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Strategies to Create and Sustain Work-Life Balance in the Hospitality Industry

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Elizabeth Balbickram

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Strategies to Create and Sustain Work-Life Balance in the Hospitality Industry

by

Elizabeth Balbickram

MAFM, Keller Graduate School of Management, 2007

BSB/ACC, University of Phoenix, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Abstract

Employee turnover results in adverse business outcomes. Hospitality industry leaders who do not encourage an organizational culture supportive of work-life balance risk reduced profitability resulting from employee turnover. Grounded in path-goal theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies hospitality industry leaders use to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life balance. The participants were eight upper-level leaders of one lodging chain in Orlando, Florida, who successfully implemented strategies to create and sustain work-life balance for their employees. Data were collected from semistructured interviews and a review of organization personnel handbooks and training material. Through thematic analysis, six themes were identified: (a) knowing employees' personal drivers, (b) clearly and consistently communicating corporate culture, (c) encouraging and enabling employees to use accrued personal time, (d) conducting an annual engagement survey, (e) setting clear expectations, and (f) overcoming barriers caused by the nature of the business. A key recommendation is for business leaders to invest in continuous improvement training for management to ensure that the desired culture is consistently communicated and fostered. The implications for positive social change include the potential to reduce stress levels associated with work-life balance improving overall health, which may result in reduced healthcare costs for employees and the community.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my daughters, Mia and Jordan. I began this journey with the aim of meeting a personal goal. As the days and months and years passed, and the challenge grew, at times my commitment waned. At those times, I was encouraged to persevere by the belief that my daughters had in me and my ability to complete this study. My daughters have been my cheerleaders—my lighthouse—and I thank God for them. Through all the sacrifices of our family time, my husband and daughters have been understanding. My daughters have often told me that I inspire them to be their best. I need them to know that they have inspired me, and I dedicate this doctoral study to them.

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I wish to thank my committee chair, Dr. Christopher Beehner, for his support and commitment to my success. You have been patient and understanding as I struggled, and you have been a supportive guide offering invaluable feedback throughout this process. I am grateful for your mentorship.

I would like to thank my family for their support. I acknowledge and am grateful to my husband, Cantrell, and my daughters, Mia and Jordan, for their support, consideration, and understanding for the duration of this journey. I recognize that the sacrifices I made were sacrifices that we as a family made. I thank you and love you for taking this journey with me. My success is our success.

My mother, Theresa, instilled in me the belief that I am limited only by my own vision and desire. I am grateful to her for always believing in me and always reminding me of my own worth. For the countless pep talks and reminders that success is just steps away, I thank you and love you more than I can ever fully express. You are an amazing woman: strong, humble, and wise. I thank God for the gift of you.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem and Purpose	2
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	5
Interview Questions	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	7
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	8
Assumptions.....	8
Limitations	8
Delimitations.....	9
Significance of the Study	9
Contribution to Business Practice.....	9
Implications for Social Change.....	10
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	11
Path-Goal Theory	12
Methodology	15
Work-Life-Balance	18

Diversity in the Workplace	22
Leadership.....	24
Leadership Challenges and Opportunities	30
A Strong Value System as a Tool for Strategic Implementation.....	36
Transition and Summary.....	41
Section 2: The Project.....	43
Purpose Statement.....	43
Role of the Researcher	44
Participants.....	48
Research Method and Design	49
Research Method	50
Research Design.....	51
Population and Sampling	53
Ethical Research.....	56
Data Collection Instruments	60
Data Collection Technique	62
Data Organization Technique	65
Data Analysis	65
Reliability and Validity.....	67
Reliability.....	67
Validity	69
Transition and Summary.....	70

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	72
Introduction.....	72
Presentation of the Findings.....	72
Theme 1: Create a Caring Culture	74
Theme 2: Know Associates’ Personal Drivers	79
Theme 3: Enable and Encourage Taking Time Off.....	82
Theme 4: Set Clear Expectations.....	83
Theme 5: Undertake an Engagement Survey.....	85
Theme 6: Overcome Barriers.....	88
Applications to Professional Practice	89
Implications for Social Change.....	91
Recommendations for Action	92
Recommendations for Further Research.....	93
Reflections	93
Conclusion	95
References.....	96
Appendix A: Case Study Protocol	118
Appendix B: Preinterview Protocol.....	119
Appendix C: Interview Procedure	120

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics..... 73

Table 2. Participants' Views on the Leader's Role in Creating a Caring Culture 76

Table 3. Participants' Views on the Leader's Role in Knowing Associate Drivers 79

List of Figures

Figure 1. Factors in the Evolution of Core Values During the Implementation of Strategic Change	34
Figure 2. Word Cloud of Most Recurrent Terms in Interview Responses	66
Figure 3. Emergent Themes for Creating a Culture Supportive of Work-Life Balance.....	67

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The landscape of the hospitality industry is changing. Technology advances are extending communication and data sharing capacity (Nasir & Kalirajan, 2016), geographic boundaries are shrinking, and employees' needs are changing with the multigenerational workforce where millennials are swiftly establishing dominance (Weeks et al., 2017). In an increasingly competitive environment in which creativity and innovation are highly valued, a major factor in employee satisfaction, performance, and retention is the attainment of work-life balance (Pregnolato et al., 2017). However, achieving work-life balance is often challenging for employees and employers alike.

Background of the Problem

The perception that there are not enough hours in the workday has become reality for many (Sandberg, 2013). At the same time, employees are driven to attain work-life-balance, a critical factor in organizational success. The absence of a culture that supports work-life balance has been a topic of concern since the 1970s with the increase in dual-career families (Wright & Yaeger, 2016). However, the influx of millennials, individuals born between 1984 and 1996 (Wood, 2019) into the workforce, has made the issue of work-life balance more salient. With their arrival, there is a renewed emphasis on balancing work and other elements of their lives (Bhalla, 2016).

As a group, millennials strive to maintain their personal life and career by using technology to improve functioning and enable mobility of communication (Philip et al., 2017). In their unwillingness to compromise on personal interests for the sake of the job, millennials have earned a reputation as job-hoppers (Woods, 2016), a practice that costs

organizations approximately \$15,000 per hourly associate earning an annual income of \$48,672 in 2020 (Mahan et al., 2020). Another consequence of poor employee retention is skill scarcity (Gilley et al., 2015). Organizations are challenged to foster employee engagement to enable continued success (Dash & Muthyala, 2016). Employee retention has compelled business leaders to implement strategies that transform the workplace to one that attracts talent and encourages and inspires their workforce to add to their knowledge to innovate and grow the organization.

Problem and Purpose

Generational changes in the global workforce have resulted in increased employee emphasis on maintaining a balance between career and personal life (Taylor, 2018), presenting a growing challenge for employers to create and sustain a culture supporting work-life-balance for retaining employees. The annual employment attrition rate in the leisure and hospitality industry in the United States increased from 64.1% in 2013 to 73.8% in 2017 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018). The annual financial impact of employee attrition was approximately \$15,000 per hourly associate earning an annual income of \$48,672 in 2020 (Mahan et al. 2020). The general business problem is that hospitality industry leaders who do not encourage an organizational culture that supports work-life-balance incur increased employee turnover costs. The specific business problem is that some hospitality industry leaders lack strategies to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life-balance.

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures

supportive of employee work-life-balance. The target population consisted of eight upper-level hospitality leaders of one of the premier lodging brands worldwide. The participants were based in Orlando, Florida, and represented four different sectors of the industry. All had successfully implemented strategies to create and sustain work-life balance. Organizational leaders who read this study might be influenced to create and sustain an organizational culture supportive of work-life-balance, potentially improving the health, and reducing the stress, of organizational members. Other associated benefits might include reduced healthcare costs and improvement in the quality of life of employees' families and the communities in which they live.

Nature of the Study

There are three categories of research methodology: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. Business researchers using qualitative methodology employ a subjective social constructivist worldview and adopt an interpretive or hermeneutic approach to exploring the interaction among individuals or groups concerning a business problem (Onwuegbuzie, 2018). Qualitative methodology is an inductive process whereby data interpretation evolves to reveal patterns through cause-and-effect logic, indicating how one element shapes, impacts on, or influences another (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). Because I sought to explore strategies intended to influence organizational culture, I concluded that qualitative research was appropriate for this study. Quantitative analysis involves collecting data to be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment to either support or refute claims about relationships between variables or differences between groups (Apuke, 2017). Mixed-method research incorporates both qualitative and

quantitative methods (Saunders et al., 2015). Because I did not collect data to test variables' relationships or groups' differences, I determined that neither the quantitative method nor the mixed method was appropriate for this study.

Qualitative designs include case studies, phenomenological investigations, and ethnographic studies (Goulding, 2005). A business researcher using a qualitative case study design explores what, how, and why questions related to a specific organizational phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2015). Cross-case analysis involves the exploration of themes across cases with the goal of identifying differences and similarities (Houghton et al., 2015). A multiple-case study design enables researchers to draw situational comparisons across two or more cases whereas a single-case study design involves analysis of one case (Yin, 2018). Although a multiple-case study design would have enabled comparison of how work-life-balance challenges are met in different organizations in the same industry, I concluded that use of a single-case study design would provide useful knowledge and be more feasible. Researchers use phenomenological designs to explore and describe consciously experienced phenomena under study (Lewis, 2015). Researchers use the ethnographic design to explicate structural patterns in cultural or social action (Goulding, 2005). Because of the prolonged interaction with participants that is required in an ethnographic design (Goulding, 2005), and the focus on personal lived experiences with the invocation of phenomenological design (Saunders et al., 2015) neither of these designs were appropriate for this study.

Research Question

What strategies do hospitality leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employees' work-life-balance?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you employ to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of employee work-life-balance?
2. What strategies do you use to engage and motivate your employees?
3. What were the key barriers, if any, you encountered in engaging and motivating your employees?
4. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of its strategies for creating and sustaining a culture that supports work-life-balance?
5. How did your organization address the key challenges to creating a culture that is supportive of work-life balance?
6. What other information can you offer concerning strategies to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of employee work-life-balance to mitigate high turnover costs that we have not previously discussed?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was House's (1971, 1996) path-goal theory, which the researcher developed in the early 1970s. The central tenet of path-goal theory is motivational leadership (Northouse, 2016), which is characterized by direction, support, participation, and recognition of achievement (Farhan, 2018). In reference to path-goal theory, Greene (1979) suggested that a key strategic function of leadership is

enhancing the psychological state of subordinates, increasing motivation, and improving employee job satisfaction. Leaders who exemplify the path-goal theory of leadership inspire performance, clearly define paths to success in achieving goals, motivate employees, remove obstacles to success, and reward achievements, creating a more favorable workplace atmosphere (Malik et al., 2014).

House (1971, 1996) suggested that successful leaders employ varied leadership styles based on the diversity of the team being led. The challenge for leaders is to apply the appropriate style that connects with and motivates different members of teams (Northouse, 2016). Leaders who understand the dynamics of their teams by listening objectively, being aware and sensitive to the feelings and values of team members and understanding the implications of actions are better equipped to find effective ways to motivate them and create and sustain a supportive workplace culture (Dewan & Dewan, 2010). Advocates of path-goal theory support the concept that leaders affect performance, satisfaction, and motivate those they lead through participation in developing strategies, coaching, supporting the path to and process of achieving goals, and rewarding goal achievement (Dewan & Dewan, 2010). Followers are catalyzed to perform in an environment where there is a belief in capabilities, provision of appropriate resources, and infrastructure supporting reward and recognition programs (Northouse, 2016).

The path-goal theory was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study because of its focus. I examined how hospitality leadership developed and deployed strategies to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of work-life balance and increase employee retention. My specific focus was on strategies for enhancing

employees' psychological state, increasing motivation, and improving employee job satisfaction.

Operational Definitions

Employee engagement: The personal attachment that employees feel toward their place of employment (Gruman & Saks, 2011). When employees are engaged, they express a positive attitude toward the organization, which is exhibited by their efforts to improve their performance (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013).

Empowerment: Agency that employees attain by having (a) qualifiable information and necessary skills through training and experience and (b) confidence that actions have the backing of leaders of the organization (Schultz, 2014).

Millennial: Individuals who were born between 1982 and 2004; they will represent 40% of employed Americans by 2020 (Meng et al., 2017).

Organizational culture: The values and behaviors that shape the social and psychological environment of an organization; the history of the organization, leadership philosophy, expectations, experiences, and the shared values of leadership and the rest of the organization are contribute to an organization's culture (Madan & Jain, 2015).

Path-goal theory: A theory that asserts that the role of the leader is to function as a guide, supporting and aiding subordinates in achieving both organizational and personal professional goals (Dewan & Dewan, 2010).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions refer to beliefs or elements of a study that enable it to be conducted but which cannot be validated (Simon & Goes, 2013). Four assumptions were made in this study. First, I assumed the participants would be an accurate representation of the industry. Second, it was assumed that the participants would be honest and unbiased in their responses. Third, I assumed that the data collection, informed by case study protocol and interview procedures, and encompassing recorded interviews, documented observations, and document review would yield complete and detailed data. Last, I assumed that the responses received could be categorized respective of House's (1971) path-goal theory.

Limitations

Limitations relate to the degree of generalizability of the findings of the study (Saunders et al., 2015) resulting from methodology and study design choices (Simon & Goes, 2013). Limitations exist regarding the validity and reliability of this study. I examined one lodging brand, a decision which may potentially limit the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation stemmed from the use of semistructured questions. Saunders et al. (2015) suggested that the risk of content validity arises when the researcher does not address content that is pertinent to the study. Although I asked the same interview questions, I varied some questions to follow up on participant responses. Doing so may have affected the content validity of the findings.

In addition, because I administered the interviews for the study, I functioned as the data collection instrument. This may have affected the construct validity of the study by affecting the reliability of data. Factors that hinder the ability to maintain homogeneity in testing concepts and measuring results present challenges in ensuring construct validity (Yin, 2018). I took notes during each interview to capture those aspects of the interview that could not be attained from voice recordings, but these were subject to my interpretation of relevance. Recognition of commonalities between interviewees and themes derived were subject to personal interpretation.

Delimitations

Simon and Goes (2013) defined delimitations as those characteristics that arise out of the conscious limitations that a researcher places on the scope of the study; delimitations extend to the subsequent inclusion and exclusion decisions made by the researcher in the development of the study. Three delimitations bound this study. First, the study was limited geographically to the city of Orlando in Central Florida in the United States. Second, participants in the study were limited to upper-level hospitality leaders in the lodging sector of the hospitality industry. Third, the scope of the study was limited to eight senior leaders holding functional roles between the director level and vice president level at one of the lodging brands.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

Misunderstandings about differences in work ethic are creating a rift between generations of workers leading to strained relationships in the workplace (Weeks et al.,

2017). Millennials tend to be highly energetic, confident, and driven achievers who will leave an organization that does not align with their goals, potentially taking with them a wealth of knowledge, untapped talent, and growth potential (Weeks et al., 2017). The findings of this study may be of significance because readers may gain insights into strategies for engaging, retaining, and developing the millennial employee talent pool and finding synergies among different generations in the workforce. The findings of this study may contribute to the development of work environments where leaders are more engaged with their employees and where there is more collaboration and support. These enhanced workspaces can be more attractive to new entrants to the job market and more supportive and rewarding to existing employees, improving engagement, retention, and organizations' performance.

Implications for Social Change

Poulose and Sudarsan (2017) likened work-life-balance to a balancing act among the organization, society, and personal life, with achievement of satisfying experiences in all aspects of life requiring the scarce resources of time and commitment. The potential societal benefits of work life balance are reflected in (a) social cohesion; (b) a greater sense of security, well-being, and optimism among individuals; and (c) a strong feeling of purpose and belief in the potential for success (Byrne, 2018). Employees are less prone to work that adversely impacts their personal lives when the workplace culture is supportive of work-life-balance.

