, and completed member-checking to ensure validity and data saturation.

I imported all data, rearranged the data based on similar content, and identified four common themes answering the overarching research question. The themes aligned with Bass's transformational leadership theory. Electric cooperative leaders use teamwork through effective communication, encouragement, leading by example, and rewards as positive leadership strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity.

I attained data saturation at the point that no new themes surfaced from the semistructured Zoom interviews, transcripts, follow-up questions, company documents, and journaled observations. Upon finishing the data collection process, I coded the participants using a letter and number system. I chose the letter "P" to represent each participant and paired the letter with a chronological numbering system to ensure that each participant's identity was not jeopardized. The managers interviewed were given the following labels: P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5. I collected numerous documents, each of which I labeled with the letter "D" to represent the document, paired with a chronological numbering system, to ensure that the documents were not compromised. The documents were labeled as follows: D1, D2, D3, and so forth. I recorded and interpreted the data

using a thematic approach. Nowell et al. (2017) identified similarities in data sources by using a thematic approach. The following themes emerged under transformational leadership: (a) teamwork using effective communication, (b) encouragement, (c) lead by example, and (d) rewards.

Theme 1: Teamwork Using Effective Communication

Internal communication is helpful in building a culture of transparency between management and employees and assists leaders in engaging employees in the organization's priorities (Mishra et al., 2014). Business leaders should understand the need to communicate with employees in the organization using several different platforms. Leaders being open and honest with their team tends to increase responsive leadership communication, cultivating a positive emotional culture in the organization (Men & Yue, 2019). Gong et al. (2020) explained that leaders should understand the importance of communication with employees to comprehend the emotional connection that it has to customer loyalty. For leaders to establish and show value in the employee-employer relationship, it is critical that communication lines are open, allowing teamwork to increase productivity (Pentland & Haerem, 2015).

All participants discussed the utmost importance of communication being open between managers and employees. In Interview Question 1, I examined the strategies used to improve organizational commitment. P1explained, "They feel constant effective communication is the most important factor in having employees committed to the organization as it relates to productivity." P1 used the example of morning tailgate sessions as a way of communicating with their employees and provided D1 as evidence

that the meeting occurred. The sign-in sheet was written documentation that each employee understood the day's work and the safety protocols. P4 suggested, "They needed to speak to all employees daily to have effective communication." They did this by going by each employee's desk and engaging in small talk. They provided me D2 as the outline from the conversation with each employee. I paraphrased some of our conversation to make sure that I understood P4's process. P5 revealed, "Effective communication allows employees to know what to do when a problem arises." P5 wanted all of their employees to come to them if any situation was to arise that might need attention. They provided D3 as documentation showing where they corrected a misread of an electric meter. P5 would then give D3 back to the employee for follow-up. P1, P4, and P5 all believed that various methods are effective, but they agreed that face-to-face communication was the most effective.

P3 stated, "If you can improve understanding and communication the leader-employee relationship increases organizational commitment together." P3 provided me D4 and discussed how they had regular meetings to review each policy. D4 was the policy manual; it gave me a better understanding of how the organization was governed. P3 felt that the policy manual bridged the gap between management and employees, especially with sensitive topics. P3 and I role-played a scenario to enable me to better understand the process. We role-played a scenario about the dress code and used the policy manual as a guide to better understand what was acceptable. A dress code policy excerpt explained that an employee must display a well-groomed personal appearance that creates a favorable impression while reflecting personal and organizational pride. P3

explained, "Casual dress codes were supposed to make the work environment more comfortable and less restrictive. As a result, many people experience dress-down confusion." P3 revealed,

> Our policy is reviewed every other year by a committee that is cross departmentalized and made up of managers and regular employees. The committee submits changes to the CEO for board approval. The committee looks at the latest trends and OSHA requirements trying to give some flexibility; our employees are happier and tend to be more productive.

> P2 added, "By establishing and defining performance goals, we can communicate expectations to employees on a regular basis making the team stronger." The performance goals measured how the employees met the service expectations of its membership. The goals were documented through customer surveys. The surveys were completed by a customer service representative after each service order was completed. The surveys tracked items such as complaints, the speed with which the request was completed, the friendliness of the employee, whether the cooperative met the customer's expectation, and what the cooperative could do better to serve their needs. P2 provided D5 outlining corporate goals and how the employee was performing. D5 was a simple Excel matrix that tracked surveyed items. P2 followed up with D6, a graph outlining areas that the employee met and those needing improvement individually and as a department. All participants were given the opportunity to confirm the need for communication. The participants shared the various means they used to communicate, such as face-to-face communication, email, the policy manual, memos, a daily safety log,

and reports. Review of the documents supplied by each participant supported the theme of teamwork using effective communication.

