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Talent Management Strategies for Managing Employee Career Advancement at Fortune 500 Companies

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

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500 Companies

by

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MS, Webster University, 2013

BS, Florida A&M University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

The focus on attracting talent versus an internal focus on advancing talented employees has become costly for corporations. Senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies need to advance the careers of internal employees to achieve their business objectives. Grounded in the path-goal theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple-case study was to explore the talent management (TM) strategies senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage the career advancement of internal employees. Methodological triangulation was used to analyze data collected from semistructured interviews and company documentation. The participants were six Fortune 500 leaders in the United States Midwest region who successfully managed internal employees' career advancement. Yin's five-phase approach was used for data analysis. Five themes emerged: provide mentorship, conduct one-on-one meetings, create individual development plans, encourage continuing education, and provide internal job shadowing. A key recommendation is for senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies to provide formal mentoring programs that connect employees with mentors to help develop their professional skills. The implications for positive social change include the potential for senior leaders to help their employees contribute financially to their families and support the local job market.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my angel baby, Asha Chennel Thomas. I almost gave up on life when Asha passed away, but GOD. I am forever grateful to have birthed a tiny human and held her for three months. Thank you, Princess Asha, for awakening my authenticity to finally tap into my personal power.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Talent management (TM) strategies are important to manage the careers of employees. Senior leaders who invest in the career development of employees will be successful in having a talent pipeline to advance a corporate hierarchy (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019; Whysall et al., 2019). However, senior leaders must first understand the nature and context of the career pathway of each individual employee (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). When employees at Fortune 500 companies are led properly with TM strategies, they can advance along their career paths. This study explored TM strategies senior leaders use, specifically at Fortune 500 companies, with the goal of improving career advancement of internal employees.

Background of the Problem

Both attracting and retaining talented employees have been challenging for Fortune 500 companies. Some companies search externally for the right talent, instead of promoting internal employees to fill key positions (Lagat & Makau, 2018). When this happens, companies lack a global vision of tapping into talented internal employees to achieve business objectives and address skill shortage problems (Napathorn, 2020; Ramli et al., 2018). There are many strategies for TM, but an important focus should be on the talent of internal employees versus acquiring new talent (Pirzada et al., 2021; Theys & Schultz, 2020). Building a leadership pipeline within an organization starts with training internal employees for executive roles (Griffith et al., 2019; Kasdorf & Kayaalp, 2021; Whysall et al., 2019). As such, it is necessary that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use TM strategies to manage career advancement for internal employees.

Companies that are proactive about having a TM strategy in place promote internal employees. TM is a concept that is attracting more research due to its strategic nature and an evolving workforce, so there is a need for further research on implementing TM strategies and its impact at organizations (Al Aina & Atan, 2020; Chawla & Agarwal, 2021; Claus, 2019; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Bonneton et al. (2019) noted further research is needed to link career-related TM strategies to individual career success. While there is research in TM literature regarding TM strategies, there is a lack of clear guidelines for employee career advancement (Pirzada et al., 2021). The intent of this qualitative multiple case study is to contribute to the development of the TM field by identifying the TM strategies senior leaders use to manage the careers of internal employees. The results of this study may help senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies adopt TM strategies to improve how they promote internal employees for career advancement within the organization.

Problem and Purpose

Talent management (TM) has become scarce and when not done is costly for corporations, but many senior leaders fail to manage the careers of internal employees (Adeniji et al., 2019, p. 255). A study conducted by Boštjančič and Slana (2018) indicated 38% of companies have an inclusive TM process to manage employee careers and develop their talents (para. 25). The general business problem is senior leaders fail to manage career advancement for their internal employees, which impacts business objectives. The specific business problem is that some senior leaders at Fortune 500

companies lack TM strategies to manage career advancement for their internal employees.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the TM strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. The targeted population was six senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies from four industries in the Midwest region of the United States who have implemented successful TM strategies to manage career advancement for their internal employees. The implication for positive social change includes the potential for senior leaders to develop TM strategies to help their individual employees contribute financially to their families and support the job market of the communities where their companies are located.

Population and Sampling

The target population selected for this study included six senior leaders from four Fortune 500 companies in the Midwest region of the United States. I used purposive sampling to select participants who have successfully used TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees. All but two of the companies involved in the study included two participants leading similar departments. Each participant had over 5 years of leadership experience. Zoom video conferencing was used to interview participants using a semistructured interview process. Using six senior leaders from different companies led to richer data to address the research question. I also reviewed relevant company documentation to answer the research question.

Nature of the Study

Researchers can use quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods to gain insights into problems, products, services, consumers, and opinions (Bryson, 2015). The quantitative research method uses statistical data to test theory or develop theory (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers use the quantitative methodology to examine variables' characteristics or relationships by collecting data from surveys or secondary records (Saunders et al., 2015). The qualitative research method, on the other hand, is an in-depth study using nonnumerical data by exploring phenomena between people and constructed meanings (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers operate in natural settings when using the qualitative methodology. Third, the mixed-methods approach uses both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze findings of a study (Saunders et al., 2015). I did not use the quantitative or mixed-methods approach because testing a hypothesis or interpreting statistical relationships among variables was not necessary for conducting this study. The qualitative method was most appropriate for exploring the talent management strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for employees.

I considered three qualitative research designs: (a) phenomenology, (b) narrative inquiry, and (c) case study. Researchers use the phenomenological design to focus on the meanings of lived experiences of participants (Yin, 2018). I did not use the phenomenological design because the study did not focus on the phenomena of the meanings of participants' lived experiences. Narrative designs focus on participants sharing chronological life stories of their experiences (Saunders et al., 2015). The

narrative design was not suitable because the study did not focus on participants' life stories. The case study design provides an in-depth evaluation of a research problem (Yin, 2018). Researchers use the multiple case study design to gain a deeper analysis of the phenomena from multiple sources and perspectives than the single case study design from an internal source (Yin, 2018). I used a multiple case study design to explore the talent management strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. The case study design has been widely used in business management and allowed me to investigate real-life settings through the interview process. I was able to gather detailed information from participants responses to open-ended questions and reviewed company documents to answer the research question.

Research Question

What TM strategies do senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees?

Interview Questions

1. What are some TM strategies you have implemented that have proven to be effective in advancing your employees' careers?

2. To what extent do you focus your TM strategies on developing employees to their full potential to meet their career goals?

3. What key challenges have you experienced in implementing TM strategies for employee career advancement?

4. How did you address the key challenges you experienced in implementing TM strategies for employee career advancement?

5. What knowledge have you gained about TM strategies from current employees who foresee advancing their careers at your company?

6. How, if at all, have you adapted or changed your TM strategies to support employees in the pursuit of their career goals?

7. What additional information would you like to share concerning how you manage the careers of your employees using TM strategies?

Conceptual Framework

The path-goal theory, originated by House (1971), was the conceptual framework for this study. According to the path-goal theory, leaders can influence their employees' work goals, personal goals, and paths to goal achievement (House & Mitchell, 1975). House proposed that leaders who change their leadership behaviors can increase their employees job performance and satisfaction towards reaching their goals within the company (House, 1971). There are four leadership behaviors in the path-goal theory that leaders can use to be more effective. The four leadership behaviors are directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership (House & Mitchell, 1975).

The four leadership behaviors exemplify different attributes. When leaders use directive actions, they let employees know exactly what is expected of them with set standards of performance (House & Mitchell, 1975). Within the supportive behavior, leaders are friendly and approachable while recognizing the well-being of their employees (House & Mitchell, 1975). Participative leaders value the opinions of their

employees before making decisions (House & Mitchell, 1975). When leaders use achievement-oriented actions, they set challenging goals for their employees and have confidence that employees will perform consistently at a high-level (House & Mitchell, 1975). Leaders can embody all four of these leadership behaviors (House & Mitchell, 1975). The path-goal theory was the conceptual framework used to identify and explore the TM strategies used by senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies that were specific to both business objectives and career advancement for their employees.

Operational Definitions

The following are some terms used within Fortune 500 companies that might need clarification by those outside talent management.

Career advancement: Career advancement is the opportunity employees have to get promoted within a company from entry level positions to other job preferences (Petry et al., 2021).

Internal employee: An internal employee is a permanent employee of a company who receive benefits and can earn an opportunity to be promoted (Zafar Sheikh et al., 2021).

Senior leader: A senior leader is responsible for leading a team of other leaders in a company to achieve business objectives (Reimer et al., 2018).

Talent management: Talent management is a strategic process designed to attract, develop, and retain employees to meet business objectives (Samanta & Eleni, 2021).

Talent management strategies: Talent management strategies are practices used to manage employee performance and career growth (Mtethwa, 2019).

Talented employee: A talented employee is effective at performing work tasks, and they help increase the productivity and profitability of an organization (Al Aina & Atan, 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements assumed to be true by researchers, but have not been validated (White, 2018). There were two assumptions that impacted this study. The first assumption was that study participants would answer all questions in detail and provide honest answers regarding the research question, and this assumption was confirmed. The second assumption was confirmed in that the study participants did provide company documentation relevant to the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses of the study that are beyond the researcher's control (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). There were two limitations that did not impact this study. The first limitation was that participants may not be able to share confidential information about company practices related to the research question. I explained to participants their answers were confidential and participants felt comfortable answering the research question. The second limitation was that senior executives have time limitations that may curtail availability for interviews. Zoom video conferencing allowed participants flexibility with scheduling interviews and each interview had positive interactions.

Delimitations

Delimitations are research boundaries intentionally set by the researcher (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018). There were two delimitations that impacted this study. The first delimitation was the selection criteria of senior leaders who work for Fortune 500 companies in the Midwest region of the United States. I selected participants who met the selection criteria and agreed to participate in this research study. The second delimitation was the selection of the path-goal theory over other theories that may be applicable to career advancement. I only used the path-goal theory to investigate the phenomenon to answer the research question.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study may impact the use of TM strategies senior leaders use to manage career advancement of internal employees and contribute to positive social change. The insights and awareness about what TM strategies work to advance employees careers and how those TM strategies contribute to business objectives may enhance a company's talent pipeline and competitive advantage. The results from this study could further improve senior leaders' understanding of how career advancement is both professional and personal growth. The findings from this study may be significant enough to gain the interest of senior leaders who believe in creating positive work environments where employees are developed and positioned to have satisfying careers.

Contribution to Business Practice

The use of TM strategies provides opportunities for corporations to revive and make systematic changes for future endeavors (Painter et al., 2019). A potential

contribution of the study to business practice may be the retention of talented employees. Employees are more committed to stay with their organizations when they feel leaders in the organization care about their development and advancement within the company (Almaaitah et al., 2020). Employees value professional growth within their organizations. Implementing TM strategies to retain talented employees can help sustain the talent pipeline within organizations and may further lead to an overall improvement in achieving business objectives.

Implications for Social Change

When senior leaders use TM strategies, the implications for positive social change may begin with happy, satisfied employees, who are fairly compensated and recognized for their work. Leaders who empower and enable their employees build employees' confidence in the job performance which leads to job satisfaction (Bourini et al., 2019). When employees are supported, they feel they can thrive at work and are excited to share their career success to mentor others. Setting and reaching career goals is a motivator for employees to become role models for other individuals who want to advance in their careers (Andresen et al., 2020). When employees have a fulfilling career, they feel empowered and enabled to give back to their communities by volunteering their time to connect to the lives of others−for example by mentoring young people pursing similar careers.

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A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

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The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore TM strategies senior leaders use to manage career advancement of internal employees. The targeted

population consisted of senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies in the Midwest region of

the United States. The literature review includes an analysis of existing literature on the

topic of TM strategies and how it is applied in Fortune 500 companies. At the beginning

of the literature review, I discussed the conceptual framework, the path-goal theory. The

leadership behaviors outlined in the path-goal theory were analyzed for applicability to

the specific business problem along with relevant literature on TM strategies and the

aspects related to the career advancement of internal employees.

Organization of the Literature Review

I organized the academic literature review beginning with expanding upon the

conceptual framework, the path-goal theory. I also reviewed relevant literature on TM

strategies, career advancement, and leadership at Fortune 500 companies.

Research Strategy

I conducted a comprehensive review of the academic literature, and most studies

were published within the last 5 years, between 2018 and 2022. I analyzed 138 scholarly

sources, 131 (95%) sources were peer reviewed, and seven sources (5%) were seminal

publications before 2018 or not peer-reviewed sources. I used the Walden Online Library,

Wiley Online Library, and Google Scholar to select sources for my literature review.

Additionally, Ulrichsweb was used to verify peer-reviewed journals.

Path-goal Theory

The path-goal theory was the conceptual framework used to explore the TM

strategies senior leaders apply to manage the career advancement of internal employees.

The path-goal theory, originated by House (1971), focuses on a leader's behavior. A

leader's behavior can affect how an employee perform their job duties and determine an

employee job satisfaction (House, 1971). The path-goal theory identifies how leaders

influence their employees with a clear path to achieve universal goals (House & Mitchell,

1975). There are four leadership behaviors in the path-goal theory: (a) directive, (b)

supportive, (c) participative, and (d) achievement-oriented leadership (House & Mitchell,

1975). The use of the path-goal leadership theory allows leaders to provide support to

their employees, when needed, to help complete complex tasks (Adoli & Kilika, 2020;

Rana et al., 2019). Leaders can use the path-goal theory to convey clear expectations and

requirements for employees interested in advancing in the organization (Deshwal &

Ashraf Ali, 2020). The path-goal theory describes how leaders can help their team

achieve company goals and motivate them to excel (Adoli & Kilika, 2020; Sujana, 2020).

Lagat and Makau (2018) agreed that the path-goal theory emphasizes a leader's influence

to lead their employees by having a positive outlook on company goals. A leader's

personal performance may have the power to motivate their employees to complete job

tasks (Henkel & Bourdeau, 2018). Leaders who use the path-goal theory are tasked with

enhancing employee performance and satisfaction (Magombo-Bwanali, 2019).

Understanding the path-goal theory can be helpful to senior leaders as they manage the

career advancement of internal employees. The four leadership behaviors in the path-goal

theory hereunder describes how leaders can apply each leadership behavior.

Directive

The first leadership behavior in the path-goal theory is directive. According to

Mustofa and Muafi (2021), directive leadership behavior is described as supervision with

structure and control. This leadership behavior is valuable when job roles and tasks are not clearly identified for employees (House & Mitchell, 1975). Directive leaders operate a workplace where they can effectively guide their employees on what tasks need to be completed and there is minimal ambiguity associated with employee workflow (Adoli & Kilika, 2020; Dokony et al., 2020). Although directive leadership can be valuable, it can be discouraging if employees want the autonomy to be innovative with their work (Hoang et al., 2019). Dokony et al. (2020) supports this point of view by stating the directive leadership behavior can be viewed as a manipulative approach and that employees do not favor leaders who are directive. The directive leadership behavior may be used by leaders who do not know how to properly train their team on job roles.

Supportive

The second leadership behavior in path-goal theory is supportive. This leadership behavior is helpful when the workplace is stressful and prevents positive workflow from employees (House & Mitchell, 1975). A supportive leader is approachable and provides their employees with a positive work experience (Rana et al., 2019). Supportive leaders provide their employees with emotional support (Lam et al., 2021), which Mustofa and Muafi (2021) described as listening and appreciating. Lam et al. (2021) stated that supportive leaders create a company culture of collaboration, trust, and learning. Supportive leaders also use coaching techniques when they clarify specific work tasks to help their employees (Huang, 2019). The supportive leadership behavior is used by leaders who enjoy assisting their teams.