The potential social change impact of this study is improvement in the quality of life for hospitality employees and their families, because of transformation of the

workplace culture to one that supports work-life-balance. Transformation of the workplace culture may lead to reduced stress and stress-related illness, improved psychological health of individuals, and improved familial and other interpersonal relationships (Cardiff et al., 2020). The result may be a decrease in stress-related healthcare costs for hospitality workers in local communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life balance. In conducting the study, I focused on ensuring that the methodology and conceptual framework aligned with the problem statement. I approached leadership effectiveness in achieving work-life balance goals from the perspective of House's (1971) path-goal theory. The literature review includes an overview of this theory. I also discuss the study's qualitative methodology and its appropriateness for this study, compared to other methodological options. The main focus of the literature review is on work-life balance challenges and how leaders contribute to employees attaining work-life balance. I conducted research mainly within EBSCOhost and ProQuest academic journal and research databases available from Walden University Library. Additionally, I used Google Scholar. Searches were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, trade publications, and books. In most instances I limited the search for relevant literature to that published within 5 years from the intended completion date, 2022, deviating only when deemed necessary due to limited results. Of the 136 sources

used, 75 were within the past 5 years, 20 were aged 6 to 7 years, and the remainder were older than 7 years.

Kock and Binnewies (2015) relayed that, although organization leaders recognize the benefits of employee work-life balance, they struggle with understanding how this is achieved. Technological advancements, specifically regarding communication and connectivity, are changing the way people work and the degree to which a physical presence in a shared office space is needed. However, the ability to connect remotely is increasingly becoming a challenge that is neutralizing the benefits previously sought; the overlap of personal and work life is expanding as boundaries blur (Onken-Menke et al., 2017). At the same time, the employee-employer relationship is changing as employee needs evolve with changing generational considerations. The following literature review relates to the theories and methodology applied to this study; the concept of work-life balance, attaining work-life balance, and the benefits thereof; and the challenges of employee attraction and retention.

Path-Goal Theory

House introduced path-goal theory in 1971. Path-goal theory is regarded as primarily a theory of task- and person-oriented supervisory behavior and has two objectives: to identify roles and behaviors of effective leaders and to explore situational contingencies that modify those behaviors (Malik, 2012). The postulations of the path-goal theory center around the leader-follower relationship. The essential notion is that leaders provide cognitive clarification to ensure that subordinates' expectations of attainment of work goals, intrinsic satisfaction, and rewards for goal achievement (and

the linkages therein) align with real attainable goals and rewards (House, 1996). The theory is dependent on leaders' ability to use a directive path; clarify goals; be supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented; and establish a relationship that is rooted in behavioral attitude (Sudbrack & Trombley, 2007). The focus in path-goal theory is on the effect of leaders' behavior on subordinates. It has a foundation in the following tenets of learning leadership: (a) being instrumental in development of a learning organization; (b) representing a model of enhanced learning practices and motivating subordinates; and (c) postulating the rationale for developmental strategies focused on sharing knowledge, information, and experience (Bayan, 2018). The responsibility of the follower is to pursue goals, and the responsibilities of the leader are to remove obstacles, guide followers on a path around obstacles or introduce skills and knowledge to overcome obstacles, and support and motivate followers (Sudbrack & Trombley, 2007).

Secretan (2004) defined leadership as a serving relationship to inspire the growth of others. The supportive leadership style of path-goal theory promotes leadership that encourages, understands, and adopts a friendly manner in responding to subordinates with clarity of direction and expectations of the goals. Great leaders inspire, enthuse, engage, honor, and nourish the teams they lead (Secretan, 2004). The postulations of the path-goal theory indicate five strategic functions of leaders: (a) understanding and stimulating subordinates needs for outcomes, (b) enhancing followers' incentives to motivate them to strive to attain goals, (c) helping followers to align actions toward goal planning, (d) clarifying expectations, and (e) removing barriers to achieving goals (Malik,

2012). Bayan (2018) stated that adopting path-goal theory of leadership results in leaders who clarify to provide direction to and encourage and reward subordinates on attainment of goals. Path-goal theory of leadership places emphasis on the leader's understanding of team beliefs and what drives their actions (Connors & Smith, 2011).

The leadership member exchange (LMX) theory, by contrast, hinges on the quality of the relationship between leader and subordinate effecting mutually beneficial results (Bugvi & Wafa, 2018). The LMX theory evolved from the vertical dyad linkage theory of the 1970s and is a conceptualization of the give and take between leaders and their subordinates, permeated by reward and recognition agreements (Kula, 2017). Under LMX, leaders differentiate between subordinates by grouping them into quality categories: in-group and out-group (Megheirkouri, 2017). Bugvi and Wafa (2018) observed that subordinates who have higher quality relationships with leadership are categorized as in-group and have a greater potential for achieving rewards. In-group subordinates are considered more dependable and communicative than out-group subordinates and, as a result, benefit from personal and positional resources earned by performing additional tasks and taking on additional responsibilities (Megheirkouri, 2017). Regarding the benefits of an in-group versus out-group relationship, Bugvi and Wafa stated that subordinates benefit from having quality relationships with their leader by having greater potential for job satisfaction and, in return, perform at higher levels exhibiting greater organizational citizenship.

Methodology

Using a case study design enabled an in-depth inquiry into the study phenomenon; I was able to identify what was happening, why, and the effects and consider the implications of actions to gain an understanding to inform and advance subsequent research into the study phenomenon (see Boblin et al., 2013). Furthermore, by using a case study design I was able to draw from several different credible and quality sources of information for change management. As Saunders et al. (2015) wrote, case studies may generate insight leading to rich empirical decision-making. By choosing a case study design for this study, I sought to apply constraints on the data sources, parameters, and collection. Boblin et al. (2013) observed that because researchers are inclined to further explore a phenomenon to gain an even more in-depth understanding, the case study forces the researcher to be constrained, bound by set parameters, and to focus their research. Case studies are preferred for use in early stages of research as a complement to deductive research revealing specific attributes (Boblin et al., 2013).

The qualitative data analysis method I employed was thematic analysis. Recommended by Saunders et al. (2015) for integration of related data from different transcripts, thematic analysis is a stand-alone technique that aids in the identification of key themes and patterns for further exploration. Thematic analysis may involve using manual and technology options to facilitate the exploration of patterns and themes through an iterative process in coding (Wang & Wang, 2017). The coding process is critical in the search for a theme, and the codes should relate to the concepts intended to be the focus, the approach to the research, and the research question (Saunders et al.,

2015). I used ATLAS.ti.9, a computer assisted data management tool for qualitative analysis of varied data sources: textual, graphical, and audio (ATLAS.ti, n.d.). Houghton et al. (2015) noted some of the benefits of using a computer assisted data management tool to be (a) assistance in handling storage, (b) assistance in data manipulation, (c) ease of access and retrieval of data, (d) management of data and ideation, (e) query of information, (f) fulfillment of transparency and rigor requirements, and (g) access to tools to test emerging themes.

Thematic analysis entails the analysis of the interview transcripts and notes by comparison, notation, and codification of emerging similarities and patterns (Yin, 2018). Establishing the codes, according to Houghton et al. (2015), occurs during the comprehending stage of analysis; at this stage, the researcher collects data and performs broad coding to develop preestablished codes. Saunders et al. (2015) concurred that this is the starting point in the search for themes. Further synthesis involves merging perceptions to create a composite pattern of themes (Houghton et al., 2015). The themes should relate to the concepts that will be explored (Saunders et al., 2015), which in this case were work-life balance and the impact on productivity and organizational success.

Case Study Versus Phenomenological Research Designs

Case studies and phenomenological research designs are qualitative research designs methods. Commonalities exist in both methods. Like case study research, phenomenological research involves the examination and description of phenomena as they are experienced (Lewis, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). Newman et al. (2017) stated that case study research involves documenting how research participants experience,

perceive, interpret, reflect upon, and derive meaning from events. Phenomenological research has the same focus, though on a smaller scale. Researchers who employ either case study or phenomenological designs provide insight into behavioral responses to phenomena, change, and stimuli (Newman et al., 2017). Their research differs by scope.

At the onset of planning my qualitative study, I considered applying a phenomenological research methodology. Heimbrock (2005) noted that phenomenological research is a study of life in terms of experiences rather than measures and correlations of variables; it is based on an understanding that the evolution of cause-and effect from the injection of strange phenomenon into regular occurrences leads to reality surpassing logic. A phenomenological research study requires more participant responses than a case study as it draws heavily on implicit normativity as both a precondition and a consequence of the research process (Heimbrock, 2005). A phenomenological study is also more time intensive than a case study because it involves the documentation of the lived experiences of participants over an extended period. Heimbrock (2005) regarded the phenomenological research process as being circular in nature because the researcher returns several times to previous points in the research process to gain exposure to new perceptions. A phenomenological research study involves the documentation of an evolving state of a phenomenon over an extended period of time, rather than a reflection of past experiences. For this reason, a phenomenological research approach was not appropriate, and I elected to move forward with a case study methodology. .

My study was a case study of strategies that hospitality leaders have employed to successfully create and sustain a culture supportive of work-life-balance. A case study, is an in-depth study of a phenomenon in a real-life setting for a specific group, person, organization, change process, or other type of subject case (Saunders et al., 2015). The case study is an exploration of what Boblin et al. (2013) regarded as a bounded system, using in-depth data collection and analysis of a defined phenomenon within specific date and location parameters. A case study provides a holistic and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon gained through research using sources for contextual information about those events that cannot be observed; the researcher confirms, or questions information received to showcases linkages between historical data and participant responses (Boblin et al., 2013). Bound geographically and by industry, and evidenced by interview responses on past experiences and other sources, the case study design was most appropriate for this study.

Work-Life-Balance

Millennials entry into the workforce have brought a resurgence of emphasis on achieving work-life-balance. Bhalla (2016) asserted that work-life balance is a state where there is balance of meeting obligations to both the workplace and personal or familial responsibilities. Work-life balance has become more of an issue with the prevalence of dual-career families and longer workdays. Bhalla noted the following consequences of conflicts relating to work-life balance that directly impact on organizational profitability: employee health-related challenges, high absenteeism, higher attrition rates, low employee morale, and low productivity. Bhalla's findings align with

those of Raju (2017), who investigated respondents' perception of (a) the personal and professional consequences of work-family conflict, (b) experiences with work-family enrichment, and (c) policies that can be implemented to improve work-life-balance.

Achieving work-life balance leads to improved mental and physical health of the individual, and enhanced employee engagement that tends toward greater efficiency for the organization.

A Family-Supportive Culture

One of the factors that individuals consider pivotal to the appeal of a potential employer is the apparent value of family to the organization. Wayne and Casper (2016) studied the effects of a family supportive culture on the attractiveness of an organization to potential employees. The researchers explored whether and to what degree potential applicants are attracted to an organization because of (a) different types of family-supportive policies, (b) a family-supportive culture, and (c) family-supportive policies and a family-supportive culture based on gender. They also examined gender differences in applicants' attraction to organizations. The results revealed that a family-supportive culture was more important than having family-supportive policies, with women being significantly more in favor of the family-supportive culture and alternate flexible work arrangements than men.

The absence of consideration of the familial needs of individuals results in elevated work-related stress. Work-related stress resulting from the conflict between the job and family responsibilities is exhibited in turnover, chronic absenteeism, poor performance, and low commitment (Raju, 2017). Indirect effects of job-family conflict

include dissatisfaction in life, marital challenges, family absenteeism, depression, exhaustion, failing body health, and drug abuse (Raju, 2017). Organizations need to implement programs to minimize work-related stress and provide rewards to motivate and sustain employees' energy at nonmanagement levels (Raju, 2017). Two suggestions presented by Bhalla (2016) are to offer flexible working hours and to use technology to enable employees to work remotely. The effects of work-related stress are vast extending from poor performance at the workplace to personal health and family failure, increasingly, employers are challenged to become creative in creating workspaces that enhance the employee experience.

Flexibility

One way of enhancing the employee experience is by being flexible in how, when and where work is done. In a study by Mazerolle and Goodman (2013), respondents revealed that support of leadership in facilitating work-life balance positively impacts decisions to stay with an organization. Flexibility of work schedules and time spent on personal outside activities rejuvenates, adds professional commitment, and provides a mental break from work roles (Mazerolle & Goodman). In a qualitative study on linkages between flexible work practices, organizational attractiveness, and organizational attachment, Onken-Menke et al, (2017) observed that since sabbaticals are less common than flexible work schedules and telecommuting, job seekers consider sabbaticals a special privilege that makes the job more attractive. Onken-Menke et al. noted that added attractiveness has a positive impact on organizational support and productivity. Employees respond favorably and are more committed when they are afforded flexibility

in their work schedules or spaces enabling them to achieve both personal and professional goals,

Maintaining the benefits of flexibility requires clearly defining the boundaries or work and personal time. Philip et al. (2017) wrote that the boundaries between work and private life begin to blur when there is an overlap of work and personal time, negating the positive results of telecommuting, a view shared by Wright and Yaeger (2016) on women and work. To be effective, separation of work and personal time is a critical component in defining a flexible work schedule. Mazerolle and Goodman (2013) relayed that creating a balance between work and family time requires recognition of personal strategies, strong communication, time away to rejuvenate, development of support networks, and boundaries. Challenges arise when there is blurring of the boundaries between work and personal time making it critical that boundaries and expectations are clearly defined.

Technology Overlap

Blurring of the boundaries is a direct consequence of technology overlap. Riel and Fulton (2001) postulated that technology facilitates the expansion of socio-economic culture by providing links to intellectual property and providing virtual communication forums where ideas can be shared and developed. As technology advances the way we perform daily tasks evolves. Wright and Yaeger (2016) expressed concern that technological advancements and that the opportunity to telecommute has led to difficulty in defining boundaries between work and life, a concern that is also aired in the study by Philip et al. (2017). Though the survey conducted by Wright and Yaeger was specific to

women in the workplace, analysis revealed that both men and women, in their evolving roles, would benefit from a change in organization culture to one that is more flexible and integrates humanistic value. The benefits of advancing technology that facilitates virtual communication and workspaces needs to be met by a focus on the human aspect in order to maintain work-life balance.

Diversity in the Workplace

Cultural Diversity

The interconnectedness of global economy of the 21st century has resulted in organizations becoming increasingly culturally diverse. Northouse (2016) defined diversity as the coexistence of multiple cultures within an organization. Effectively leading a diverse workforce necessitates accommodating multiple perspectives and worldviews, assessment of the work environment with the goal of seeking out potential barriers to access or participation and adapting to a culture of inclusiveness backed by a comprehensive approach to diversity and intercultural interaction (Smith, 2008).

Culturally diverse teams tend to exhibit a lack of cohesion, and elevated levels of stress, mistrust, and conflict resulting from ineffective verbal and non-verbal communication at the onset (Puck et al., 2006). Vallerio (2006) offered seven recommendations for best practices in dealing with diverse groups: set the context for change; provide ongoing communications; reward effective diversity management; measure results; provide ongoing training; offer flexible schedules; and partnering with employees, vendors, and the community. To build a strong culturally diverse team leaders should resolve to

maintain open respectful communication, being inclusive in goal setting, encouraging sharing experiences, and collectively participating in the recognition of goals achieved.

