

2022

Effective Workplace Stress Reduction Strategies in For-Profit Higher Education

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Erin K. Woods

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

Abstract

Effective Workplace Stress Reduction Strategies in For-Profit Higher Education

by

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MBA, DeVry University-Keller Graduate School of Management, 2013

BA, National-Louis University, 2009

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

July 2022

Abstract

The idea that business leaders experience stress in the workplace has resulted in a demand for understanding the negative impact stress has on business. Business managers in for-profit higher education lack strategies to reduce employee workplace stress. Grounded in the job demands-resources model, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how business managers in for-profit higher education in Arizona reduce employee workplace stress. The participants comprised of three business leaders at a for-profit higher education institution in Arizona who have successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee workplace stress. Data were collected from semistructured interviews with three participants via Zoom and a review of company human resource documents on the company website. An inductive approach was applied to analyze the data. Three themes emerged: provide flexible support resources during times of change, establish effective communication, and recognize barriers that need to be addressed to support employees. A key recommendation to mitigate workplace stress is for business leaders in for-profit higher education to develop resources applicable across their university system that account for unanticipated changes in the industry that may affect business growth and student support. The implications for positive social change include the potential to improve employees' health and happiness in the workplace and at home, which may result in lower health care costs for families and the generation of more income and community involvement as individuals live happier and healthier lives.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my mom, Sheryl, grandmother, Dorothy, and grandfather, John, who were all advocates of education. Their dedication to being lifelong learners themselves has been my motivation for pursuing and completing this journey. To my uncle, Johnny, who always checked in to see what stage of the process I was in and how much longer. To my sister, Janel, who was there to cheer and motivate me to keep going with her #dontbeaverage mantra. To my nephew, Jayden, and nieces, Journée and Julep, who will see that nothing is impossible. Lastly to my best friend/sister, Keisha, for reminding me how crazy I was to have started this chapter of my life and how rewarding it will be when it's complete.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Ronald Black, without whom I'm not sure I would have completed this study. His patience and guidance when I spent sessions with minimal forward movement kept me encouraged. To Dr. Laura Thompson who provided support and excitement on this topic. To Dr. Kenneth Gossett for the expeditious feedback that allowed me to progress forward seamlessly. And to my friends and family that reminded me that I am in a marathon and not a race when I would feel discouraged.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Working adults reported job stress as the main cause of stress in their lives (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999). Stress can contribute to avoidable direct and indirect costs for an organization. Many business leaders require resources to mitigate the effects of employee workplace stress (Abilgardet al., 2018).

Background of the Problem

Workplace stress costs U.S. industries an estimated \$300 billion annually (American Institute of Stress [AIS], 2018). Researchers have worked to find ways to assess, monitor, and reduce workplace stress because the need for organizational leaders to understand the workplace stress phenomenon increases (Carneiro et al., 2019). The AIS (2018) reported that 46% of working U.S. adults identified their workload as a main cause of stress. Researchers determined that managers play a pivotal role in helping their employees to manage stress (Horan et al., 2018). Carneiro et al. (2019) argued that stress affected the productivity of employees and aligned with an increase in job demands.

Organizational leaders are implementing well-being programs in their organizational strategy to counteract the negative effects of workplace stress on employee engagement, health care costs, absenteeism, and production (Stephan et al., 2016). Some researchers have suggested that managing workplace stress required intervention at the organizational and personal levels; such strategies at the organizational level may include policies, management/leadership support, and/or communication training for leaders on managing job demands (Ravalier et al., 2019).

Problem Statement

Employees rely on their supervisors to provide them with resources and strategies to mitigate and manage the stress they experience in the workplace (Horan et al., 2018). In a survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (2017), 37% of working adults in the United States reported experiencing chronic workplace stress, and 42%, which is less than half of this group, reported receiving the resources needed to manage workplace stress. The general business problem was that business managers in higher education are not effectively mitigating employee workplace stress. The specific business problem was that some business managers in higher education lack strategies to reduce employee workplace stress.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how business managers in for-profit higher education reduce employee workplace stress. The participants of this study were business leaders at a for-profit higher education institution in Arizona who have successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee workplace stress. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change through the potential to improve the health and happiness of employees, their families, and their communities.

Nature of the Study

Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods are the three methodologies used for research (Saunders et al. 2016). I used the qualitative methodology in this study. Opinions, feelings, and experiences from the perspective of those being studied are

explored in qualitative studies by addressing “how” questions rather than “how many” questions (Bansal et al., 2017; Clark & Vealé, 2018; Lee, 2014). In this study, I identified patterns and themes in the data collected through an analysis of archived company documents and semistructured participant interviews. Quantitative research methodology is used to test a hypothesis using closed-ended questions to examine the relationships among the variables of a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2016). No hypotheses needed to be tested to explore the strategies business leaders use to reduce employees’ workplace stress, so the quantitative methodology would not have been appropriate. The mixed-methods research methodology was not applicable for this study because of the quantitative component.

I considered exploratory case study, phenomenology, and ethnographic research for the qualitative design. The exploratory case study design is used to identify the research questions or procedures that may be used in future research (Yin, 2018). Explanatory case study research is used to explain what, how, or why questions related to phenomena (Yin, 2018). Phenomenological research is used to analyze and understand in-depth the feelings and perceptions of participants through their lived experiences of the phenomena under study (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014). Ethnographic researchers study the cultures of groups and organizations (Saunders et al., 2016). Using a single case study design is justified when the results of a single experiment contribute to the knowledge of the theory being explored (Yin, 2018). To identify and explore how business managers reduce employees’ workplace stress and the actual relevance of theory in a specific organization in this study, an exploratory single case study design was appropriate.

Research Question

What strategies do business managers in for-profit higher education use to reduce employees' workplace stress?

Interview Questions

1. How do you identify workplace stress within your employees?
2. What established leadership strategies has your organization implemented to reduce employees' workplace stress?
3. What are the principal resources your organization identified to assist in reducing workplace stress strategy management?
4. What key challenges have you faced for reducing employees' workplace stress?
5. How do you overcome the key challenges to reducing workplace stress?
6. Based upon your experiences, how does reducing workplace stress benefit your employees and the organization?
7. What else can you share with me about your organization's strategies and key business processes for managing the stress of the employees?

Conceptual Framework

Researchers utilize a conceptual framework in qualitative studies to provide a lens through which to view and understand phenomena. Bakker and Demerouti (2001) designed the job demands-resources (JD-R) model to expand upon the research on workplace stress after determining the effort-reward imbalance (ERI) model and demand-control model (DCM) were limited to a given set of variables that may not be relevant to

all job positions. In the JD-R model, it is assumed that the unique characteristics that have the potential to affect workplace stress on any job can be categorized as either job demands or job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The authors identified job demands as any physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspect that requires physical or psychological effort. Job resources are the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects that (a) assist in achieving work goals; (b) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development; and (c) reduce job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). The JD-R model can be a useful lens for understanding the strategies leaders use to align demands and resources to reduce employees' workplace stress.

Operational Definitions

Job demands: The aspects of the job that require effort that may physically or psychologically affect employees physically or psychologically (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Job resources: The physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that aid in meeting work goals and reduce demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Workplace stress: The harmful physical and emotional responses of an individual as the result of job requirements not matching the needs of the worker or their capabilities (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1999).

Work-life balance: The shared time between an employees' family and work demands (Soomro et al., 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

The assumptions within qualitative research are unverified facts that are out of the researcher's control (Denscombe, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I made two assumptions in this study. The first assumption was that the participants in this study were knowledgeable about workplace stress management strategies. The second assumption was that the participants offered truthful and comprehensive responses during the interviewing process.

Limitations

Limitations are addressed within qualitative research to demonstrate the study's purposes and strengths (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I identified three limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the results may not be applicable to all higher education institutions because the resources that are utilized may be organization specific. A second limitation in this study may be the participants' recollection of valuable information during the interview process. Another limitation was preexisting participant bias may have been reflected in their interview responses.

Delimitations

Delimitations refer to the boundaries of the study in relation to the problem and purpose statements (Denscombe, 2013). There were two delimitations in this study. The first delimitation was that the participants are business leaders from one proprietary higher education institution in Arizona. The second delimitation was the participant pool

did not include every business leader within the organization that had managed teams that have experienced workplace stress.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

As the dynamics in the workplace continue to change, organizations' leaders seek to identify and implement strategies, processes, and the resources to reduce and manage the stress levels of their employees. The introduction of newer and faster technology has exacerbated the challenges to quality work-life balance as employees face increased job demands for faster turnarounds (Tripathy, 2018). The results of this study may contribute to business practice by providing workplace stress management strategies for business leaders to reduce the workplace stress of employees because of increased job demands. Employees that have the resources to manage their job demands may produce higher quality work outcomes that positively contribute to the bottom line of the organization.