The success of an organization depends on a leader's capability of not only determining the factors leading to a successful team, but also applying transformational leadership practices to sustain an overall successful organization (Shi & Zainal, 2021). Transformational leadership theory postulates a range of follower attitudes and performance outcomes explained by a leader's ability to influence followers' values to support organizational change and work as a team (Groves, 2020). Corcoles et al.'s (2018) research indicated that leaders showing individualized consideration increases followers' role clarity while developing a trusting relationship with them. Individualized consideration involves leaders mentoring employees, coaching, and providing individual support within the team.

During the formulation of this theme, the cooperative managers encouraged teamwork by making sure that they effectively communicated with their subordinates. They encouraged a top-level-down approach with weekly meetings and an internal metric system for all employees to work toward as a team. The metric system is based on safety, member experience, outreach to the community, reliability, and economic viability. All participants stated that they routinely discussed with their employees how they impacted each of these metrics in efforts to build a stronger team. P2 stated,

> The CEO routinely talks to the management team and reports the success of the
> organization through a monthly magazine. This allows the employees to witness
> first-hand the management team cares and are engaged to increase organizational

commitment. Additionally, the management team has started utilizing Microsoft

Teams as a unified communication and collaboration platform that combines

persistent workplace interaction. I have taken this same approach and developed

a Microsoft Team for my department to keep all employees engaged and to track

productivity.

P2 supplied a copy of D7 outlining the message from the CEO and D8 from a

manager's meeting that conveyed how the cooperative was improving service, how much

money was spent, and what departments were involved. I was also given D8 from P2's

department outlining the task that each employee was responsible for and corresponding

timeframe when it was to be completed. P2 mentioned that they were consistently

revising D8 tasks to stay updated, and they used it regularly to communicate because

employees were in different offices. P1 stated, "I believe in a hands-on approach." They

mentioned meeting weekly with their subordinates to make sure that they knew the tasks

at hand and how those needed to be completed. They provided D9, which was a copy of

tasks in Microsoft Teams, with each employee's name beside the task and an estimated

time of completion. D9 is updated every week, and new tasks are added or reassigned. I

had a follow-up question about how the work was divided among the employees. P1

mentioned that workload was determined by skill and experience. P5 stated, "I meet with

my employees monthly and make notes that I use during our employee evaluation

process. Furthermore, I believe in positive reinforcement during these sessions to award

my team for a job well-done." They provided me with D10 as documentation. D10

outlined items completed, attendance irregularities, and perceived progress. I asked,

"How much weight do these monthly reports have on their evaluation?" P5 stated, "They were heavily weighted because it was a snapshot in time as it relates to the employee's progress." P5 showed me D11, which was a gift card that allowed an employee to receive one free lunch. D11 was used as positive reinforcement when P2 felt that the employee was going beyond the call of duty. These findings were consistent with the literature. Companies that have a positive work environment should have an easier time encouraging organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. P3 stated, "Working with employees each day is key, letting them know you are on their team. It is crucial they know I am here to help. We are a family." P3 provided D12, which was personal notes, as a personal touch recognizing the employee for a job well done. I had a follow-up question about how often they gave out D12 to employees. P3 stated, "They do not give personal notes freely. They are used as tool that fosters encouragement for a job well done only and to make sure the employee knows I noticed their hard work." P4 stated,

> Coming up through the ranks, I find it difficult at times for the employees I manage to respect me as their manager instead one of the gang. I know they respect me due to the position our CEO has placed me in, and they know, without a doubt, I have their back. Many of our employees have been here forever and think the cooperative cannot do without them. These employees are typically very outspoken and, at times, hard to manage.

The analysis revealed a positive relationship between long-term employees who have trouble with work-life balance and affective and normative commitment (Shabir &

Gani, 2020). P4 provided D13, which was an employee evaluation, from a seasoned employee who received "needs improvement" on their evaluation in management/employee relations. The employee evaluation clearly pointed out areas of improvement that the employee needed to work on, with communication being the primary area of concern. P4 mentioned having multiple face-to-face meetings with this employee and correcting the employee when they were out of line. I asked how often they had to correct the employee. P4 stated, "I have to correct this employee more than any other employees. Sometimes I feel some older employees might need to leave when they reach retirement age."