A diverse workforce that is effectively managed is an invaluable asset. Jabbour and Santos (2008) stated that diversity management increases the value of an organization by attracting and retaining the highest quality of associates, accessing a previously unexplored market share, stimulating creativity and innovation, increasing problem solving abilities, and increasing organizational flexibility. The potential employee pool is more diverse today than ever before. And this diverse pool comes equipped with a wealth of experience, ideation and talents developed in varied environments and circumstances.

Generational Differences

Millennials are leading the charge in changing the way we work. Bhalla (2016) suggested that the issue of work-life balance was revived by the influx of generation-X into the workforce, and their tendency to place greater emphasis on balancing work and other valued elements in their lives. George (2015) regarded the generational identity as a factor in changes in expectations of employees as well, stating that the current generation seeks success in their professional and personal lives concurrently, and cited flexible work schedules and the ability to work remotely as favorable employment options. Millennials differ from previous generations in several ways: (a) the expectation that employers will provide two-way loyalty, (b) ambition, (c) unwillingness to sacrifice personal interests for work, (d) definition of work-life-balance as flexibility to choose where and when to work, (e) traits that are synergistic with high core self-evaluation such

as adaptability, creativity, and narcissism (Philip et al., 2017). As millennials move into leadership roles, having entered the workforce 20 years ago, they do so as leaders who seek success in both their personal and professional lives and the evolution of work to achieve this.

The 21st century workforce is multigenerational: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Each generation has different expectations, skillset, and work ethic, often resulting in a management challenge across organizations. Rai and Mukherjee (2017) asserted that management's failure in mitigating the intergenerational conflict leads to lowed employee morale, reduced productivity and innovation, poor corporate citizenship, higher turnover, and higher attrition. Each generation brings different strengths to the workplace. Rai and Mukherjee assessed that where the aging employees bring greater maturity, stability, work orientation and experience, the younger workforce tend to be highly mobile and entrepreneurial, more educated, and more technologically savvy. Effectively managing the multigenerational workforce requires recognition of the value that each brings to the organization.

Leadership

Leadership holds a pivotal role in the success of an organization. The concept of leadership can be traced back to Aristotle and involves adaptive constructive change toward achieving a competitive advantage (Northouse, 2016). Leadership requires interaction between the leader, a group, and a goal (Solomon et al., 2016). Key leadership traits noted by Northouse (2016), and Kotter (2001) were setting a direction, strategizing, motivating, high energy, being impassioned, articulating the value of the change, and

providing support for staff to realize the goal. Solomon et al. (2016) asserted that leadership is the intentional influence on a group that motivates and directs actions in a specific direction. Uhl-Bien (2019) stated that the ability to influence others to create change through rich interconnectivity is a major component of leadership. Northouse (2016) wrote that the main functions of leadership to be: (a) setting the direction or vision, (b) strategizing to achieve the vision, (c) motivating and inspiring stakeholders toward the shared vision, (d) coping with the challenges of change management, and (e) aligning people. Alignment involves directing efforts and actions toward a shared goal that is in keeping with the culture of the organization (Latham, 2013) with the benefit of empowering employees (Kotter, 2001). Three main functions of a leader are to set goals, influence others, and act as a guide in achieving goals.

The role of a leader is multi-faceted. Pavlica et al. (2013) suggested that a leader's role is that of a visionary to inspire individuals to move forward in one direction by being inclusive and supportive through acknowledgement, empowerment, and support. Effective leaders relay trust, clarify expectations, and more effectively motivate others by articulating the vision of the organization and by empowering them through quality leader-member exchange (LMX) (Lu & Jian-Min, 2017). Engaging in a change initiative is often met with resistance that is manifested as denial, anger, and fear (Latham, 2013). As these damaging emotions emerge, leaders who express belief in the change agents, mitigating the challenges and supporting progress will be able to effect a change in employee perspective toward productivity (Latham, 2013). Kotter (2001) also shared that leaders support employee efforts to realize their goals by providing coaching, feedback

and by leading by example, and improve employee engagement by recognizing and rewarding successes. This results of which includes directed individuals, company growth and innovation (Pavlica et al., 2013). Leadership success is effected by conveying a shared goal; trusting, empowering and supporting individuals in their tasks; and recognizing and celebrating the achievement of goals.

Leadership and Power

Leadership exerts power through influence over their followers. Power is a tool that leaders wield to achieve a desired outcome (Northouse, 2016). Similarly, Wells and Berrone (2017) stated that power is an instrumental tool used to direct individual actions, to do something they would not have done otherwise. In 1993, Raven further developed previously published theories expressed by himself and J. R. P. French on the bases of power. The bases of power refer how someone in authority exerts influence on or effect change that will result in social dependence or independence (Raven, 1993). Where the proposed change is communicated, internalized, and becomes the new norm, a state of social independence is achieved (Raven, 1993). Conversely, social dependence requires constant reinforcement, and engagement to sustain results (Raven, 1993). Raven and French identified six bases of power. How leadership exerts power directly impacts whether social dependence or independence will result.

How power is exerted is referred to as the base of power. Raven (1993) observed that there are six bases of power: coercion, reward, legitimacy, expert, reference, and informational. Individuals who can threaten, punish, or reward another individual are endowed with the capacity for coercion and reward (Raven, 1993) that facilitates

directing the behavior of the subordinate (Walls & Berrone, 2017). Legitimate power is conferred by status or formal job authority (Northouse, 2016). Expert and referent power are derived by others' perception of competence relating to the former, and how they identify with and link with the leader for the latter (Northouse, 2016). These five bases, coercion, reward, legitimacy, expert, and reference require continuous work on the part of the leader to influence the follower. The final base, informational power, entails educating others, sharing knowledge, and gaining buy-in to change the mindset of the follower (Northouse, 2016). Of the six bases, five are stated and require continuous reinforcement and validation to maintain power, one base, informational, is derived from changing the mindset and is self-fulfilling.

Leadership and Culture

Leadership plays a crucial role in establishing the corporate culture of an organization as the personal beliefs and values of the leaders form the basis of the culture. Leadership is not the only contributing factor, the culture of the associates also add flavor to the tone of the organization as their cultural norms are adopted and adapted so that the culture becomes representative of the people and the shared goals and vision for success. The role of leadership is to incorporate the needs of the people working with the organization with those of the business to come to an equitable medium where all parties benefit and grow. Raguž and Zehan (2016) stated that the role of a leader is to create and communicate the vision and engage employees in developing the culture of an organization. The culture of an organization is born out of the values of leadership that in turn is representative of the evolved culture.

Culture is defined by beliefs and actions. Wilson (2014) stated that culture is a standard of beliefs held and shared by a group that defines behavior and interaction. This view was also shared by Schultz (2014) who regarded culture as the collective behavior indicative of shared values and norms: group dynamics. Hopkins and Scott (2015) defined culture as homogenous characteristics that separate one group from another exhibited by explicit and implicit patterns of behavior that are acquired through experiences or learned, and represented in language, traditions, rules of behavior, symbols, and artifacts. Culture is dynamic and contagious (Northouse, 2016), and guides interaction within and beyond the group determining how issues are confronted and resolved. The culture of group is indicative of what is valued and is represented through actions, and artifacts.

Organizational culture (OC), by extension, is indicative of where leadership places value and how this is relayed and reflected in how the organization operates. Madan and Jain (2015) considered OC to be representative of the personality of the organization. OC is influenced by the history of the organization, personal and professional characteristics of leadership, and personal and professional cultural habits of employees (Raguž & Zekan, 2016). Al Rahbi et al. (2017) regarded culture as a pattern of shared assumptions shared by a group to solve internal integration and external adaptation problems. Raguž and Zekan (2016) wrote that beyond shared beliefs, OC also includes shared behavior and assumptions within an organization that helps solve challenges. OC is experienced through values, beliefs and behavior.

OC refers to the values and behavior contributing to the social and psychological environment of the workplace. OC is impacted on by leadership philosophy, expectation, experiences, and shared values of leadership and the rest of the organization that is expressed in the mission statement, self-image, and outside interaction (Madan & Jain, 2015). Hopkins and Scott (2015) regarded OC as important building blocks that define how and why employees approach work, make decisions, and manage conflict in the workplace. The OC directly impacts on employee loyalty and commitment, and is a key predictor of employee performance, satisfaction, and success (Madan & Jain, 2015). The OC of an organization directly impacts the approach that employees have toward their work and degree of satisfaction derived from their role.

Leaders set the tone for the culture of an organization. Leaders often wear many hats and demonstrate visionary, counselor, democratic leader, peer, promoter, and dominator traits (Solomon et al., 2016). Bârgau regarded the leader of an organization as the soul of an organization who possesses qualities of flexibility, innovation, courage, and inspiration (Bârgau, 2015). The character of leaders, the direction, and the influence on the employees are instrumental in forging the culture of organizations. Northouse (2016) stated that leadership embodies a focus on group processes, the shared purpose of an organization, having influence over others, and an ability effect change. In the current global economy of increasing competition, leaders are required to make changes as necessary to keep up with the evolving market. Leaders that are effective change agents function as role models leading by example, communicate high ideals and expectations, and adopt a coaching style of leadership, guiding and encouraging based on individual

employee needs (Northouse, 2016). Effective leaders have foresight, are aware of the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the current state, and are able to be an agent of change when needed to ensure continuity, growth and development.

Leadership style is reflected in the culture of an organization. Leadership style is unique to the individual and impacts on culture by providing an example to follow (Raguž & Zehan, 2016). The alignment of leadership style and corporate climate results in high performance. Conversely, where leadership style and corporate culture is misaligned, there are negative consequences to job performance that are problematic to corporations (Madan & Jain, 2015). Retaining associate engagement is heavily dependent on that leaders exemplify the culture they communicate.

Leadership Challenges and Opportunities

Leadership is constantly faced with challenges that threaten the going concern of their organization. Challenges include responsibility to employees, maintaining employee engagement, and effectively managing change. These challenges are lessened when leaders can motivate, inspire, and empower employees to become invested in their roles, create an environment that supports work life balance, and convey social responsibility in their actions.

Bolstering Team Member Success

Success is achieved when leaders recognize the need and step in to help remove obstacles. Schwartz (2007) relayed Peter Drucker's concept that businesses have a responsibility to their employees since their actions directly impact on their employees, society, and the economy by extension. Northouse (2016) suggested several instances

where leadership intervention could bolster team member success: (a) reaching out to the organization to gather information for the team from individuals or groups that the team is not connected with, (b) advocating for employees to superiors that are unaware of their talent, (c) securing resources for their team by convincing upper management of the value of their work, (d) intervening to remove distractions so the team is not derailed from achieving their goals, (e) indicating the team's effectiveness with benchmarking, (f) being current and transparent in sharing organizational information that directly impacts the team. Participative and supportive leadership leads to strong trusting successful teams and organizations.

Maintaining Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a key component to organizational success. Anwar et al. (2014) regarded employee engagement as a critical element in retaining employees. Employee engagement involves an intellectual and emotional connectedness to the organization and other employees. (Anwar et al., 2014). Employee engagement is exhibited by a positive attitude toward the organization and an effort to improve performance (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). The main factors contributing to employee engagement are trust and integrity in leadership, growth opportunities, pride in the company (Anwar et al., 2014), access to sufficient resources, and flexibility (George, 2015). Employee engagement exists when employees have the tools needed to do their job and find emotional and professional gratification in their role.

Leadership of an organization has a responsibility to keep employees engaged. Raguz and Zekan (2016) suggested four ways that leaders can encourage employee

engagement: (a) by acting as a role model demonstrating standards of performance, (b) leaders take action to inspire and motivate employees, (c) regular evaluation of roles and functions followed by improving and enhancing processes, (d) mentoring and encouraging employees to grow beyond their current capacity. An engaged employee displays work energy, mental resilience, feelings of pride and satisfaction, a healthy involvement in work, and focus (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Employee engagement is a response to leaders that model the standards they set and are engaged in developing their employees.

Motivating and Inspiring Employees

Motivation is a driving force for success. Al Rahbi et al. (2017) defined motivation as the major force that helps allocate efforts associated with generating and implementing innovative, creative ideas. Some of the motivating factors of employees at work include the enjoyment they get from performing the task, the promise of a tangible reward, and a desire for affirmation of their skill (Barbuto & Story, 2011). Inspired people are driven by passion to perform, to make a difference, and to have a positive impact on a situation (Kerfoot, 2002). Inspirational leaders inject creativity, enthusiasm, and passion to do the right thing independently and intrinsically and this grows through the trust relationship bred between the leader and follower (Kerfoot, 2002). Employees are motivated to raise the standard of performance when they feel a personal connection, and gain satisfaction from their work.

Fostering Employee Empowerment

Empowering employees aids in their personal and professional development. Schultz (2014) suggested that empowering employees at the operational level frees leadership to focus on inspiring and setting direction for the team. Empowerment requires having quantifiable information, necessary skills, training, experience and having the confidence that your actions are backed by the organization (Schultz, 2014). Employees cannot truly feel empowered if they are not provided clear direction, and support in their decision-making. For sustained empowerment of employees in an organization there needs to be clearly defined and documented desired outcomes and deliverables, a clear definition of authority and responsibility, and sufficiency of resources to complete tasks (Schultz, 2014). An environment where employees are provided the tools, direction, trust and leadership support to get tasks completed fosters empowerment and enhanced job performance.

Navigating Work-Life Balance

The attainment of work-life balance is a major consideration for the current generation of job seekers. Technological advancement, and the accessibility to a global workforce creates challenges for organizations to acquire and retain highly skilled employees (Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013). Leadership needs to consider the needs of the current generation that seeks success in both their personal and professional life concurrently: work life balance and are unwilling to compromise (George, 2015). When demands of the job take from their personal life, workers tend to seek alternate employment. Mazerolle and Goodman (2013) observed that leaders' recognition of the

need to support work life balance has led to more offerings of flexible work schedules and working remotely. Establishing and marketing new, more flexible work arrangements is required to entice potential, and retain current employees.

Undertaking Change Management

The current rapidly evolving global environment requires leaders to be effective agents of change. Success in such an environment requires fluidity, flexibility, continual process evaluation and improvement (Schultz, 2014). Change management refers to a structured approach to management, organization, and cultural change within an organization over time (Raguž & Zekan, 2016). Implementing change initiatives involves a systematic application of knowledge, resources and procedures while controlling the influence of and reaction to change on key players (Raguž & Zekan, 2016). A well-designed change process does not guarantee success. Consideration of behavioral issues that will arise out of disruption, frustration, skepticism, and fear will arise that can be combatted with the use of cultural reorientation practices such as speeches, providing videos, posters and web notification have been found to be helpful (Schultz, 2014). Since individuals have an emotional reaction to change, it is important to have a clearly defined plan in order to alleviate the stress of uncertainty, and maintain alignment and reevaluation of the plan throughout the process.

Enhancing Corporate Social Responsibility

Having a clear understanding of the organization's corporate social responsibility directly influences the actions of employees. Enhancing corporate social responsibility (CSR), a strategic goal for many organizations, lends to promoting a higher quality

corporate image for the organization (Wu et al., 2015). CSR can be achieved through the creation of an organizational culture where ethical conduct expectations are clearly established, ethical behavior is rewarded, violating ethical standards is reprimanded, and leadership acts as role models of the ethical standards of behavior (Wu et al., 2015). Employees tend to act responsibly in making ethical decisions and consider all stakeholders' perspectives and interests to align with the CSR position communicated (Wu et al., 2015). Being a part of an organization that is representative of strong ethical and social standing gives employees a sense of pride in what they do and encourages elevated awareness and responsiveness.

Global awareness of conservation of our planet has raised the question of ethical practices affecting the environment. Leadership is responsible for supporting corporate environmental awareness and effecting organization change through training and communication. Incorporating an environmental dimension to the values of the company aid in stimulating ethical awareness and reflects positively in the global market (Jabbour & Santos, 2008). Undertaking global conservation practices enhances the image of an organization making it a more desirable place to work.