Participative

The third leadership behavior in path-goal theory is participative. Participative leadership behavior is important when employees are particularly involved in their work and are opinionated (House & Mitchell, 1975). A participative leader collaborates with their employees to help them make decisions (Rana et al., 2019). Leaders who use the participative leadership behavior can encourage employees to use their voices and be a part of making decisions within the team (Dokony et al., 2020). Leaders can gain more commitment from employees if they apply participative leadership behavior (Dokony et al., 2020). Leaders who use participative leadership behavior welcome team opinions before making final decisions that impact the team.

Achievement-oriented

The final leadership behavior in path-goal theory is achievement-oriented. This leadership behavior is important when employees work in competitive work environments, such as technical or sales job roles, or work for entrepreneurial business owners (House & Mitchell, 1975). Achievement-oriented leaders provide goals to their employees that are clear and challenging, with an expectation of increased job performance (Dokony et al., 2020; Sujana, 2020). Achievement-oriented leaders like to reward their employees when they have reached their performance goals and it results in more effective employees (Dokony et al., 2020). The achievement-oriented leadership behavior is used by leaders who like to keep track of their team's progress and remind them of expectations.

A leader can choose to use one or all four leadership behaviors in the path-goal theory. Each leadership behavior in the path-goal theory can be tailored to the unique circumstance of the leader-employee relationship. Leaders are responsible for defining the business goals for their employees and enable them to create their own career paths (Yoon et al., 2021).

The path-goal theory has evolved since its introduction. The evolution of the path-goal theory focused on leader effectiveness by adding leadership behaviors to the original four, for a total of eight (House, 1996). The four leadership behaviors added were (a) work facilitation, (b) group-oriented decision process, (c) work group representation and networking, and (d) value-based actions (House, 1996). The four extended leadership behaviors focus on group responses to achieving goals. A leader's behavior changes based on the environment of the organization (House, 1996). An example of this is when leaders work in positive environments that support their ability to lead their teams versus working in negative environments where leaders are micromanaged on how they lead their teams. It is still the leader's responsibility for helping employees reach their career goals and some leaders may even reward employees for doing so (House, 1996).

Alternative Theories

Leaders need to adapt and be willing to change their behavior when they are leading others. Hersey and Blanchard (1969) developed the situational leadership model so that leaders can accurately identify the needs of their followers and support them. Situational leaders lead based on their environment (Price-Dowd, 2020). The situational leadership model allows leaders to choose the best leadership style given the situation to

lead their teams (Mustofa & Muafi, 2021; Raza & Sikandar, 2018; Seidel et al., 2019). Similar to the path-goal theory, the situational leadership model is used to encourage employees.

Transformational leaders lead with motivation to enhance the performance of their employees (Price-Dowd, 2020). Transformational leaders express the essential engagement between leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). Løvaas et al. (2020) concur transformational leaders use prosocial motivation to help encourage their employees. Transformational leaders have high expectations for employees and constantly encourage them to achieve their goals (Zhang et al., 2021). Transformational leaders also help employees understand company values that may help employees identify career goals at the organization (Busari et al., 2019). Transformational leaders emphasize the importance of employees doing exceptional work and being engaged with others at the company (Sulistiyanto & Murtini, 2018). Transformational leaders have charisma and are more likely to persuade their employees to pursue organizational goals and objectives (Khattak et al., 2020). Transformational leaders also use their charisma to inspire employees to make a commitment to reaching company goals (Khattak et al., 2020; Steinmann et al., 2018). Løvaas et al. (2020) posited transformational leaders also increase employee creativity and innovation. The transformational leadership theory is similar to the path-goal theory by motivating employees to consistently do well.

Leaders also provide rewards to their employees when they achieve excellent job performance. Burns (1978) created the transactional leadership theory to use a rewards-based system to improve employee performance. The achievement-oriented leadership

behavior of the path-goal theory requires leaders to provide clarity of flow and give rewards when employees have accomplished tasks, consistent with transactional leadership (Sulistiyanto & Murtini, 2018). Leaders who apply the achievement-oriented leadership behavior provides employees with a path-goal transaction where they tend to do their jobs well, knowing a reward will be given to them (Crews et al., 2019). Leaders use the transactional leadership approach to get their employees to complete tasks quickly and transactional leadership can be compared to the path-goal directive leadership behavior.

Choosing the best leadership style to manage the career advancement of employees can be complex. The laissez-faire leadership approach gives employees the autonomy to complete work that is most effective for them (Baig et al., 2019). Leaders who use the laissez-faire leadership style gives employees few rules and provide little to no direction (Price-Dowd, 2020). Laissez-faire leaders have a passive leadership approach by avoiding making key decisions and taking responsibility for their teams (Baig et al., 2019). Team members can complete their daily workflow to meet deadlines without laissez-faire leaders getting involved (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). The laissez-faire leadership approach can have a negative impact on employee performance (Baig et al., 2019). For example, some employees might need leaders to provide them clear direction on daily job tasks so they can perform well in their job role. The laissez-faire leadership approach is a contrasting theory of the path-goal theory that leaders can consider using.

Talent Management Strategies

A shift must occur in how senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies view TM and how senior leaders use TM strategies to manage employee careers. The concept of TM emerged over 100 years ago, and researchers are still trying to comprehend TM effectiveness for the workplace (Chawla & Agarwal, 2021; Pirzada et al., 2021; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). The TM process is about attracting and developing employees to reach their full potential while benefiting companies (Chawla & Agarwal, 2021; Samanta & Eleni, 2021). Some companies use TM to focus only on talented people within their organization and how they complete business objectives (Glaister et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Kabwe et al., 2020). Some leaders at companies focus on the career development of talented employees, but TM requires leaders to focus on the career development of all employees (Pandita & Ray, 2018; Samanta & Eleni, 2021). Using key TM strategies to develop employees can strengthen businesses (Johnson et al., 2019) and provide companies the best human capital within their organizations to maintain a competitive edge (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018; Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Jose, 2019). Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) proposed that there is a gap between what employees view as TM strategies and why their leaders provide them. Therefore, leaders need to ensure employees understand how they are using TM strategies for their benefit.

There are several ways TM literature define how TM strategies should be used for employees, specifically employees who are talented. Defining the concept of TM and how organizations see people as talent is still unclear in the literature (Cross Walker, 2020; Farndale et al., 2019; Jooss et al., 2019; Kichuk et al., 2019; Sparrow, 2019). The

shift in how senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies effectively view TM can begin with senior leaders identifying who and what is being considered as talent within the organization (Meyers et al., 2020; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Kabwe et al. (2020) postulated that talent comes from an employee, but the company in which an employee works for acquires that talent and can use it for their advantage. Talent can be defined as a natural characteristic and potential of a person (Jooss et al., 2019; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Tyskbo (2019) stated that organizations define talent by their own company culture. A company's culture may affect how employees will demonstrate their talents (Mitosis et al., 2021; Tyskbo, 2019). Some companies view all employees as talent versus dividing employees in different talent pools (Harsch & Festing, 2020). These studies illustrate that there are competing definitions for talent and a clear definition is still needed.

Leaders understanding of what *talent* is differs. Ansar and Baloch (2018) argued that talent and TM have distinct meanings and need a uniform definition in academia and corporations. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2020) agrees that more research needs to be conducted to provide a broader context in the field of TM. Tyskbo (2019) also proposed that future researchers focus on gaining an understanding of TM strategies used by senior leaders for employees' career progress, since most TM literature currently focuses on how human resource management (HRM) departments attract and retain employees. Senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies need to rethink how they view talent and resolve any problems with the use of TM strategies for career development of employees (Johnson et al., 2019; Painter et al., 2019; Tyskbo, 2019). Creating a clear definition of

the word talent may help senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies understand how to manage the career advancement of internal employees.

Talent management is a function of HRM departments at companies. Yildiz and Esmer (2021) stated TM is a subprocess of HRM. HRM focuses on the operational approach of attracting, training, and managing employees in a company to achieve its business objectives and TM focus on how employees use their skills to meet the company's business objectives (Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). The TM process should not be an HRM-only function since most company's culture is to have high performing employees (Theys & Schultz, 2020). Leaders can review the TM process at their companies and may consider evaluating TM as a separate function. Kabwe et al. (2020) challenged the way companies use TM strategies and assumed that leaders only use it to control employees instead of empowering them in the workplace. The goal of TM is to identify and develop employees with talent so that they can become future leaders (Kabwe et al., 2020; Whysall et al., 2019). Additionally, TM is about placing people in roles that fit their skills (Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Companies must change their current TM strategies to meet the needs of their employees (Claus, 2019). The TM approach used by leaders will determine how they advance employee careers at their companies.

Talented Employees

Talented employees are valuable resources to an organization, and leaders should focus on retaining employees at companies (Almaaitah et al., 2020; Azizi et al., 2021). There are talented employees within every organization, but leaders are overlooking them based on their perspective of talent (De Boeck et al., 2018; Ramli et al., 2018). Meyers et

al. (2020) surveyed a group of human resource (HR) managers located in different countries about talent philosophies. The results of the study indicated only 10-15% of employees are commonly identified as being talented and are provided opportunities to develop their potential at corporations (Meyers et al., 2020). Griffith et al. (2019) emphasized that leaders lacked appropriate TM strategies to discover and develop potentially talented employees. Harsch and Festing (2020) revealed that some leaders expect employees to prove themselves with exceptional job performance for at least 3 years before they can be identified as a talented employee. Senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies may need to consider a new approach to determining who are talented employees within their organization.

Talented employees are more likely to receive development and career opportunities at companies. Companies invest in talented employees through TM developmental programs (De Boeck et al., 2018). Given development opportunities, talented employees are more likely to feel valued and they are committed to stay with their company (Jayaraman et al., 2018; Pandita & Ray, 2018; Pirzada et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2021). Aguinis and Burgi-Tian (2021) recommended that companies conduct stay interviews with talented employees. An example of this is when a senior leader meets with an employee who has shown interest in leaving and they persuade them to stay by providing incentives and making them feel valued.

Senior leaders should advance the careers of talented employees by matching them with key positions (Al Aina & Atan, 2020). Otherwise, talented employees may feel they are being used if not given proper placements (King & Vaiman, 2019; Mtethwa,

2019). Companies who value developing talented employees have standardized career paths for them to follow, which allows employees to plan how to advance their careers (Griffith et al., 2019; Harsch & Festing, 2020). TM should encourage leaders to create a career path with all internal employees to strengthen their skillsets to effectively achieve business objectives (Theys & Schultz, 2020). All internal employees should have the opportunity to advance to a position within the organization that fits their skills and abilities.

Career Advancement

Career advancement can address TM challenges Fortune 500 companies are facing. There is a gap in literature that connects TM strategies to career advancement (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). Literature about TM strategies has focused on companies maintaining a competitive edge versus advancing the careers of internal employees (Claus, 2019). Kharadze et al. (2019) identified 34.8% of survey participants who worked at corporations in Tbilisi believe they cannot achieve maximum success in their organizations. Leaders have a vital role in selecting internal employees for open opportunities (Harsch & Festing, 2020). Companies may need to implement new TM strategies to help employees advance their careers (Harsch & Festing, 2020; Mitosis et al., 2021). Leaders who understand the career goals of their employees can synchronize them to benefit company goals and, at the same time, prepare them for career advancement (Adeniji et al., 2019; Hitka et al., 2019; Otto et al., 2021). Houssein et al. (2020) added that career development is one of the best factors to retain employees. Thus,

companies that believe they are responsible for advancing the careers of their employees

can start by having a positive work environment that fosters career growth.

Positive Workplace

Employees want to work in positive environments that promote career growth.

The use of TM strategies in a positive and healthy work environment can motivate

employees to stay with their companies (Mitosis et al., 2021). Employees are more likely

to stay with their companies when they feel that there are good career opportunities

available for them and they continue to be happy doing their jobs (Rasheed et al., 2020).

Kähkönen et al. (2021) noted employees want to work for companies that have a good

public reputation. Ashraf (2019) added that employees enjoy working for companies that

has a culture of career growth. Employees who find intrinsic values in their job tasks

versus extrinsic values tend to be satisfied with their companies (Ashraf, 2019; Pandita &

Ray, 2018). A positive workplace is conducive to employees' growth and can help keep

them engaged.

Employee Engagement and Retention

Engaged employees are more likely to be retained. Employee engagement is when

employees feel they are personally aligned with a company's values and stay involved in

company activities because they are satisfied (Li et al., 2021). Engaged employees

believe in the company's culture and attend corporate events (Staniec & Kalińska-Kula,

2021). Employees who are dissatisfied with their job role and do not believe they have

job security will begin to make decisions about changing their career (Sullivan & Al

Ariss, 2021). Thus, the level of employee engagement is an important factor for leaders

to determine the likelihood of commitment to the company (Badshah & Bulut, 2020; Houssein et al., 2020; Mtethwa, 2019; Pandita & Ray, 2018). This means employee engagement affects a company's retention rate because the more active an employee is in the workplace may indicate an intent to stay with the company. Employees may need to reconsider their involvement in company activities as they seek to advance their careers.

Career Success

Some employees want to be successful in their careers while benefiting their company. Walsh et al. (2018) defined career success as an employee's happiness at a company. Benson et al. (2020) provided several definitions for career success, such as employees continually being recognized for their job performance, being promoted with an increase in pay, and having the opportunity to share their expertise with others in the workplace. While some employees do not believe their organization care about their career success, it's hard for organizations to agree on one specific factor that determines employee's career success (Kichuk et al., 2019; Yagüe-Perales et al., 2021). Kharadze et al. (2019) identified 30.7% of survey participants who worked at corporations in Tbilisi have lateral career moves, and 32.9% of survey participants experience vertical career moves. This means employees have more career advancement opportunities moving up the company hierarchy. Employees are more likely to advance their careers internally than externally because they learn key internal skillsets where they become subject matter experts (SMEs) at their organization (Kharadze et al., 2019). SMEs are internal employees who have mastered job tasks at a company (Capitano et al., 2021). An example of this is when an employee has personal knowledge of how to complete job

tasks in the most efficient manner. SMEs also use knowledge transfer, which is when a

person shares their knowledge with others (Cross Walker, 2020). Knowledge transfer

helps employees be recognized for their transferable skills (Bartz, 2019). Employees who

have transferable skills could possibly get offered a new position faster. How employees

identify career success should be considered when leaders are supporting employee

career advancement.

Mentoring

Leaders who want their employees to do well mentor them. Enoch and Mohana

(2021) defined mentoring as a process where senior leaders build a relationship with a

protege (employee) and provide career guidance, access to a bigger network, and psycho-

social directions to help the protege advance both personally and professionally. Blake-

Beard et al. (2021) explained mentoring as a mentor-mentee relationship where the

mentor has more professional experience than a mentee and commits to guiding the

mentee to become an emerging leader at the company. Lin et al. (2021) supports this

point and identified that senior leaders who mentor employees take a personal interest in

their work. The mentor goal is to use their experience to teach their mentee how to

navigate their new career from start to finish (Samanta & Eleni, 2021). Epitropaki et al.

(2020) indicated that 29.1% of information and communication technology professionals

located in several European countries had a mentor within their organization. Enoch and

Mohana (2021) identified 74.2% of information and technology employees located in

Chennai reported their mentor was their immediate supervisor. Mentors can be outside of

the mentees organization and still teach the mentee how to make valuable decisions that

will propel them to the next level in their career that can last a lifetime (Bell &

Rosowsky, 2021). Mentorship is vital for career advancement and mentors can even

become sponsors for their mentees.