Implications for Social Change

Business leaders are incorporating positive social change strategies into their organizational culture to improve business operations and encourage entrepreneurship through innovation that enables them to benefit the customers and communities they service (Stephan et al., 2016). The cost of healthcare impacts the finances of individuals and families (Vilhjalmsson, 2021). The study's implications for positive social change include the potential to lower the health care costs of employees, their families, and their communities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative, single-case study was to explore the strategies used by business leaders in for-profit higher education to reduce the workplace stress of their employees. In this review of the current professional and academic literature, I provide a thorough examination of workplace stress using the JD-R model as the conceptual framework. A combination of qualitative and quantitative studies are reviewed to provide a holistic perspective of current research on workplace stress theory, strategies, and constructs that impact the stress experienced by employees. In this examination of the current literature, I identify gaps in the literature and propose future research opportunities that may contribute to the growing body of knowledge on workplace stress.

This literature review includes peer-reviewed works that have been published in online databases and professional organization websites. I searched the following online databases: Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, Emerald, Google Scholar, ProQuest, SAGE, and Science Direct. The keyword search terms used were (a) *workplace stress*, (b) *burnout*, (c) *stress management strategy*, (d) *organizational change*, (e) *job performance*, (f) *work-life balance*, (g) *job demands*, and (h) *job resources*. Table 1 displays information about the publication date and type of works included in the literature review.

Table 1

Literature Review Resources

Literature review content	Total no. of resources	No. of resources published with the last 5 years at projected graduation date (2016–2021)	% of peer-reviewed resources published within the last 5 years (2016–2021)
Peer-reviewed journal articles	67	60	90%
Journal articles, books (non-peer-reviewed)	2	2	
Total sources in literature review	69	62	90%

JD-R Model Conceptual Framework

I used the JD-R model as the conceptual framework for this study. Researchers have used the JD-R model for 19 years to explain how job demands and job resources impact the workplace stress experienced by employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Reina-Tamayo et al., 2017). Bakker and Demerouti (2017) explained that the JD-R model has been used to examine how work overload, emotional and physical job demands, and work-home conflict are contributors to workplace stress. Job satisfaction, employee engagement, and supervisor support have also been examined by Brawn and Peus (2018). De Beer et al. (2013) supported the foundational use of the JD-R model to examine workplace stress as a performance indicator for organizations over time. Chen et al. (2018) used the JD-R model to explore leaders' autonomy support and individual psychological capital, such as optimism, efficacy, resiliency, and hope, as resources that buffer job demands. De Gieter et al. (2018) further examined the JD-R model and the self-determination theory (SDT) in respect to the psychological outcomes of employees

as they manage job demands and resources that result in workplace stress and determined that employees were more satisfied with jobs that met their basic need for competence and autonomy. Scholars have used the JD-R model to provide an understanding of the relationship between job demands and job resources and how employee workplace stress may be mitigated.

The JD-R model consists of constructs from earlier alternative theories. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) developed the JD-R model in 2001 to explore workplace stress because the ERI theory and DCM do not include contributors to workplace stress. In the DCM model, job control is the only resource for managing workplace stress, not accounting for the additional resources available in varying work environments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2010). Proponents of the ERI theory suggest that when rewards, such as salary and status, are not in alignment with the demands of the job, employees may experience workplace stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Siegrist & Li, 2016). The JD-R model is universal and applicable across many industries.

Job Demands

Job demands are a construct of the JD-R model. High job demands are directly related to high workplace stress (Affrunti et al., 2018). Smoktunowicz and Cieślak (2018) disputed the findings of Affrunti et al. (2018) by determining that job and family demands have no effect on workplace stress. The workplace role determines the impact job demands have on stress. Employees who perceive high job demands as a function of their job tend to experience less workplace stress (Hentrich et al., 2017). Job demands impact the workplace stress of employees in various ways.

De Beer et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study on the reverse outcomes of the JD-R theory arguing that most research conducted on the JD-R theory examined how demands and resources cause workplace burnout. The authors examined how burnout has a causal relationship to demands as opposed to demands causing burnout.

Job Resources

In the JD-R model, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) posited that job resources lower workplace stress. Resources can be categorized as internal or external, and the results of various studies support the access of specific resources as tools that are useful for managing workplace stress. He et al. (2018) determined that an internal resource, such as supervisor support, and external resource, such as stress management programs, provided outside of the organization were beneficial to lowering the workplace stress of employees. Dediu et al. (2018) identified supported job autonomy as a resource for innovative workplace behaviors that allowed employees to feel they were in more control of their job roles and outcomes, which resulted in lower workplace stress. Employees that feel supported in sharing innovative ideas perceive themselves as valuable within their organizations and this mitigates their concerns about job security, organizational change and production, and engagement.

Cooke et al. (2019) tested the JD-R model by examining public service motivation as a resource that enhances employee work motivation. Cooke et al. noted the ongoing focus from scholars and consultants on employee engagement and argued for the need to further research what impacts employee engagement. Their results supported public service motivation as a resource for increased employee work engagement, finding

that public service workers with a genuine interest in providing support to the public are self-sufficient in identifying resources that keep them engaged in their jobs. Their findings (2019) reinforce the research on the importance of resources to alleviate workplace stress when performing jobs that service others. Dicke et al. (2018) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the effectiveness of the JD-R model using beginning teachers, 1 to 2 years into their roles, as the sample group. The study was conducted in three timeframes measuring classroom disturbances, self-efficacy in classroom management, engagement, emotional exhaustion, and occupational commitment. The authors concluded that access to personal and professional resources increased engagement. Kulikowski and Orzechowski (2018) conducted a quantitative study that tested the JD-R theory on 383 random employees in a variety of roles at different levels of cognitive function and determined that the JD-R theory demonstrates the need for employees to have access to job resources regardless of their cognitive function. Scholars have tested the impact resources have on workplace stress and engagement across industries and various levels of management within organizations.

Alternative Theories

Alternative theories to examine and explore workplace stress had been developed prior to or in addition to the JD-R model, such as the ERI theory, job demand control support (JDC-S) model, SDT, COR theory, and job-embeddedness theory. Each of these theories and models have been used as sole frameworks or in combination to the JD-R model to contribute to the research on workplace stress.

ERI Theory. Scholars can explore intrinsic and extrinsic factors that contribute to workplace stress through the ERI model. According to the ERI model, high efforts with low rewards results in increased workplace stress and consists of three hypotheses: (a) effort, reward, and overcommitment jointly have a direct effect on health; (b) the interaction of effort and reward create stronger effects on health together as opposed to analyzing them separately; and (c) overcommitment moderates the effects of ERI (Siegrist & Li, 2016). Employees who feel rewarded for the effort they give to their work are likely to experience less workplace stress.

Kinman (2019) conducted a study using the ERI model to explain the underlying mental and physical effects of workplace stress on university employees. Kinman posited that employees in academia experience higher levels of workplace stress when compared to employees in other public sector roles, such as health and social care workers. Extrinsic efforts are external demands placed on employees, such as workloads, deadlines, and responsibility (Kinman, 2019). Intrinsic efforts, also referred to as overcommitment, are internal demands the employee places on themselves based on their personal commitment to their work. Intrinsic efforts have been found to affect the health of the employee directly because their overcommitment prevents them from being able to withdraw from their job roles and indirectly because their need for control and approval causes them to overcommit to their roles (Gerich, 2019; Kinman, 2019). The identity and esteem of academic professionals drives their commitment to their job roles. Kinman concluded that the mental and physical health of academic professional was negatively affected by the perception of high rewards and low effort. Kinman also determined

concerns about job security in times of constant change in the higher education sector have negatively impacted the mental status of academic professionals. These conclusions suggest that stress management strategies are needed to aid employees in managing their workplace stress because role identity has been used by employees to overcommit to their job roles.

JDC-S Model. The JDC-S model is an extension of the job DCM. According to the JDC-S model, when job demands are high and job control and support are low, employees experience psychological strain or stress (Jachens & Houdmont, 2019). The JDC-S model was extended to strengthen its validity as a workplace stress model, and it has been used in conjunction with the ERI model to identify the sources of workplace stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Jachens & Houdmont, 2019).

The JDC-S model has been reliable for investigating the effects of job control, autonomy, and performance expectations on occupational health. Del Pozo-Antúnez et al. (2018) conducted a study examining the effects of job demands on the occupational health of accountants utilizing the JDC-S model as the framework. Accountants were the sample group for this study because the researchers acknowledged how their roles experience higher work demands because of the financial component of their jobs and the effects those outcomes have on decision making for the organization. Del Pozo-Antúnez et al. concluded that the occupational health of the accountants was impacted by the demands of the role but was moderated by the resources provided from superior support and/or coworker support. Leitão et al. (2018) identified additional stress mitigation resources using the JDC-S model and determined that working conditions and autonomy

aided in reducing the effects of work demands. The findings of Del Pozo-Antúnez et al. and Leitão et al. reinforced the research on the JDC-S model that suggests that social support and autonomy assist in decreasing the effects of job demands that lead to workplace stress.