D14 and D15, the monthly magazine and career section of the website, also mentioned the word "team" as it related to the workforce. The website described in its career section that the cooperative employees had a vested interest in its cooperative values and shared a commitment to providing a vital service to their customers. The career section included the following question: "Do you have what it takes to be a part of our team?" The statement was displayed in an area outlining the different careers that the cooperative had available. It forced the reader to believe that the cooperative viewed its employees as members of a team. In order to manage an organization with a diversified workforce, it is incumbent upon managers to possess practical soft skills such as communication, leadership, listening, and commitment to the team (Karim et al., 2019). I concluded in the findings that transformational leadership styles positively enhance organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity, aligning with the conceptual framework and academic literature.

Theme 2: Encouragement of Employees

Encouragement surfaced as another theme as data were analyzed. P5 stated, "By offering words of encouragement it gives employees an incentive to meet cooperative expectations." If employees feel wanted in the organization, they will be more committed, efficient, innovative, and successful, and they will experience positive emotions such as joy, pride, and enthusiasm in the workplace (Preskar & Zizek, 2020). I read and journaled about the monthly magazine, which reinforced and demonstrated management's commitment to cultivate and sustain an encouraging environment. In D14, the general manager stated, "We are committed to providing affordable, reliable, and convenient services through our dedicated employees." I felt that this message provided the basis for what the electric cooperative was going to do for the members using its employees as the vessel. Without a dedicated workforce, the electric cooperative would not have been able to provide service.

The electric cooperative participants used encouragement as a motivational tool to engage employees at work and in the community to achieve the cooperative's desired objectives and goals using their metric system. Their metric system included a set of desired objectives such as outages, customer complaints, and service orders addressed successfully. The cooperative gauged each department on their handling of each of these tasks and achievement of stated goals. Furthermore, each employee was ranked based on a comprehensive data model that used historic data compared to recent data. Each employee was given a raw score based on their success or failure in each category. Management took into consideration factors such as attendance, management/employee

relations, and productivity. An employee could receive a high score of 5 or a low score of 1. These monthly numbers also made up a portion of the employee's overall employee evaluation. Mahmood et al. (2019) reiterated Bass's transformational leadership theory by suggesting that scholars define inspirational motivation as a process of encouraging employees to meet or succeed goals. All participants used positive reinforcement as a tool to build organizational commitment to increasing productivity. P1 revealed,

> I always make sure my employees understand I have their back. I tell them I would not give you this task unless I did not believe in you. They typically step up to the challenge because they know I am not going to allow them to sink.

> P1 gave me D16, a complaint letter, which outlined a member questioning the

deposit policy and a response they had helped the employee to formulate. In this example, the complaint letter was the triggering mechanism for the employee to ask P1 for assistance. The employee was confused about the cooperative policy and did not know how to explain when the customer would receive their deposit back from the cooperative. I asked as a follow-up question, "How do you determine when you need to help the employee?" P1 stated, "I typically wait until the employee brings the issue to me and that's when I tell them we will work on this together."

Transformational leaders who motivate, practice transparency, and challenge employees typically have a more dynamic organization because of the open channels of communication (Frazer et al., 2020). P5 confirmed the process of maintaining positive and motivational employees as a daunting task. P5 stated, "It is important to challenge employees and to know when to intervene to reset their focus and overcall outcome." An

example given by P5 was when an employee was frustrated in wiring a transformer. P5 helped the employee overcome this challenge by having a trained coworker instead of a supervisor work one-on-one with the employee in a controlled environment at the outdoor lab until they understood how to complete the task. P5 supplied D17, a transformer wiring diagram, to the employee to follow-up with the training. The wiring diagram outlined the proper way to wire the transformer for future reference.

P2, P3, and P4 explained employees with negative attitudes and their unwillingness to change were significant barriers they faced when trying to define and increase organizational commitment in efforts to increase productivity. P4 stated, "Older employees seem to have a routine and it's hard for them to accept change. As I increase their workload, I provide them a memo with what I wanted to see accomplished." P4 stated the memo was not only given to the employee but was explained in detail. Furthermore, P4 asks older employees to explain and mentor younger team members with the changes. Transformational leadership weakens the effect of a negative voice, allowing managers to develop objective strategies to discourage negative intuitive external behaviors of employees (Zhang et al., 2020). P3 stated, "You always have those that do not like change. I attempt to encourage them and let them know it is beneficial to the cooperative they attempt to work with me in making the change go smoothly." P3 gave the example of moving from printed service orders to electronic service orders. They had some employees that did not see the benefit so they role played in a group setting to show the importance of change and what issues the new service orders would eliminate. As a follow-up question, I asked how long did it take to get them on board? P3