Sponsorship

Leaders who foresee an employee's success at their company can sponsor them

for career advancement. Gray et al. (2019) defined sponsorship as senior leaders

promoting the careers of high-potential and high-performing employees within their

company. Lin et al. (2021) added sponsorship provides essential career-related support

for mentees' promotion in the workplace. Leaders who provide sponsorship to employees

give additional resources needed for career development (Epitropaki et al., 2020).

Kharadze et al. (2019) discovered 33.8% of survey participants who worked at

corporations in Tbilisi believed that their career advancement happened through

sponsorship. Career sponsorship from a senior leader will enhance an employee's persona

and they are more likely to be sought after at the company for open positions (Bonneton

et al., 2019; Epitropaki et al., 2020). Gray et al. (2019) concluded that sponsorship has a

direct impact on an employee's career compared to mentorship. An example of this direct

impact is when a sponsor knows the hiring manager and can guarantee their mentee gets

an interview. A mentor may only be able to provide resources on how a mentee can

prepare and apply for open positions with no control on guaranteeing them an interview.

Thus, employees can advance in their careers if their senior leaders sponsor them to the

next level.

Coaching

Coaching employees allows them to take the lead with their careers. Samanta and Eleni (2021) defined career coaching as an informal agreement between the coach and coachee where they create a specific plan with a deadline to achieve goals. Coaching is an effective TM practice to help employees with career progression and should be used globally at corporations (Mangion-Thornley, 2021; Samanta & Eleni, 2021). Coaching employees to create their own strategic plan for their career path is essential to their professional journey.

Career Path

Employees should have a career path that allows them advancement opportunities within their organization. Advancing the careers of internal employees is known as a traditional career path where an employee prefers to wait for a new job opportunity at their company, which provides them job security (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). TM has evolved where companies have a central role in helping employees create a career path (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019; Gallardo-Gallardo et al., 2020). Leaders have the power to help employees create a rewarding career path (Lagat & Makau, 2018). Zeijen et al. (2020) suggested leaders cannot assume how an employee may feel about their professional growth at a company. Employees who want to advance at a company should share their career goals with leaders (Yoon et al., 2021). Employees should also create specific short- and long-term goals to advance their careers (Bartz, 2019; Kichuk et al., 2019). Employees can help advance their careers by clarifying their personal values through goal setting and execution planning (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Additionally,

leaders should do their best to understand an employee's goals at the company (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019). Employees should have a clear career path that helps a company meet their business goals, which is beneficial for both employee and company (Enoch & Mohana, 2021; Mtethwa, 2019; Otto et al., 2021). Once leaders understand an employee career path, it is imperative that they help them attain their career goals with regular goal-performance feedback (Locke & Latham, 2019). Leaders may use a career-discovery strategy that involves meeting with employees to understand employee career goals (Li et al., 2021). An example of a career-discovery strategy is when leaders meet with employees to ask questions about their expectations of their job role and how employees want to be developed within the company. Leaders should meet with their employees regularly to discuss the employees career path.

Adapting to career change can be beneficial to employees' career paths. Employees who adapt to changes within their careers are more successful (Delle & Searle, 2020). Employees must also be prepared to manage any changes if societal conditions affect their career path (Andresen et al., 2020). An example of a societal condition is COVID-19 and the affect it may have had on employees' opportunities for job promotions.

Job Promotion

When an employee is certain about advancing their career, they begin to explore job promotion opportunities. Vuong et al. (2020) defined job promotion as the progress of upping expertise, rank, and position in a job role at a company. Kilson (2021) found having a bachelor's degree can help employees get a job promotion faster than others

who do not have a degree, this may not always be the case. Some internal employees believe job promotions are owed to them for longevity at a company (Ngan & Tze-Ngai Vong, 2019). These employees believe years worked in a role better qualifies them for a promotion over a newer employee regardless of education. Kharadze et al. (2019) identified only 46.6% of survey participants who worked at corporations in Tbilisi believed that investing in higher education will increase the likelihood of a job promotion. This may mean most internal employees at corporations do not believe an advanced degree prepares them for job promotion opportunities.

Employees do not have to wait on their leader to offer them a job promotion. Self-promotion is the most common career-related outcome for an individual who wants to advance their career (Al-Shatti & Ohana, 2021). An example of self-promotion is when an employee takes control of their career by telling their leader they are interested in a promotion (Sibunruang & Kawai, 2021). An employee self-regulating how they want their career to develop may have a better chance getting promoted (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Some employees need assurance their company is committed to helping them advance their careers and asking for a job promotion can lead to understanding the next steps they should take.

When an employee decides to change positions, they may seek external opportunities as well as internal opportunities. The timing of a job promotion is vital to an internal employee and may determine if the employee remains with the company (Kichuk et al., 2019; Ngan & Tze-Ngai Vong, 2019; Otto et al., 2021; Peltokorpi & Michel, 2021; Theys & Schultz, 2020). Some companies have administrative limitations

on advancing internal employees for job promotions (Napathorn, 2020). Companies with

limited open positions may have difficulty advancing internal employee careers. A job

promotion may also be difficult for an internal employee who has already reached a high-

earning job role, which may cause them to seek advancement of their career at another

company (Bonneton et al., 2019; Otto et al., 2021). When an employee has

communicated, they are ready to advance in a company, they begin to prepare for career

transition.

Career Transition

Senior leaders need to effectively communicate how internal employees can

successfully transition into a new job role. A career transition occurs when a person

changes their job role (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Employees can have career transitions

at one company or have several career transitions with multiple companies (Sullivan &

Al Ariss, 2021). van Harten et al. (2021) noted that career management literature is still

unclear on how leaders manage employee career advancement at companies. There are

some approaches leaders can use to help internal employees with a successful career

transition. Providing internal employees with additional organizational resources as they

transition into a new job role can be a way leaders help employees produce valuable work

(Federici et al., 2021). The training and development an internal employee receive can

give them the opportunity to work efficiently and be acknowledged for their job

performance (Kasdorf & Kayaalp, 2021; Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Having access to a

leader's direct network is an important factor in helping employees transition their

careers (Sibunruang & Kawai, 2021). An example of a leader's direct network is when

leaders connect employees with other leaders within the company to determine if they may be more suited for a different job role.

There are some approaches leaders should avoid for an employee career transition. Providing an unpaid internship is an unsuccessful career transition approach (Brook et al., 2020). No employee should have to work for free to prove they are worthy of getting a new position; employees should be compensated for completing tasks for a company. Another unsuccessful career transition approach leaders should avoid is discrimination towards employees who want to advance their careers (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Leaders should try to avoid using unsuccessful approaches when helping employees with career transitions.

Leadership at Fortune 500 Companies

Many people who wish to excel in their career fields seek out Fortune 500 companies. Fortune 500 companies, which includes multinational corporations (MNCs), can offer more career opportunities to employees compared to smaller companies and they have the capabilities to provide opportunities to internal employees for career advancement (Bonneton et al., 2019; Gupta & Briscoe, 2020; Hathaway, 2020; Kilson, 2021). Most Fortune 500 companies have been operating for an average of 17 years and this duration period can be sufficient for employee career growth (Shet, 2021). Research studies about career advancement primarily discusses the leadership of chief executive officers (CEO) at Fortune 500 companies and often omits other senior leaders who have a direct impact on developing employees. Senior leaders are responsible for employee's career progression at a company (Yoon et al., 2021). Companies need senior leaders who

are charismatic and effective in developing employees with strategic TM strategies to maintain a competitive edge in their industries (Pirzada et al., 2021). Given the reasoning above, Fortune 500 companies are in a key position to advance the careers of internal employees and they can start by effectively communicating the company's business objectives with employees.

Business Objectives

Understanding a company's business objectives is critical to an employee's career advancement. Corporations are guided by their business objectives, which are specific and measurable goals organizations put in place to grow the company (Ehrenberg, 2021). Internal employees are key assets to helping corporations meet business objectives (Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021). The keys to a company's achievement of business objectives are maximizing shareholder value (Inkpen & Sundaram, 2021; Signori et al., 2021). Leaders must have a good understanding of company business objectives to effectively communicate them to employees (Inkpen & Sundaram, 2021; Yoon et al., 2021). Once employees have a clear understanding of a company's business objectives, they are in a better position to advance their careers.

Performance Reviews

Employees are evaluated based on their job performance at corporations. Performance reviews are when an employee is fairly assessed by their leader on an annual basis on how well they achieved their work tasks as it relates to the company's business objectives (Kharadze et al., 2019; Soltani & Wilkinson, 2020; Theys & Schultz, 2020). Leaders meet with employees one-on-one to go over their performance the prior

year and agree on next steps for the upcoming year. Senior leaders at Fortune 500
companies who are innovative in developing employees focus on the utilization of
performance reviews to help them make key decisions about an employee's growth
(Kremer et al., 2019). Leaders who provide performance reviews throughout the year can
help their employees stay on track to achieve their career goals (Ngan & Tze-Ngai Vong,
2019). The frequency of performance reviews is vital to an employee's career
progression, providing an accurate account of their performance. Senior leaders should
take the time to schedule performance reviews throughout the year to discuss employee's
performance aligned with business objectives (Napathorn, 2020). When leaders take the
time to discuss employee performance, it may create a strong leader-employee
relationship.

Leader-employee Relationships

Employees may benefit from having open communication about career
advancement with their leaders. Leaders who have open communication with their
employees can build relationships where knowledge is shared to complete business
objectives (Kremer et al., 2019; Mtethwa, 2019). If there is a lack of communication
between employees and leaders, it can be difficult for leaders to understand the value
employees bring to strengthening the company (Mtethwa, 2019; Paiuc, 2021; Vuong et
al., 2020). When there is a lack of communication between leaders and employees, it is
the leaders' responsibility to improve communication (Kähkönen et al., 2021; Mtethwa,
2019). Leaders may need to encourage their employees to voice concerns about the
workplace without employees fearing retaliation (Kähkönen et al., 2021; Liao et al.,

2019; Mtethwa, 2019). Employees often can tell if their leader is interested in their concerns about the company.

Leader-employee relationships may take time to develop. Leaders can start to develop trust with their employees by having weekly meetings to discuss tasks and provide feedback on performance (Rofcanin et al., 2020). Leader-employee relationships are strongest when they have regular face-to-face interactions in the workplace rather than communicating via email or by phone (Braun et al., 2019). Leaders who consistently communicate with their employees have a greater probability of building a relationship with their employees and understanding what they need to be successful (Nyberg et al., 2021). Communication standards in the workplace will eventually become obsolete due to the use of technology and remote working, but the use of technology will not replace personal communication, being key to building relationships (Jaiswal et al., 2021; Paiuc, 2021). Leaders can conduct and review company surveys to understand the employees' thoughts and concerns to improve communication in the workplace (Staniec & Kalińska-Kula, 2021). When employees are led by leaders who value open communication, employees can cultivate the work relationship.

Leader Support

Some leaders may not be prepared to support internal employees towards career advancement. Some employees perceive leaders as unsupportive, disrespectful, and unable to provide career development opportunities in the workplace (Kasdorf & Kayaalp, 2021; Kichuk et al., 2019). Some employees have also revealed that the lack of leader support was due to leadership's limited knowledge of essential job functions

(Kasdorf & Kayaalp, 2021). Leaders may need additional training on how to support

employees in the workplace. Employees sometimes find weekly check ins with co-

workers are more beneficial than meeting with leaders for support (Rofcanin et al., 2020).

Some employees may get angry when leaders provide them with mundane job tasks

which prevent them from focusing on other job skills that may help with career

development (Zhou et al., 2018). Leaders need to understand how their lack of support

affects employee's career development.

There are several ways leaders can best support employees with their career

advancement. Leaders may need to be trained on humility to promote employee career

growth (Liu et al., 2021). An example of humility training can include leaders listening to

and understanding an employee's perspective about career goals. Leaders can also

support employees by acknowledging their value within the company and encouraging

them to advance their careers (Leroy et al., 2021). Once leaders acknowledge the value of

employees, they may begin to provide them with career advancement opportunities

(Sibunruang & Kawai, 2021). Leaders should also share their own stories of career

development to encourage employees who seek career growth (Lambert, 2020; Shet,

2021). Leaders should invest in their own personal and professional development when

leading a team.

Succession Planning

Most Fortune 500 companies have succession plans. Succession planning is the

process companies use to fill vacant positions due to retrenchment, resignation,

retirement, or death (Abioro et al., 2020). Ali et al. (2019) simplified the definition of

succession planning as the process of smooth leadership transitions. Succession planning

is vital to ensure there are no prolonged searches when filling key positions at a company

(Abioro et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2019). A succession plan should be in place at a company

to also prepare for unexpected loss of talent. A succession plan is an element of TM

strategy that provides leaders with a list of internal employees who are next in the talent

pool to fill key job roles (Napathorn, 2020). Employees perform better when they know

their jobs are secured through the company's succession plan (Ali et al., 2019; Essman et

al., 2021). An example of an employee performing better can be when an employee takes

on more job tasks in preparation for a leadership role. Leaders can manage succession

planning at their company by developing internal employees with TM strategies (Mitosis

et al., 2021). Succession planning may be an important TM strategy that can help

advance employees' careers.

Leadership Development Programs

Most Fortune 500 companies use leadership development programs (LDPs) to

advance the careers of employees. A LDP is a corporate-level TM strategy where

employees are trained for leadership positions at a company (Napathorn, 2020). LDPs

enhance an employee's current skillset and prepares them for future leadership roles

(Enoch & Mohana, 2021). Napathorn (2020) examined a banking institution's LDP

which consisted of recent college graduates instead of internal employees. While some

companies focus on hiring external employees, internal employees can also be selected

for an LDP. LDPs may require employees to perform job rotations. Employees complete

job rotations to become cross-trained in other areas at the company, which prepares them

to quickly fill a variety of open positions (Samanta & Eleni, 2021). Bonneton et al.

(2019) examined a MNC that ran a LDP where candidates entered an 18-month program

of training and development, and three job rotations in different countries and

departments. LDPs offer cross-cultural training to prepare employees to become global

leaders who can be placed in roles in other geographical areas (Subrahmanyam, 2019).

Kragt and Day (2020) stated that employees are likely to advance their careers after

completing corporate LDPs. LDP programs have been cited as great resources for

internal employees to advance their careers.

Companies that offer LDPs are likely, but not guaranteed, to retain employees.

Bonneton et al. (2019) conducted a study with one MNC in Europe, which involved

surveying and interviewing a control group of HR managers about TM and career

management. The results of the study were that 24% of LDP participants left the MNC

after completing the program (Bonneton et al., 2019). Some employees will receive

training and development from a company but will leave if career opportunities are not

quickly provided (Theys & Schultz, 2020). Some employees may leave a company after

completing a LDP due to a lack of available leadership positions and dissatisfaction of

current job role (Bonneton et al., 2019). Companies must be proactive by having open

positions available for LDP participants after they complete the program.