SDT. According to the SDT, employees with job autonomy experience less stress in the workplace (Park & Jang, 2017). SDT research has focused on identifying factors in the workplace that promote self-motivation and personal growth by satisfying the universal human motivation needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Karatepe et al., 2018). Employees with supervisor-supported job autonomy feel they have higher job control, which leads to better job and needs satisfaction (Park & Jang, 2017). Park and Jang (2017) examined the relationship between job autonomy and employee well-being using the SDT and concluded that employees that felt supported by their supervisors, had autonomy in their work tasks, and had access to the resources needed to manage their work experienced less workplace stress and were more satisfied with their jobs. Karatepe et al. (2018) combined the SDT and COR theory to examine the effect workplace stress has on job outcomes and engagement and concluded that managers can effectively mitigate employee stress through resources, such as training and rewards programs, employee recognition, empowerment, and recruitment. Drieson et al. (2018) researched predictors of job stress using the SDT and JD-R model and determined that employees with high levels of supervisor autonomy support, self-efficacy, and staff cohesion as resources reported lower stress levels. The research on SDT support the

necessity of supervisor-supported autonomy in the workplace as a resource for employees to meet their motivation needs to fulfill their job tasks and lessen workplace stress.

COR Theory. Scholars have used the COR theory in stress management research to determine how employees reserve their personal resources and identify new ones that aid in managing their work demands. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2018) conducted a study using the COR theory to explore how new employees utilize their granted resources, expand on the resources they have identified as necessities to navigate their job demands, and identify new resources through social support in the workplace. They concluded that stress was moderated for employees that established a strong social support network as a resource in the workplace through trusted relationships and feedback from their supervisors. Madden et al. (2017) also used the COR theory to explore how social support in the workplace was a resource for mitigating stress and determined that access to resources through social support networks offset stress. Access to valuable internal resources in the workplace mitigates stress. The COR theory has been used by scholars to explore how resources impact employees' workplace stress.

For-Profit Higher Education Through the Last 2 Decades

Castagnera (2017) provided an in-depth review of the for-profit higher education industry from the Bush administration through the Obama administration, stating that for-profit institutions thrived under the Bush administration, declined under the Obama administration because of the increase in federal regulations, and had the potential to rise again under the Trump administration if history demonstrates the trends for the industry. Corinthian College was used as a case study in the research conducted by Castagnera,

where the admissions practices, fraudulent financial aid processes, unethical marketing processes, and inaccurate job placement reporting were all investigated by the U.S. Department of Education and resulted in the school closing in April 2015. Large, for-profit institutions were reviewed to help provide insight into how the for-profit education industry has been impacted by federal regulations and the reputations of schools and the industry tarnished. Castagnera concluded the research on the for-profit education industry with a review of the Trump administration's experience with education and how the lack of oversight may allow for unethical practices to continue.

Davidson (2016) explored the transition of student affairs practitioners from traditional non-profit institutions to for-profit institutions. Davidson provided a brief background on the history of for-profit institutions and how the demand for the learning platform of for-profit institutions grew exponentially as working adults wanted to continue their education. Davidson acknowledged the learning curve that student affairs practitioners experience in transitioning from traditional institutions to for-profit as the main contributor of inefficiencies, attrition, and continuity of services. Eleven participants were interviewed in this qualitative study that produced five themes: (a) a focus on business, (b) the purpose of student affairs work, (c) position role and responsibilities, (d) the supervisory relationship, and (e) alternate preparation of for-profit work. The results of the study conducted by Davidson resulted in a mix of positive and negative experiences but help to provide insight into how the practitioners' that are responsible for student support view for-profit institutions as a business. Davidson

acknowledged that this study does not account for individuals that left higher education after working at a for-profit, nor for the other departments within higher education.

Gilpin et al. (2015) reviewed the factors that have contributed to the rapid growth of for-profit colleges over the last 2 decades. Gilpin et al. compared the tuition costs and degree program offerings of public and for-profit schools and acknowledged the needs in the labor market as a driver for program offerings. Gilpin et al. stated that for-profit institutions have the capability to design and offer degree programs that are in demand, which has left traditional schools to fulfill the need for liberal arts, social science, and education degrees. The empirical study conducted by Gilpin et al. does not distinguish between program flexibility or the ability of for-profit schools to meet the labor market demands as the root cause of rapid growth and suggest additional research during growth periods to hone in on the specific causes. Gilpin et al. acknowledged the research is limited to the focus on community colleges and 2-year degree programs of for-profit schools while acknowledging that for-profit schools have expanded into 4-year and graduate level degree programs. The studies by Castagnera, Davidson, and Gilpin et al. demonstrate the agility of the for-profit higher education industry and how federal regulations aid in creating an environment of constant change that impacts workplace stress.

Workplace Stress and Employee Well-Being

Workplace stress has been linked to rising healthcare costs and increased absenteeism in the workplace, which results in lower productivity within organizations. Research on workplace stress has expanded throughout the last few decades as 46% of

workers identified their jobs as the number one cause of stress in their lives (AIS, 2018). As such, workplace stress has become a focal point of organizational strategy as business leaders work to understand the impact workplace stress has on the bottom line. Long hours, job insecurity, heavy workload, and organizational change were identified by Yeend (2019) as the top factors that cause stress and cost U.S. employers between \$300 billion and \$500 billion annually.

The foundation of the organization is made stronger or weaker by its employees. Yeend (2019) suggested that understanding what stress has been experienced at all levels of the corporate structure would be better for managing the potential financial impact on the organization. However, Henrich et al. (2017) determined that employees with perceived high stress jobs accepted the stress as part of their job functions and were less likely to report experiencing stress. The idea that high level business leaders are expected to experience stress in the workplace has resulted in a demand for understanding the negative financial impact stress has on business. Rook et al. (2019) supported the findings of Henrich et al. through their study on the perception of workplace stress on executive leadership that allowed them to develop a protocol that executive coaches can use to identify and understand stress in business leaders despite their acknowledgement of experiencing stress. Stress protocols may be the first line of defense for executive coaches to use in identifying and managing the workplace stress experienced by employees.

Richardson (2017) conducted a systematic review that assessed the past and present contributions to the body of literature on how to identify and manage workplace

stress and the importance for organizations to implement a mental health wellness program for their employees. The (JD-R) model was used as the conceptual framework for this study review and introduced additional support for the reliability of the JD-R model to identify and measure workplace stress, while examining the necessity for organizations to make concentrated efforts to focus on employee well-being. Stress management interventions are a key resource for mitigating workplace stress during times of exponential changes with technology, how generations create work habits, and negative cyber interactions (Richardson, 2017). Adil and Baig (2018) conducted a quantitative study to test the application of the (JD-R) model on burnout and employee well-being by surveying 352 employees in the pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan. The study concluded that in addition to demands and resources, workload, autonomy, and work-life imbalance impacted burnout, which negatively affected the employee's well-being. Organizations need to understand how new workplace stressors effect their employees and provide access to wellness programs that address their employees 'needs.

Managing workplace stress through supervisor support. Employees are better supported through their experienced workplace stress when their leaders have a better understanding of their triggers and what strategies to implement to mitigate the stress. Quade et al. (2017) conducted a study that explored how ethical leadership impacted employee workplace stress drawing on the conservation of resources theory. Quade et al. hypothesized that boundaries existed for the benefits of ethical leadership behaviors when supervisor-induced hindrance stress existed that drained employee resources which in turn increased employee stress and increased turnover. The results of the study

determined that ethical leadership behavior was not beneficial for organizations when supervisor-induced hindrance stress was perceived. This means that employees felt their leader's ethical convictions was high and they were less likely to feel they were in control of their jobs, lacked social support from their peers, and less likely to contribute thoughts and input about their work. Tripathy (2018) identified self-awareness as a strategy for managing stress, which may be useful for helping business leaders understand the type of support an employee may need.

Job performance expectations as a contributor to workplace stress. Job control effects job performance. Organizations have set higher expectations to perform in a highly competitive, highly demanding, and constantly changing workspace. The performance of employees determines the performance outcomes of the organization. Gawke et al. (2018) conducted a study to determine how entrepreneurship within the workplace contributed to positive job performance. Employee intrapreneurship is a form of job control that allows employees to contribute to and mold their job tasks while contributing innovative and strategic ideas to the organization (Gawke et al., 2018). The researchers concluded that employee intrapreneurship motivated employees but could also be beneficial or detrimental to employee job performance and work avoidance which have been proven to contribute to exhaustion or experienced feelings of workplace stress.

Rhee et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study using the job demands-resources theory to examine the relationship of coworker incivility to job performance through emotional exhaustion, work compassion, and the effects of employee self-efficacy. Two hundred seventeen frontline employees at a five-star hotel in South Korea were used as

the sample population resulting in additional insight on the need to understand and manage workplace incivility as a workplace stress predictor. Coworker incivility was negatively related to job performance, self-efficacy balanced the negative outcomes of coworker incivility, and work compassion did not moderate the relationship between coworker incivility and emotional exhaustion.

Siregar (2018) conducted a case study on how transactional leadership affects occupational stress and employee performance. Siregar concluded that transactional leadership lessens the effects of occupational stress but had no direct influence on work performance and occupational stress negatively impacts work performance.

Organizational Change

Leaders must provide support when managing employees through organizational change. Rafferty and Jimmieson (2017) determined that resistance to change leads to insomnia and stress when employees are not emotionally supported through organizational change. Through a better understanding of how employees perceive organizational change, human resource managers, supervisors, and colleagues may be better equipped to support employees through stressful change. Smollan and Pio (2018) identified restructuring, lack of support, changing job roles that increase workload and complexity, and poor communication as stressors that occur in organizational change. Employees tend to rely upon their peers for emotional support in managing change and are better equipped to cope with stress when they receive support before the change occurs (Smollan & Morrison, 2019). Smollan (2017) claimed that supportive organizational culture is a resource for managing the potential effects of workplace stress.