gave me D18 as documentation to fully understand the concept. They further explained the employee has embraced the process and has alleviated several bottlenecks in the service que. P2 stated, "Older employees tend to hang on to the old ways because of their unwillingness to learn new technology. These employees are hard to encourage and motivate." P2 mentioned as an exercise they created a new connect service order for a customer and changed the date the employee needed to connect the service during the day. The issue P2 had was the employee printed the service orders in the morning instead of using a laptop to complete their work in real time. The date was changed on the service order and the employee completed the job on the wrong day. The employee was called in and explained why it was important to work the system in real time to provide good customer service. P2 stated, "The older employee learned the lesson and embraced the new technology." I asked, "P2 have they had any more issues from other employees as a follow-up?" P2 stated, "This one exercise showed employees the benefit and they know management is watching and encourages them to use the computers."

Caniels et al. (2018) concluded leaders would benefit from using Bass's inspirational motivation technique to encourage, define, and increase employee engagement. Additionally, I analyzed D4, the policy manual, to further triangulate the responses P2, P3, and P4 made about encouragement. The participants stated numerous times how important it was to encourage employees and remain positive with every situation. I found several policies that confirmed being role models, encouragement, and change. These policies confirmed that it is the participants' job to make sure they are creating a positive atmosphere while encouraging employees to do their best. This

continued effort of making sure their subordinates worked in a supportive workplace aligned with Bass's transformational leadership theory.

Theme 3: Lead by Example

During the zoom interviews, several of the participants mentioned leading by example as a common strategy they use to manage employees. Bass (1985) associated the term *leading by example* with the idealized influence approach in transformational leadership theory. The participants indicated leading by example, exposes their willingness to be head-in and hands-on relating to the day-to-day activities, which allow employees to interact with them as a manager. An idealized influence approach is when one leader becomes a role model for their followers to imitate (Albejaidi et al., 2020). During this approach, employees want to copy the attitude and behavior of their leaders. Leaders having idealized influence try to bring improvement to their employees also try to avoid adverse outcomes (Nicolaides, 2016). The personality of the leader and their characteristics are perceived as a role-model type for the followers and team members to become motivated.

In Interview Questions 1, 4, and 7, I explored the leadership strategies electric cooperative managers use, how they measure effectiveness, and key drivers associated with retaining employees. Participants P1, P3, and P5 revealed leading by example demonstrates the manager's commitment to encouraging employees to do their best. P1 stated,

My number one strategy in leading by example is I do not ask anyone to do

anything I am not willing to do myself. I have been known to go out in the field

and help others do whatever needs to be done on the job site.

P1 further revealed they used these visits as a teaching exercise with employees to

improve workplace standards. P1 presented a scenario where they went out in the field

and assisted an employee in programming an electric meter. P1 supplied me with D19 as

evidence how to complete the job. P1 stated, "I gave this diagram to further improve the

employee's knowledge and to share what I have learned throughout my career." P3

stated,

I believe in letting employees know what is going on in the workplace. When I

take time to explain things to them, I am creative and positive during our

conversations. I feel this displays excellent communication and makes them

understand the issue versus shoving something down their throat. I believe this

makes them willing to discuss with me things they may find confrontational in the

workplace. You lead by example at all times with people. You cannot expect a

good outcome if you are secretive with information.

Leaders should inspire, support, and intellectually challenge their followers

weekly because these behaviors enhance followers' trust in the leader (Breevaart &

Zacher, 2019). P3 presented D20, a memo, that was given to employees for a change in

membership certificates. D20 outlined the change and how it would affect the employee.

P3 wanted not only to discuss the change but give the employee documentation to answer

any follow-up questions they may have about the change. As a follow-up question, I

asked P3, "Did the document resolve all the issues?" P3 stated, "It did. In fact, we are now reviewing other processes." P5 expressed,

> I like being involved and working hands-on with my subordinates. It allows me to evaluate their success and failures better if I am leading them along the way. I feel by building a stronger relationship I can retain entry level employees.