Talent Management Strategies to Manage Career Advancement

Leaders who manage employees with specific TM strategies enhance the

employee's professional development. As such, the use of TM strategies can help leaders

identify who their talented employees are and groom them towards career success

(Aljbour et al., 2021; Bonneton et al., 2019; Widodo & Mawarto, 2020). Leaders should

develop their employees to guarantee adaptability to their career growth and motivate

them to be more effective in their work performance and achievement of company goals

(Adeniji et al., 2019; Delle & Searle, 2020). Shet (2020) suggested that leaders use TM

strategies that build employees skills necessary for global job roles. Macro-TM is an

approach where leaders strategically develop internal employees and place employees in

global job roles (King & Vaiman, 2019). The use of this approach may help leaders

understand how to manage employees who seek to advance their careers globally. An

example of a leader using the macro-TM approach may be advancing the career of a

bilingual employee to gain an advantage in another country.

There are proactive TM strategies leaders can use to manage the careers of

internal employees. A TM strategy that leaders can use is to focus on teamwork and an

employee's individualization (Theys & Schultz, 2020). For example, a leader can allow

an employee to display their strengths leading a team project. Another successful TM

strategy for employee career advancement is ensuring employees understand their value

at the company (Mtethwa, 2019). A leader may help employees understand their value by

communicating how their job tasks meet business objectives. Other TM strategies leaders

can use for employee career advancement include performance updates, training and

development, succession planning, and retention strategies (Mtethwa, 2019). Bonneton et

al. (2019) suggested leaders can use TM strategies, such as mentoring, coaching,

shadowing senior leaders, job rotations, and training and development to advance the

careers of internal employees. Training and development of internal employees are key

TM strategies that should be used by leaders (Kasdorf & Kayaalp, 2021; Li et al., 2021; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Some companies offer training and development to internal employees who are eager to develop their skills and have leadership potential (Theys & Schultz, 2020). When leaders train and develop their employees, they may provide employees with transferable skills they can use in other departments at the company. Kichuk et al. (2019) discovered that the careers of employees at corporations who were involved in training and development courses progressed faster compared to employees who were not offered those courses. Leaders may use these proactive TM strategies to provide career advancement opportunities to internal employees.

There are numerous TM strategies leaders can use to develop employee career advancement. Aljbour et al. (2021) identified six TM practices that may help advance the careers of employees: (a) talent planning, (b) talent acquisition, (c) talent development, (d) talent performance management, (e) talent engagement, and (f) talent retention. There were also three dominant TM practices used to manage employee careers: (a) talent acquisition, (b) talent development, and (c) talent retention (Aljbour et al., 2021). These three dominant TM practices suggest that leaders can provide employees with developmental resources to hire, grow, and retain them. Aljbour et al. (2021) also discovered that TM practices affect positive employee outcomes, including (a) employee retention, (b) organizational citizenship behavior, (c) intention to stay, (d) affective commitment, (e) employee engagement, and (f) career success. Leaders may choose any of these TM practices to help advance the careers of employees.

Talent management, career advancement, and COVID-19

The 2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic affected the way senior leaders used TM strategies. TM challenges increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and many corporations had to adjust employees job roles, freeze salaries, and some employees even had to take pay cuts (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). Performance appraisals were not used by many corporations during the global pandemic, which ultimately means employees were not provided information on career advancement opportunities (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021). The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics (2021) data showed that 13.2% of people in the United States teleworked because of COVID-19. This may have been some employees' first time working from home. Yoon et al. (2021) suggested that telework allowed employees to use technology to communicate efficiently with colleagues, developing skillsets that can be used for professional development. Despite the COVID-19 crisis, companies need to continue utilizing TM strategies that demonstrate leaders care about employees' career growth (Azizi et al., 2021). There are still ways for leaders to support employees with career opportunities during a global pandemic, leaders just need to know which practices work best.

Yoon et al. (2021) suggested seven TM practices companies should implement to advance the careers of internal employees during COVID-19. The seven TM practices include: (a) take care of basic needs, (b) facilitate development, (c) develop and maintain network, (d) facilitate adaptions to change, (e) communicate effectively, (f) facilitate work engagement and productivity, and (g) support career transitions (Yoon et al., 2021).

The use of these practices may be beneficial for employees who are still working during a global pandemic. Employees can also start to control the trajectory of their careers by engaging in self-care practices that supports their mental health (Yoon et al., 2021). An example of this is when employees take deep breaths, relax, and think about positive things happening in their life (Vera et al., 2020). All these TM strategies can assist leaders promoting employees' physical wellbeing as well as their career advancement during a global pandemic.

Transition

In Section 1, I provided the background of this proposed study, research question, conceptual framework, and a comprehensive review of recent academic about TM strategies and how senior leaders manage career advancement for internal employees. Section 2 conveys my role as a researcher with details about data collection and data analysis, participants, research method and design, and state the ethical standards of this study. Section 3 includes the findings, business practice and contribution to positive social change, recommendations, and future research opportunities.

Section 2: The Project

The focus of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand what TM strategies senior leaders use to manage the careers of internal employees. Section 2 includes (a) restatement of the purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) the participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, and (j) data analysis. I conclude this section with an explanation of the procedures I used to ensure the reliability and validity of the study and a transition to Section 3.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the TM strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. The targeted population comprised of six senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies from four industries in the Midwest region of the United States who have implemented successful TM strategies to manage career advancement for their internal employees. The implication for positive social change includes the potential for senior leaders to develop TM strategies to help their individual employees contribute financially to their families and support the job market of the communities where their companies are located.

Role of the Researcher

The primary role of the researcher is to identify suitable organizations, gain access to potential participants and build trust, and collect data to conduct a research

study (Saunders et al., 2015). The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in the data collection process (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). I was the primary data collection instrument and conducted semistructured interviews for this research study.

Qualitative researchers often have experience in the research topic when conducting research studies (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). As a former leader at a Fortune 500 company in the Midwest, I have worked with senior leaders who are passionate about advancing the careers of employees. Having worked for 5 years in a management role and leading a small team, I value developing employees and I am interested in learning more about this research topic. I did not seek participants with whom I had worked or had a relationship at my previous organization.

Researchers must understand the importance of ethics when conducting research studies. Most business and management research studies generally involve human participants (Saunders et al., 2015). My role as the researcher was to follow the basic ethical principles outlined in *The Belmont Report* to safeguard and protect human subjects and provide an equal opportunity for all participants (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). I abided by *The Belmont Report* guidelines and conducted interviews in a safe environment, obtained informed consent, and ensured participants knew they could opt out of the research study at any time. Additional approval to conduct interviews must be granted by a research ethics committee before researchers can start the data collection process (Saunders et al., 2015). Before conducting the research, I received approval by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Researchers may experience research bias when conducting a study. Research bias occurs when researchers allow factors to influence the way they accurately record participant responses in a research study (Saunders et al., 2015). Although I am familiar with the research topic, it was important to not interpret data from a personal lens. Researchers can mitigate bias by keeping detailed notes and retaining all documents during the data collection and data analysis process (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). I mitigated researcher bias by effectively documenting participant responses and retained all documentation and recordings. Researchers use reflexivity to exclude researcher bias by identifying assumptions prior to conducting research studies (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers can use reflective journals to mitigate basis by taking notes about their experience during the research process (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I also mitigated bias by taking reflective notes in a research notebook during the research process and avoided viewing data through a personal lens.

Interviews allows participants to verbally share open-ended responses instead of completing a written questionnaire (Saunders et al., 2015). I mitigated bias by following an interview protocol guide (Appendix A) to maintain fairness for participant interviews. Researchers use interview protocols as a strategy to be organized and to code participant information consistently during an interview (De Block & Vis, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021). Further, member checking is a common method researchers use to validate participant data (De Block & Vis, 2019; Husband, 2020; Yin, 2018). I conducted member checking after each participant interview to ensure participant responses were accurately interpreted.

Participants

The eligibility criteria for selecting interview participants were (a) participants must be a senior leader at a Fortune 500 company in the Midwest region of the United States, and (b) participants must use TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees. I used purposive sampling to select six senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies from four industries who have successfully used TM strategies to manage the career advancement of internal employees. Purposive sampling is when researchers make the decision to select participants, or cases, they believe will best answer the research question (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). This criterion ensured selected participants had the experience to answer the research question for this study.

As a former leader at a Fortune 500 company, I have a professional network of senior leaders that provided me access to potential participants for this study. Researchers may use existing contacts to develop new contacts as a strategy to gain access to potential participants (Saunders et al., 2015). I used my professional network of leaders at Fortune 500 companies to gain access to other senior leaders who meet the participant eligibility criteria. Once the connection was made, I requested an initial virtual meeting using video conferencing applications, such as Zoom. Meeting participants beforehand helped me gain their trust and ensure their comfort participating in the study. The goal of the virtual meeting was to (a) share my purpose for conducting this study, (b) build trust and credibility with participants, (b) acquaint them with privacy and withdrawal information, and (c) get participants consent to be a part of this study. Saunders et al. (2015) mentioned researchers' familiarity with an organization and credibility are strategies to

gain access to participants. Gaining trust from participants allowed me to share the purpose of the research study and get approval to collect data to use in the study.

Research Method and Design

Researchers select a research method and design to conduct research studies (Bryson, 2015; Saunders et al., 2015). There are different methods and designs researchers can use to obtain research results (Saldaña, 2014). I used the qualitative method and multiple case study design to explore the TM strategies senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for internal employees.

Research Method

Researchers use one of the three fundamental research methods when conducting a study: (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, or (c) mixed methods (Bryson, 2015). Qualitative researchers conduct research studies to understand participants perspectives about a phenomenon (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015). A quantitative researcher focuses on numerical data to gain insights about a research study (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015). Mixed method researchers conduct research studies using both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand complex phenomenon's (Noyes et al., 2019; Yin, 2018; Yousefi Nooraie et al., 2020). I used the qualitative research method for this study.

Qualitative researchers use descriptive responses from participants for an in-depth study (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015; Yousefi Nooraie et al., 2020). Köhler et al. (2019) described qualitative researchers as glorified reporters of participants' experiences. Qualitative researchers can collect data from participants via interviews, focus groups, observations, or through documentation (Noyes et al., 2019). Qualitative

researchers can use more than one data collection technique when conducting research studies (Saunders et al., 2015). Qualitative researchers also review all data collected from participants and categorize data into themes to discover new concepts (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). The qualitative method of gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon supports how to answer the research question for this study. I used the qualitative research method to collect data in an in-depth interview setting to have participants share open-ended responses that focus on the research question. I also asked participants to share company documentation related to this study.

Quantitative researchers use statistical data to examine the relationship between variables in a research study (Saunders et al., 2015). Quantitative researchers also hypothesize what must be measured in advance when conducting studies (Noyes et al., 2019). It was not the intent of this study to test a hypothesis to answer the research question, so the quantitative method was not used. Mixed-method researchers use a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to conduct a research study (De Block & Vis, 2019; Noyes et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015; Yousefi Nooraie et al., 2020). Mixed-method researchers solve for complex cases that need substantial evidence (Noyes et al., 2019). The mixed-methods approach of using both narrative and numerical data was not appropriate to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon for this study.

Research Design

Research designs are the approaches researchers use to collect data for research studies (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). I considered three qualitative research designs: (a) phenomenology, (b) narrative inquiry, and (c) case study. Case studies allow researchers to investigate real-life settings of participants in the present moment where data can be collected in numerous ways (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015; Wohlin, 2021; Yin, 2018). Researchers do not have an active role in the case while documenting research findings (Wohlin, 2021). Using a case study design, researchers use multiple data collection techniques for an in-depth investigation of the research problem (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015; Wohlin, 2021). Case study research designs can be single or multiple cases where participants share their knowledge and experiences with the researcher (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). I used a multiple case study for this study. A single case study would have limited my research findings to one Fortune 500 company, but by using a multiple case study it allowed me to gain more evidence from multiple Fortune 500 companies using replication logic.

Phenomenology research design focuses on participant's lived experiences (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). A phenomenological researcher conducts more than one interview with participants to document their stories in its entirety for data collection (Saunders et al., 2015). The use of multiple interviews is only one way to collect data and qualitative researchers often use multiple data collection techniques (Wohlin, 2021). I did not use the phenomenology research design for this study because multiple data collection techniques were used to identify the TM strategies senior leaders use to

manage career advancement of internal employees. The narrative inquiry research design focuses on participant's sharing stories in chronological order to capture a comprehensive perspective (Saunders et al., 2015). I did not use the narrative inquiry research design because an individual chronological story was not needed to learn what TM strategies senior leaders use to manage career advancement of internal employees.

Qualitative researchers must ensure data saturation within their studies. Data saturation happens when a researcher does not obtain any new thematic information from participant interviews (De Block & Vis, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). Data saturation is achieved when reoccurring themes are shared by multiple participants that answers the research question (Roberts et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). I achieved data saturation in this study by having in-depth interviews with participants until no new information or themes emerged. I also used methodological triangulation to analyze data collected from semistructured interviews and company documentation.

Population and Sampling

The target population selected for this study included six senior leaders at four Fortune 500 companies in the Midwest region of the United States. The criteria for selecting interview participants were (a) participants must be a senior leader at a Fortune 500 company in the Midwest region of the United States, and (b) participants must have successfully used TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees. I used purposive sampling to select six senior leaders who have successfully used TM strategies to manage the career advancement of internal employees. Purposive sampling is when a researcher selects the appropriate participants and cases that meets the criteria of

answering the research question (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015).

Yousefi Nooraie et al. (2020) suggested that researchers target the best populations rather

than randomly sample a population for a research study. Senior leaders who did not

successfully implement TM strategies to manage the career advancement of internal

employees were not eligible for participation in this study.

The sample size for this study was six senior leaders. In-depth interviews should

have a sample size between five to 25 participants (Saunders et al., 2015). From the

sample size of six senior leaders, I selected select two senior leaders from two of the four

Fortune 500 companies and one senior leader from the other two companies. Each senior

leader agreed to participate in the study. Qualitative researchers select a small sample size

to gain an in-depth understanding about research studies (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin,

2018). Selecting four Fortune 500 companies allowed me to study data from four cases to

have an in-depth understanding of the research problem. Qualitative researchers focus on

the quality of data received from its sample size through data saturation (Roberts et al.,

2019; Saunders et al., 2015). Given the sample size for this study, I interviewed each

participant until no new information or replication of trends were shared and data

saturation was achieved.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participant interviews were completed virtually

using Zoom video conferencing, instead of an in-person interview setting. Researchers

may use internet-mediated research to conduct qualitative studies (Aguinis & Solarino,

2019; Saunders et al., 2015). Virtual interviews are an alternative to face-to-face

interviews during a global pandemic. Additionally, Zoom video conferencing allowed

participants to feel safe participating in this study. Each participant interview was audio recorded through Zoom software, which allowed me to transcribe interview data. I conducted participant interviews in a location free from distractions and encouraged participants to do the same.

Ethical Research

Researchers must assure the ethical protection of participants when conducting research studies (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). Walden University's institutional review board (IRB) has standards researchers must follow before conducting ethical research. The IRB approval number for this study was 05-05-22-1023938. The informed consent process requires the researcher to share ethical principles with participants about the research study (Saunders et al., 2015; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 1979). As the researcher, I emailed the informed consent form to participants five days prior to their scheduled interview so they could decide to fully participate in the research study. The informed consent form indicated (a) purpose of the study, (b) procedures of the study, (c) volunteerism and confidentiality, and (d) risks and benefits of the proposed study. Each participant agreed and signed the informed consent form before I conducted the semistructured interviews. Before the interview, I reviewed the informed consent form and explained to participants they have the right to withdraw at any time throughout the research study process and there were no consequences for their decision to withdraw from the study. I did not offer compensation or incentives for participation in this study and all six selected participants remained active in the research study process. After each

interview, I provided participants with a synopsis of their interview responses for member-checking. I also emailed a summary of findings to participants and will provide them with a copy of the final research study when published.