What is correct behavior in one region may not be in another. Most global companies are challenged by conflicting precedence. There are several global principles intended to guide ethical behavior worldwide. The global economic ethic (GEE) was developed by theologian Kung in 2009 when he noted in Article 3 that we have a duty to do good over evil, in Article 5 that working conditions should be maintained in a manner that avoids harm to workers health, and Article 6, which related to maintaining the health

of our natural environment and avoiding waste (Werhane, 2010). Corporate social responsibility necessitates ethical leadership.

A Strong Value System as a Tool for Strategic Implementation

Effective change is only possible when individual actions are directed toward a shared goal. Graetz and Smith (2010) regarded change as a natural phenomenon entwined with achieving a state of continuity; viewing change as a continual process where goals evolve while maintaining alignment with the core values of the organization. Alignment results when efforts and actions are directed toward a shared goal in keeping with the culture of the organization (Latham, 2010) adding the benefit of empowering employees (Kotter, 2001). Dyer et al. (2016) recommended the 7S model of alignment as a guide for successful implementation of strategic change. The 7S model helps to identify the following elements to be aligned: shared values, strategy, systems, staffing, skills, style, and structure (Dyer et al., 2016). Central to this alignment is the development, maintenance, and association of strong internal values which Kolb (2015) relayed to be a key tool in effecting strategic change. As challenges arise, it is imperative that the values, culture, and the change initiative are aligned in order to keep employees engaged.

Strategic implementation requires a plan and retaining the support of those engaged in the process. Being strategic goes beyond the plan, to the willingness and persistence of implementation, monitoring and adjusting as needed (Paniati, 2018). Implementation requires gaining the buy-in of others that starts with aligning goals with the core values of the organization and maintaining open clear communicating throughout. The process of developing strong shared values is multifaceted, requiring

development of a vision, communicating the vision and goals, and navigating the strong emotions that relate to change to arrive at a state of shared values, vision, and direction toward a shared goal. Successful execution of change will prepare an organization for course correction and continuously setting new goals (Newman, 2012), and continuity promotes openness to diversity and a state of wellbeing (Moss et al, 2017). Strategic implementation is not static, rather it evolves over time and requires constant communication and reassessment to achieve the end goal.

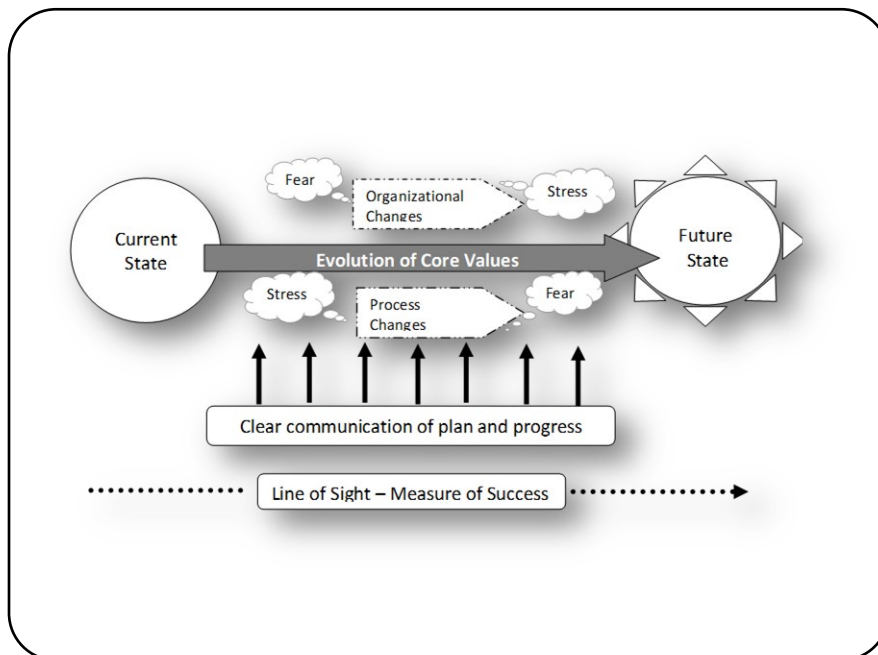
Shared Values

The culture of an organization is representative of shared values. Ravishankar et al. (2011) stated that at its center, the culture of an organization consists of core values and beliefs that are embedded in preferences about the goals and how these goals are to be attained. These tacit beliefs become organizational norms, rules, practices, and expectations (Ravishankar et al., 2011). The responsibility for creating an environment where people buy in to and live the cultural belief is the responsibility of leadership (Connors & Smith, 2011). Strategic change requires a change in the value structure or priorities within the organization, and this tends to evoke a degree of resistance since people do not understand the stress of feeling that their values or priorities will change abruptly (Moss et al., 2017). Figure 1 illustrates the feelings that accompany organizational changes and process changes, and that the evolution of core values endures from the current to future state with the application of clear continuous communication of implementation strategy and progress. The core values of an organization that is experiencing strategic change endures when the fears and stress that

accompany organizational and process change are met with clear communication of the plan and progress.

Figure 1

Factors in the Evolution of Core Values During the Implementation of Strategic Change



Note. The figure includes information on line of sight and moving from current to future state from Dyer et al. (2016), for fear and stress associated with change from Moss et al. (2017), and for evolution of core values from Ravishankar et al. (2011).

Resistance to change is wrought out of fear and uncertainty. A strong organizational culture poses a formidable force in achieving alignment (Ravishankar et al., 2011). To mediate the fears and challenges invoked by change and achieve realignment leaders should reinforce that the core values remain over time despite the changes being made (Moss et al., 2017). Strategic change that transforms values,

priorities and agendas imply that similar transformations are possible in the future that do not compromise the core values, and therein reduces the degree of resistance.

Line of Sight

Maintaining a line-of-sight aids in achieving the desired goal. Moss et al., (2017) stated that when people see that the values, goals, and roles of today may overlap considerably with future goals they are willing to make sacrifices to assist in achieving the future goals. Since strategic implementation often takes a significant length of time, leaders need to have an established method of continuously motivating their people in the desired direction and measuring their success in achieving their goals. Dyer et al., (2016) suggested the line-of-sight principle that brings to the fore the consideration of timeliness of actions to effect the change, the order of operations, and the need to provide affected parties with a map of sorts that connects their daily tasks with the overall strategic plan or goals. A line-of-sight is achieved through clear communication of progress, plan and process changes, and defined roles that provide direction.

Communication

As organizations undergo strategic change, employees experience anxiety in the face of the unknown. A key component to the change process that reinforces the strength of core values is open and continuous communication of the values, priorities and plans reinforced by the belief in evolution and continuity of current values and goals and priorities (Moss et al., 2017). Plans and progress should be communicated frequently (Moss et al., 2017), and in various media to members: posters, email, newsletters (Paniati, 2018) as this often creates a sense of familiarity and reinforces a sense of

connectedness and inclusion adding longevity and validity to the process (Moss et al., 2017). Effective communication should be clear and frequent, and provided in many forms in consideration of the diverse audience.

Engagement

Employee engagement is critical to employee retention. Engagement relates to the intellectual and emotional connection that employees have with co-workers, management, and the organization at large (Anwar et al., 2014). When an employee is engaged, they have a positive outlook on situations and experiences that is exhibited by vigor, dedication, focus and pride (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Engaged employees are invested in their role in the organization evidenced by high energy levels and mental resilience, absorption in their tasks, a healthy involvement in their work and feelings of pride and satisfaction in the personal contribution to the product or service offered (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Engagement is achieved when employees feel appreciated; that they are a valued member of the organization.

There are many factors that influence employee engagement. Anwar et al., (2014) suggested that the main factors associated with employee engagement are trust, integrity, nature of the job, connectedness to company performance, growth opportunities, company pride, and relationships with co-workers and management. Providing unbiased relevant information to stakeholders in a timely manner can reduce the occurrence of stakeholders being blindsided by news that directly impacts them (Parris et al., 2016), improving engagement. Frequent unambiguous communication maintains engagement of the workforce and builds trust (Essandoh et al., 2017). By sharing information on areas

needing improvement as well as their successes, a lack of bias is communicated that improves trustworthiness (Parris et al., 2016). People appreciate truth, and this also provides an opportunity for input and suggestion from stakeholders on how improvements can be made, adding elements of inclusion (Essandoh et al., 2017). The give and take of information and praise helps build relationships based on trust and respect. Clifton and Harter (2019) observed that employees who receive meaningful feedback that involves recognition of their strengths on a regular basis are three times more likely to be engaged. Engagement requires relationship building and instilling in employees the feeling of worth and being value added.

Engaged associates are necessary for the sustained growth of an organization. Buble et al. (2014) suggested that individuals that are satisfied and motivated are necessary to ensure growth. The cost of poor management and lost productivity from non-engaged or actively disengaged employees is between \$960 billion and \$1.2 trillion in the United States and tends toward \$7 trillion annually globally (Clifton & Harter, 2019). Kawasaki (2011) cautioned employers to not forget that the most valuable assets of organizations leave at the end of the day with no certainty that they will return in the morning. The absence of engagement results in loss of skilled labor, loss of productivity, and financial loss to an organization.

Transition and Summary

Section 1 includes insight into the challenges that employers in the hospitality industry encounter in creating and sustaining an environment supportive of work-life balance. Using the qualitative method, case study design and conceptual framework of

House' path-goal theory of the leadership was explained to be most appropriate to this study. Assumptions made, and the limitations and delimitations that bind the study were conveyed. The significance of the findings of this study to organization leaders and society was also relayed in the previous section. In the literature review the theoretical framework of House' path-goal theory, and the justification of the use of a qualitative method and case study design was further developed. The concept of work-life balance and those factors that both enable and detract from achieving this were explored as were the tools for strategic implementation.

Section 2: The Project

My study is a qualitative single case study of successful strategies employed to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of work-life-balance in the hospitality industry in Orlando, Florida. I will define the participants and population sampling and explain why my choices were suitable to my research design. The project included analysis of interview responses from industry leaders, documents, and artifacts. Eight participants were interviewed. In the upcoming section I will explain how the participants were selected and the interview protocols. I will also describe my role as the researcher and measures taken to maintain reliability and validity. Data collection, organization, analysis, and storage were critical to this project. I will define my data collection techniques and tools utilized to ensure completeness and confidentiality.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life-balance. The target population consisted of eight upper-level hospitality leaders of one of the premier lodging brands worldwide. The participants were based in Orlando Florida and represented four different sectors of the industry. All had successfully implemented strategies to create and sustain work-life balance. Organizational leaders who read this study might be influenced to create and sustain an organizational culture supportive of work-life-balance, potentially improving the health, and reducing the stress, of organizational members. Other associated benefits

might include reduced healthcare costs and improvement in the quality of life of employees and their families and the communities in which they live.

Role of the Researcher

My role in this research was multifaceted. Saunders et al. (2015) compared research to a journey in which the researcher's role is two-fold, that of a guide and the vehicle used to progress along the journey. The success of the journey is dependent on the researcher's ability to navigate the obstacles that are presented. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection (Iyamu, 2018), interpreting data collected from interviews, records, documents, and artifacts (Yin, 2018). The role of the researcher is multitiered: (a) to identify the organization, (b) to negotiate access to participants for meaningful exchange, (c) to gain the trust of participants, (d) to be critically reflective, (e) to be open to learning, (f) to understand different realities and perspectives of others, and (g) to provide a detailed analysis of a phenomenon or occurrence (Saunders et al., 2015).

In qualitative research and analysis of interactions with and data collected from participants, the researcher incorporates an interpretivist perspective that entities are dependent on one another (Onwuegbuzie 2018). The research is contextual, with focus on understanding the meaning underlying experiences that are relayed and strengthened by the triangulation of perspectives and data sources (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). The researcher in qualitative studies typically adopts a cause-and-effect mindset in analyzing and relaying how one thing impacts or influences another.

In conducting this study, I made numerous decisions that required critical reflection on why I chose to pursue the study topic, how to engage participants, and how to use the data collected. From the interviews, I sought to create a contextually appropriate account of interactions with interviewees, paying attention to the words that the participants used to articulate their view to capture the underlying meaning of the participant responses (see Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Critical to the study was adherence to ethical considerations to ensure the privacy and safety of the study participants (Palmer et al., 2014). The researcher's role is not merely to relay the facts, but more to explore data in an in-depth manner and probe participant responses to ascertain their thoughts and feelings (Katz, 2015). Critical reflection aids in illuminating any researcher bias that exists.

I conducted interviews with participants who were employed in the same industry as me. Thus, I was familiar with factors prevalent in the industry (see Saunders et al., 2015). This knowledge afforded me greater contextual understanding of findings, reducing the time needed for the research. According to Saunders et al. (2015), however, interviewers risk the introduction of preconceptions and assumptions due to such familiarity. I strove to minimize these perceptions and assumptions to prevent missed opportunities to explore relevant information.

Bias as a potential risk in my study. Podsakoff et al. (2012) regarded bias as an inevitable consequence of social science research that can potentially compromise the quality of research (see also Saunders et al., 2015). To address this challenge, I adopted the following procedures outlined by Yin (2018): (a) use a variety of data sources to

satisfy the need for in-depth contextual analysis; (b) maintain a comprehensive case study database of all data sources to add reliability; (c) document the progression of the study, from evidence to findings to confer validity to the study; and, (d) use multiple sources to correlate converging responses, achieve triangulation, and confer accuracy to the study. Triangulation involves using more than one source of data and method of collection to ensure that research data analysis and interpretation are valid and credible (Saunders et al., 2015). Triangulation adds depth, breadth, complexity, and richness to research.

I took several actions to minimize potential bias. Heslop et al. (2017) suggested that documenting coding discussions and acknowledging potential bias could work toward conformality, provide an audit trail, and confirm of the veracity of the study. Using an interview guide and audio taping and transcribing the interview for review by peers, aids in minimizing researcher bias (García et al., 2017). Chenail (2011) recommended the researcher adopt the role of interviewee and be interviewed by peers using the interview questions for the study to identify personal bias relating to the questions. To mitigate the challenge of bias my research questions were reviewed by my chair and, interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and codified.

I was responsible for maintaining ethical standards throughout the research process as mandated by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Maintaining ethical standards aligns with federal regulations (see Saunders et al., 2015). The *Belmont Report*, which was published in 1979, highlights various instance of research malpractice that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and introduced the concept of vulnerability of research participants and the need for some degree of protection (Morales

et al., 2019). The *Belmont Report* summarizes the ethical principles identified by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, an agency that was created after the signing of the National Research Act of 1974 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Prior to interviewing participants, I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct the research. IRBs outline procedures regarding informed consent, risk/benefit assessment, and the selection of participants (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). Governing bodies such as the Walden University's IRB and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research regulate studies such as this, ensuring that the safety and security of the participants is not compromised

I maintained an interview protocol refinement framework to confer transparency. This framework aids in maintaining interview protocols and supports the evolving nature of the research (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Use of the interview protocol refinement framework aides in maintaining quality data while strengthening congruence of the interviews with the study (see Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Yeong et al., 2018). The interview protocol refinement framework consists of four key control points: (a) ensure interview questions align with the research question, (b) construct inquiry-based conversation, (c) receive peer feedback on interview protocols, and (d) construct pilot interview protocol (Young et al., 2016). Interview protocols ensure consistency and completeness in all interviews adding to the veracity of the study.