As a follow-up question, I asked P5, "How often do you work hands-on with your subordinates?" P5 stated, "Any time I see them struggle and sometimes I dedicate a whole day to work with some employees on special projects." When leaders pay close individual attention, it allows them to nurture and grow strong leader-employee relationships. Employees who are inspired by transformational leadership are more likely to immerse themselves in work and, in turn, this is likely to result in better task performance and helping others (Lai et al., 2020). P2 posited, "I utilize one-on-one discussions, emailing, and weekly meetings to improve employee participation. I believe if I stay focused, they will see I believe in them and they will in turn be more productive." P2 supplied D21, a task tracker, they sent to employees detailing a project they all were working on and the percentage it was completed. I asked P2 as a follow-up question, "How do you decide who gets a one-on-one discussion with you about a project?" P5 stated, "I typically speak with the best performer and those that are falling behind to let them know I am here to help. By speaking to the best performer, I build their confidence and typically they take a supporting role to help low performers met my expectations." P2 mentioned during the process of helping poor performers they

typically take the lead and prioritize tasks and explain why the tasks are being completed in that manner. It was imperative P2 didn't leave any employee behind.

I analyzed the cooperative's core values, which indicated the circumstances management would take promoting honesty, transparency, and efficiency to employees and its members, ultimately preserving relationships. The core values are widely attainable by everyone through the website. The core values were safety, member experience, outreach to community, reliability, and economic viability. The electric cooperative management team made it known the employees are valuable to the cooperative's success. The participants further explained they remain available and committed to the employees by being active in daily tasks, hands-on, and leading by example, which reflected an organizational culture of support through positive leader-employee relationships.

Theme 4: Rewards for Employees

The last theme developed from my data analysis was rewards. Three participants mentioned they use rewards as motivation to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. Scholars determined rewards and recognition as a concept of transactional leadership (Chanager & Atan, 2021). P3 stated, "We give awards out to the employees. There is special recognition given each year for safety and an employee of the year is selected. The employees are given plaques, monetary gifts, and special gifts for their recognition." I asked P3, "Who determines what employees receive recognition?" P3 stated, "We have a cross functional team that accepts nominations and the team votes." P3 supplied D22 that would be given to an employee for one year with

no accidents. Reward, incentive, and recognition are all different, but complementary, approaches the participants mentioned during their interviews. Intrinsic rewards in the workplace can include things such as praise, recognition, or the feeling of being part of the team. Extrinsic rewards can include gifts, certificates, bonuses, or promotions. In response to Interview Question 1, P2 mentioned the following, "Some of the incentives I use in my department include buying lunches for my team. I do not believe in giving monetary incentives to employees. It creates more jealousy between the employees." I asked P2, "How do you determine who gets a free lunch?" P2 stated, "I keep a spreadsheet where I identify the success and once the employee has obtained five task completions I feel unique I take them to lunch." I was given D23 as documentation of the unique reasons an employee might be recognized.

I identified contingent reward as the most practiced and preferred method the participants utilized to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. Contingent reward is a motivation-based system used to reward those that meet their identified goals by providing positive reinforcement (Hilton et al., 2021). P5 stated,

> As it relates to performance of the employee, I would have to say our recognition of their work plays a critical role in their development. We have manager meetings with the CEO to discuss our metrics. It is our responsibility to relay the information to our employees and encourage them.
>
> I was able to review the metrics managers used to measure employee goals,

motivation behind each goal, and the recognition associated with the achievement. P5

mentioned they take the metrics and give specific instances during their employee meetings to show employees how their work is reflected in the metrics. As a follow-up, I asked P5, "Do you only discuss positive instances, or do you point out the negative ones as well?" P5 explained,

> No. I tend to concentrate 60% on the negative and 40% on the positive metrics. I don't want to brow beat the employee, but I feel we need to work on our failures to make employees better. This approach in turn makes them better employees and they typically have a higher evaluation at year end.

Northouse (2016) stated transactional leadership is a contractual agreement between leader and follower involving rewards or compensation.

I was able to determine the final theme of rewards aligned with Bass's transactional leadership theory but emulated a transformational leader's positive nature. McClean et al. (2021) stated transformational leaders are positive and encourage employees to exceed status quo. I concluded in the findings both transactional and transformational leadership styles positively impact employees' overall productivity aligning with the conceptual framework and literature review.

Applications to Professional Practice

Electric cooperative managers may be able to develop a comprehensive approach to identifying and addressing the needs of their management team based on the results of this study. From a general business perspective, organizational commitment affects profits, sales, and organizational return on investment. Practitioners and many scholars have indicated business leaders may use various leadership strategies to increase

productivity (Nguyen et al., 2015). The findings of this study could empower electric cooperative managers to network, cooperate, and share vital information regarding strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increasing productivity.