As the researcher, I protected the names of participants by labeling them as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 for confidentiality. Labeling participants replaced their names, company names, and any other relevant company documentation that could identify anyone in this study. I kept all digitized data stored on a secured external flash drive. Walden University requires data be kept securely for 5 years to protect confidentiality of participants. I am keeping the secured external flash drive and paper documents pertaining to the research study for 5 years in a locked fireproof box. After 5 years from the date of completing the approved and final research study, I will permanently dispose research data by shredding paper documents and deleting research data from the secured external flash drive.

Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative researchers concurrently collect and analyze data when conducting research studies (Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015). I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. Qualitative researchers collect data to conduct in-depth studies through notetaking, observing participants, hosting focus groups, or interviewing participants (Noyes et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015; Yousefi Nooraie et al., 2020). I used semistructured interviews as the primary data collection instrument. Semistructured interviews allow researchers to ask participants the same open-ended questions and probe throughout the interview to receive detailed responses from participants (Husband, 2020;

Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Semistructured interviews also allow researchers to use audio and video recording when conducting interviews (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I wanted to ensure participants felt safe, so I used Zoom video conferencing to conduct semistructured interviews. Zoom software allowed me to audio record each participant interview. An interview protocol is a guide that lists interview questions and researchers use it during the interview process (De Block & Vis, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021). I used the interview protocol (Appendix A) as a guide to conduct each participant interview, which included seven open-ended interview questions for data collection.

In addition to collecting data using semistructured interviews, I asked participants to share company documents that relate to the research question as a secondary data collection method. I reviewed documents shared by participants that included details on how leaders track employee career progress and performance, thank you emails and articles from mass media from their former employees, and local newspaper publications to confirm employees career advancement under their leadership. I also reviewed publicly available company documentation on each corporation's website related to the research question. The use of multiple data collection techniques helps with data triangulation where researchers find similar information from different sources or methods (Wohlin, 2021; Yin, 2018). I used both interview data and company documents to support methodological triangulation. The informed consent form indicated interview data and company documents will be kept confidential.

I used member checking to improve the reliability and validity for the study. Member checking is defined as a process to validate the accuracy of researcher's interpretation of participant data (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; De Block & Vis, 2019; Husband, 2020; Yin, 2018). Before the member checking process, I transcribed audio recorded interview data and created a one-page summary of participant responses. Each participant received an emailed summary of their interview responses for review. I conducted member-checking interviews with participants to ensure the accuracy of my interpretation of their interview responses.

Data Collection Technique

Semistructured interviews is a data collection technique that allows researchers to use interview guides, audio, and video recording devices to collect information for research studies (Saunders et al., 2015). I used semistructured interviews as the primary data collection technique for this study. Researchers use interview protocols to guide them through the interview process to ensure each participant interview is replicated using the same open-ended interview questions (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). I used the interview protocol (Appendix A) to collect data for each participant interview. I worked with people in my professional network using LinkedIn to seek participants who fit the participant criteria for this study. I asked participants to agree to (a) participate in an audio recorded virtual interview for approximately 45 minutes, (b) provide me with relevant authorized company documents via email, and (c) participate in a member checking interview for approximately 15 minutes. I used Zoom video conferencing to conduct audio recorded participant interviews. Each participant

audio recorded interview was transcribed in a Microsoft Word document. Some researchers use reflective journals to take personal notes about the research process (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I kept a reflective journal to keep notes about my personal experience throughout the research process. The informed consent form indicated the specific details about the data collection process.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to using semistructured interviews. Some advantages of semistructured interviews are participants can answer questions by openly expressing their beliefs and researchers can get quotes from participants responses (Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). Another advantage of semistructured interviews is researchers can prepare interview questions before conducting participant interviews (Saunders et al., 2015). I conducted semistructured interviews, used the interview protocol (Appendix A) with open ended questions, and conducted member-checking as advantages for this study. Semistructured interviews also produces a high level of validity and credibility for qualitative research studies (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). Some disadvantages for semistructured interviews are participants may not feel comfortable with the interview setting and may feel reluctant to share specific details when answering questions (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I conducted participant interviews virtually, so they were able to choose their own interview setting and I explained the confidentiality of their responses. Researchers may conduct pilot tests to help validate and make any adjustments before conducting research studies (Husband, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I did not conduct a pilot test based on the limited scope of this study.

Once I received participant consent, I scheduled a Zoom audio recorded interview on a day and time that worked best for the participant's schedule. Researchers may use the internet and technological software to conduct research studies (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). Due to the global pandemic, a virtual setting allowed participants to feel safe and they were able to access Zoom video conferencing using a computer or cellphone. To start the interview, I introduced myself, shared the purpose of the research study, and asked participants background questions using the interview protocol (Appendix A). During the interview, I asked participant questions and probed to ensure data saturation. Data saturation occurs in research studies when no new themes or information is being replicated in interview data (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I asked follow-up questions and inquired about further information from participants to help me reach data saturation.

After the interview, I used member checking to validate the accuracy of each participant responses. Member checking is a data validation technique researchers use to ask participants to verify data accuracy (De Block & Vis, 2019; Husband, 2020; Yin, 2018). Researchers can provide participants with paraphrased interview responses to review for data accuracy (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). I emailed participants a one-page summary of their paraphrased interview responses within two days of the interview, and they had five days to review the interview transcript for accuracy. During the member checking interview, participant interview responses was reviewed to ensure I captured the correct interpretation of participant responses. I made updates to responses if participants provided any new

insights. Researchers are ethically responsible to ensure accurate data is collected from

participants (Husband, 2020). The completion of member checking ensured I summarized

participants responses correctly to include in data organization and analysis.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers organize and code participant data throughout the data collection

process to keep track of all research materials (De Block & Vis, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe,

2020; Saldaña, 2021). Protecting the identities of participants is an ethical standard and

labeling participants helped me keep interview data organized. I followed the interview

protocol guide (Appendix A) and labeled participants as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 on all

research data. Reflective journals are a technique researchers use to keep track of data

and make personal notes about the research process (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders

et al., 2015). I kept track of research data, emerging ideas about the study, and my

personal research experiences in a reflective journal for data organization. The use of

electronic software efficiently helps researchers organize, code, and analyze data

(O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021). I used Microsoft Excel to organize data

collected from interviews and company documents by storing information on a secured

external flash drive. I also used Zoom software to audio record participants interview and

Microsoft Word was used for transcription. I used NVivo, a computer software with

query features to easily categorize all raw data collected. I will adhere to Walden

University's requirements and keep raw data stored securely for 5 years to protect

confidentiality of participants. I have stored the secured external flash drive and company

documentation in a locked fireproof box and will keep items for 5 years. After 5 years

from the date of completing the approved and final research study, I will permanently

dispose research data by shredding paper documents and deleting research data from the

secured external flash drive.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process researchers use to organize and analyze raw research

data to interpret research findings (Roberts et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018).

Triangulation is a common data analysis technique researchers use that involves the use

of multiple sources for data collection to validate research findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015;

Saunders et al., 2015; Wohlin, 2021; Yin, 2018). Data triangulation increases validity of

research studies and can reduce researcher bias (Yin, 2018). I used methodological

triangulation to analyze data collected from semistructured interviews and company

documentation. There are different approaches researchers can use for data analysis. Yin

(2018) created five phases for data analysis which includes (a) compiling, (b)

disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpreting, and (e) concluding data. I used Yin's

five-phase approach for data analysis.

Compiling

Qualitative researchers use both interview data and relevant company documents

for an in-depth review when conducting a research study (De Block & Vis, 2019;

Saldaña, 2014; Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Yin (2018) advised researchers to first

compile all data, such as participant interview data and company documentation during

data analysis. Reviewing data allows researchers to organize transcribed data for analysis

(Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). I used Microsoft Excel to organize data collected from

semistructured interviews, company documentation, and member checking. Data was entered in NVivo software for data categorization.

Disassembling

Researchers code data during the disassembling phase (Yin, 2018). Thematic data analysis is a process researchers use to thoroughly review and code data into themes (Roberts et al., 2019; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). Coding participant responses allows researchers to sort data and identify themes to understand information specific to the research question (De Block & Vis, 2019; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). I used NVivo to code and highlight data for review to identify themes and categories.

Reassembling

Researchers reassemble research data after they become familiar with common themes discovered in the disassembling phase (Yin, 2018). Reassembling data is a process researchers use to combine and analyze data for recurring themes or categories (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). I used NVivo to identify any common themes or categories in the research data. NVivo produced graphical elements of the data to help me identify specific themes for the study.

Interpreting

Researchers review data and interpret logical findings to validate research studies (Yin, 2018). Methodological triangulation is how researchers validate research findings using one or more methods to study a phenomenon (Wohlin, 2021; Yin, 2018). I used semistructured interviews and company documentation to achieve methodological

triangulation. By using multiple methods, I was able to improve the validity of interpreting research findings for this study.

Concluding

Qualitative researchers use computer software to help them make conclusions about research data (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saldaña, 2021; Saunders et al., 2015). Using both Microsoft Excel and NVivo software helped me review data collected and formulate conclusions about the data. I analyzed research data by comparing and contrasting key themes identified from the academic literature, conceptual framework, semistructured interviews, company documentation, and reflective journal notes to answer the research question. I also correlated research findings with new literature published since writing the literature review. Using Yin's five-phase approach for data analysis supported the reliability and validity of the study.

Reliability and Validity

Qualitative researchers aim to have accurate and credible research studies (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Reliability and validity of research data support the trustworthiness of a research study (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020; Roberts et al., 2019). Qualitative researchers use credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and data saturation to validate research studies (De Block & Vis, 2019; Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020; Roberts et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015).

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the stability of research findings across time, contexts, and research instruments (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). Research studies are reliable if they

can be replicated based on the dependability of the research data (Saunders et al., 2015).

Qualitative research studies should be replicable (Belur et al., 2021). Replication of

themes can be difficult for researchers when analyzing academic literature and participant

data (Roberts et al., 2019). Some qualitative research studies are more replicable than

other research studies (De Boeck et al., 2018; Roberts et al., 2019). Qualitative

researchers can ensure research studies are reliable and dependable by using consistent

data collection techniques (Belur et al., 2021; Roberts et al., 2019; Saldaña, 2021;

Saunders et al., 2015). To ensure dependability for the study, I consistently used the

interview protocol (Appendix A) for participant semistructured interviews and reviewed

company documentation for data saturation. I used member checking to allow

participants to validate my interpretation of their responses.

Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy of analyzing research data and the appropriate use

of instruments in a research study (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020; Roberts et al., 2019;

Saunders et al., 2015). Credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation was

the criteria I used to help validate this study. I ensured validity for this study by using

member checking after each participant interview to share my interpretation of their

responses and obtain participant feedback for data accuracy. I used methodological

triangulation to analyze data collected from semistructured interviews and company

documentation.

Credibility

Researchers' interpretation of participant data must be checked for accuracy and member checking helps researchers validate the accuracy of participant responses (Saunders et al., 2015). Researchers use multiple methods to reach methodological triangulation for credible research studies (Saunders et al., 2015; Wohlin, 2021; Yin, 2018). Member checking allows participants to confirm the researcher's interpretation of their responses (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019; De Block & Vis, 2019; Husband, 2020; Yin, 2018). I used member checking after each participant interview to support the credibility of this study. As a secondary method to participant interview data, I reviewed relevant company documentation to ensure credibility for this study.

Transferability

Transferability refers to researchers' capability to replicate research study findings based on applying the same research process in a similar context or setting (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). O'Connor and Joffe (2020) suggested qualitative researchers use meticulous data collection and analysis techniques so other researchers can evaluate transferability of research studies. I provided thorough descriptions of the research process to collect and analyze data, the interview protocol guide (Appendix A), and meticulously documented findings to ensure transferability of this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability supports the trustworthiness of a research study (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020). Qualitative researchers establish confirmability in research studies by

verifying research findings compared to participant information and excluding researcher bias (Saunders et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). Researchers use reflexivity to exclude researcher bias by identifying assumptions prior to conducting research studies (Huttunen & Kakkori, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). A research notebook can also help researchers be reflective when conducting research studies by documenting the research process (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020; Saunders et al., 2015). I used methodological triangulation to confirm this study from semistructured interviews and company documentation. I used a reflective journal to keep an audit trail of the research process that includes information from interview data and company documents to ensure the confirmability of this study.

Data Saturation

Researchers can also validate research studies by ensuring data saturation. Data saturation occurs when participants start to share the same themes and concepts during the interview process (De Block & Vis, 2019; Roberts et al., 2019; Saunders et al., 2015). The repetition of information from participants during an interview alerts researchers that data saturation has occurred, and the interview is complete (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2018). I used the interview protocol (Appendix A) to ensured data saturation occurred by probing and asking clarifying questions during participant interviews until no reoccurring themes or concepts were shared. I used methodological triangulation by conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documentation to ensure data saturation for this study.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the TM strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. In Section 2, I discussed my role as the researcher and participant selection criteria. I also described the research method and design, population and sampling, data collection and techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity for this study. Section 3 includes research findings, application to professional practice and implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and a conclusion to finalize the research study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the TM strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. Researchers conclude research studies by providing an overview of the data collected and by identifying new concepts, theories, and recommendations for future research (Yin, 2018). Six senior leaders from four Fortune 500 companies participated in this multiple case study. Five major themes emerged from data analysis: (a) provide mentorship, (b) conduct one-on-one meetings, (c) create individual development plans, (d) encourage continuing education, and (e) provide internal job shadowing. The path-goal theory was used as the practical lens as each participant discussed in detail the TM strategies they had used to manage career advancement for their internal employees. This section includes the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for further research, reflections, and conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was: What TM strategies do senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees? To identify these TM strategies, I recruited six senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies who have successfully used TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees in the Midwest region of the United States. After each participant agreed to the informed consent of this research study, I conducted six semistructured audio-recorded Zoom interviews using an interview protocol guide (Appendix A) for

consistency. The study participants were labeled as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 to protect

their privacy. As shown in Table 1, participants were asked demographic questions and

provided information about their (a) industry, (b) current leadership position, (c) number

of employees they managed, (d) overall leadership experience, and (e) highest education.

I ensured data saturation for this research when no new information or themes emerged

during data collection. After each interview, Zoom transcribed the interview data, and I

created a summary of each participant interview responses. I emailed participants a

summary of their interview data before performing member-checking. A member-

checking interview was held with each participant to confirm the reliability and validity

of interview data. There was one participant whose interview data was updated to

accurately report their responses.

In addition to the interviews, I reviewed publicly accessible company

documentation on each corporation's website. I also reviewed documents shared by

participants that included details on how leaders track employee career progress and

performance, thank you emails and articles from mass media from their former

employees, and local newspaper publications to confirm employees' career advancement

under their leadership.

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Participants

Participants	Fortune 500 Industry	Current Leadership Position	Number of Employees	Overall Leadership Experience	Highest Education
P1	Gas and Electric	21 years	7	18 years	Master of Business Administration
P2	Aerospace	15 years	15	42 years	Master's
P3	Banking	2 years	6	40 years	Bachelor's
P4	Business Consulting	7 years	4	6 years	Master's
P5	Banking	17 years	8	20 years	Bachelor's
P6	Gas and Electric	31 years	33	20 years	Master of Business Administration

Table 2 shows the five emergent themes of TM strategies: (a) provide mentorship, (b) conduct one-on-one meetings, (c) create individual development plans, (d) encourage continuing education, and (e) provide internal job shadowing. Some themes consist of subthemes and the table lists the frequency all participants mentioned this theme. Themes and subthemes align with the path-goal theory conceptual framework, in which a leader's behavior affects managing employee careers. Research findings include direct participant quotes, connection with the path-goal theory, and other peer-reviewed studies from the literature review including literature added since the approval of the proposal.