Participants

I chose the participants for this study from one of the premier lodging brands worldwide, based in Orlando, Florida. The participants represented four different functional areas of the industry. The eligibility criteria for the participants included that they must hold a position of director or above and have 2 or more years in that role. I used a purposeful sampling technique to select eight participants who met the eligibility criteria. Marshall and Rossman (2011) advised that employing purposeful sampling is effective in ensuring that the participant sampling supports both the research problem and the research question. Because the focus in qualitative studies is the depth of the research and variance in participant experiences, the participant sample size is small compared to that of quantitative studies (Hennick et al., 2011). For this study I used a sample size of 8 participants.

My participant pool aligned with the objective of this study. The objective of a qualitative study is to explore an array of views, so the two fundamental factors in the selection of sample participants are appropriateness and sufficiency (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). I interviewed eight leaders from four functional areas of the organization: site operations; sales and marketing; corporate planning and analytics; brand inventory management. Within each functional area I enlisted two leaders.

One of the responsibilities of a researcher is to identify and mitigate potential risks. To protect the research participants, I followed the procedures and guidelines outlined by Walden University's IRB and the U.S. federal regulations. To gain access to participants, I contacted the human resources department of the study organization and

had an online, face-to-face meeting with leadership to relay the focus and intent of the study and interviews. I requested a list of potential candidates who met the study criteria and authorization to proceed with recorded interviews. I also reviewed published documents and websites on the hospitality industry and hotel chains that relevant to the research question.

Prior to meeting with participants, I emailed a consent form for their signature. Pletcher et al. (2015) recommended the use of a consent form to document the shared agreement and understanding of the nature of the study, the intent of the interviews, and the role and rights of the participant. The consent form also documents authorization to use voice recording and reassures the participant that proper confidentiality and ethical safeguards are in place to prevent disclosure of sensitive information acquired in the interview process (Pletcher et al., 2015). I met with each participant at least twice and communicated via email the transcript of interviews for validation and verification.

Research Method and Design

I used a qualitative research method and multiple case study design for this study. The aim of the study was to provide answers to what Yazan (2015) regarded the postpositivist “why” and “how” in relation to creating and sustaining an organizational culture supportive of work-life balance. The researcher’s personal perspective throughout a study should be neutral, with generalizations that are corroborated by data from other sources (Boblin et al., 2013). The methodology is inductive and flexible, with interpretation of discoveries as they occur to gain in-depth interview responses (Boblin et al., 2013). The underlying goal of the study was to understand what is happening through

interpretation of data, a characteristic of constructivist philosophy (see Saunders et al., 2015).

Research Method

I chose to apply qualitative research methodology. Hunt (2011) posited that at the core of qualitative research is the exploration of the meaning of an area of human experience. The study aligns with the post positivist approach. The post positivist approach is based on observable social reality (Saunders et al., 2015), obtained from experiences conveyed through interviews. A researcher should adhere to the notion that people construct their social reality, indicative of constructivism (Saunders et al., 2015). The study involved exploring opinions and perspectives of interviewees whose ideas about the value of work relative to other elements in an individual's life are based on external factors including their personal value structure, life experiences, and leadership training.

The qualitative data was studied using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves using manual and technology assistance to explore patterns and themes through an iterative process of coding (Wang & Wang, 2017). The coding process was critical in the search for a theme, and the codes related to the concepts that would be the focus of the research, and the research question (Saunders et al., 2015). I also used ATLAS.ti9, a computer assisted data management tool licensed by ATLAS.ti to verify my analysis of the data. Houghton et al., (2015) suggested some of the benefits of using a computer assisted data management tool to be: (a) assistance in handling storage, (b) assistance in data manipulation, (c) ease of access and retrieval of data, (d) management of data and

ideation, (e) query of information, (f) fulfilling transparency and rigor requirements, (g) having tools to test emerging themes.

I considered using the quantitative or mixed approach initially, since either of these would be applicable to research on work-life balance but found the qualitative method more appropriate to this study. Quantitative research methodology is effective in the analysis of implicit relationships between variables: the who, what, where, and how much (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The goal of this study was not merely to explore what factors were currently present, nor to hypothesize the impact of one element on another, and for this reason the quantitative method was not suitable. Results of this study revealed how leadership in the hospitality industry strategized creating and sustaining a workplace culture that is supportive of work-life balance. Understanding process, how situations unfold, and gaining an understanding of how individuals interpret their lived situations, are all fundamentally qualitative data (Harding & Seefeldt, 2014), and the type of data needed to explore my research question. For this reason, the qualitative method was perhaps better suited for the proposed study.

Research Design

Having decided on a qualitative analysis methodology, I had to choose between either doing a case study or a phenomenological research design. Case study and phenomenological research designs are used in qualitative analysis to examine and describe phenomena as they are experienced (Lewis, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). Interviewers who apply either the case study or phenomenological designs provide insight into behavioral responses to phenomena, change, and stimuli, by documenting

how research participants experience, perceive, interpret, reflect upon, and derive meaning from events, as does phenomenological research, though on a smaller scale (Newman et al., 2017). The main factor in deciding on my design was the scope of the study

The phenomenological research study requires more participant responses than a case study as it draws heavily on implicit normativity as both a precondition and a consequence of the research process (Heimbrock, 2005). The phenomenological study is also more time intensive than a case study since it involves the documentation of the lived experiences of participants over an extended period. By contrast, a case study is an in-depth study of a phenomenon in a real-life setting for a group, person, organization, change process, or other type of subject case (Saunders et al., 2015). The case study design is one that involves an exploration of what Boblin et al., (2013) regarded a bounded system providing a holistic and in-depth understanding of a phenomenon gained through research using sources for contextual information about those events that cannot be observed, confirming, or questioning information received, and finding and showcasing linkages between historical data and data from participants (Boblin et al., 2013). Doing a comprehensive phenomenological research study would require interviewing participants over an extended period of time, revisiting to record changes over time, and having a large participant base. As I was not able to full the scope and time parameters, I chose not to do a phenomenological study.

The design of a case study includes in-depth inquiry that can aid in identifying what is happening, why, and the effects and implication of actions, to gain greater

understanding, to inform and advance subsequent research into the phenomena (Boblin et al., 2013). The case study is an investigation of phenomenon in a real-world context where the researcher can explore what decisions were made, why, and how changes were implemented. Case studies contain valuable research material that can be synthesized for change management and used by leaders in rich empirical decision making (Saunders et al., 2015). The structure of the case study forces the researcher to scale down research to a manageable size, constrained, and bound by set parameters, to gain an even more in-depth understanding (Boblin et al., 2013). In consideration of the availability of viable participants, and my geographic and time limitations, the case study was a more feasible and effective option for exploring the strategies employed to achieve a corporate culture supportive of work-life balance in the hospitality industry.

Population and Sampling

For this study, interviews were conducted with senior hospitality industry leaders exploring the strategies employed to create and sustain an organizational culture supportive of employee work-life balance. Participants include upper-level hospitality leaders of one of the premier lodging brands worldwide, holding positions of director and above for a minimum of 2 years who are empowerment to grant alternative work arrangements. In choosing participants I needed to minimize any indication of perceived coercion of participants, as Turcotte-Tremblay and McSween-Cadieux (2018) have suggested, in undertaking research, neither will there be personal gain from individuals participating, nor compulsion to participate fearing a negative impact on their careers if they decline. Turcotte-Tremblay and Mc Sween-Cadieux (2018) stated confidentiality

breaches and biased responses are inherent risks when interviews are conducted with participants related to the interviewer. To mitigate the potential for inherent risk, I did not choose to interview anyone from my organization within my department. There was equitable distribution of candidates and inclusion and exclusion criteria was clearly documented: hierarchy in the organization at the director level and above, tenure at 1 year or more.

Five key ethical principles were at the forefront in electing my target population participants. First, Turcotte-Tremblay and Mc Sween-Cadieux (2018), stated that an equitable distribution of candidates is needed to ensure justice and fair distribution of benefits. The risk of negative impact on the respondents' jobs was minimized by ensuring all responses are confidential and that no questions force participants to compromise their integrity, values, or ability to abide by the rules of the organization. The third component was expressing respect for participants through full disclosure of the intent of the study in conversation, documenting interviews and recording them, and gaining signed consent before engaging candidates. The fourth component was ensuring that the candidate did not feel pressured to participate, nor that they were expected to extend any favors having participated in the interview. Finally, questions were designed to minimize risk to the participant.

Measures were taken to ensure the reliability of my research. Reliability of research is conferred by demonstrating that repetition of a process yields the same or similar results (Yin, 2018). My interviews progressed until the responses to questions were similar. Reliability was supported by consistency of participant responses. Saunders

et al. (2015) stated that two participant-based risks to the reliability of a doctoral study are participant error and participant bias (Saunders et al., 2015). To overcome potential participant bias, Gelling and Gelling (2013) offered the following suggestions: careful selection of interview process; emphasis on honesty, anonymity, and confidentiality; establishing a trusting relationship; and interview participants multiple time to validate consistency of responses. To avoid participant bias I relayed to participants that their anonymity would be maintained and all responses kept confidential. This helped create a safe open space for the interview. Additionally, I did not offer my opinion when asked and explained my reasoning around bias so that the trust would not be broken.

The IRB does not sanction research if the benefits of the research study do not outweigh the risk to the researcher, the research subject, copyright holders of data instruments, stakeholders, and the university (Corbie-Smith et al., 2018). The assessment is facilitated by peer review to ensure the research conducted will potentially yield benefits over and above potential risks. Velarado and Elliott (2018) stated that the researcher exercises responsibility in maintaining ethical standards by: documenting a comprehensive research plan; being committed to uncompromising ethical integrity in data collection and analysis, participant recruitment, and interviews; building rapport and trust with participant in a safe comfortable environment; remain unbiased removing preconceived notions to enable full focus on the participant's feedback; and ensuring not to sway participant responses.

By conducting the interviews in an ethical manner, the responses provided insight into the leader's perception of the need for change, the value of work-life-balance, and

their impact on the culture of the organizations they represent. The responses of the interviewees supported the statistics sourced. Ethical consideration should remain at the forefront (Saunders et al., 2015), and was sustained by regularly referencing the university's code of ethics and ethical guidelines.

Ethical Research

Conducting research ethically is achieved when the researcher presents findings honestly and with scholarship, avoiding plagiarizing, deception, and exploitive tendencies (Yin, 2018). Ethics in research can only be achieved when the researcher approaches the pursuit of knowledge with an unbiased perspective that should carry through to presentation of findings (Yin, 2018). Ethical principles that should be maintained in any research study include justice and fair representation in my participant pool; beneficence to candidates; respect to all participants; accountability; informed risk assessment; and avoidance of coercion (Corbie-Smith et al., 2018). Specific to the proposed study, I ensured the benefits to participants outweighed any negative impact on their job, ensured appropriate approvals were obtained from institutions, and that I received IRB approval (no. 10-30-20-0870679). The IRB ensures that research conducted yields greater potential benefits than risks through peer review by other researchers (Corbie-Smith et al., 2018).

The United States Department of Health and Human Resources (HHS) provides guidance through the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) on the requirements for documents regarding consent, anonymity, and protection of the rights of individuals participating in research studies. The OHRP mandates that research participants be informed of their rights, which they be provided with a statement that their participation

is voluntary and that after agreeing, refusal to participate does not result in being penalized (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018). At the forefront of this study is the commitment in ensuring all participants are safe, comfortable, and willing.

Since case studies require interviews, physical interaction between individuals, ethical challenges around conduct are a reasonable risk to be considered. The ethical challenges that researchers face result from what Saunders et al., (2017) described as conflicting philosophies of deontological views and teleological views. The deontological view purports that actions should be confined to prescribed rules of conduct and that no deviation is justified (Saunders et al., 2015). Alternately, the teleological view is that justification of conduct is subjective, determined by consequences rather than prescribed rules (Saunders et al., 2015). The challenge is exacerbated by the fact that appropriate code of conduct differs by location and situation.

To address the ethical challenge, the British Sociological Association (BSA) produced the Statement of Ethical Practice. In the Statement of Ethical Practice, the BSA recognized the impracticality of hard-and-fast rules and encouraged consideration of ethical standards in making choices (Saunders et al., 2015). However, ethical principles are subjective relative to region and social norms. To maintain integrity in a study and maintain quality of research design, Heale and Twycross (2015) recommended ensuring the critical components of content validity, construct validity and criterion validity are fulfilled. Content validity refers to the degree to which all content that impacts or is impacted by variables are covered, whether the measure or response addresses the study

concept or not (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Heale and Twycross stated construct validity relates to the ability to assess the concept and draw inferences, and that criterion validity is obtained through correlation of variables. I addressed the validity challenges by adhering to interview protocols for all interviews, asking the same questions and asking for clarification as needed, and making notes of physical responses that could not be recorded on the voice recordings.

There are strict copyright guidelines and sharing of company information at my workplace, where I conducted several interviews. I fully expected the same at other hospitality organizations. Predefined organization communication guidelines may have contributed to participant bias challenges where participants felt compelled to answer in keeping with company policy in lieu of giving honest answers where they felt that honesty might be harmful to their company. Gaining IRB approval and gaining signed agreement on anonymity may have helped overcome these challenges to some extent.

Another challenge is the negative perception surrounding the credibility of case studies. Unethical practices in case studies reinforce negative perceptions of a lack of credibility, bias, and a lack of generalizability (Yin, 2018), researcher bias, and factors that induce biased representation of research findings (Saunders et al., 2015). Chenail (2011) regarded the researcher as an instrument of research that is subject to bias due to the researcher's mental state during analysis, lack of preparation, inappropriate interviewing, and affinity with study population. I recognize that as I was the research instrument for this study there were risks of bias and I took measures to minimize this risk.

There are various practices that are suggested to researchers to validate their study. To provide an audit trail and confirm the veracity of a study, Heslop et al., (2017) suggested documenting coding discussions, source data and sources of potential bias. In a qualitative study by García et al., (2017) the researchers used interview guides for their semi-structured interviews that were audio taped and transcribed, and the interview documentation was reviewed by peers to minimize researcher bias. Performing pilot studies and interviewing the investigator also aid in minimizing researcher bias. Using interview guides and semi-structured interviews ensures all participants are presents the same questions and minimizes bias in analysis. Having transcribed audio recordings allows the researcher to revisit the interview for clarification reference.

Performing pilot studies is a practice that aids in complying with ethical standards in research studies. Pilot studies can help address instrumentation and bias issues, assess whether questions provide an adequate range of responses, and establish which questions align with the information needed for the study (Chenail, 2011). Interviewing the investigator involves the researcher effectively adopting the role of interviewee and being interviewed by peers using the design questions (Chenail, 2011). This process aids in addressing potential researcher bias by identifying personal feelings relating to the questions and raise an awareness and appreciation of the vulnerability felt by participants (Chenail, 2011). Through this exercise the researcher will also develop an awareness of the need for patience in interviews and see areas where interview protocols need to be revised (Chenail, 2011). Through pilot studies the researcher can gain an awareness of if

the research questions adequately address the issues and where interview protocols may need to further development.

Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instrument in qualitative studies is the researcher. The primary instrument of data collection in a qualitative case study is the individual conducting the research (Iyamu, 2018). As research instruments, human beings contribute unique traits of sensitivity, flexibility, and responsiveness (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). For this case study, I was the primary data collection instrument. Qualitative study analysts adopt an interpretivist perspective that entities are dependent on one another (Onwuegbuzie, 2018), and recognize that their research is an inductive process whereby data interpretations evolve to reveal patterns (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). Researchers performing substantive qualitative studies perform in-depth interviews in which the interviewee can learn how participants' experiences drive their perspectives (Willard, 2016). The human aspect of the qualitative study data collection instrument lends to challenges of sensitivities, preconceptions, perspectives and interpretation

The demands on the researcher conducting case studies differ from that of other types of studies. Yin (2018) contended the rigor of conducting case studies, and the impact on the researcher's intellect and emotions are greater than other research methods primarily due to the absence of a set routine. Yin (2018) provided the following list of traits of an effective interviewer: effective listening; being adaptive; a professional approach; ethics; and sensitivity to participants. Researchers that perform quality data collection have a complete grasp of the research topic, ask good questions, and engage in

rich dialogue in combination with fair interpretation of responses without bias: separating existing ideologies and preconceptions (Yin, 2018). An effective case study researcher has an in-depth understanding of their topic and be sensitive and receptive to the study participants.

To document the research findings, I used multiple overlapping methods. Semi-structured interview questioning, detailed notetaking of the nonverbal responses and the physical elements were applied. Physical elements include the location of the interview, the time of day, and the apparent disposition and responsiveness of the participant. I used electronic audio recordings of virtual zoom interviews that were transcribed and used in transcript review for accuracy and completeness. Documented evidence, compiled from public organization documents, authorized internal documentation and public records of related information encompassed my third source of study data. The case study was directed by the case study protocol detailed in Appendix A. All interviews followed a set procedure as detailed in Appendix B to maintain consistency.

Case study protocol is a useful tool for maintain focus on tasks, checking alignment with the research topic, and preparing for anticipated challenges (Yin, 2018). Using multiple sources for data collection is essential for triangulation of data, which confers validity to the study (Saunders et al., 2015). The role of the researcher as data collection instrument extends beyond collection to understanding the meaning behind experiences which is validated by triangulation of perspectives and other data sources (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). Yin (2018) contended that triangulation aids in identifying convergence of findings. Conversely, Stake (1995) stated that triangulation

identifies divergence. For this study I took both perspectives into consideration. Interview protocol is a guide that lists the questions or issues that will be addressed during inquiry that ensures the same line of inquiry is used in all interviews and that all relevant topics are covered. I have detailed the interview protocol followed for this study in Appendix C.

Data Collection Technique

This study was a qualitative multi-case study. Yin (2018) defined a qualitative multi-case study as an investigation of a technically distinctive situation in a real-world context, exploring and illuminating decisions made, and the results of implementation. The process of data collection involves documentation, interaction, organization, and charting patterns that emerge and evolve in the research process (Davies & Riach, 2018). Yin (2018) proposed that there are four principles of data collection: use of multiple data sources, creating a comprehensive database, maintaining a chain of evidence, and being responsible with social media as a source.

To satisfy the first principle, I gathered data for this study primarily from semi-structured interviews supported by research and organization artefacts. Conducting interviews is critical to completing a thorough and fair research study (Saunders et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews confer formality and uniformity to the study, along with the flexibility to ask follow-up questions as the interview evolves (Bernard, 2013). I adhered to pre-interview protocol as listed in Appendix B based on protocol by Saunders et al. (2015) to clarify expectations and show beneficence. To facilitate review and ensure nothing was missed, participants were requested to give written consent to the interview being electronically recorded prior to the start of the interview. At the interview inception

the participant was informed of their rights and that they were entitled to choose to not answer or stop the interview at any time. Participants were also assured, that confidentiality would be maintained. In setting expectations timing parameters were clarified, the theme and structure of the interview summarized, and appreciation extended to participants for helping to make the study possible.

It is important to create an atmosphere that encourages the interviewee to be open and honest in their responses. Sibbald et al. (2018) suggested utilizing the one-sentence one-word (1S1W) interview tactic to help identify early codes and cross-check emerging themes while using participants own words. The 1S1W is two-tiered, with a self-reflection question asked at the beginning of the interview, and the participant asked for one word that condenses the interview experience at the end of the interview, intended to enhance thematic analysis (Sibbald et al. (2018). At the beginning of the interview, each participant was asked a self-reflection question such as “What sentence describes your philosophy on work-life balance?” to place the participant into an introspective mindset. At the end of the interview, each participant was asked to provide a single word that condenses their experience, which, when combined with the words provided by other interviewees, formed the basis of the thematic analysis.

Appropriate body language, balancing rapport and neutrality, clarity in communicating expectations and information (Corbie-Smith et al., 2018), and utilizing open-ended questions, empower participants to focus on what is important to them rather than to the researcher (Ross, 2017). Because researchers tend to explore a phenomenon to gain a more in-depth understanding, this method forces the researcher to be constrained,

bound by a set of parameters, to focus thoughts and participant responses (Boblin et al., 2013)

The second principle stated is to create a comprehensive database (Yin, 2018). The database used included documentation of the request for authorization to carry out interviews from the organizations human resources departments, communication with participants granting the interviews and signed confidentiality agreements, approval from Walden University's IRB to conduct the interviews, and the interview questions. Each interview was conducted virtually: the participant at their office or an alternate location of their choosing, and the interviewer at a home office. Data collection instruments at the site of each interview included a field notebook where nonverbal cues, body language and changes in tone were recorded for post-interview notation against the transcript of the voice recording of the interview. Niger (2020) cautioned about the subjective nature of interpretation of nonverbal responses. After documenting the interviews, recipients received a copy of the transcript for validation, clarification and adding additional comments that were added to the respective interview notes in the database.

The third principle is to maintain a chain of evidence that is documentation of the progression of the case from evidence collection to findings of the study (Yin, 2018). The chain began with the field guide used for data collection, followed by case study notes showing instruction and implementation. Critical to this element is the case narrative presenting evidence in varied forms: using charts, tables, chronologies, comments (Yin, 2018). And finally, the fourth element is responsibility in using social media as a source of data for the study by: (a) setting time limits for navigating the internet, (b) cross-

checking sources for validity, (c) being mindful of authenticity and authorship on like Facebook and Twitter (Yin, 2018). Case study notes charts and tables were cross referenced against interview transcripts and, and other than information accessed from the official company website, source documents were acquired from the organization human resources department representative.

Data Organization Technique

Having conducted the interviews, I used ATLAS.ti.9 for Windows, an analytical software product of ATLAS.ti, to aid in identifying themes. ATLAS.ti.9 is a computer-based program used to perform qualitative analysis of textual, graphical, and audio data sources that aids in developing coding, linkages, and analytics in a systematically meaningful way (ATLAS.ti, n.d.). Data organization at this phase was from a group-data perspective rather than details. In group-data analysis the emphasis is more on making associations and finding connections between sorted and categorized data (Boström, 2019), an exercise that was the foundation of this study. A coding system of participants was developed based on semi-structured interviews conducted in compliance with the confidentiality agreement extended to interviewees: P1 to P8 representing the eight participants. In adherence to IRB requirements, all interview notes, transcripts, and thematic analysis will be saved in hard copy and soft copy for 5 years after which they will be shredded.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis technique employed was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves using manual and technology assistance to explore patterns and themes

through an iterative process in coding (Wang & Wang, 2017). The coding process is critical in the search for a theme, and the codes should relate to the focus of the study, the approach to the research, and the research question (Saunders et al., 2015). I used ATLAS.ti.9 software to analyze and develop thematic coding of the data collected. Houghton et al., (2015) identified some of the benefits of using a computer assisted data management tool to be: (a) assistance in handling storage, (b) assistance in data manipulation, (c) ease of access and retrieval of data, (d) management of data and ideation, (e) query of information, (f) fulfilling transparency and rigor requirements, and (g) having tools to test emerging themes.

Heslop et al., (2017) suggested that documenting regular discussions around coding of recorded source data and acknowledgement of sources of potential bias, could work toward conformality, provide an audit trail, and confirm of the veracity of the study. In a qualitative study by García et al., (2017) the researchers used interview guides for their semi-structured interviews that were audio taped and transcribed, and the interview documentation was reviewed by peers to minimize researcher bias. Two other processes suggested to minimize researcher bias are use of pilot studies and interviewing the investigator.

Triangulation of data aids in validation of findings. Triangulation of field notes, interview transcripts archival records and other research documents was integral to data convergence (Yin, 2018). Triangulation of data involves using more than one source of data and method of collection to confirm that research data analysis and interpretation is valid and credible (Saunders et al., 2015). Accuracy is achieved where diverse sources

converge on similar responses. Triangulation involves coordination of data from multiple perspectives (Olsen, 2019) that adds depth, breadth, complexity, and richness of research by involving more than one source of data and method of collection to confirm that research data analysis and interpretation is valid and credible (Olsen, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). Through triangulation of data, the researcher is able to find linkages between participant responses and gain different perspectives on a phenomenon.

Reliability and Validity

Quality research is reliable and valid. Critical components of a quality research study are validity and reliability (Saunders et al., 2015). The four key tests that Yin (2018) proposed for judging the quality of a research design are construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability tests. To satisfy construct validity criteria the researcher must identify correct operational concepts and measures (Yin, 2018). For explanatory and causal studies, the researcher must establish that one condition leads to the other except spurious relationships, to satisfy internal validity criteria (Yin, 2018). External validity is established by showing the generalizability of findings (Yin, 2018). Finally, reliability is conferred by demonstrating that repetition of processes yields same or similar results (Yin, 2018). A research study that can be recreated under similar parameters and yield similar results is deemed reliable and valid.

Reliability

A key component of a quality case study is reliability. Reliability is evidenced by consistency and dependability (Morse, 2015): the ability to replicate yielding similar results (Saunders et al., 2015). Reliability is corroborated by homogeneity or internal

consistency, stability, and equivalence (Heale & Twycross, 2015). When obtaining reliable data, García et al. (2017) suggested that to overcome participant bias in a research study the researcher should ensure careful selection of process, emphasize honesty anonymity and integrity, establish a trusting relationship, and interview participants more than once to get beyond the desired response to that based on reality. Regarding the case study process, Yin (2018) offered the following tactics to improve the quality of research:

- use multiple case sources of evidence to illustrate converging lines of inquiry
- have the draft study reviewed by key informants
- perform pattern matching
- explain findings and address rival explanations
- use logic modeling
- validate findings of single case studies with theory
- validate findings of multiple case studies with replication logic
- develop a case study database and maintain a chain of evidence

Challenges exist in achieving reliability. The reliability of a research study may be compromised by both researcher and participant errors and bias (Saunders et al., 2015). Fedina (2015) surmised that two key elements could negatively impact a research study: flawed methods and unreliable data. Flawed data casts doubt on the integrity of the researcher as well as other researchers in the same or similar fields (Fedina, 2015). Unreliable data leads to misinformation, prevention of the opportunity to impact positive change, and potential misallocation of resources (Fedina, 2015). Bias on the part of either

the researcher, the participant or both leads to flawed data and analysis based on misinformation that degrades the integrity of the study and other similar studies.

Validity

Validity also directly impacts on the integrity of the study. Validity relates to the appropriateness of methods and accuracy of measurements used in analysis, along with the generalizability of findings (Saunders et al., 2015). Heale and Twycross (2015) stated that validity falls into two basic categories: content validity and construct validity.

Content validity relates to the degree to which all content that impacts or is impacted on by a variable is covered, and whether the measured response addresses the study concept (Heals & Twycross). By comparison, Heale and Twycross suggested that construct validity, is evidenced by homogeneity, convergence, and theory evidence, and addresses the ability to test the concept and draw inferences. Data that if complete and directly addresses the concept of the study add validity.

Correlation of variables convey validity to a study. Heale and Twycross (2015) stated that the criterion of validity was the correlation of variables and different instrument measures; convergent, divergent, and predictive. Convergent measures, as defined by Heale and Twycross, show high correlation when similar variables are measured, in contrast to divergent measures that show poor correlation when different variables are measured. Heale and Twycross also characterized predictive measures as those that reflect high correlation with future. Similar responses indicate high correlation and dissimilar responses are indicative of low correlation of concepts.

Varied threats to validity exist. Threats to the validity of research include: (a) recent events that alter the participant's perception, (b) the effect that testing has on the participant, (c) changing research instructions, (d) participant withdrawal, (e) lack of clarity of responses (Saunders et al., 2015). Utilizing case study protocol, I was able to maintain consistency in the interview procedures and minimize difference in participant experience. Communication with the participants prior to the interview and emphasis on confidentiality was used to create a safe, comfortable environment. Clarity of response was achieved by combined efforts in note taking with voice recording and transcript review once the transcript is drawn,

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, the purpose of the study, research design and methodology that was employed, and the target population located in Orlando, Florida considered optimal for this study were clarified. The role as the researcher to maintain ethical standards in data collection, be open and understanding in conducting interviews, and ensure validity and reliability standards are upheld was defined as critical elements of the research process.

Section 2 contained justification of the chosen research method, notably a qualitative research method and multiple case study design. Characteristics of the target population sampling and the importance of maintaining safety and respect of participants was relayed. In Section 2 I reviewed the importance of ethics in research and relayed my data collection, organization, and analysis techniques, and how reliability and validity were maintained.

In Section 3 I will provide detailed results of the research conducted; explore the themes that emerge from interviews with participants in varied sectors, similarities and differences in the challenges and solutions found. Based on the results of the study I will make recommendations for how application of successful practices may benefit other organizations in the industry and the social impact on individuals and communities. I will identify who would benefit from the results of this study and make recommendations for action to be taken to initiate change. Finally, applying a retrospective lens, and considering limitations to this study, I will make suggestions of additional research that could add to the body of knowledge to aid in effecting positive change in workspaces and corporate culture.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life-balance. I used purposive sampling to select eight senior leaders in the hospitality lodging industry for the study. Each of the leaders had achieved success in creating and sustaining a workplace culture that is supportive of employee work-life-balance. In this section, I will present the findings of the study, grouping them by emergent theme. I will also discuss how this study may affect industry practice and social change. In addition to offering my reflections on this study, I will make recommendations for additional research that may build on this study. The section includes a conclusion to the study.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was, What strategies do hospitality leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employees' work-life-balance? To answer this question, I conducted semi structured interviews with eight senior leaders in the hospitality lodging industry who had achieved success in creating and sustaining a workplace culture that is supportive of employee work-life-balance. Transcripts of the interviews were subsequently sent to interviewees to be read and returned within 1 week. Interviewees were encouraged to add comments as they deemed appropriate. Data saturation was reached when interview responses yielded no additional

information. Figure 2 shows a word cloud of the most common terms in participant responses.

Figure 2

Word Cloud of Most Recurrent Terms in Interview Responses

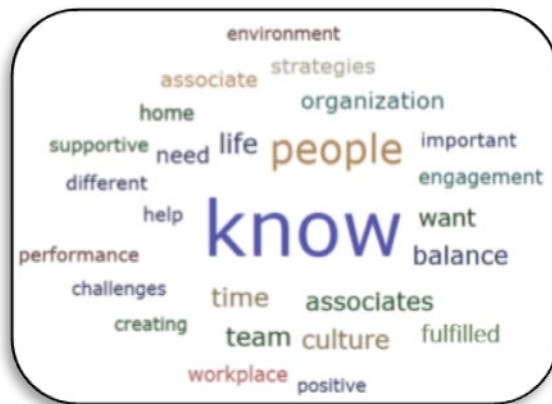


Table 1

Participant Demographics

Participant	Industry sector	Job title	Gender	Years of experience
P1	Site operations	VP	Female	> 10
P2	Site operations	VP	Male	> 5
P3	Sales and marketing	VP	Male	> 20
P4	Sales and marketing	VP	Male	> 30
P5	Corporate planning and analytics	VP	Male	> 5
P6	Corporate planning and analytics	VP	Male	< 5
P7	Brand and inventory management	VP	Female	> 5
P8	Brand and inventory management	VP	Female	> 15

Note. VP = vice president.