Hussinki et al. (2018) asserted business sustainability is integrally linked with value creation in end-customer markets when employees are considered the most critical asset. When leaders rely on relational attributions and engage with employees, the employees tend to feel more interpersonal citizenship behaviors, which increase organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity (Sun et al., 2019). Based on the findings from this study, the most compelling contribution to professional practice may be the recognition of potential strategies electric cooperative managers use to increase employee productivity. If considered, leaders can use the findings to implement effective leadership strategies in underperforming areas of the organization to meet departmental and corporate goals or eliminate potential gaps contributing to the professional practice. More specific communication training utilizing the policy manual as the guide could ensure everyone is following same guidelines and procedures. By encouraging employees, managers could use the metric system discussed above to share results of the high performers as role models for others to emulate. Leaders can compare or reevaluate the leadership strategies they currently use and incorporate strategies presented in the case findings. A person who is new to electric cooperative leadership may utilize the findings in this study to enhance organizational commitment to increase the productivity of the employees they manage.

Medlin et al. (2016) suggested organizations could increase organizational commitment through satisfaction facts such as trust, communication, and cooperation. Electric cooperative managers should consider employee management as a viable strategy to increase organizational commitment. Carter (2013) stated that managers who lack strategies to improve employees' organizational commitment would find it difficult to increase productivity. Business leaders must formulate strategies to enhance organizational commitment in efforts to increase efficiency and productivity (Zhao et al., 2020). Electric cooperative managers may utilize the data captured in this study to establish organizational strategies that will enhance organizational commitment. Managers who lead by example and are willing to complete normal tasks can gain respect and build employee-manager relationships to build a stronger workplace environment. Similarly, rewards for employees give employees the satisfaction of gaining a small token of appreciation that builds loyalty. The study findings may assist electric cooperative managers to bridge the lack of or knowledge gaps on strategies for enhancing organizational commitment to increase productivity to sustain the electric cooperative.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of this study could be used to enhance organizational engagement to increase productivity in the electric industry and any organization, while it contributes to social change. The participants in this single qualitative study consisted of electric cooperative managers in the electric industry who created and implemented strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity in the workplace. Managers in any organization could decide to include these strategies to enhance

organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. Florence et al. (2017) asserted companies are forced to function in a world full of change and under various complications, and it is more important than ever to have the correct employees at the right job with the right qualifications, experience, and attitude in order to survive. Employee perceptions of engaging leadership can shape employee's perceptions and attitudes in the workplace (Hechanova & Manaois, 2020). Better leaders create a safe, comfortable environment that improves the human or social conditions by promoting the worth, dignity, and development of their subordinates. In turn, happier employees tend to stay longer on the job which increases their financial stability. By fostering a culture that inspirits employees, leaders can empower employees to engage in issues that matter to them and instill a sense of shared purpose by volunteering. By volunteering, employees give back to the communities they dwell. When leaders lead with authenticity and integrity, leaders create a climate where people are engaged. Leaders should avoid setting agendas without stakeholder input. When leaders value the ideas of employees, they create pathways that let employees know that they are both appreciated and valued increasing their organizational commitment.

The results of this study may fill the knowledge gap of what strategies managers should consider implementing to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. Moreover, the findings of this study may help create and maintain the building blocks for a healthy social change. A committed employee is part of the business culture. Maqsoom et al.'s (2019) study revealed that responsible leadership significantly influences employees' organizational commitment in an organization. The leadership

strategies examined in this study to enhance organizational commitment may increase employee productivity, which may improve employee recognition, employee commitment, and develop future leaders. This increased satisfaction may drive profits up and lead to higher wages for employees, which may stimulate the economy. Katsikea et al. (2015) asserted that leaders and employees are both met with obstacles to overcome when dealing with an organizational culture with minimal committed employees. Mwesigwa et al. (2020) proclaimed that leaders must create strategies that promote job satisfaction and motivate their employees to stay committed, which increases employee productivity. This increase in employee productivity can increase profits to help expand businesses, which can also reduce the unemployment rate, help drive the economy, and produce opportunities for leaders to create new jobs. As baby boomers leave the workplace, leaders must recognize the autonomy of the millennials and generation z, be attentive to employee needs, open to employee input, personal development, and encourage creativity. By taking a proactive approach to invest in human capital and maintaining employee engagement, managers could improve retention levels and reduce turnover, which can negatively impact the electric industry.

This study can be adopted and promoted within an organization to assist leaders in improving their knowledge of methods to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. This research study contributes to the body of knowledge about the leadership strategies electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity.

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies some managers in electric cooperatives use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. Electric cooperative managers shared successful leadership strategies implemented at the cooperative located in Northwest Florida, which aligned with the study's academic literature review and conceptual framework. Based on the study's findings, I have recommended actions current and future electric cooperative managers may consider when devising measurable strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity. The business manager must comprehend the four main themes of the study for enhancing organizational commitment to increasing employee productivity: (a) teamwork using effective communication, (b) encouragement for employees, (c) leading by example, and (d) rewards for employees.