Table 2

Emerged Themes of Talent Management Strategies

Theme	Frequency
Provide Mentorship	42
Conduct One-On-One Meetings	30
Create Individual Development Plans	17
Encourage Continuing Education	16
Provide Internal Job Shadowing	10

Theme 1: Provide Mentorship

The first theme that emerged indicated that senior leaders provide mentorship as a TM strategy to manage career advancement for employees. Each participant in this study discussed the importance of mentorship and its impact on employees' careers. The study participants noted they match employees with a mentor inside or outside of the company depending on the career goal of the employees. These senior leaders agreed that providing mentorship is one of the best TM strategies to help employees advance their careers.

Employees who have a mentor develop professional skills that are necessary for career growth. P5 defined a *mentor* as,

Someone who is going to sit down with you and create a development plan to review where you are at. This person might challenge you on some things and give you advice on what you should do. A mentor is someone you can talk to and is very transparent.

P1 noted mentorship was important for people who want to develop and grow in the organization. Four participant companies have formal mentoring programs that connect employees with mentors to help develop their professional skills. P1 emphasized that the mentoring relationship is important and when they have provided employees with a formal or informal mentor their careers have advanced. The study participants discussed how employees are matched with a mentor with expertise in a field employees want to develop their skills in. P6 found providing mentorship was best when employees connect with an expert in a career field. These senior leaders discovered that employees who are engaged in their mentoring relationship often advance their careers.

Senior leaders also connect employees with people in their personal network to provide mentoring. Study participants discussed how they go beyond their companies to ensure their employees connect with a mentor who can help them succeed. P1 shared they use their network to provide mentors for employees. P5 stated, "I'm a full-time mentor to employees but I like for them to get mentorship outside of me." P3 and P4 agreed with P5 and stated they match employees with mentors both within and outside the company. Each participant shared the effectiveness of utilizing their personal network to help employees advance their careers.

There are several ways senior leaders can provide mentorship to their employees. P3 explained the process they use for mentorship involves starting with an action plan. P2 and P3 start mentorship by ascertaining the employee's career goals. Each participant shared that once they understand what career their employees want to pursue, they connect them with an expert in that field using their professional or personal network. P3

noted they mentor their employees with a "start to finish" action plan to help them reach their career goals. The participants agreed that having a mentorship plan has been effective for their employees' career advancement.

Providing mentorship to employees can last beyond the initial relationship. P2 and P3 discussed how former employees are grateful for the mentorship they have provided. P3 even said that they continue to have relationships with employees after they have advanced their careers. P2 noted some employees "can't see where they want to go until you can show them" they can achieve their career goals. P2 and P3 were passionate when they discussed how employees tend to give back and help other people develop professionally because of the help they received to advance their careers. The participants discovered that providing mentorship can be a transformational experience for employees. Table 3 is a list of the five subthemes of providing mentorship.

Table 3

Subthemes of Provide Mentorship

Subtheme	Frequency
Sponsorship	10
Career Transition	10
Generational Differences	12
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	5
Lack of Leadership Support	5

Sponsorship

The first subtheme that emerged is the difference between mentorship and sponsorship. Each participant shared instances where they took the next step to help employees get started with new opportunities by sponsoring them. The study participants agreed mentorship is an important TM strategy, but suggested sponsorship of employees in the workplace. P5 was passionate about sharing the definition of sponsorship. P5 said,

Sponsorship is when someone will be your voice in the room when you are not there. A sponsor is a person that can put you in contact with the person hiring for the job. A sponsor is going to be your champion and advocate in roles where you are not able to. So, a sponsor is going to give you more career insight and tell you where to go to put your name out there.

Participants discussed the need to sponsor their employees for career opportunities. P6 described a time when an employee was unable to get into a training course and they needed to add the course to their resume. The participant described they knew the facilitator, so they reached out to explain their employee situation and was able to have their employee enrolled in the course. This response is an example of how senior leaders can use their connections with others to help their employees. For example, senior leaders may know hiring managers in other departments and call them to help their employees get an interview for a job. These strategies can be the difference between a senior leader mentoring an employee versus sponsoring an employee.

Three other participants applied strategies similar to P6 when connecting their employees with the right people. The participants agreed their role is to ensure employees

connect with the right people by making a personal connection. P4 sponsors their employees by including other leaders in conversations that can help their employees excel in their careers. P1 encourages their employees to share with them their career goals because their network encompasses people from various careers, and they reach out to specific people depending on employees' needs. P3 mentioned that connecting employees with others gives them the power of influence and other employees tend to respect them more. P3 described sponsoring employees in their careers as being a successful strategy. P1 sits on an internal committee at their company and uses this leadership role to sponsor other employees. The participant discussed a time when they had an opportunity to sponsor an employee for a new job role where they moved into a department to fly drones. This response is an example of how leaders serving on committees at their company gives them a greater chance of sponsoring employees. P6 agreed and ensures her employees receive new projects by being transparent and sharing employee information with sponsors to help them. Senior leaders can go beyond mentorship by sponsoring employees for career advancement.

Career Transition

The second subtheme that emerged was leaders having career transition conversations while mentoring employees. Five participants shared instances during mentorship where employees said they wanted to leave the company or discovered employees were not suited for their position. P2 described how they recommended new career opportunities to employees who were not a good fit for their job role and provided employees letters of recommendation. P2 said, "Former employees would come back and

thank me for helping them find their niche." P5 often asks employees how they can help

them if they are uncertain about the job role. P5 discussed the importance of having a

good team of people who enjoy their job roles. For example, if an employee does not like

their job, then they may not provide good quality work. P5 talks to employees if the job

role may not be a good fit for them and mentions "let's look for something in a back

office." P5 further explained some employees have a good character but lack the

necessary skills to meet business objectives. P2 and P5 agreed that employees must fit

well into their job roles, or they would help them transition into a career that suits them.

Senior leaders must support their employees when they want to make career

transitions. Four participants discussed how they support their employees who decide to

leave the company. P4 said, "I do my best to not let employees get stuck in their job role.

So, if they want to leave the company based on a better job opportunity, I will support

them." P5 agreed and shared that each employee has a unique talent and deserves to work

in a job role where they can use that talent. These senior leaders shared how important it

is for an employee to feel fulfilled in a job role. P3 discussed how they encourage

employees to make strategic career moves by researching information in the field they

want to transition into. P3 said, "I just really want employees to see a higher version of

themselves and pursue it. When I help my employees, my spirit of influence grows bigger

and other employees begin to ask me for advice." P3 further shared experiences they had

when employees left the company and how their team became smaller until they found a

new hire. P5 agreed with P3 and discussed how they respect employees who tell them

they are looking for other career opportunities. P5 mentioned that if their employees need

time off to interview for another job, they will approve it. This response is an example of how senior leaders may want to handle the career transition of employees. Senior leaders must understand that losing an employee for career advancement is better than keeping an employee stuck in a job role they find unfulfilling.

Generational Differences

The third subtheme is leaders encountering generational differences while mentoring employees. Three participants shared that the majority of their employees are new to the workforce. They also shared that they have to mentor employees differently based on age groups. P5 has been managing a team of different generations for over 20 years but noted "this new age group caused me to adjust to them." Leading different generations can be difficult and P5 realized they had to lead differently if they wanted results from the younger generation at their company. P4 agreed with P5 and discussed a major adjustment was excepting their younger employees were challenging them to think differently. P4 said, "Just because I did things a certain way so many years ago, doesn't necessarily mean that was the right approach for me or my career." The participant further explained that conversations in the workplace must acknowledge the views and concerns of younger employees because they offer a unique perspective on modern business problems. P4 discussed the importance of work experience for the younger generation and how the younger generation is more focused on wellness but not at the expense of their happiness. The study participants discovered young professionals will express their expectations of the job role with their leaders.

The younger generation needs guidance in the workplace. The participants agreed most of their younger employees want to be successful, but they need guidance from leaders to help them. P3 discovered that their younger employees are always on their cellular phones while at work and often forget to acknowledge customers. P3 uses this example as a learning experience for their younger employees by providing them with guidance on the business etiquette they need to have in the workplace, such as not having their phones out in front of customers. P5 agreed with P3 about the use of cellular phones by the younger generation in the workplace. P5 said, "A lot of individuals who are new to corporate America have unrealistic expectations and tend not to work as hard because some of them want to become Instagram influencers." P5 shared that outside of mentorship, they also share business etiquette techniques to guide employees new to the workforce. The participants agreed that they often teach soft skills to help some of their younger employees do well in corporate America. P5 shared that in addition to mentoring younger employees they also guide employees with (a) answering the phone, (b) checking and sending emails, (c) writing and grammar, (d) professional dress code, (e) the importance of coming to work on time, and (f) communication. P5 further shared that younger employees must understand what is in it for them to be interested in achieving business objectives and advancing their careers in the workplace.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The fourth subtheme that emerged was diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) when providing mentorship to employees. P3 discussed that different TM strategies work for different people, especially depending on who they are and where they are in life. P3

and P5 work for the same Fortune 500 company. Their company's publicly accessible 2021 employee information report described the majority of their senior leaders as white men, with little to no cultural diversity in senior leadership roles. P3's and P5's companies also had a publicly accessible 2021 workforce composition disclosure that identified white employees received more promotions compared to all other ethnicities in the United States. P4 company's publicly accessible documentation also reported similar results where white employees received job promotions more than any other ethnicity in the company. P2 discussed similar results at their company and the impact it has on providing mentorship. P2 said, "Employees in the information and technology field (IT) are predominantly Caucasian males. So, being a minority and having a mentor is few and far between." P2's company did not have a public DEI report to review although the company did have employment data that only provided the numbers of employees.

Some companies' public DEI reports stated some practices used to track DEI success. P4 company's publicly accessible 2022 DEI report suggested their priority is to equip all of their employees for success by having a company that reflects diversity in every department. P4's company had seven commitments identified to uphold DEI practices. One of the seven commitments states, "enhance parity in career progression by having a diverse team of women and people with different ethnicities." This commitment from a Fortune 500 company highlights that having diverse teams can ensure DEI practices are being implemented in the workplace.

P1 and P6 participants work for the same Fortune 500 company. P6 works in a male-dominated field and discussed they have a challenge with other leaders' perception

of minority employees, and their ability to meet expectations of a job role. P1 and P6

company's publicly accessible 2021 DEI states a commitment to "increase diversity in

the leadership pipeline." This idea was one of the several workforce strategies this

Fortune 500 company plans to implement. The report also indicated the company has 13

leadership and development programs to develop and retain top talent. Of the 13

programs, two programs specifically enhance Black equity at their company, and five

programs focus on preparing employees for management positions, specifically showing

a high percentage of women participants. Senior leaders must consider the importance of

DEI practices so that all employees have equal opportunities to advance their careers.

Lack of Leadership Support

The final subtheme of mentorship was the lack of leadership support. P2 and P6

discussed the lack of leadership support from other leaders at their companies when

mentoring employees for career advancement. The study participants posited that some

managers were not interested in helping employees advance their careers in the

workplace. P2 observed other leaders who were more results-driven than helping

employees with their career paths. The participant further explained how they believe

other leaders may not mentor people and support their career path because they want

employees to stay in their current roles, especially if they are producing good work. The

participants agreed that the lack of leader support impeded the way they could promote

some of their employees. The study participants discussed how other leaders may not feel

an employee is ready or a good fit for certain job roles. P6 shared that they get pushback

from other leaders when they help their employees advance their careers. They described

that pushback occurs because other company leaders have a fixed mindset about where they think an employee should go. Senior leaders at all levels of Fortune 500 companies should support employee career growth and not restrain employees to one job role.

Connection to the Literature

Mentorship prepares employees to become emerging leaders in their companies (Blake-Beard et al., 2021). Providing mentorship also aligns with research that found the mentor and mentee relationship helps employees make valuable career decisions (Bell & Rosowsky, 2021). All participants in this study provide mentorship to their employees and connect them with other mentors, inside and outside of the company, to help them advance their careers. P5 talked about the value of having a sponsor, which relates to the findings of Lin et al. (2021) on how sponsors provide career-related support to help people get promoted. Phaladi and Ngulube (2022) found that 41% of HR managers who worked at South African companies confirmed mentoring was not in place in their organizations. The findings from my study do not agree with Phaladi and Ngulube (2022) about the high percentage of companies not offering mentoring. More companies do indeed have mentorship programs in place. All participants discussed how their companies' mentorship programs are key factors in helping employees advance their careers.

My research findings identified information for generational differences and DEI, which was not examined in the literature review. Some participants shared that minorities usually lack an understanding of mentorship. Samanta and Eleni (2021) found that employees with mentors understand the value of mentorship for career advancement.

Some participants lead the new generation entering the workforce differently compared to how they lead people who have been in the workforce for over 10 years. Situational leaders can change their approach to best lead their teams (Mustofa & Muafi, 2021). Iyer (2022) posited companies include disadvantaged group members in the decision-making process when changing DEI policies. Having diverse groups collectively change DEI policies may create more equal opportunities for employees. When employees get the same privileges in the workplace, including mentorship, there may be an equal opportunity for all employees who seek career advancement to move up in the company.

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

The first theme, provide mentorship, connects to two leadership behaviors of the path-goal theory: supportive and participative. Supportive leaders appreciate their employees and are approachable when employees want to share their concerns about the workplace (Lam et al., 2021; Mustofa & Muafi, 2021; Rana et al., 2019). Each participant shared their desire to support employees wanting to advance their careers. Supportive leaders provide valuable resources to employees and closely watch their development to determine if they reach their career goals while meeting business objectives (Huang, 2019). Participants discussed the importance of sharing resources with their employees to support them as they plan for career transitions.

Participative leadership behavior encourages a collaborative work environment where employees' opinions matter in decision-making (House, 1996). Participative leaders cooperate with employees when making decisions and make them feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns (Dokony et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2019).

Four participants discussed having collaborative work environments where their employees feel empowered to ask questions and provide feedback. Participants further mentioned they like problem-solving with their employees.

The findings also connect to workgroup representation and networking, which is another leadership behavior of the path-goal theory. Leaders who are involved in representing themselves in other areas and have a network can positively affect their team (House, 1996). Networking is when people engage with others at professional or community events who share similar interests (Bonneton et al., 2019). Leaders who use their personal networks can be successful in advancing employee careers (Sibunruang & Kawai, 2021). Three participants confirmed they use their networking skills to help manage the careers of employees. Virtual networking, such as LinkedIn, is now the most common strategy for an employee's career transition (Schechter, 2020). When leaders have a powerful personal network, they can leverage their relationships to help employees advance their careers.

Theme 2: Conduct One-On-One Meetings

The second theme that emerged indicated senior leaders often conduct one-on-one meetings with employees as a TM strategy to manage career advancement. Each participant shared the importance of conducting one-on-one meetings with their employees to manage career advancement. The participants discussed how they enjoy having one-on-one conversations with their employees. P6 described a one-on-one meeting is held between a leader and an employee to discuss performance and career advancement. One-on-one meetings can occur in different settings based on the senior

leaders' schedules. Most of the participants shared they conduct one-on-one meetings with employees in their offices or virtually, but P4 takes their employees outside of the building. P4 revealed their one-on-one meetings with employees are lunches to discuss career growth aligned with business objectives. P4 company provides a budget for leaders to take employees to lunch. One-on-one meetings allow leaders and employees to talk with no interference and build a relationship.