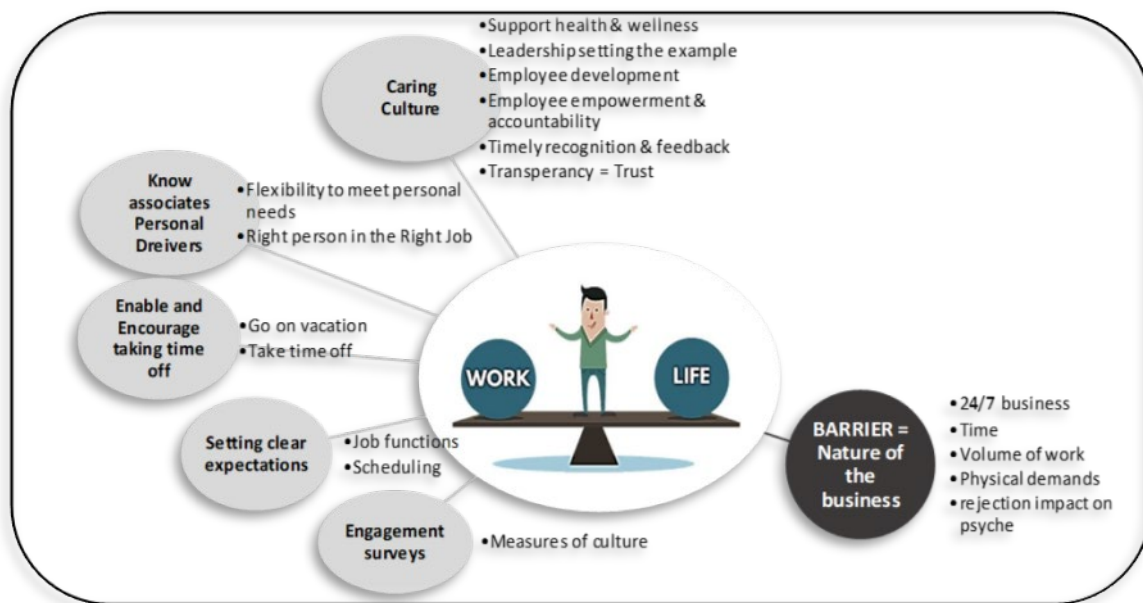
Eligible participants for this study held a position of director or above and were in their role for a minimum of 2 years. Participant demographics are displayed in Table 1. In discussing the findings, I use alpha numeric codes to maintain participant privacy and

confidentiality. Also, references to participants' names, places of employment, employer, or any other identifying information do not appear in the discussion.

I collected data by conducting face-to face, semi structured interviews using Zoom video conferencing and from obtaining documents and data that is available to the public retrieved from the World Wide Web. The interview data were validated via transcript review. Participants were sent a copy of the interview transcript and asked to review for validity and completeness, and to provide additional comments if needed. ATLAS.ti.9 software was used to aid in thematic analysis.

Figure 3

Emergent Themes for Creating a Culture Supportive of Work-Life Balance



Theme 1: Create a Caring Culture

Six key themes emerged from the triangulation of data analysis: (a) knowing employees' personal drivers; (b) clearly and consistently communicating a corporate that cares about

the associates, customers, and the community; (c) encouraging and enabling employees to use accrued personal time; (d) conducting an annual engagement survey; (e) setting clear expectations; (f) overcoming barriers caused by the nature of the business. Figure 3 provides an illustration of the themes.

All of participants interviewed relayed that the organizational leadership places emphasis on ensuring that a caring culture is fostered and communicated down through the organization. This concept has also been incorporated into leadership training and reverberates throughout the company via electronic newsletters and posters displayed in common areas. The message is consistent regardless of location globally and is communicated in multiple languages. The organization's website states the culture, which is,

We empower our associates to live their most fulfilling lives. Fun is at the heart of our business. Our associates are inspired to deliver unforgettable vacation memories, all while creating their own. Our values provide the framework for a life, fulfilled.

Regarding its caring culture, the public communication is as follows: "We are devoted to the personal development of associates. We act with genuine concern for the wellbeing of others. We care deeply and respond quickly to the needs of each other, our customers, and our communities." Additionally, associates are cited as the cornerstone of the company. In discussing its caring culture, the organization notes that it seeks to foster "environments where associates are given opportunities to grow and reach their full potential. Our first focus is to care for our associates so they can care for our customers."

Participant responses revealed a shared view that leadership is directly responsible for setting the tone of the culture of an organization and that cultivating it is an ongoing process. Critical elements to maintaining a culture of care relayed by participants are (a) setting the tone, directing, encouraging, supporting, and enlightening; (b) setting milestones for associates and coaching to achieve success/growth; (c) leading by example; (d) being respectful of others, (e) holding employees accountable for task completion or success; (f) providing timely recognition or feedback; and (g) fostering trust through transparency of communication. Table 2 displays which elements were coded in each participant's interview responses; an "X" indicates that the participant's response was coded for the element in that row.

Table 2

Participants' Views on the Leader's Role in Creating a Caring Culture

Element	Participant							
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Leadership role: setting the tone, directing, encouraging, supporting, enlightening	X		X	X		X		X
Employee development: Set milestones, coach to achieve success/growth		X	X		X			X
Lead by example	X	X				X		X
Respectful of others	X	X	X		X		X	
Hold employees accountable for task completion / success		X				X	X	X
Support staff decision-making	X							X
Timely recognition/feedback	X	X		X				X
Transparency in communication = trust			X	X		X		X

P3 remarked on the importance of connecting with associates on both a personal and professional level to better meet their needs with the goal of sustaining a caring culture. P3 stating that “there are continuous conversations both in general meetings and in one on ones to connect with associates, ask them how they're doing, we go over their performance, but then we ask them how they're doing personally”. This ideology is reminiscent of what McCutcheon (2019) regarded as achievement-oriented leaders that prescribe to House path-goal theory of leadership where the leader’s behavior is tailored to the needs of the individual in consideration of their wellbeing and is adjusted in response to feedback for optimal goal achievement.

In line with House’s (1971) path-goal theory, P8 spoke about the importance of knowing one’s associates to effectively aid in development as a function of leaders and a factor relevant to the culture of caring. P8 stated that

I like to understand what makes people tick... getting a feel for people and kind of what they need to kind of light the fire because it's different, again, for different people. And focusing on development plans, and I don't mean always promotion, but opportunities to change it up, switch it up, you know, grow, make development a part of the conversation with my leaders with their team, understanding how are we developing certain associates with associates’ passions? Where did they gravitate towards? Do we have paths that excite them?

The functions of providing direction and setting tasks tailored to the individual’s competencies and personal and professional goals and following up to aid in achieving success are characteristic of directive leadership, a component of House path-goal

leadership model (McCutcheon (2019). At their core, directive leadership, supportive leadership, participative leadership, and achievement-oriented leadership adhere to the tenets of House path-goal theory of leadership (Boone, 2019). Leading by example, an element of both directive and participative leadership, was echoed by five of the participants as a way of guiding while building a connection with associates. P1 stated that,

I like to be out and about with the associates. So, I think that having management, be in tune with the associates and show that you know the job and we are no better than they are, and I can help them. But they also, I think, learn that I understand what they go through.

P1 also shared a story of one of the lifeguards jumping in to aid a 4-year-old while the mother protested that he would have been okay. The following morning P1 conveyed gratitude and support of his actions. This gave the associate assurance that they have the support of leadership: exemplary of supportive leadership. Holding employees accountable for their actions and successes, and providing timely feedback are components of achievement-oriented leadership. Both components were cited by participants as crucial to fostering employee engagement in a culture that is supportive of work-life balance. P4 relayed the importance of giving feedback to help maintain perspective: “But just frequent feedback as frequently as you can, I think, is very motivating for people because they, you know, then they're focused on the right things.” P2 articulated the importance in giving feedback in saying,

I like to send any positive message that I get from any owner or guests to department heads to read in their team meetings, celebrate the wins, praise for positive, hold accountable for negative and that holding accountable in coaching and developing.

Two other sentiments conveyed by participants in creating a caring culture are being respectful of all and being transparent in communication. Where these elements are present, there is increased confidence in leadership. Covey (2006) wrote that confidence in leadership relies on four basic tenets: integrity that comes from transparency, intent that is rooted in practices and values, capability that is evidenced by skills and strengths, and results that rely on a committed workforce.

Theme 2: Know Associates' Personal Drivers

Participants noted that sustaining a culture supportive of work-life balance required knowing the associates. As P8 stated, “first we need to understand what work life balance means to the associate because it's different for everybody.” Table 3 is a depiction of the participant responses related to this theme.

Delete extra line

Table 3

Participants' Views on the Leader's Role in Knowing Associate Drivers

Driver	Participant							
	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Flexibility to meet personal needs		X				X		X
Having the right fit of person to job	X			X		X		X

Achieving balance of work and life does not merely mean dividing one's time equally between home and the job. Rather, as Mikotajczyk (2021) stated, the concept of balance is subjective, based on the individual's age, family situation, leisure habits, professional and personal goals, and their perspective of what is a reasonable amount of time and energy to be expended in each facet to achieve satisfaction.

Mikotajczyk (2021) wrote that employees entering the workforce expect flexibility in time and nature of work, a larger pool of days off than previous generations, and benefits that support physical activity and community involvement. Three of the participants cited being flexible in work schedules as a strategy for creating a culture that supports work-life balance. P2 stated,

I almost equivocally try to say yes, to any schedule request that comes through, even if it means we have to get creative behind that. Because I've seen that if a team rallies around associate being able to have their time off, that person is fresh, they feel valued, and they will work just as hard when perhaps they're having to cover for somebody else.

In a study on sustainable development, Mikotajczyk (2021) noted three emergent flexibility solutions: flexible and compressed workdays, working remotely part of the time, programs such as parental leave and childcare solutions to support family matters. Some of the anticipated benefits of utilizing remote workspaces are increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and locational independence (Malik et al., 2014). Working remotely is a strategy that many organizations have adopted to retain employees and boost engagement.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic many corporations transitioned to working remotely when feasible. Remote working has brought benefits and challenges to managers, based upon the extended workday and difficulty shifting from work to leisure, leading to a disruption in the body's rest and regeneration rhythm (Mikotajczyk, 2021). Another consequence of remote work is social separation, which according to Malik et al. (2014) adversely affects individuals personal and professional development.

Beyond gaining an understanding of the needs and expectations of employees, effective leaders consider the skills employees bring to the workplace and align tasks with appropriate resources. Four of the study participants stated the criteria of having the right person in the right role doing the right thing as necessary for creating and sustaining the caring culture.

It's getting the right associate in the right job, and where that doesn't happen, helping guide them to that right job, if it is in the hospitality if it is still in the area, or if it's outside of that. (P1)

It is important, once you do get that knowledge, or keep in touch with who your people are, you're able to better navigate whatever challenges they have. (P4)

By knowing the associates, you can then align people better with what they are passionate about, what drives people. And make sure that the core of what they're doing is something that is, you know, aligned with their passion and their skill set.

And that goes a long way in terms of alignment. (P6)

With my leaders with their team, understanding how we are developing certain associates with associates' passions. Um, where did they gravitate towards? Do we have paths that excite them, kind of thing? (P8)

Selecting the appropriate individual who possesses the skills and passion that align with role impacts on the degree of job satisfaction the associate experiences and their longevity with the organization. Erdogan (2019) wrote that person-job-fit directly impacts on job satisfaction, which is a key driver in achieving work-life-balance. Job satisfaction directly impacts employee engagement. In the same vein, Johnson and Pike (2018) stated that employees' perception of whether their skills are being utilized in their role is reflected in the employer's engagement measures.

Theme 3: Enable and Encourage Taking Time Off

Miller (2020) reported that in the United States, 85.8% of males and 66.5% of females are working more than 40 hours per week. The World Health Organization (2021) reported that working longer hours led to 745,000 deaths from stroke and ischemic heart disease in 2016, up 29% from 2000. Over this period the number of deaths from heart disease increased 42% and from stroke increased 19%. Studies by the World Health Organization (2021) concluded that working a 55-hour work week opposed to a 35 to 40-hour work week leads to a 35% higher risk of ischemic heart disease and 17% higher risk of stroke. There is an increasing need for individuals to disconnect from the pressures of work and focus on relaxation. We can all benefit from a restful night's sleep and pleasure derived from leisure activities, control over our time, and the psychological detachment from the responsibilities of work (de Bloom et al., 2013).

All the study participants shared that they strongly encouraged their associates to use their vacation and other paid time leave.

We had this limit on vacation time (previously), but for people going back to Morocco, or traveling to Brazil, it really made sense for them to take longer spells of vacation together. We understood that if someone is going home to visit their family, and it's on the other side of the world that they be able to take a longer vacation, spend more time with their family. (P4)

I tried to make a pact with myself and the team, that nobody will lose vacation. Nobody will have a request denied. I've been with the company almost 21 years.

It's never fun trying to make plans and having your request denied. (P2)

We're in the business of vacations, we should encourage people to have healthy lifestyles and take their vacation time and, manage their children's issues during COVID and whatever else is going on. (P8)

We ask them how they're doing at home. Is everything okay? Are they taking enough time for enjoyment? Here we are in the vacation ownership business, and we're selling vacations. Are they taking the time to enjoy their personal life? (P3)

I've told my team they have vacation days that they need to use, I encourage them.

And so, providing the opportunities for those types of things, by providing people the opportunity to take their vacation days, take a mental day, whatever. (P6)

Theme 4: Set Clear Expectations

Another emergent theme was the importance of setting clear expectations.

Solomon et al. (2016) wrote that leadership is a relationship between the leader, the

individual or group, and a shared communicated goal. The role of the leader is to motivate and direct actions toward a specified result. House (1996) indicated that a crucial role of leadership is to provide cognitive clarification to ensure that subordinates expectations of attainment of work goals, intrinsic satisfaction, rewards for goals achieved, and the linkage therein aligns with real attainable goals and rewards. Proponents of House' path-goal-theory of leadership empower and motivate their followers by clearly defining goals, clarifying how best to achieve the stated goals, assisting in overcoming obstacles to success, and supporting efforts along the way (Northouse, 2016). Clarity and completeness in communication results in enhanced follower performance and satisfaction.

Clear expectations are a basic need of employees. Employees need to know performance targets, organization objectives, and the potential for career development (Erdogan, 2019). One-half of the participants interviewed conveyed the importance of setting clear expectations as critical to engagement and job satisfaction and longevity of employment. The following were relayed in their responses to strategies employed to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of employee work-life-balance:

Specifically resort operations, we're 24 hours seven days a week. I think it starts when you hire them, letting them know what the expectations are, our busy days are the weekends, our holidays. It's not a Monday through Friday, 9 to 5 job. (P1)

I think right up front the expectations have to be set. Because if someone has a situation outside of work that prevents them from being there, they need to know there are some positions that have a lot less flexibility. (P4)

And I think what's happening right now is, the older workforce has always kind of been used to this style of work, right? Where you know, you just keep working work, work, work. I do think that with the newer workforce, there could be challenges there. Because they're expecting something different now. (P6)

Also, we are a 24/7 business and upon hiring, I think expectations need to be clear that it's the right fit for you because we do work holidays, weekends, nights, and if the shift after you doesn't show you can't just leave the guests on attended. (P8)

The consensus, especially from leaders at sites versus corporate locations, due to the nature of the business, was that clearly relaying the expectations of the job when onboarding an associate is critical to their success and job satisfaction. Site employees are more directly impacted by the function of meeting guest needs every day all day, and the cyclical nature of occupancy.