Guidetti et al. (2018) suggested that employees experience an increase in stress and low work engagement during the anticipation stage of the change process and that human resource managers acknowledge the importance of social support from supervisors and colleagues during the planning phases of change. Day et al. (2017) acknowledged supervisor support as a resource to buffer the negative relationship between change stressors and exhaustion, while incorporating job control as an additional resource to mitigate organizational change stressors. Employees who receive support through each stage of organizational change may experience less workplace stress.

An employees' perception about organizational change affects how they perform and manage themselves through change. Seppaelae et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the work engagement of employees during organizational change that contributed to the literature on the effectiveness of work resources helping to improve work engagement. The study used the teams from two departments from two organizations experiencing organizational change. Seppaelae et al. further examined how employees that are engaged in their work mobilize resources as needed to remain engaged in their work while employees who were less engaged became even more disengaged when resources were not as readily available. The (JD-R) theory was used as the framework for this study to measure how job resources affect motivation in relation to high job demands. The results of the study further contributed to the resourcefulness of the JD-R theory in aligning job resources to work engagement where the high engaged employees were able to increase their team innovativeness but did not demonstrate any gains to their established engagement levels. Gearin (2017) conducted a qualitative study

on how 11 new campus presidents that had been on the job for less than 4 years at higher education institutions implemented and managed change for their campuses. The presidents had various career backgrounds from education to business and varying degrees of change to implement and manage on their campuses. The results of this study determined the importance of management style, data, and communication transparency when managing change and the resistance to change from tenured employees. The study conducted by Gover and Duxbury (2017) sought to compare the mindsets of employees during organizational change and after organizational change. This qualitative study examines how planned change impacts the mindset of employees, accounts for real-time and retrospective data, theoretical perspective of the employees and the amount of time over which the organizational change is occurring. Lofquist and Lines (2017) conducted a study that examined the high failure rates of organizational change strategies and the commitment by change agents within the organization to change regardless of the negative impact the change may have on the organization. This study determined that organizations need to conduct the research that will determine the success and necessity of change before fully committing to implement change strategies. Oreg et al. (2018) conducted a study to expand the research on the variety of behavioral responses recipients of organizational change experience during change events. Oreg et al. also utilized their research to identify the extremes to which recipients of change are either resistant to or passively supportive and used the data to develop a model to manage organizational change from top-down or bottom-up in an organization. Oreg et al. developed a theoretical model that identified predictors that resulted in specific reactions

as a result of change from the perspective of the employee in terms of how they feel supported, psychological distance from change events, and how receptive their leaders were to the ideas of the employees about change events. Cinite and Duxbury (2018) conducted a mixed-method study to explore how employees committed to or rejected organizational change. The extensive research and available literature currently available demonstrated how organizational change impacts employees, as acknowledged by Cinite and Duxbury but has resulted in a skewed analysis of how to implement and manage organizational change. Cinite and Duxbury identified behaviors that employees displayed as they either committed to or rejected organizational change, argued the position that employees committed to organizational change and offer input about change when they felt supported, and tend to reject change when they feel unsupported.

Work-Life Balance, Flexible Working Arrangements, and New Ways of Working

Hirschi et al. (2019) developed an action regulation model that creates a strategy with executable actions for helping employees balance work and family life goals. The action regulation theory distinguishes between goal-engagement and disengagement strategies. Hirschi et al. created four actions strategies to achieve work-family balance through the action regulation model: (a) allocating and activating resources, (b) changing resources and barriers, (c) sequencing work and family goals, and (d) revising and developing new work and family goals. Through this model, individuals are better equipped to achieve their work-life goals, which can result in higher work engagement.

Leslie et al. (2019) identified three work-life ideologies that contributed to scholarly research regarding the perception of work-life balance of employees. The work-

life ideologies are a fixed pie ideology where an understanding of how individuals believe work and life compete with or enhance one another, a segmentation ideology where an understanding of how individuals believe work and life are independent of one another, and a work priority ideology where an understanding of how individuals believe work or life is the more important domain (Leslie et al., 2019).

Dumas and Perry-Smith (2018) conducted a study to examine the connection to work and family life to determine which type of employee demonstrates a higher work commitment as a result of their family obligations. The results of this study determined that individuals with family obligations were more psychologically immersed into their roles at work.

Brawn and Peus (2018) conducted a study on how employees perceive authentic leadership behaviors as a tool to balancing their work and personal lives and how this leads to higher job satisfaction. In the study, Brawn and Peus link authentic leadership to the well-being of organizations through the conservation of resources theoretical framework which will then link authentic leadership as an organizational resource to aid in a positive perception of work-life balance of employees.

Powell et al. (2019) conducted a review of the literature that examined the impact of work-life balance in relation to the rapid changes in social trends. Powell et al. acknowledged the lapse in the literature pertaining to work-life theory as the roles and focus of employee's lives have changed over the last 5 decades. They introduced and reviewed current work-life theory and stress the importance of extending the research on employee life outside of work beyond family obligations as gender roles, career goals,

family obligations, and external factors continue to change across cultures, within different countries, and varying social and socio-economic platforms.

Sungdoo and Christensen (2017) conducted a study to examine the relationship between personal technology use in the workplace and work-life balance because of the limited academic research on the benefits or distractions of technology. Sungdoo and Christensen distinguish between the effective use of technology in helping employees to balance their personal lives or gain knowledge for their work roles versus the distraction and added stress from inappropriate use of technology. The (JD-R) model was used as the conceptual framework for the study to help provide positive and negative measurements for the constructs that predict employee burnout.

Van Steenbergen et al. (2018) conducted a study on how job demands, resources, burnout, and engagement changed for employees at a Dutch financial services organization where new ways of working (NWW) was implemented. Van Steenbergen et al. defined NWW as a work design that allows employees control the timing and place of their work, while being supported through electronic communication. The study concluded that mental stability of employees was not affected by the implementation of NWW, work engagement increased, but autonomy and professional development opportunities decreased

Job Control and Autonomy

Job control and autonomy have been used as resources for managing and mitigating workplace stress. Job control is the employee's ability to determine the time, place, and method in which to carry out their job responsibilities (Gerich, 2019). Earlier

research conducted by Elfering et al. (2005) examined how employees cope with stressful situations in the workplace that are onset by chronic and situational characteristics in the workplace using the mediation, main-effects, and moderation models to determine how chronic job conditions affect well-being. Elfering et al. concluded that by having higher job control, employees were able to cope better with chronic work conditions which lowered their stress and improved their well-being. Cotti et al. (2017) examined the correlation between varying degrees of job control (low and high) and self-reported workplace stress levels by employees from various jobs to determine how their workplace stress was impacted by their ability to control the demands placed on them through their work and what control they had over their schedules and the tasks associated with completing their jobs. The results of the study determined that employees with high control, which consisted of their ability to alter their work schedules and balance their work with personal obligations, experienced lower workplace stress. The employees with less job control reported higher workplace stress. Conversely, Gerich (2019) argued that higher job control had negative effects on employees. The results of the study by Gerich determined that employees with higher job control reported to work while ill by using their job control as a coping strategy to deliver the perception that their absence results in loss of productivity. Employees with high job control perceived their work obligations highly contributed to the success of their organization and that their decision-making responsibilities impacted the daily operations of their work. Employees with high job control and autonomy feel responsible for the success of their peers. The perceived obligations have impacted the social support employees receive

from their peers. Social support and job control have been considered coping resources for mediating workplace stress. Work environments that meet the psychological needs of support and control encourages positive outcomes from employees through higher work engagement, individual learning and development, and job satisfaction (Brough et al., 2018). Quade et al. (2017) defined social support as the provision of work-related instrumental and/or socio-emotional resources intended to make a positive impact on the recipient.

Van Wingerden et al. (2017) examined how the engagement and well-being of employees was positively or negatively impacted when they were given more job control. The (JD-R) theory was used as the framework to determine how well employees perform and remain engaged when their job resources are mobilized and they are given the opportunity to change the work tasks needed to complete their jobs, referred to as job crafting. Van Wingerden et al. concluded that as employees are unrestricted through job crafting, their personal needs were met which allowed them to be in more control of their own engagement. Employees control their own well-being when they can manage the resources needed to feel personally satisfied in their own job roles.