Senior leaders offer one-on-one meetings at different frequencies with their employees. Some participants meet with employees (a) bi-weekly, (b) monthly, or (c) bi-monthly for one-on-one meetings. The participants also shared that they check in with employees weekly about their well-being connected to their job performance and workflow in the office. P1, P2, and P3 prefer to have bi-weekly meetings with their employees. During these meetings, participants discuss job performance and career growth with their employees, while asking about the progress of employees' mentorship opportunities. P4 and P5 conduct monthly one-on-one meetings. P5 said, "I've noticed in my tenure doing this job, once a month is a good check in time with employees." The participant further noted some employees often tell them they never had a leader meet with them before. This issue gives P5 a reason to make time with employees to ensure they are getting the development they need.

Some leaders prefer a combination of ways to meet one-on-one with employees. P6 shared they like to have separate one-on-one meetings with employees to discuss specific items. P6 prefers to meet with employees bi-weekly or monthly to discuss job-related tasks and bi-monthly to discuss career advancement. The participant shared that

separating the meetings allows them time to focus on the career advancement of their employees and explore how they are achieving their plan. P3 has scheduled bi-weekly one-on-one meetings with employees, and they also like to have casual conversations with employees about career advancement. The participant further discussed how they walk around their branch connecting with their employees through a casual conversation and ask employees questions about their career plans. The participants schedule one-on-one meetings with employees and have casual conversations throughout the workday. Whether a senior leader decides to use varied one-on-one meetings or standard one-on-one meetings, findings show this TM strategy has been successful for employees to advance their careers.

Some participants shared how they ensure employees understand one-on-one meetings are for them to provide feedback so employees can take control of their future. P1 said, "If I know an employee is striving for something, I begin to be more intentional about helping them." P1 shared how important it was to align their meetings with employees' career goals. P2 discussed their one-on-one conversations with employees focus on career growth. P2 said, "I start positioning employees for their next job when they start working for me." P5 shared that some employees are not familiar with one-on-one meetings because they are new to corporate America. The participant educates employees about the importance of one-on-one meetings and guides them through the process. Table 4 is a display of the four subthemes related to conducting one-on-one meetings.

Table 4

Subthemes of Conduct One-On-One Meetings

Subtheme	Frequency
Supportive Relationships	8
Performance Reviews	3
Company Culture	11
Employee Mindset	8

Supportive Relationships

The first subtheme from senior leaders conducting one-on-one meetings is

supportive relationships. Participants shared that building supportive relationships with

employees has been beneficial to managing employees' career advancement. The

participants shared how employees enjoy sharing information with them in their one-on-

one meetings because they feel supported. P2 emphasized, "I like to be transparent and

personable to individuals who report to me." P6 agreed with P2 and noted when

employees join their team, they spend a lot of time getting to know them. P3 discussed

how they created a workplace culture of supportive relationships and noted employees

feel relaxed around me by openly sharing their career goals. P4 agreed with P3 and also

fosters an environment where employees can be honest with them. P4 provided a public

mass media article from a former employee that highlighted the support they received

from P4 to advance their career. This documentation confirmed the employee felt

supported by P4 leadership and the employee was able to excel in their career at the

company. The participants take the lead in creating supportive relationships with their employees as a strategy to help them advance their careers.

Performance Reviews

Performance reviews were the second subtheme that emerged from one-on-one meetings. P5 shared that conducting a one-on-one meeting about performance prepare employees for their annual review. The participant further discussed how employees can be aware of what leaders put in their development plan during monthly checkpoints, which prepare them for what to expect at their annual review. P5 prefers to use Microsoft Outlook to schedule monthly checkpoints with employees and document both performance and development notes so they can help employees with goal setting. P4 also shared they use one-on-one meetings to discuss performance management and career growth aligned with business objectives. The participant asks employees how they feel about the progress they made during the feedback cycle. Allowing the employee to lead the conversation about how they perform has been a great conversation starter and allows P4 to take meticulous notes. When senior leaders have regular one-on-one meetings with employees, employees become aware of their performance and can track their career progression.

Company Culture

The third subtheme of one-on-one meetings is company culture. P1 said their company culture is a place where people work hard and has a history of "work now, grieve later." The participant shared stories of how employees were apprehensive of their leadership style of collaboration because other managers are known to have a "do as I

say" attitude toward employees. P2 agreed with P1 and revealed their company's managers often focus on the results, not the person. P2 said, "Other managers focus on employees being here to do a job and remind them to get the job done." The participant also shared how they encountered other leaders whose only goal was to make employees the best people to meet the business objective. P5 also discussed how most leaders like telling employees what to do but mentioned their leadership style will not work in the evolving work environment.

Participants shared how they tried to change the company culture to create a better experience for employees who foresee advancing their careers. P3 discussed how they created a workplace culture to help people go where they wanted to go, and their employees feel relaxed around them by openly sharing their career goals. P4 shared that they were compelled to change the culture in the office because their younger employees challenged the way they think. P4 said, "I learned pretty early on that if you don't take ownership of your career, then the firm will." P4 stated that there are instances where the company needs job roles filled and turn to internal employees to perform them.

Employee Mindset

The final subtheme of one-on-one meetings was an employees' mindset. Participants shared how the mindset of their employees dictates their career success. P4 stated some of their employees have fixed mindsets instead of growth mindsets, so it can be difficult having conversations with them. P3 disagreed and expressed how some of their employees want to be successful and do better in life. The participant shared, they have to overcome the negativity that some employees pick up outside of the workplace

from mass media including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. P3 said,

"Employees use if-then statements about life. They say, if I do this, this could happen. If I

do that, that could happen." P6 agreed with P3 and noted some of their employees believe

they should be at a different level in their career but often hold themselves back with their

negative mindset. P2 said, "I am an aggressive accountability partner and it's challenging

helping employees move forward when they push back." The participants discussed how

some employees must overcome their negative thoughts by changing their mindsets about

themselves. How employees feel about their career growth can impact how quickly they

can grow their careers. Employees who want to advance their careers must have a

positive mindset to allow their leaders can help them.

Connection to the Literature

The conduct one-on-one meeting's theme is consistent with existing literature on

TM strategies for career advancement. Leaders must understand their employees' career

paths to help them intentionally achieve their career goals (Locke & Latham, 2019).

Employees are more likely to reach their career goals when they meet regularly with their

leaders (Ngan & Tze-Ngai Vong, 2019). The leader-employee relationship that includes

face-to-face meetings develops trust and opportunities to share feedback (Braun et al.,

2019; Rofcanin et al., 2020). Senior leaders in this study confirmed meeting one-on-one

with employees regularly helped them build supportive relationships and understand how

career goals align with employee job performance. P6 revealed an electronic employee

tracker related to one-on-one meetings and employee career progression. P4 also revealed

a thank you email from a former employee that shared how their regular meetings helped

them achieve their career goal. In reviewing documentation, it confirmed one-on-one meetings with employees are a successful TM strategy in advancing employee careers. While study findings confirm the importance of the leader-employee relationship, recent literature suggests factors such as (a) financial crises, (b) the evolution of technology, and (c) workplace globalization affect how the leader-employee relationship changes in the workplace (Schechter, 2020). Study participants shared that having one-on-one meetings with their employees was beneficial to understanding how they can help employees reach their career goals.

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

The second theme, conducting one-on-one meetings, connects to all four leadership behaviors of the path-goal theory: (a) directive, (b) supportive, (b) participative, and (c) achievement-oriented. P2 was the only participant that expressed directive leadership behavior when having one-on-one meetings with employees. Directive leaders lead with structure and control to ensure employees understand job expectations (House & Mitchell, 1975; Mustofa & Muafi, 2021). Supportive leaders listen to and appreciate their employees in the workplace (Mustofa & Muafi, 2021). Participative leaders ensure employees cooperate in decision-making matters that impact them (Rana et al., 2019). Each participant shared experiences where they supported their employees and cooperated with them on the trajectory of their careers. Leaders with achievement-oriented behaviors set challenging goals for their employees and help employees track their progress for improvement (Dokony et al., 2020). Four participants explained how they spend a great deal of time discussing career goals with employees. P2

added that they are a results-oriented leader who can be demanding of employees to reach their goals. P3 shared that 80% of the work they do as a leader focuses on their employees' career goals. These senior leaders possess the leadership behaviors presented in the path-goal theory to help employees advance their careers.

Theme 3: Create Individual Development Plans

The third theme that emerged indicated senior leaders help employees create individual development plans (IDPs) as a TM strategy to manage career advancement. Five participants discussed having employees create IDPs to manage career advancement. P1 defined an IDP as "a living document of employees' goals and tasks that they can continue to use within the company." The participants' companies have standardized IDP forms for employees to use that have specific performance and professional development questions. P1 and P6 work for the same Fortune 500 company. P1 discussed the importance of employees having an IDP to track their goals and tasks throughout the year. P6 added that using an IDP helps employees have an organized plan. P6 also monitors the effectiveness of an IDP by regularly discussing with employees their timeframe and goals reached to identify how long it takes employees to reach their goals. Study participants meet regularly with employees to see what progress they have made toward reaching their goals. According to P1 and P6, their employees complete an IDP each year to guide them toward their performance and professional goals.

P3 and P5 work for the same Fortune 500 company. Their company uses an electronic system to track employees' development. Their company has a system-based development plan; employees receive one within two weeks of their hire date. P5 shared

they can also use the IDP to start career progression conversations with employees to determine what employees want to do in the future. The use of an electronic IDP allows both managers and employees to track progress on the IDP, quickly make updates, and guide monthly meetings.

Many employees may not know the intent and purpose of an IDP. P4 shared that almost all of their employees are new to the workforce, and some employees often do not know what to include on their IDP. P4 described how they explain the importance of an IDP by asking employees a few questions to get them thinking about what they want to include. P4 asks, "Why did you enter this job field? What do you hope to get out of your career? What can I do to help you?" P4 further expressed that asking employees questions about what they want out of their careers is a major factor in helping them with career advancement. Table 5 is a display of the two subthemes related to creating IDPs.

Table 5

Subtheme of Create Individual Development Plans

Subtheme	Frequency
Employees take the lead	13

Employees Take the Lead

The subtheme that participants discussed was employees took the lead in achieving career goals listed on their IDPs. The participants shared experiences they had with employees who were adamant about career growth at their companies. P2 discussed how they observed that an employee's effort pays off in the workplace, sharing that it is

up to the employee to commit to achieving their career goals. P2 noted that each

employee has an individual journey, and some employees are not motivated to succeed.

P4 agreed with P2 and mentioned they encourage their employees to vocalize the ideas

they want to make toward career progression. The participants shared how some

employees get out of the relationship what they desire to have from it. This response

means employees who want to achieve their career goals take the lead by asking leaders

for help or are determined to do things themselves. P4 discussed how some employees

have a certain career path they want to follow so there is not much help they can offer

employees. P1 said, "I also noticed employees are loyal to a company if they have seen

growth in their careers by switching to other departments." Employees who want to

advance their careers will take the lead if they truly want to progress.

Employees should advocate for their career advancement. P6 observed that

employees who take the lead in their careers advocate for career advancement. P6 shared

that employees who want to advance their careers are (a) proactive, (b) outspoken, (c) ask

questions, and (d) offer insights about their job roles. These employees take the lead on

projects to learn and grow. The participants shared that employees who take the lead are

always looking for career opportunities at the company. The participants agreed leaders

should support employees, especially if they have shared their desire to change career

paths.

Connection to the Literature

The create IDP theme is consistent with existing literature on TM strategies for

career advancement. Employees can plan their careers by using standardized documents

(Griffith et al., 2019; Harsch & Festing, 2020). Fareed et al. (2022) found that IDPs are given to high-performing employees at companies for career advancement. The study's findings do not agree with Fareed et al. (2022) because all participants stated that IDPs are created for all employees, not exclusively for high performers. Senior leaders should make sure all employees have a completed IDP that they can refer to as they set specific strategies to advance their careers.

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

The third theme, create IDP, connects to three leadership behaviors of the path-goal theory: (a) achievement-oriented, (b) supportive, and (c) participative. Senior leaders who have achievement-oriented behavior help employees reach challenging goals and employees expect to receive rewards for their work (Dokony et al., 2020; House & Mitchell, 1975). Some study participants stated employees expect to do well, achieve their goals on their IDPs, and earn a pay increase. Supportive leaders enjoy helping their employees achieve their goals and participative leaders collaborate with employees while they do the work (Lam et al., 2021; Rana et al., 2019). Each participant shared how they are intentional about supporting their employees and collaborating with them to guide how they can achieve their career goals. When senior leaders use IDPs they can effectively track the professional development of their internal employees and provide feedback throughout the year to help them reach business objectives, which support them in advancing their careers.

Theme 4: Encourage Continuing Education

The fourth theme that emerged was encourage continuing education. Each participant encouraged employees to seek higher education to help advance their careers. Two participants were adamant about their belief that employees should continue their education at a technical college or earn a four-year degree. Study participants discussed how a college degree can help an employee advance in a company. P2 said, "One of the things I do is push education to help employees find their niche." P2 shared that employees who know their niche focus on developing themselves for the career of their dreams. P1 shared that their company values employees who continue their education because the majority of open job roles require employees to have a bachelor's degree. Table 6 is a display of the two subthemes related to encourage continuing education.

Table 6

Subthemes of Encourage Continuing Education

Subtheme	Frequency
Higher Education	7
Certifications and Training	9

Higher Education

The first subtheme that emerged from encouraging continuing education was higher education. The participants shared employees who have a higher education had a better chance of advancing their careers internally. P1 discussed that most job requirements at their company require employees to have at least a bachelor's degree so

employees seeking career advancement may have to go back to school. P3 added they encourage younger employees to pursue a college degree. This TM strategy was confirmed with public social media documentation where an employee thanked P3 for helping them get enrolled into a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), which was always a dream. By using this TM strategy, a senior leader may be able to change an employee's life.

Certifications and Training

The second subtheme of encouraging continuing education is certifications and training. Some participants shared the importance of employees having industry certifications and completing internal training to meet job requirements to advance their careers. P2 discussed the importance of formal education but noted technical education is required for employees to develop their talent in the information and technology (IT) field. P1 and P6 discussed their companies' internal virtual training courses where employees can learn new skills and apply what they learned after each training. P1 shared their concern about employees having to perform well on internal certification exams at their company to maintain a license or credential. P1 said, "I hate to say it, but the testing component sometimes knocks people out of the job position. Plus, when employees get certain job roles, they have to continue to pass internal tests." P1 further discussed how certification exams are difficult for internal candidates to pass and advancing their careers internally depends on a passing score. As more employees share their interest in advancing their careers, senior leaders must ensure employees understand new job roles may require more certification or training components.

Senior leaders encourage employees to attend internal training courses. P6 discussed how they encourage their employees to take on new projects and take additional training courses and attend seminars to build their professional skills. The participant reiterated that employees who have taken training courses to develop professionally are more successful with career advancement. P6 offered the following steps leaders should take to get employees into training courses; (a) discuss the gaps in professional development with employees, (b) have employees register for internal online training courses, (c) have employees take notes on applying skills learned to their day-to-day life, and (d) review the training material with employees in individual meetings. These four steps may ensure employees understand training material as a means to advance their careers.