Theme 5: Undertake an Engagement Survey

Participants relayed the value of performing an annual employee engagement survey. Employee engagement relates to the positive attitude toward the organization that is exhibited by efforts to improve performance with vigor, dedication, and focus (Jenkins & Delbridge, 2013). Participants relayed that the organization measures engagement through an annual associate experience survey, the results of which are shared with leadership who are charged with following up and working with their teams on areas for improvement and celebrate successes. Anwar et al. (2014) cited employee engagement as critical to employee retention as it relates directly to intellectual and emotional connection employees have with co-workers and management.

Some of the comments and views shared about the effectiveness of the associate experience survey were as follows:

- I've seen it as low as 12 questions to 43 questions to now maybe it's 66 or 70 questions that measure engagement. There are specific key drivers and questions on the survey that will tell any property leader how effective our strategies are to create and sustain an optimal work environment. (P2)
- Once a year, we get the survey and when the survey results come out, that's how we evaluate the employees' engagement, grievances and how they feel about where they work. (P3)
- It's feedback, and it lets you know overall how you're doing and, almost breaks down too many ways, but we can look at it by associate group, within areas of responsibility by brand, by department, by job function. (P4)
- The results provide leaders a gauge of how effective we are at keeping our employees engaged. If our employees' needs are being met. And of course, where we need to make changes to keep our people happy. We are in the business of hospitality, meeting the needs of our guests. How an employee feels about where they work directly impacts our guests' experiences, and for us at corporate, our coworkers work experience. (P5)
- The organization itself does an annual assessment, an associate engagement survey to formally measure the effectiveness. It is very data driven. (P7)

Though the organization effectively administers the associate experience survey annually, some of the leaders relayed that the process is deficient, stating

I find surveys get you kind of surface answers, not really what's underneath things and what they really mean. (P8)

Because most leaders are bonused on it, I think how can you possibly get an honest response out of something that affects people's pocket? (P8)

I think our engagement survey is a good one. Is it enough? You know, maybe twice a year, you know, have one in the spring, and have one fall, since the fall one would follow up on where you did well, the areas that you did not do well, you're supposed to work on them. (P3)

The culture of an organization is directly reflected in the engagement survey responses. The culture of an organization directly impacts on employee engagement, performance, satisfaction, and success (Madan & Jain, 2015). Factors that directly impact on engagement and by extension the culture of an organization include trust, integrity, connectedness to the company, growth opportunities, and company pride (Anwar et al., 2014). In this vein P5 shared that leadership works to shape the organization culture efforts directed to both the associate and the community

We try to work with individuals' schedules. And we try to provide intrinsic motivation: paying people well, keeping in line with the market, showing we care about the community as evidenced in our work with the Children's Miracle Network, supporting wellness, both physical and mental, and having resources at associate's disposal. And sometimes this is not the associate's number one career choice. sometimes the job is a stepping step toward where they really want to be or is just a job to fill the gap. In those cases, we as leaders try to guide them

toward other opportunities of try to help them find purpose in what they are doing.

Theme 6: Overcome Barriers

Interviews revealed that the barriers to achieving a culture that is supportive of work-life-balance varied between sites and the corporate offices due to the nature of the business. The key challenges identified by the study participants are displayed in table 4.

Table 4.

Barriers to achieving Work-Life-Balance

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
<i>Time / Scheduling</i>	X							
<i>Insufficient time to meet goals</i>					X		X	
<i>Physical demands / Burnout</i>		X						
<i>Employee/Role alignment</i>	X	X				X		X
<i>Availability of tools and resources</i>		X						
<i>Leadership disconnected from team</i>			X					X
<i>Rejection impact on Psyche</i>			X	X				
<i>HR practices to mitigate risk</i>								X
<i>Disparity between communication and execution of culture</i>			X					X
<i>Lack of transparency</i>				X			X	X
<i>Management - Policy inconsistency</i>			X	X				

Challenges unique to hotel and resort locations include ensuring there is sufficient staff to meet guest needs during peak seasons and the tendency for burnout due to the physicality of the job. Sales teams are also unique in their challenges, primarily maintaining a positive disposition in a role that is subject to more rejection than success. Challenges faced by leaders at the corporate headquarters differ from those at the sites in that corporate leaders do not have sufficient time to meet narrowing deadlines. Other

challenges relayed by participants included (1) not having the right employee-role fit, (2) leadership that is not connected with their team, (3) inconsistency in management policies between associates and situations, (4) lack of transparency, (5) disparity between communicated direction and actions taken, (6) inability to meet individual needs due to limitations enforced by human resources to mitigate risk.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this study can aid leaders in the lodging industry by illuminating challenges that exist and considerations that can aid in creating a culture that is supportive of work-life-balance. Where employees achieve work-life balance they feel more accomplished and experience less stress in the workplace and in turn take less of this stress home (Raju, 2017). The result is, on a personal level, a better quality of life and more positive psychological state (Hill et al., 2007). Organizations will experience reduced turnover costs when employees feel connected and appreciated, and experience personal development toward their goals, reducing their likelihood of flight: taking with them a wealth of knowledge and experience. Key factors relayed by participants in this study were fitting the right employee in the right job; take the time to know the team; recognition that there is no one correct strategy; leaders are ultimately responsible for success.

The success or failure in creating a culture of balance begins with onboarding. Despite the socio-economic changes that have taken place in the last decade, individuals basic need to feel accomplished and to know that they add value is unchanged (Oludayo et al., 2018). Feeling accomplished is not possible when an individual is not performing a

task in which they are not invested. As was stated by all participants in this study, challenges are mitigated by ensuring that employees are fitted to the appropriate role that aligns with their talents, skills, and goals. In the hospitality industry though, as P1 explained individuals accept roles with the intention that it is not their “forever job” but rather a stepping-stone. In instances such as these, turnover is not an indication of a failure in meeting the associate’s needs. It is important to fit individuals with the appropriate role to meet their needs with full disclosure of expectations. Clear communication is imperative.

Two-way communication is a critical element of any successful team. Every participant in this study relayed that creating and sustaining a culture that supports work-life-balance, where employees feel that they are valued, requires that the leaders take the time to get to know their team. Leaders that align with House’ path-goal theory of leadership recognize the need to adjust to the individual needs of employees, tailoring goals to individual talents, strengths, and interests to increase the potential for mutual success (McCutcheon, 2019). The workforce is more diverse today than in decades past, and consideration need to be given to the individual needs in making organizational decisions that will impact the whole.

As these study findings showed, in a single organization there are various factors that impact different sectors or divisions, so a blanket statement or mandate on how to tailor the organization culture is ineffective. At the hotel and resort sites leadership must accommodate for seasonal travel, the rigor of the tasks, and transient workers. At the sales sites leadership must consider the negative impact of rejection on their sales force

and find ways to keep them motivated and engaged. At the corporate sites locations ever changing demands and deliverables, and employee expectations need to be engaged and managed. Leaders can only begin to work toward creating a culture that supports work-life balance after they have assessed the varied needs, and challenges of their workforce in their varied workspaces.

Throughout, the responsibility falls on leadership to create a culture that is supportive of work-life balance, regulate practices to sustain this culture, measure their success, and adjust as need for continued success. Leadership is responsible for showing integrity and transparency in their actions to garner the respect and trust for their employees.

Implications for Social Change

The implications of creating and sustaining a workplace culture that is supportive of work-life balance are three-fold. Firstly, employees will be engaged in self-fulfilling work with the increased potential for personal growth and development. Employees incentivized to share ideas further advancing enhancing the team efforts potentially improving on efficiencies. Reduced stress levels associated with work-life balance will result in lower (individual) spending on healthcare for stress related illnesses and lower organization spending on stress related healthcare claims-balance. Additionally, there is potential for reductions in turnover, poor performance and absenteeism, symptoms of work-related stress (Raju, 2017).

Recommendations for Action

A proactive approach is needed to create and sustain a culture that is supportive of work-life balance. The culture of the workforce in 2022 is changing rapidly, requiring employers to gain a better understanding of the employee base. Generational, geographic, and socio-economic differences directly and significantly impact the vastly diverse workforce. To better meet the needs of employees, and effect a more productive workforce, employees need to gain clarity into what incentivizes employees.

Within individual teams, leaders should invest time in meeting with staff individually to gain an understanding of their motivators and any special circumstances impacting motivation and performance. Organizations should invest in the administration and analysis of surveys to collect information about demographics, age, interests, motivators, goals, and how personal and professional goals are prioritized. The survey findings might provide leadership with information needed to transform and enhance existing development planning and develop incentive packages to motivate employees toward elevated performance and leadership development.

Hospitality organization leaders should invest in continuous improvement training for management to ensure that the culture that is communicated and the culture that is being fostered are aligned. Consistency and speaking with one voice aids leaders in building trust commitment and security.

Finally, I believe that greater efforts should be made in being transparent in communications. When employees hear rumors of changes that may impact them, but those potential changes are not communicated directly, the resulting employee

uncertainty results in fear, distrust, and disassociation. I intend to publish this study in the ProQuest Dissertation database to be available to a broader audience of academics. I will also make a copy available to anyone who contacts me.

Recommendations for Further Research

When I began my doctoral journey, my intention was to complete a study that was reflective of the hospitality industry. However, the impact of COVID-19 and the challenges that the industry continues to experience limited my scope. Participants represented leaders from one major organization based in Orlando. I would recommend future researchers expand the scope of this study to include leaders from multiple competitor brands to better explore how the challenges vary, and gain perspectives of leaders from organizations that are branded differently and have different corporate cultures. A multiple case design conducted in a broader geographic area may add depth to the findings.

Reflections

When I embarked on my doctoral study journey, I did so with fear and trepidation. As I progressed, I constantly heard about the sacrifices of my time that this would take, and the failure rate, causing my fear to grow. But I was driven to complete this by the faith my children have in me, and the pride I heard in their voices when they spoke of what I was doing. I was driven to complete this study having been employed in the hospitality industry for two decades, experienced various leaders, and grown and developed into a leader who has weathered multiple storms and learned through academics and experiences. I have studied leadership theories and read more case studies

than I would care to mention and am acutely aware of the responsibility that comes with leadership. But as I near the end of my journey, I must admit that the fear is still there, just as intense, but different. I question whether I have done justice to this study. But I am resolved to accept that though there is always another question to ask, and always another avenue to explore, those are avenues that another will traverse.

While conducting my interviews I was fearful that my own experiences and views would influence participants responses. To avoid this, I spent additional time second guessing my interview questions and rewording them to avoid leading the interviewee. While doing the interviews I recall several times the participant would say “you know what I mean right” and my response was always “would you like to expand? I would really appreciate your perspective.” During one of my interviews a participant asked me if I agreed with the response, and what my opinion was. I responded to this participant that I would not want to influence their response, but I agreed to share my opinions at a later date post-interview.

Through this process, I have been humbled by the work involved. I learned to accept that I have limitations and let that go. I learned the value of pockets of time and how they easily they can slip beyond my reach. Most of all I guess I learned that I have more drive and am more stubborn than I initially thought. Life will happen. There will always be an obstacle to overcome or an event that rocks you to your core. We need to decide what we do when these things happen. I may have faltered at times, but I always rise. Through this journey, I have met incredible people, endured, and overcome terrible challenges, and learned to choose what is important.

Conclusion

The research study supports the statement that some hospitality leaders in Orlando, Florida employ strategies to create and sustain a workplace supportive of work-life balance. The culture of the organization is rooted in the notion that you must care for your employees so that they care for your guests. The culture is considered a “caring culture” where leadership promotes living a life fulfilled. Six key themes emerged from the study: (a) knowing employees’ personal drivers; (b) clearly and consistently communicating a corporate that cares about the associates, customers, and the community; (c) encouraging and enabling employees to use accrued personal time; (d) annual engagement survey; (e) setting clear expectations; and, (f) barriers caused by the nature of the business. Leaders who understand and care about their employees, communicate clearly and effectively, and provide workplace flexibility create a workplace characterized by work-life balance. Workers in this environment better care for the customers, resulting in continued financial success for the employing organization.

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Appendix A: Case Study Protocol

Overview of the case study	
Purpose of the study	The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life-balance.
Conceptual framework	The conceptual framework of this study is House's path-goal theory which was introduced in 1971 (1971, 1996). Leaders who exemplify path-goal theory of leadership inspire performance, clearly define paths to success in achieving goals, motivate, remove obstacles to success, and reward achievements, creating a more favorable workplace atmosphere.
Data collection procedures	
Contact persons for connecting with participants	Contact human resources departments at four Orlando resort chains
Data collection plans	Use the Walden university website and the worldwide web to retrieve information on the study topic, the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, the organizations under study, and case study process data.
Other areas to be covered before interviews can be conducted	Seek out an appropriate transcription tool and data analysis tool. Research effective interview training/preparation, thematic analysis and any other data driven tools.

Appendix B: Preinterview Protocol

Purpose	Step
To clarify expectations and communicate mutual respect	Inform the participant of their rights to not answer or stop the interview at any time. Restate that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained. Request permission to electronically record the interview so that nothing is missed. Summarize the theme and structure of the interview Clarify timing parameters. Express appreciation to participants for helping to make the study possible.

Appendix C: Interview Procedure

What will you do	What will you say
Introduce the interview and set the stage.	<p data-bbox="662 401 1377 611">Good day _____. I would first like to extend my appreciation for your participation in my case study addressing strategies that hospitality industry leaders employ to create and sustain organizational cultures supportive of employee work-life-balance.</p> <p data-bbox="662 657 1365 762">This case study is the foundation of my doctoral study towards the completion of my Doctorate in Business Administration with Walden University.</p> <p data-bbox="662 808 1393 1018">Having completed the consent form that I emailed to you previously, I will now ask you a couple of questions to which I would like you to express your views and experiences. With your permission, I will be recording this session and you reserve the right to at any time refuse to answer a question or stop the interview.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1064 1333 1169">Let me reassure you that the proceeding will be kept confidential and that your name will not be used anywhere in the study when it is published.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1215 1328 1320">Note that these notes and recordings will be kept securely, for 5 years after which time they will be destroyed.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1367 1377 1493">Your responses will be compared to those of other participants. I have booked and 30 minutes with you but the interview is intended to be 20 minutes leaving us time to delve into anything that may come up.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1539 1398 1644">Following the interview, I will be emailing you a copy of the transcript and would appreciate your reviewing it to ensure I have accurately recorded your responses.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1690 1357 1795">I am going to turn on the voice recorder now. If at any time you would prefer that I turn it off please let me know.</p> <p data-bbox="662 1841 1219 1858">Do you have any questions before we start?</p>

(table continues)

What will you do	What will you say
Watch for nonverbal cues. Note the disposition of the participant regarding the line of questioning. Paraphrase as needed. Ask clarifying questions. Ask probing questions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strategies do you employ to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of employee work-life-balance? 2. What strategies do you use to engage and motivate your employees? 3. What were the key barriers, if any, you encountered in engaging and motivating your employees? 4. How does your organization assess the effectiveness of its strategies for creating and sustaining a culture that supports work-life-balance? 5. How did your organization address the key challenges to creating a culture that is supportive of work-life balance? 6. What other information can you offer concerning strategies to create and sustain a workplace culture supportive of employee work-life-balance to mitigate high turnover costs that we have not previously discussed?
Wrap up the interview thanking the participant.	We have come to the end of my interview questions. Do you have any questions for me?
Schedule follow up transcript review interview.	<p>I will be transcribing both the recorded interview and my notes and would like to forward this one week from now. Would you be able to review the transcription and get back to me in two weeks with any comments or changes you may have? If you have additional comments that were not expressed in this interview, I also welcome those.</p> <p>I will send you an emailed meeting request by close of business today. Do you have a preferred time?</p>