Job Insecurity

Job security has become a concern for employees as their organizations experience organizational change. Yan et al. (2020) explored the effects of workplace stress on employees 'quantitative and qualitative job insecurity. Quantitative job insecurity was referenced as insecurities about the employees 'entire job whereas qualitative job insecurity consisted of segments of the job role. Yan et al. suggested ways

for business leaders to implement strategies to manage stress caused by job insecurity when organizational change will occur. Yan et al. used the regulatory focus theory to separate the behaviors of the employees' response to job insecurities: promotion or prevention. Employees that manage their feelings of job insecurity through promotion seek professional development and training as strategies to feel more secure in their work roles. Employees that seek prevention tend to focus on error-free work to feel more secure in their roles. The results of the study suggested that prevention focus weakened the positive relationship between quantitative job insecurity and employee stress symptoms (Yan et al., 2020). The promotion focus weakened the negative relationship between qualitative job insecurity and employee work engagement (Yan et al., 2020). This means that employees that prefer the prevention focus were not affected by quantitative job insecurity and the work engagement of employees that prefer the promotion focus was not affected by qualitative job insecurity. Business leaders need to understand the type of job insecurity their employees are experiencing to manage and mitigate the stress it may cause. The research results demonstrated that qualitative and quantitative job insecurities cause different effects on the employees' work perception. The fear of the unknown during times of change may affect the well-being of employees. Abildgaard et al. (2018) acknowledged the lack of research support on workplace stress management strategies for business leaders managing their employees through organizational restructuring that leads to job insecurity. The focus of the study conducted by Abildgaard et al. was to determine if quantitative and qualitative job insecurities could be managed during organizational restructuring. The JD-R model was used to provide the

framework foundation to determine what resources were needed to decrease the demands that contributed to job insecurity stressors. Quantitative and qualitative job insecurities need to be managed in different ways given the varying effects they have on employees (Abildgaard et al, 2018; Yan et al., 2020). The study findings determined that the type of job insecurity an employee experiences effected the success of the organizational-level intervention. Future research is needed to strengthen the academic support of intervention plans that specifically mitigate job insecurities during organizational restructuring.

Individualized intervention strategies are needed for employees to manage themselves through their job insecurity stressors. An organizations success and ability to remain competitive relies upon the innovation of their employees. Scholars have proposed that employees 'commitment to innovation is affected by their lack of job security. When employees are not confident about their future with an organization, they are less likely to develop new ideas and processes that improve their work and organizations performance. Jiang (2018) acknowledged the lack of evidence that supported individual interventions, such as self-affirmation, as a mitigation strategy to manage job insecurity. Jiang used the self-affirmation theory as the framework to explore how job creativity was impacted by paring the natural job insecurities of employees to one of three affirmation conditions (i.e. self-affirmation, work-affirmation, and no-affirmation control). Individuals that aligned themselves with the constructs of the self-affirmation theory lowered the negative association between job in security and creativity. Employees that exhibited positive behaviors attributed to their true core-selves, motivated by their self- worth and personal integrity, were found to have been better

equipped to cope with the stressors caused by job insecurities (Jiang, 2018). Control and self-worth as suggested through the self-affirmation theory (Albalooshi et al., 2020) have been proposed as reliable resources for individual intervention strategies that provide power to employees in uncertain circumstances.

Interventions at the organization and individual levels were explored by Abildgaard et al. (2018) and Yan et al. (2020) as resources to mitigate the stress created by quantitative and qualitative job insecurities. Sender et al. (2017) suggested that employee reactions to job insecurities needed to be explored from a cultural perspective to gain an understanding of their attitudes in relation to job insecurity. The assumption cannot be made that all stress mitigation strategies will produce the same outcomes as organizations operate in a global capacity with employees of different cultures. The COR theory was used to provide the framework for understanding how employee attitudes about job insecurity were influenced by the resources available to them. The job itself has been identified by some scholars in previous research as a resource in accordance with the COR theory (Sender et al., 2017). This argument presented a contradiction to the research by Sender et al. as the perceived value of the job varied by culture. Sender et al. argued that job insecurities led to decreased job satisfaction and that the threat of losing valued resources led to increased job turnover intentions. The researchers suggested that cultural differences in societal support effected uncertainty avoidance for quantitative job insecurity and predicted how employees performed while experiencing qualitative job insecurity. These suggestions align with the study conducted by Guidetti et al. (2018) where societal support was identified as a resource for managing

stress through uncertain changes. Sender et al. concluded that cultures with higher societal practice performance had a stronger relationship between qualitative job insecurity and job satisfaction and that the relationship between quantitative job insecurity and turnover intention was stronger in cultures with lower societal uncertainty avoidance. This means that quantitative and qualitative job insecurities cannot be explored through one societal lens. Additional research on the COR theory may explain how culture and business leaders provide valuable resources while understanding how the societal support of employees affects their intent to leave or perform while on a job that they feel insecure in.

Employee Engagement

Workplace stress impacts employee engagement. Kahn (1990) defined engaged employees as those who are simultaneously physically, emotionally, and cognitively present in their roles. Cooke et al. (2019) examined the work engagement of public service workers. The researchers sought to determine if public service motivation was a resource that impacted work engagement. Cooke et al. determined that public service workers possessed an intrinsic need to provide their own resources to motivate themselves and keep them engaged in their work which lowered their workplace stress.

Anthony-McMann et al. (2017) examined employee engagement in correlation to positive outcomes such as profitability, customer satisfaction, job performance and satisfaction, and employee retention. This study was conducted to review the ways in which employee engagement had been measured and to provide additional support and structure around the outcomes so that as organizations utilize the findings to make

operational decisions, clear parameters are set to drive decision-making. Anthony-McMann et al. surveyed information technology professionals as they worked through periods of workplace stress and burnout to determine how they remained engaged in their workplace through the process. Anthony-McMann et al. argued that limitations existed in how employee engagement had been measured and is a result of the limitations in the framework used to support previous studies. Throughout the research of the literature on workplace stress, several frameworks have been created and utilized to measure workplace stress and to predict the onset of such behavior. Scholars have demonstrated that no single framework can be considered valid for measuring and predicting all variables that result in workplace stress and that specific variables need to be identified at the beginning of the study to determine the measurement tool. As a result of those limitations, the needs-satisfaction framework, burnout-antithesis framework, and job-satisfaction framework were all utilized in this study to provide a focused framework and support. The other limitation to this study is that it focuses on information technology professionals in healthcare during a specific period where workplace stress and burnout were anticipated as a result of the changes in the federal regulations pertaining to their jobs.

Takashi et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the associations of job demands, resources, work engagement, and psychological distress using a survey on 7,843 individuals. The (JD-R) model was used as the framework for this study to examine the effects work engagement based on job demands and available resources. The study concluded that there is a positive correlation between work engagement and job

resources, work engagement moderated the association between job characteristics and psychological distress, and further added to the validity of the JD-R theory as a resource for measuring and identifying workplace stress. The limitations to this study were the large male population in the sample, limited representation to the working population of Japan, and potential bias due to attrition (Takashi et al., 2018). This study contributes to the literature on the JD-R theory and further examines the correlation between job demands, resources, job characteristics, engagement, and workplaces stress.

Bakker et al. (2004) conducted a quantitative study through surveying 146 employees from 11 companies to examine the effects of burnout and performance in relation to organizational success. The study by Bakker et al. explored the access to job resources as a buffer to employee burnout and examined the opportunity to include the constructs of Leiter's process model of burnout should be included in the (JD-R) model. Leiter's model stated that feelings of exhaustion caused employees to emotionally distance themselves from their work to avoid burnout resulting in them becoming disengaged.

Reina-Tamayo et al. (2017) conducted a study using the JD-R theory to examine the fluctuations in work engagement of employees between changes in job activities throughout the day based on the demands of the individual jobs and the resources available to them to complete the tasks. Engagement levels changed for the employees from one activity to the next. Reina-Tamayo et al. concluded that employees were more engaged when they received feedback from their supervisors, had job autonomy, and

control of various activities while performing job tasks that met their personal needs satisfaction.

Transition

An explanation for the need of a qualitative single-case study to explore the strategies business leaders utilize to reduce workplace stress for their employees is presented in Section 1. A thorough examination of current professional and academic literature to explore the research on workplace stress is included in Section 1. Section 2 includes how the study is being conducted. The role of the researcher, participants, data collection process, data analysis, data management, and validity and reliability are explained in alignment with this study in Section 2. Section 3 will conclude the study with results, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I explain the purpose of the study and describe the role of the researcher and participants. A discussion of the research method, research design, and data collection process is also provided to ensure the findings of the study are reliable and valid.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how business managers in for-profit higher education reduce employee workplace stress. The participants of this study were business leaders at a for-profit higher education institution in Arizona who have successfully implemented strategies to reduce employee workplace stress. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change through the potential to improve the health and happiness of employees, their families, and their communities.

Role of the Researcher

Sutton and Austin (2015) suggested that researchers in qualitative research are responsible for gaining access to the thoughts and feelings of the study participants. I was the data collection instrument in this qualitative single-case study. The researcher is responsible for identifying the organization; recruiting study participants; and ensuring the research practices are ethical, participants protected, and that the data collected are reliable, valid, and confirmable (Saunders, et al., 2016).

I have worked as a business leader in proprietary higher education but have had an interest in understanding workplace stress mitigation. I have not worked for the

organization that was selected for this qualitative single-case study or did I know any of the study participants personally or professionally. The state of Arizona was selected due to the proximity of my home and the abundant selection of proprietary higher education institutions within the state.

Qualitative researchers face ethical challenges throughout the study process with anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, and bias (Sanjari et al., 2014). *The Belmont Report* was written by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) to protect human subjects in research. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services established the commission because of the National Research Act of 1974 and charged it with outlining and addressing the ethical principles and issues that may arise while conducting human research. As the researcher, it was my responsibility to protect the identification of participants and the data collected from the study in alignment with *The Belmont Report* and the guidelines set forth by Walden University for no less than 5 years.