The first recommendation for managers is to use teamwork for effective communication. Managers must give honest feedback regularly, coach when needed, and train to make sure employees have the opportunity to succeed in a working environment that is conducive for employee engagement. Internal communication represents a distinct advantage in an organization as employees may be the most critical audience for the organization's communication and corporate branding efforts. Thorton (2018) explained, leaders judge success in internal communications when employees can see the value for their career and work interests by understanding, believing in, and behaving in line with the company's business objectives. Managers can integrate weekly face-to-face meetings with employees, which increases the open flow of communication throughout the

organization. Managers leading subordinates with respect and open communication is key in creating a productive work environment.

Witte et al. (2020) asserted 50% of most business failures are attributed to the unengaged and unmotivated workforce. Employee engagement contributes to the overall success of a business. The second recommendation for small business managers in the electric industry is to provide leadership support to their employees by nurturing the relationship and create a method which enables employees to assist in the decision-making process. By nurturing and seeking advice from subordinates, managers show employees they are valued, and they are a contributing factor to the organization. Supportive leadership has a positive direct effect on job performance (Khan et al., 2020).

The third recommendation is leading by example. By implementing a flexible leadership mindset, or liquid leadership, which allows leaders to conform and interact with employees differently. Leaders can adapt and change direction instructionally because employees respond differently. This type of leadership helps find the best strategy to improve the person-organization fit, which allows for employees to be placed in positions for motivation, satisfaction, and success. This leadership style allows for employees to feel comfortable in voicing their concerns and thoughts because they have a comfort level with the leader. Leading by example is the motivation and job satisfaction employees need to be committed to the organization.

The fourth recommendation for electric cooperative managers is to develop sufficient salary compensation and reward for employees to enhance employee engagement to increase productivity. Human resources have been an essential factor in an

organization providing functions such as: hiring, firing, benefits, legal, and policy enforcement. Organizations need to enhance their human capital if they want to have a competitive advantage in the marketplace. It is crucial organizations maintain their outstanding employees. Prasetio et al. (2019) asserted compensation had a direct effect on turnover intention, which means the organization must remain focused in managing their compensation program. The critical factor is an organization must identify why motivated employees seek to leave an organization. An electric cooperative manager who seeks effective leadership strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity should consider the findings outlined in this study. The results of this study will be distributed through Walden University for academic purposes. I intend to publish the study in business venues where business managers actively evaluate leadership strategies to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. Lastly, I will attempt to have this study published in the National Electric Cooperative Association publication to assist electric cooperative managers.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies electric cooperative managers in an electric cooperative located in Northwest Florida used to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. I selected five managers within the organization: (a) each participant had managed 5 years' or longer in their respective position, (b) each manager had used strategies for improving employee commitment, (c) each had more than five employees working for them, and (d) each participant was able to recommend leadership strategies to enhance organizational

commitment to increase productivity. The results of the study revealed four themes identifying leadership strategies that answered the overarching research question. Future researchers can take the four identified themes and apply them to a different population for future studies. Additionally, future researchers could use a different methodology, such as quantitative, measuring the effects of implementing the strategies. Future researchers could use a mixed method methodology that measures the most effective strategies or how employees react to the strategies. Lastly, this study can assist managers in enhancing organizational commitment to increase productivity in their respective workplace by applying the themes studied.

Reflections

This experience was a marathon for me. I changed careers, survived Hurricane Michael, life altering effects of COVID-19 and had many personal hurdles. I learned how to adapt and overcome these challenges while changing my personal biases and perceptions regarding the overarching research question. This process sharpened my writing skills by cultivating the ability to write scholarly. Through active guidance and mentoring, I was able to solve problems that arose with this research immediately, keeping the research moving forward. The findings from this study were aligned with my understanding of enhancing employee commitment to increase productivity. It was imperative that my questions and concerns relating to the overarching question did not create biases during the member-checking. Reflecting on the interview process, I identified participants used similar leadership strategies within their departments. The participants answered the interview questions from a different perspective, which assisted

me in understanding the strategies managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increasing productivity. The findings from this study were aligned with modern literature on leadership strategies enhancing organizational commitment to increasing productivity.