External training courses can be used to help employees advance their careers. P1 encourages their employees to use LinkedIn Learning. P1 described LinkedIn Learning as an online training resource where employees can obtain professional development courses. P1 stated, "I have a current mentee who has been taking some LinkedIn Learning courses. I've been helping them develop their skills, so they are transferable." Senior leaders who help employees develop transferable skills not only benefit the company but also the employees. Employees who learn new skills can add to their skillsets for future job roles.

Connection to the Literature

Findings related to the encourage continuing education theme are connected to existing literature that describes how having a bachelor's degree can help employees

advance their careers (Kilson, 2021). Most participants emphasized the value of employees having a higher education or receiving certification from training to advance their careers. Employees investing in higher education is a key TM strategy for career advancement (Kharadze et al., 2019). Companies that provide internal training and development to employees provide them with transferable skills (Theys & Schultz, 2020). Some participants shared that their companies had internal training employees could use to develop their skills. Online LinkedIn training modules are helpful for people to complete if they foresee advancing their careers (Schechter, 2020). Senior leaders should encourage employees to continue their education if it will be a job requirement for them to advance to an open position.

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

Encouraging continuing education connects to two leadership behaviors of the path-goal theory: supportive and achievement-oriented. Supportive leaders create an opportunity for employees to experience further learning in the workplace (Lam et al., 2021). Participants shared that when they encourage continued education their employees were able to further their careers within and outside the company. Achievement-oriented leaders help their employees keep track of their goals and progress (Dokony et al., 2020). Some participants shared how they remind employees to enroll in internal training to receive certifications that can help them add to their resumes. Supportive and achievement-oriented leaders create a workplace environment that encourages continued education for their employees.

Theme 5: Provide Internal Job Shadowing

The fifth and final theme that emerged indicated senior leaders provide internal job shadowing as a TM strategy to manage career advancement for employees. Four participants shared that providing employees with internal job shadowing opportunities builds their curiosity about the company. P1 defined job shadowing as "employees spending the day with a colleague doing the work of a different job role." P6 described the job shadowing process as employees "observing someone that's in a different position or department within the company to pick their brain or confirm if that is indeed the job role they want to advance to." For example, an employee may shadow a technician at their company by watching how the technician completes daily job duties. P1 mentioned they could get an employee a job shadowing opportunity with the drone department. P1 said, "The employee was on the specific workgroup for two months to learn and get hands-on training flying drones." Providing employees with job shadowing opportunities will help them decide about applying for open job roles.

Employees should be placed with expert colleagues for internal job shadowing. Two participants mentioned they provide employees with job shadowing opportunities, but only with colleagues who are experts in the department. P6 said, "People invest a lot of time and energy into their jobs, so it's important I help my employees make sure the job roles they desire to move into is something worthwhile." Through job shadowing, employees can determine if certain job roles will fit their talents. P2 said, "I would have employees train in other positions to learn other techniques and develop their talents." The participants mentioned the importance of employees getting experience in other

departments to help them make a final decision about internal career advancement. P3 said, "I tell my employees to reach out to people who are doing the job role you want to do, so you can find out how you can build your skill level to get in that department." When employees shadow expert colleagues, they can ask specific questions about the job role and determine if the career they want involves the type of work they observe.

Employees who participate in job shadowing can gain new skills that help them advance their careers. P6 said, "Job shadowing provides growth and development opportunities for employees, and they can add it to their resume to help them move to the next level." P1 discussed the excitement employees have when they learn new skills from job shadowing in another department. Senior leaders identified that employees feel more knowledgeable when they can complete other job tasks at the company. When employees are offered internal job shadowing, they get hands-on training to develop new skills that may help them advance their careers. There were no subthemes identified from internal job shadowing.

Connection to the Literature

Job shadowing senior leadership and job rotations are key TM strategies for employees who seek internal career advancement (Bonneton et al., 2019). However, some companies lack programs providing on-the-job shadowing and job rotations for employees (Phaladi & Ngulube, 2022). For example, 60% of HR managers who work at South African companies stated job shadowing and rotations were not in place at their organizations (Phaladi & Ngulube, 2022). Four of the six study participants disagree with the observations of Phaladi and Ngulube (2022) because job shadowing was in place at

their Fortune 500 companies. P1 did mention that they would like to see more job rotations and that their company was possibly thinking about adding this TM strategy for employee advancement. Internal job shadowing will help employees gain more experience in other job roles or departments. Employees who get the opportunity to shadow other colleagues may have a greater chance of advancing their careers.

Connection to the Conceptual Framework

The fifth theme, internal job shadowing, connects to two leadership behaviors of the path-goal theory: supportive and achievement-oriented. Supportive leaders appreciate employees who share their career goals (Mustofa & Muafi, 2021). Some participants stated they listen to what job roles employees are interested in to provide specific TM strategies to help them advance their careers. Achievement-oriented leaders help employees reach their desired goals (Dokony et al., 2020). Some participants revealed they place employees in job shadowing opportunities to see what a new job role would entail. Allowing employees to job shadow other positions will help them decide which job role they would like.

Applications to Professional Practice

The purpose of this study was to identify the TM strategies senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage the career advancement of internal employees. The findings of this study provide senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies with information on how to effectively resolve one of the most common business problems they face: attracting and retaining talented employees. Six senior leaders who are successful with using TM strategies at Fortune 500 companies identified how they have

advanced the careers of internal employees. The key TM strategies identified in this study demonstrated an increase in internal employees advancing their careers by (a) providing mentorship, (b) conducting one-on-one meetings, (c) creating individual development plans, (d) encouraging continuing education, and (e) providing internal job shadowing.

Senior leaders should know the most effective TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees. Employees who have a leader who can provide mentorship opportunities can help them become more focused on their professional development. Manager-employee one-on-one meetings can help leaders become aware of the talent each employee brings to the team and organization. Tracking employee progress by creating individual development plans will allow leaders to make intentional decisions about advancing employees to job roles that fit their talents. Senior leaders who encouraged continued education for their employees set them up for career success, especially if internal job roles have degree or certification requirements. When employees get the opportunity to shadow other colleagues, they learn and develop key skills required for a job role of their interest before applying for an internal position. Fortune 500 company senior leaders who incorporate these five strategies support the achievement of business objectives by retaining talented employees and placing them in job roles that help the company's sustainability and competitive edge.

The insights gained from the participants of this study confirmed employees want to stay at their current company to develop and advance their careers. Senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies may find these TM strategies useful when they decide how employees should advance in the company. Senior leaders can begin to strengthen the

company's talent pipeline by advancing the careers of internal employees in job roles that will both help the employee professionally, and the company's capacity to achieve business objectives. Talent retention supports achieving company business objectives because internal employees' intention to stay shows their commitment to the company (Aljbour et al., 2021; Badshah & Bulut, 2020; Houssein et al., 2020; Mtethwa, 2019; Yildiz & Esmer, 2021). Senior leaders who understand and implement these TM strategies may reduce internal employees' decisions to leave the company to advance their careers.

Implications for Social Change

Employee career advancement can increase job performance and job satisfaction (Bourini et al., 2019). The career advancement of an employee can affect their perspective and behavior about how they think about themselves, and how they make contributions to communities, organizations, institutions, cultures, or societies they identify with. This implication for social change is the result of employees growing professionally and building their skill sets at a company they enjoy working for. Senior leaders who perform the five TM strategies in this study can help employees positively contribute to the company and their communities.

The value of the information provided by the six senior leaders in this study offers a benefit to communities and the economy. Employees often seek career advancement to sustain a living wage. Employees who achieve their career goals often become role models for others (Andresen et al., 2020). Employees may also become mentors to aspiring professionals in their communities. This knowledge may also benefit others

needing career guidance. The implication for positive social change includes the potential for senior leaders to develop talent management strategies to help their employees contribute financially to their families and support the job market of the communities where their companies are located.

Recommendations for Action

After exploring the TM strategies used by six senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies, I propose three specific recommendations for action. Senior leaders should (a) understand their direct role in the career advancement of internal employees, (b) create a team talent plan, and (c) collaborate with the HR department about filling open positions. These recommendations for action should be gradually introduced at corporations to ensure successful implementation. Gradual introduction can allow senior leaders to analyze each strategy's effectiveness to review the impact on retaining talented employees and the impact on meeting business objectives.

The first recommendation for action is for senior leaders to understand they have a direct role in the career advancement of internal employees. The study results disclosed that a senior leader's role is to (a) build a one-on-one relationship with employees to understand their career path, (b) accurately evaluate job performance and inquire about job satisfaction, (c) develop employees professionally and personally through company training or online programs, and (d) advocate for employees to be hired in job roles that align with their talents and can benefit the organization.

The second recommendation is for senior leaders to create a team talent plan. This talent plan should include each employee's talent development and career goals. Aside

from the hiring process, senior leaders should document the talents an employee

possesses. Senior leaders can use the team talent plan to help them determine the role

they play in advancing the careers of their employees in the organization.

The third recommendation for action is for senior leaders to collaborate with the

HR department about filling open positions. When senior leaders have an open position

on their team, they should collaborate with the HR department to identify talented

internal employees who are ready to advance their careers. Filling open positions at

companies can become more about recruiting internal employees versus hiring external

talent.

The study findings provide senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies with TM

strategies they can use to improve how they advance the careers of internal employees. I

intend to disseminate the findings of this study at corporate training and development

events, leadership conferences, and research symposiums. I plan to publish the findings

in the Human Resource Management Journal, Journal of Career Development, and other

online publications that provide information about TM strategies and career

advancement.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research would be to expand or focus on the

exploration of TM strategies senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use for internal

employee career advancement. The majority of participants in this study were from

various Fortune 500 company industries located in the Midwest region of the United

States. I would recommend a research study on a specific Fortune 500 company in a

specific area to provide more insight into the TM strategies senior leaders use to advance employee careers. For example, a future research study may want to focus on the TM strategies senior leaders use in the industrial industry for internal employee career advancement. Although this study provides knowledge on the different types of TM strategies senior leaders use, the first theme identified as providing mentorship indicated several subthemes that I did not identify in the literature review. Recent literature suggests there is more research suggesting networking and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as key TM strategies to help employees advance their careers (Iyer, 2022; Schechter, 2020). The two limitations of the study were (a) senior leaders may not be able to share company information or practices, and (b) senior leaders may have time constraints on their availability for an interview. These limitations can be addressed by a single case study with one Fortune 500 company to (a) receive approval to provide more internal company documentation and (b) ask company leaders to make their senior leaders more available for interviews.

Reflections

My doctoral journey can be described with one word: willpower. I had to have the willpower to complete each milestone of the journey and remember my goal was to become a Doctor of Business Administration. My doctoral journey occurred during a global pandemic, and I was confined to my home, which was depressing. The coursework of the program was also time-consuming and sometimes I felt overwhelmed working full-time and running a business. As a best-selling author who writes self-help books, I thought writing would be easy but writing this doctoral study was the most difficult

written work I have ever undertaken. I had to learn how to become an academic writer by thoroughly researching peer-reviewed articles to confirm my writing approach. I am now aware of how to support my writing with several resources. I was also able to build a support team that helped me persevere along my doctoral journey and that included an alumnus of the DBA program, a peer mentor in the DBA program, and my student advisor. Each individual was supportive and encouraged me on the pros and cons to finish my doctoral study. It was important to have a team of people who understood the DBA program to guide me as I pursued my goal. I reflected on the guidance they provided me as I researched articles, interviewed participants, and wrote the three sections of my doctoral study.

Working previously as a leader at a Fortune 500 company, I felt there were limited TM strategies that senior leaders used to help advance the careers of internal employees. My experience and preconceived ideas did not affect interviewing participants as I learned about the TM strategies they used by accurately capturing their responses using the interview protocol to avoid personal bias. This research study changed my thinking about how senior leaders lack TM strategies to advance the careers of internal employees. I am now aware that there are senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies who are passionate about employees' career growth and will support employees with specific TM strategies.

Conclusion

Senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies can advance the careers of internal employees. A qualitative multiple case study was used, and data was collected from six

senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies in the Midwest region of the United States who

have successfully used TM strategies to advance the careers of internal employees. The

findings of this study indicated five major themes that can help internal employees with

career advancement: (a) provide mentorship, (b) conduct one-on-one meetings, (c) create

individual development plans, (d) encourage continuing education, and (e) provide

internal job shadowing. Advancing the careers of internal employees also relies on the

leadership behaviors of senior leaders, as identified by the path-goal theory. The results

of this study may illustrate how senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies who lack TM

strategies can use the TM strategies from this study to manage career advancement for

their internal employees.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol
Specific Business Problem
The specific business problem is that some senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies lack TM strategies to manage career advancement for their internal employees.
Research Question
What TM strategies do senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees?
Primary Research Goal
My goal is to understand what TM strategies senior leaders use to manage the careers of internal employees, and which of these TM strategies are working or not working. Additionally, I want to understand how a leader's behavior affect managing employee careers.
Participant Criteria
Participants (a) must be a senior leader at a Fortune 500 company in the Midwest region of the United States, and (b) must successfully use TM strategies to manage the careers of internal employees.
Participant Identification
The name of each participant and name of Fortune 500 company will be confidential. To protect participants privacy, I will label participants with (a) the letter P, and (b) the number in which they are interviewed. For example, P1 will be used to identify a participant.
Participant Background Questions

1. What is your job title?
    2. How long have you been in your job role?
    3. How long have you been with this company?
    4. What is the total number of employees on your team?
    5. What is your highest level of degree?

What you will do	What you will say—script
This column contains what the researcher will be doing in addition to	This column contains what you will say to the participant as you proceed through the interview. Note—that one will add probing questions as appropriate.

asking the interview questions.	
Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee.	Hi _____ (interviewee). I really appreciate you taking the time to meet with me today. As noted in our introductory virtual meeting, I am Kimberly Burke, a doctoral candidate at Walden University. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore the TM strategies that senior leaders at Fortune 500 companies use to manage career advancement for their internal employees. This interview will be recorded, and I will be taking detailed notes. As a reminder, your participation is confidential, and you have the right to withdraw from this study at any time. Do I have your permission to proceed with this interview?
Reminders that you should do during the interview. • Watch for nonverbal cues. • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth data. • Remember that qualitative researchers need deep and rich data. A one sentence short answer to the interview question may provide superficial data at best. • Again, probe, probe,	**Interview Questions** 1. What are some TM strategies you have implemented that have proven to be effective in advancing your employees' careers?
	2. To what extent do you focus your TM strategies on developing employees to their full potential to meet their career goals?
	3. What key challenges have you experienced in implementing TM strategies for employee career advancement?
	4. How did you address the key challenges you experienced in implementing TM strategies for employee career advancement?
	5. What knowledge have you gained about TM strategies from current employees who foresee advancing their careers at your company?
	6. How, if at all, have you adapted or changed your TM strategies to support employees in the pursuit of their career goals?
	7. What additional information would you like to share concerning how you manage the careers of your employees using TM strategies?

probe. Metaphorically dig deep for rich data.	
Wrap up interview thanking participant.	Those are all the questions I have for you. Again, thank you for participating in this interview.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview.	The next step is for me to summarize the results of this study. I will send you an interview transcript in the next 2 days for your review. You will have 5 days to review the interview transcript before our next scheduled member checking interview. During the member checking interview, we will discuss each question and response so you can verify my interpretation of your responses. As a reminder, I will share my final research findings with you. Do you have any questions?