In addition to ethical practices, researcher bias is another threat to the reliability of qualitative research. The coding and thematic process involved with quantitative research data collection provides for a comprehensive and flexible structure that mitigates bias by the researcher (Mackieson et al., 2019). To mitigate researcher bias in this qualitative study, I followed the interview protocol, attentively listened to, and respected the study participants, refrained from interjecting any personal opinions and ideas, and provided a copy of the collected data to the participants for member checking to ensure their thoughts were interpreted accurately.

Participants

Scholars have noted that characteristics of the recruiter, institutional and community gatekeeping, an understanding of the behaviors and differences of participants, and determining the participant sample as challenges in selecting participants for qualitative research (Archibald & Munce, 2015). The selection of participants that can provide in-depth insights regarding their lived experiences in relation to the research question is important (Alase, 2017). I identified and selected three business managers in the for-profit higher education industry in Arizona that have worked in stressful environments, are knowledgeable about stress management strategy development, and have successfully implemented the strategies.

Gaining access to the institution and access to willing participants that meet the research criteria may present challenges for the researcher (Shenton & Hayter, 2004). To mitigate these challenges, I worked with the human resource director of the study site institution to identify valid participants that met the criteria. The profiles and contact information of the human resource directors was available on the internet; the careers section of the university website; or through professional human resource organizations, such as the National Association of African American Human Resources of which I am a member. I built a professional working relationship with the study participants to gain their trust, ensure their anonymity and data collection security, and clearly communicate the purpose and process of the research process using the interview protocol.

Research Method and Design

The research method and design are determined by how the researcher plans to answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). There are three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. In the following subsections, I justify how a qualitative single-case study was determined to be the most suitable approach for understanding how business managers in higher education reduce employees' workplace stress.

Research Method

The qualitative research method is used to gain an in-depth understanding of real-world experiences by the groups or individuals that encountered the phenomena (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). An understanding of the real-world experiences is gathered through an interview process that allows the researcher the opportunity ask follow-up questions to determine a definite meaning of what the participant is sharing (Dahlberg & Dahlberg, 2019). The participants' real-world experiences are a critical part of developing comprehensive qualitative research (Devers et al., 2000). The qualitative research method was most appropriate for this study because I planned to develop an in-depth understanding of how managers in for-profit higher education reduce the workplace stress of their employees. To gain an understanding of these strategies, I conducted semistructured participant interviews that provided insight into their lived experiences of the phenomena.

The quantitative method and mixed-methods research were not appropriate for this study. Bloomfield and Fisher (2019) stated that quantitative research is used to test a

hypothesis assumption by examining the relationships between dependent and independent variables through a statistical analysis of data gathered from a sample pool of participants. Mixed-method research combines the detailed perspectives and opinions gathered from qualitative research with the numerical data of a quantitative research that may highlight the benefits of both methods (Frias & Popovich, 2020). Mixed-methods research combines the processes of quantitative and qualitative research to add additional value, perspective, and bias mitigation that may not be present in these methods on their own (Hendren et al., 2018). The research question for this study required developing an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the individuals that have encountered the phenomena through interviews. I collected no numerical data regarding identified dependent and independent variables, which made the quantitative method inappropriate for this study. The mixed-methods approach was not suitable because the quantitative component was not used in the current study.

Research Design

I employed a case study research design in this study. Case study, narrative, ethnography, and phenomenological are common designs in qualitative research (Kegler et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). An ethnography is conducted to study the behaviors and experiences of individuals or groups while they are experiencing the phenomenon being researched (Everhart & Escobar, 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). In this study, I sought to understand how an experience was managed after it occurred. Narrative inquiry allows researchers to gather stories of an event in sequential order where conclusions are determined through an analysis of the event being studied (O'Toole, 2018).

Phenomenological inquiry involves the researcher gaining an understanding of the meaning of the lived experiences of a group (van Manen, 2020). Because I sought to explore how an event was managed, the phenomenological or narrative inquiry designs were not appropriate.

Case study research involves multiple streams of data incorporated in a triangular fashion that allows the researcher to draw conclusions about a phenomenon (Alpi & Evans, 2019; Yin, 2018). Siggelkow (2007) posited that rich data can be gathered from a single case study design when the organization or individuals being studied possess the features and attributes that meet the research objectives. I collected and analyzed data gathered from semistructured interviews and a review of documentation from managers that met the participant requirements. Data saturation is achieved when there are no new themes, no new data, and no new codes to gather from the sample pool (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I continued to gather evidence from participant interviews and document review until no new themes or information arose.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study was business managers in the for-profit higher education industry in Arizona that had experience successfully managing the workplace stress of their employees. The study population must be identified through a set of inclusion criteria that demonstrate their ability to provide the information needed for the study (Robinson, 2013). Yin (2018) stated that a sampling pool should be no greater than 10 participants. The small sampling size in qualitative studies provides the researcher

with the opportunity to collect rich, detailed data about the phenomenon being explored (Farrugia, 2019).

Qualitative researchers apply purposive sampling when the research involves selecting participants for special situations (Ishak & Bakar, 2014). Purposive sampling requires the researcher to use their judgment to select cases that will answer the research question and meet the objectives of the study (Saunders et al., 2016). The goal of selecting business managers in higher education was to (a) select participants who best understood problems that contribute to workplace stress and (b) have applied successful strategies that reduced the workplace stress of their employees. The participant's ability to provide information on the phenomenon determined their eligibility to participate.

This qualitative case study included data collected from semistructured interviews. The researcher should continue to collect data until data saturation is met, meaning no new information or themes emerge (Saunders et al., 2016). Saunders et al. (2016) also stated that data saturation could be met with a minimum sample size of five to 25 participants.

Ethical Research

Ethical concerns may arise at any stage of the research process. Saunders et al. (2016) stated that research ethics are the standards of behavior that guide the researcher's conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of their work or are affected by it. To mitigate the ethical concerns, I gained written consent from all study participants; abided by the interview protocol (see Appendix A); ensured the identification of all study participants and their organization were coded; and provided

safe storage of all collected data and consent forms in a safe, undisclosed location protecting the participants' rights to privacy for 5 years.

In alignment with ethical principles outlined in *The Belmont Report* with respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Farrugia, 2019), I did not begin collecting data for this study until I had the authorization from the Walden University Institutional Review Board, approval number 03-15-21-0970591. All participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, no financial compensation would be received for participating, that they had the right to withdraw at any time from the study by contacting me directly, and that their personal identifiable information would be coded and secured in a password-protected database that only I had access to. Participants were informed in the consent form that the collected data would be returned to them by email to review for member checking. I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative web-based training course certifying that I was aware of the requirements by the National Institute of Health to protect the rights of human research participants.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Clark & Vealé, 2018). I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative study and conducted semistructured participant interviews. Semistructured interviews are unstructured and allow the researcher to change the order in which questions are asked to meet the objective of gathering detailed information (Saunders et al., 2016). Interviews are a way to gather rich and insightful data from those that have experienced the phenomenon (Bearman, 2019; Yin, 2018). Semistructured

interviews also allow for the researcher to ask additional probing questions to build upon the responses of the participants, allowing for a richer and more detailed set of data (Saunders et al., 2016). I asked seven open-ended questions to gain insights on the strategies managers in for-profit higher education use to reduce the workplace stress of their employees. Follow-up questions were asked to gain additional clarity as needed during the interviews.

I also used human resources documents available on the company website as a second source of data in addition to participant interviews. Resources implemented by the organization that pertain to the well-being of employees were explored for emerging themes. Documentation in case study research is used to support the evidence gathered from other sources (Yin, 2018). Saunders et al. (2016) acknowledged that documentation is a useful secondary tool that may be reanalyzed for data collection for uses other than the original purpose.

Data Collection Technique

I conducted semistructured interviews with three managers from one for-profit university in Arizona. The participants were selected based on their successful implementation of workplace stress management strategies. The semistructured interviews consisted of seven open-ended questions with the option of asking additional clarifying questions to gather additional context, as necessary. The interviews were scheduled for a minimum of 45 minutes via Zoom. I audio recorded the interviews upon receiving permission to do so from the participant and took additional notes by hand by me as noted in the interview protocol (see Appendix A).

The interview approach has strengths and weaknesses. Yin (2018) stated that use of the interview technique in case studies provides focus on the case being studied with the opportunity to gain insightful knowledge from the participant. The weaknesses of this approach are that bias may be introduced, the researcher may have poor recollection of the information shared, and that the interviewee may provide answers that the interviewer wants to hear (Yin, 2018). To mitigate these concerns, I transcribed the audio recording of the interviews and provided them to the participants for member checking.

I used documentation consisting of human resource policies as the secondary source and part of the triangulation method to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The business managers were asked to include supporting documentation from their institution relating to their strategy implementation. The documentation was analyzed to support the data gathered from the semistructured interviews and provide additional context regarding the phenomenon under study.