Kang and Sung (2017) demonstrated how the use of effective leadership strategies could improve employee engagement, leading to enhanced performance. By establishing a strong relationship between management and subordinates, management creates loyalty and trust while improving communication to enhance organizational commitment to increasing productivity. Participants' responses to the interview questions, reviewing documents, and understanding the culture provided the understanding of organizational commitment within the organization and how it correlates to increased productivity. The four themes that emerged from this study include: (a) teamwork using effective communication, (b) encouragement for employees, (c) leading by example, and (d) rewards for employees.

There is a significant relationship between employee engagement and productivity. Moletsane et al. (2019) discovered if an organization wants increased productivity, they must improve employee engagement through the enhancement of their job satisfaction and instilling a sense of pride in the organization. The conceptual framework for the research study was the transformational leadership strategy. The findings from this study revealed electric cooperative managers who actively engage and develop leadership strategies enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. A manager whose employees are engaged with the organization will

outperform employees who are less engaged (Herminingsih, 2017). Finally, the findings from this study confirmed that electric cooperative managers use different strategies for enhancing organizational commitment to increase employee productivity. It further validates the previous scholars' findings regarding utilizing leadership strategies to increase productivity.

Conclusion

Scholars have demonstrated transformational leaders most often use information-rich face-to-face channels to communicate with followers leading to increase organizational commitment leading to greater productivity (Men, 2014). When a manager develops trust, loyalty, and open communication with their employees, it enhances organizational commitment to increase productivity in the workplace. By utilizing effective leadership strategies and maintaining employee productivity, leaders assist with the sustainability of the organization (Iqbalet al., 2020). Furthermore, leaders who can enhance organizational commitment can position the electric cooperative at a competitive advantage.

The findings of this study may assist electric cooperative managers in implementing leadership strategies which promote personal development, improve leader-employee relationships, and acclimate a more complimentary leadership team that can adapt and change to meet company expectations. In this study, I conducted semistructured zoom interviews, journaled observations, reviewed company documents, and asked follow-up questions to gain insight electric cooperative managers use to enhance organizational commitment to increase productivity. The participants included 5

electric cooperative managers from Northwest Florida. Four themes emerged from the data analysis process, which were (a) teamwork using effective communication, (b) encouragement, (c) lead by example, and (d) reward.

I utilized the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this qualitative single case study. Electric cooperative managers shared in-depth knowledge during the semistructured interviews which aligned with the academic literature and conceptual framework. Using the participants responses to the interview questions, I was able to compare data sources using the triangulation method. Based on the research findings, I suggest managers in the electric cooperative industry invest in its employees. The data indicated employees respond to positive reinforcement such as encouragement, rewards, and recognition echoing a combination of transactional and transformational leadership styles.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of electric cooperative managers' leadership strategies are used to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity.

Protocol:

- Interviews will be a maximum of 45 minutes.
- Interviewee responses will be transcribed, digitally recorded, and observations journaled
- All identifying information will be coded to ensure privacy and confidentiality
- At the end of the interview, I will schedule a follow-up meeting by phone or in person with interviewee to verify accuracy of data interpretations.
- Data obtained will only be used for the purpose of this study.
- Per Walden University guidelines, the interviewee may exit the study at any time.
- Interviewee must acknowledge understanding of the interview protocol by signing the consent form before conducting the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. What strategies have you used to improve organizational commitment?
2. What are the most effective strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?
3. What strategies do you consider the least effective strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?
4. How do you measure the effectiveness of strategies you have used to improve organizational commitment?
5. What challenges have you encountered when attempting to implement these strategies?
6. How have you addressed those challenges?
7. Do you have any additional information to share about your strategies to retain entry-level employees?
8. What else would you like to share regarding strategies electric cooperative managers could use to enhance organizational commitment to increase employee productivity?

Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to participate in this DBA doctoral study case.

Date:_____   Location:_____

Interviewer:_____   Interviewee:_____

Participant Consent: _____ Yes or _____ No

Appendix B: Letter of Agreement

Community Research Partner

Contact Information

Dear [Name],

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Electric Cooperative Managers' Strategies to Enhance Organizational Commitment to Increase Employee Productivity within our organization. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview participants and record their interviews. I will provide potential participants email addresses for your contact purposes. Participants' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. We understand that our responsibilities include: a safe and quiet room to conduct interviews via zoom and provide supervision. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

The student will be responsible for complying with our research policies and requirements, including our mission statement, meaning that we behave in law-abiding and ethical ways in all our business relationships, dealings, and activities. Company records include employee, payroll records, vouchers, bills, time reports, billings records, measurement, performance, production records, and other essential data. To protect our records we always, disclose records only as authorized by company policy or in response to legal process.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the policies. I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Authorization Official Name

Contact Information