Data Organization Technique

I used semistructured participant interviews and organization documentation to collect data from managers that have successfully implemented strategies that reduced the workplace stress of their employees. The documentation, which consisted of organization human resources, was uploaded to Microsoft Word for organizing in preparation for theme identification and stored on a password protected flash drive that only I have access to. Qualitative data analysis software provides the researcher with the tools that help with data organization, transcription analysis, theme development, and coding and text interpretation (Cypress, 2019; Saunders et al., 2016; Yin, 2018). NVivo

qualitative data analysis software was used to organize and analyze data from the interviews. All interviews were recorded on a voice recorder and later transcribed and returned to the participants for member checking. I will maintain all secured files, records, and flash drive in a fire safe in my home for 5 years. All files and records will be destroyed at the 5-year period and the flash drive erased.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research refers to the categorization and organization of information in a way to make sense of the data in preparation of writing a true and accurate final report (Cypress, 2017). Qualitative data are comprised of words and images that will be explored, analyzed, synthesized, and transformed to answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2016). The triangulation process is the use of two or more independent sources of data or data-collection methods that ensure that the data means what it is intended to mean (Yin, 2018). Data from semistructured interviews and company documents are the two data sources I crosschecked across participants to ensure data and interpretation accuracy to achieve triangulation. I compiled data from the semistructured participant interviews and company resource documents into Microsoft Word and then imported into NVivo for further processing. NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, was used to organize the non-numerical data collected from the semistructured participant interviews and company resource documentation. Qualitative researchers use NVivo software to sort, arrange, classify, and examine relationships in data to develop themes. An inductive approach during the coding process may provide the opportunity for new themes to emerge that may enrich the collected data (Roberts et

al., 2019). I conducted member checking of transcribed data to ensure accuracy of the interpreted responses. I applied the key themes developed from the data analysis of the semistructured participant interviews and company resource documents to the research question, ensuring accurate and realizable research results. The themes that emerged from this study correlated with the constructs of the JD-R conceptual framework and may be used to support current and future research.

Reliability and Validity

The combination of rigor, reliability, and validity demonstrate the trustworthiness of the research (Robert et al., 2019). Reliability and validity are two key aspects of all research (Cypress, 2017). Reliability is the researcher's ability to demonstrate data adequacy through consistent support of analysis across participants (Spiers et al., 2018). A valid study uses reliable instruments and measurements that accurately demonstrate what is being studied (Cypress, 2017). Reliability and validity demonstrate rigor of the study through credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Reliability

Reliability in case study research minimizes errors and bias using a study protocol, database, and maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2018). Saunders et al. (2016) stated that researchers demonstrate the study is dependable by thoroughly explaining how the data was obtained and analyzed to provide sufficient detail. Member checking is the process that allows the participants to confirm the accuracy of the collected data (Saunders et al., 2016). Fusch and Ness (2015) stated that data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study, the ability to obtain new

information has been attained, and further coding is no longer feasible. Saunders et al. defined dependability as the recording of all changes to ensure a reliable and dependable account of the changes that occur so that the research may be understood and evaluated by others. I followed the interview protocol with all participants and conducted transcript reviews of all interview data. I conducted member checking throughout the interview process to ensure that my interpretation of the participant responses was correct. I continued interviewing participants until participant responses became repetitive demonstrating that I had reached data saturation. Dependability of this study was enhanced using the interview protocol, transcript review, member checking of data interpretation, and data saturation.

Validity

The validity of a study refers to detailed and reflective account of the procedures and methods applied to the study that demonstrate to the reader how the lines of inquiry led to the conclusions (Roberts et al., 2019). Cypress (2107) posited that validity is related to accurate recording and data verification during the data collection process. Validation is the process of verifying the research data, analysis and interpretation and can be established through triangulation and member checking (Saunders et al., 2016). Validity in this study was enhanced through triangulation, member checking, and data saturation.

Credibility

According to Cypress (2017), credibility is the accurate and truthful depiction of the lived experiences of the participants, gathered by the researcher through prolonged

engagement and persistent observation to learn the context of the phenomenon in which it is embedded and minimizes the distortions that might creep into data. I ensured credibility through member checking, by following the interview protocol, transcript review, and data triangulation.

Transferability

Transferability demonstrates to the reader that the research results may be generalized or transferred to other settings in which the reader may be interested in studying (Forero et al., 2018; Saunders et al., 2016). Transferability is obtained through other researchers being able to follow the research methods as outlined in my study and in the research protocol in Appendix A. I accurately documented all interview questions, research design and method, population, and sample size to allow for transferability to other groups outside the sample used for this study.

Confirmability

Reflexivity and triangulation are techniques implemented in qualitative research to demonstrate confirmability. Confirmability, according to Forero et al. (2018) is a demonstration that the research results would be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers. I maintained a reflective journal and documented all process changes to ensure data accuracy and mitigate researcher bias. I continued to conduct and record semistructured participant interviews until data saturation was reached. Data saturation ensures the sample size is accurate and that no new themes will emerge from conducting additional interviews (Fofana et al., 2020).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, how the study was conducted was explained. A detailed review of the role as the researcher, the research method and design, the process for selecting study participants, the ethical practices of my research process, the data collection tools and process, data analysis, reliability, and validity were presented. In Section 3, the findings of the study, recommendations, and future research are presented.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how business managers in for-profit higher education reduce employee workplace stress. In this section, I present the findings and themes identified from the data collected for this study. The data were collected from semistructured interviews with three business managers and review of company documentation that related to their strategies. Three themes emerged from the data analysis: provide flexible support resources during times of change, establish effective communication, and recognize barriers to support. In this section, I also provide the applications for professional practice, implications for social change, personal reflections, recommendations for action and future research, and my final conclusions.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: How do business managers in for-profit higher education reduce employee workplace stress? I conducted a qualitative single case study to generate the data needed to answer the research question. I interviewed three business managers and assigned them unique identifiers (i.e., I1, I2, and I3) to ensure confidentiality in the data collection and analysis processes. Higher education institutional documentation that was available online was used as the secondary data source to add additional context to the data collected from interviews. Data saturation was reached at the conclusion of the interview of Participant I2, and a third interview was conducted to ensure no new themes emerged. I used NVivo 12 software to organize the

collected data into codes and develop themes from the participants' experiences of the phenomena. The identified themes are discussed in the following subsections.

Theme 1: Provide Flexible Support Resources During Times of Change

Organizational change was listed as one of the top factors that causes stress and costs U.S. employers between \$300 billion and \$500 billion annually (Yeend, 2019). The three participants each acknowledged the need to be flexible with the resources provided to employees. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many organizations to change how they interact with their customers and how they support their employees in a virtual environment. Flexibility became prevalent as organizations transitioned to working from home during the recent COVID-19 outbreak across the globe.

Supervisor Support

In meeting with their individual teams and other leaders within the university, creating virtual resources, alternating their meeting styles and format, and developing creative ways to keep employees engaged became common discussion trends. All three leaders recognized that they needed to be more engaged in a virtual world to identify the stress in their employees. Participant I1 identified self-care and wellness campaigns, podcasts, care.com, and exercise resources and support as flexible resources offered through the organization. Participants I2 and I3 identified flexibility with offering compensatory time beyond the standard paid time off offered through the university as essential to allowing employees to maintain balance and adjust to changes in the work environment. Participant I3 noted the importance of supporting employees through

change and giving them the time to process and adjust to change to improve overall performance and have more productive teams.

Virtual Support

The Ginger application was identified by Participants I1 and I2 as a virtual resource offered to employees to support their mental health. Through the Ginger application, employees are allowed to chat with life coaches in real time and connect with virtual mental health professionals. All three participants remarked on the adjustment their teams needed to make to transition to a virtual work environment and the need to offer virtual support where in-person meetings were no longer allowed. In addition to the Ginger application, the human resources team of the university created and published podcasts and webinars to support employees during their time in working from home. The topics included: managing workplace stress, managing pressure and stress to optimize your performance, handling stress, work from home expectations, creating a culturally competent workplace, and your role in workplace diversity. The concept of workplace diversity developed as a code in the interviews of all three participants and became a topic for additional resources given the societal changes over the past year.

How Theme 1 Tied to the Conceptual Framework

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) stated in the JD-R model that the characteristics that have the potential to affect workplace stress can be categorized as either job demands or job resources. The idea posited in the JD-R model that resources mitigate workplace stress is supported by Theme 1. The federal restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic caused organizations to change the way employees worked and how they accessed

resources. All three participants expressed the necessity of providing resources to their employees to help them manage their workplace stress during times of change. The stress of organizational change has been linked to increased workplace stress (Yeend, 2019). In the JD-R model, it is suggested that resources, provided either internally or externally, are beneficial to mitigating employee workplace stress (Lizano et al., 2018). The access to resources in a virtual environment allowed all three participants the opportunity to support their employees in a constantly changing virtual environment.

Theme 2: Establish Effective Communication

Communication was an overarching theme expressed by all three participants. Establishing effective communication and being flexible in how the managers were communicating with their employees was essential in identifying the stress in their employees. All three participants identified that disengagement, absenteeism, and being direct about how their employees were feeling helped them in identifying stress in their employees.

Verbal and Nonverbal Indicators

Participant I1 mentioned sickness and changes in their attitudes as an identifier of stress. Participant I3 noticed lack of response or a sense of frustration as key indicators to stress. I used these codes to identify establishing effective communication as a theme because each participant mentioned how they identified these signs in employees during weekly one-on-ones and team meetings. Participant I3 made a habit of meeting with employees to gauge their stress levels and develop a support plan that included partnering the employee with someone they are comfortable speaking with about what is going on

with them if they were not comfortable sharing their feelings with the manager.

Participant I2 allowed the employees to determine the setting for their meetings, which included taking a walk and chatting over the phone to change the setting of sitting at the computer.

Leadership Communication

Participant I1 frequently met with the leadership of various teams across the university to gain the perspectives of others and learn the resources they may want to implement to support their employees. Participant I3 noted the importance of filtering the information disseminated to employees by their managers and how the directives received at the management level may not be of immediate importance to the employee. This practice has allowed the manager to control how much demand is placed on the employees at a given time.

How Theme 2 Tied to the Conceptual Framework

Effective communication can be considered a resource for mediating workplace stress. Work environments that meet the psychological needs of support and control encourage positive outcomes from employees through higher work engagement, individual learning and development, and job satisfaction (Brough et al., 2018).

Addressing the verbal and nonverbal indicators employees share during communication with their peers and management aligns with the resource support identified in the JD-R model framework.

Theme 3: Recognize Barriers to Support

The third theme developed from the following codes: trust, comfortability, new ways of working, work-life balance, diversity and inclusion, and process management. All three participants acknowledged that even though they offer resources and communicate as frequently and effectively as possible, some employees are not as open to receive support. Recognizing these barriers was an essential function for the managers because they stated that it allowed them to recognize how best to support their employees.

Participant I3 used an example of how some employees were at risk of missing productive work output because they were not comfortable with their technology set-up. In recognizing their comfort level in having an in-person meeting with the technology team, arrangements were made to allow the employees to be supported onsite.

Participant I2 acknowledged that not being able to see people in person to gauge their physical responses was a barrier to providing support. All three participants recognized that their individual and organizational support could not be forced upon an employee and that understanding the resources needed for their employees played a pivotal role in reducing their stress.

The constant changes in the for-profit higher education industry and the onset of a global pandemic required organizations to change the way they provided support to employees. The JD-R model includes the recognition that employees need to feel supported and be provided resources to manage job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Hirschi et al. (2019) identified changing resources and barriers as an action

strategy to improve workplace balance, which may improve employee performance. Van Wingerden et al. (2017) demonstrated through the JD-R model that more support for autonomy and resources resulted in higher engagement and lower workplace stress from employees. Recognizing the barriers employees feel they have regarding available support may improve work outcomes and engagement.

Application to Professional Practice

In this study, I aimed to explore how business managers in for-profit higher education reduced the workplace stress of their employees. The following three themes emerged from data analysis: (a) provide flexible support resources, (b) establish effective communication, and (c) recognize barriers to support. The findings could be used to help business managers in for-profit higher education reduce the workplace stress of their employees. The participants acknowledged how workplace stress affects productivity, employee turnover, and organizational morale. With 46% of workers in the United States reporting that their jobs were the leading cause of stress in their lives (AIS, 2018), it is imperative that employers learn how to not only provide resources for managing workplace stress, but also how to identify the onset of stress. Through a balance of job demands and the resources provided to manage the demands, business managers may improve organizational productivity and employee morale, which both improve the bottom line for the business.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may contribute to positive social change through the potential to improve the health and happiness of employees, their families, and their

communities. Long hours, job insecurity, heavy workload, and organizational change were identified as the top factors that cause stress and cost U.S. employers between \$300 billion and \$500 billion annually (Yeend, 2019). Improved health and happiness in the workplace and at home may result in lower health care costs for families and the generation of more income and community involvement as individuals live happier and healthier lives.

Recommendations for Action

Business managers in for-profit higher education may find the results of this study useful in identifying how employees perceive and react to stress in the workplace, giving the managers an opportunity to address the change in demands facing an employee and align the resources necessary to support the employee during stressful changes. The strategies identified in the findings have been addressed in prior research as outlined in the literature review and add to the research on how flexible support resources, effective communication, and understanding the barriers that employees feel to accessing resources may impact overall business operations. The results from this study may be shared through leadership conferences, management trainings specific to the organization, and through public policy within federal and local government.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand how business managers in for-profit higher education reduced the workplace stress of their employees. I identified two limitations in this study. The first limitation was that the results may not be applicable to all higher education institutions because the resources that are utilized may

be organization specific. The COVID-19 pandemic has allowed for the results of this study to become more applicable as a resource for organizations because of the change they are experiencing. Extending the study across a multicase study design or adding quantitative results through conducting a survey may improve the applicability of the findings to other industries and allow for a deeper understanding of what causes workplace stress. A second limitation may have been the recollection of valuable information by the participants during the interview process. Preexisting participant bias may have been reflected in their interview responses. The global COVID-19 pandemic that took place during the data collection phase of this study may have allowed for more focus to be placed on the current state of events as opposed to an overall approach to managing workplace stress. As such, I recommend conducting this study after the pandemic has eased and organizations are operating within their prepandemic processes.

Reflections

When I began the doctoral study process, I was not sure where to begin because I continued to look at the end goal and what needed to be achieved to reach that point. I had to shift my mindset to focus on one milestone at a time and remind myself that this process was not a race and that my timeline was not the same as everyone else's. Deciding on a business problem to address came easy given the job I was doing and the industry I was in. I did not anticipate the COVID-19 pandemic and the effect it would have on the relevance of my study phenomena. Looking back, I am grateful I chose this path.

I was initially concerned about my personal bias when collecting the data from the interviews. As I gathered the data and reviewed it later, I began to feel overwhelmed about my personal experiences with workplace stress and how the managers I have had through the years effectively or ineffectively helped to manage my stress. Instead of interjecting my own opinions and objectives, my study results forced me to self-reflect about my personal management style and how I can improve my leadership going forward.

I have been asked throughout this process by peers about my experience and my advice on if they should pursue a terminal degree. My response has been to have a strong why when beginning the process because you will get so far and want to give up. I am glad I did not give up, but I am even more grateful that my why, which included exposing higher education opportunities to underexposed communities, was strong enough to make me push through. If I had to decide if I would pursue this opportunity all over again, my answer would be yes. My cause was greater than any roadblocks or moments of self-doubt I experienced.

Conclusion

The professional literature and previous research on workplace stress was developed during a time that organizations considered normal. The for-profit higher education industry experiences change year-over-year but also with every change of the president and their staffs within the Department of Education. This study and the results bring light to a moment in time for businesses that no one anticipated, the COVID-19 pandemic. What was understood from prior research on workplace stress adopted an

entirely new meaning with the fast-paced and immediate changes in the workplace demands and access to resources experienced by many over the last year. As such, not only does this mean the perception of workplace stress can change but how stress is identified and managed can also change. The JD-R model still holds true in that as the expectations and demands on employees increase, so must the resources and support provided. Reducing the levels of workplace stress for employees is a task of leadership and a resource employees rely on during times of change and uncertainty. The results of this study and the strategies identified are useful additions to the body of research initiated by Bakker and Demerouti in 2001.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Guidelines

1. The interview will take place in the participant's office or private room via Cisco WebEx or Zoom.
2. The interview consists of 45-60 minutes of uninterrupted time.
3. I will show interest, care, and concern for all research participants.
4. I will use interview skills so that participants may share their experiences.
5. I will have a notepad to write down key information.
6. With the participant's approval, I will record the interview.

Opening Script

My name is Erin Woods. The purpose of this case study is to explore the strategies business managers in higher education use to reduce employee workplace stress. The interview will consist of a brief conversation about the research purpose and getting your consent to proceed with the remainder of the interview. I would like you to feel comfortable while answering the questions. There are no right or wrong answers. Please review this consent form (I will share the consent form on my screen, which will have been sent via email to the participant). If it is ok with you, I will be recording this interview, as stated in the consent form (I will start the recording).

Interview Questions

1. How do you identify workplace stress within your employees?
I will ask follow-up questions.
2. What established leadership strategies has your organization implemented to reduce employees' workplace stress?
I will ask follow-up questions.

3. What are the principal resources your organization identified to assist in reducing workplace stress strategy management?

I will ask follow-up questions.

4. What key challenges have you faced for reducing employees' workplace stress?

I will ask follow-up questions.

5. How do you overcome the key challenges to reducing workplace stress?

I will ask follow-up questions.

6. Based upon your experiences, how does reducing workplace stress benefit your employees and the organization?

I will ask follow-up questions.

7. What else can you share with me about your organization's strategies and key business processes for managing the stress of the employees?

I will ask follow-up questions.

Closing Script

Thank you (Name). This study can add value to your stakeholders and contribute workplace stress reduction strategies to industry research. I will be providing you with a summary of my interpretations of your answers to the interview questions. I will send you an email with this information for you to review to ensure that I interpreted your responses and information correctly.

Appendix B: CITI Certificate

		Completion Date 12-Jan-2020 Expiration Date N/A Record ID 33615555
This is to certify that:		
Erin Woods		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
Student Researchers (Curriculum Group) Student Researchers (Course Learner Group) 1 - Basic Course (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
Walden University		
		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w9ada5393-2ae9-4b94-8a44-2d4d76d5f214-33615555		