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Managerial Strategies to Create a Diverse Workforce for Enhanced Employee Performance

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Karmashia McDuffie

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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Performance

by

Karmashia McDuffie

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2024

Abstract

Organizations with ineffective diversity management strategies risk increased conflict and decreased organizational performance. Senior managers are concerned with workforce diversity, which is critical for enhancing employee performance in the health and human services industry. Grounded in Lewin's force field theory, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry have successfully used to create a diverse workforce and increase employee performance. Participants were three senior managers from North Carolina health and human services agencies who successfully developed strategies to diversify workforces to increase employee performance. Data were collected using semistructured interviews and publicly available documents. Using Yin's five-step thematic analysis process, six themes were identified: (a) cultural competence, (b) hiring practices and policies, (c) education and training, (d) feedback, (e) change and resistance to change, and (f) commitment from leadership. A key recommendation is for organization leaders to provide required diversity training to all individuals responsible for hiring workforce members. Implications for positive social change include the potential for managers to implement better strategies to create diverse workplaces. This, in turn, may positively contribute to local communities by improving residents' economic growth and quality of life.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my family. My beloved mother had one wish and that wish was that her daughters would earn their doctorates. I want you to know mother, Rose, we did it.

Acknowledgments

To my family, friends, and faculty members thank you for pushing me throughout this process. At times, my journey has been rough but because of my spirituality and the God that I serve, all things are possible.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

For this study, I explored strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. Lewin's force field theory was the conceptual framework for this study. Section 1 includes the background of the problem, problem statement, purpose statement, nature of the study, research question, interview questions, conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, significance of the study, as well as a comprehensive review of professional and academic literature.

Background of the Problem

Due to increases in globalization and diversity, workforce diversity has become an issue of significant interest among researchers and managers. It has become increasingly important as the workforce becomes more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, age, and disability status (Nweiser & Dajnoki, 2022). This increase in the importance of workforce diversity has led many organizations to focus more attention on creating diverse workforces and implementing strategies to support such workforces (Stazyk et al., 2021). Efforts among organizations to embrace and promote diversity have been encouraged by organizational researchers and managers so that organizations can foster positive perceptions, recruit qualified workers, and develop innovative ideas (Cho et al., 2017). Researchers have explored the effects of workforce diversity on organizational performance. This study was focused on exploring strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully used to create diverse workforces in order to increase employee performance.

With diversity management, many organizations have focused on creating inclusive organizational climates and prioritizing recruitment of diverse employees (Cho et al., 2017). When an organization's workforce is diverse, there are potential positive impacts involving organizational and employee performance (Cho et al., 2017). Furthermore, workforce diversity benefits team and organization performance, innovation, occupational wellbeing, and corporate governance (Fine et al., 2020). However, without effective diversity management and diverse workforces, there is a risk of increased conflict and decreased teamwork among employees, which negatively affects productivity and performance (Cho et al., 2017). Implementation of strategies to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance is critical for the growth of organizations within the health and human services industry (Stazyk et al., 2021). Many managers in these organizations lack strategies regarding how to successfully diversify their workforce and enhance employee performance (Schroth, 2019). Data from this study may provide senior managers in the health and human services industry with strategies they need to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance.

Problem and Purpose

There is a significant and positive relationship between ethnicity, gender, and employee performance (Farmanesh et al., 2020). Kundu et al. (2019) found significant representation of female and minority employees was a positive predictor of organizational success. The general business problem is lack of workplace diversity in health and human services industries results in lower employee performance. The specific

business problem is some managers in the health and human service field lack strategies to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully used to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. The study included three senior managers from three health and human services agencies located in North Carolina who have successfully created strategies to diversify workforces to increase employee performance. Managers can use findings from this study to better implement strategies to create diverse workplaces, which may positively contribute to local communities through increasing economic growth leading to quality of life for local residents.

Nature of the Study

There are three research methods: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2018). The qualitative method was selected for this study to address the research question. In qualitative research, the researcher considers the context in which individuals and/or groups function to understand real-world problems (Schoch, 2020). According to Stahl and King (2020), qualitative research is used to understand context and environment. Researchers also use qualitative research to obtain descriptive data, collect people's own words, and study people's behavior (Busetto et al., 2021). Furthermore, qualitative researchers are focused on how people attach meaning to their lives (Busetto et al., 2021). In qualitative research, the researcher observes settings and people on a holistic level, and people and settings are not viewed by researchers as variables, but rather as a whole (Busetto et al., 2021). The qualitative research method was chosen to

explore strategies senior managers successfully used to create diverse workforces in order to increase employee performance. Researchers conducting quantitative research seek to examine variable characteristics or relationships through analyzing numerical data and statistical analyses (Bloomfield & Fischer, 2019). Therefore, it was not appropriate for the proposed study. Mixed methods include both qualitative and quantitative designs (Şahin & Öztürk, 2019). This method was not selected for the proposed study because I did not need to use the quantitative method to address my study.

I selected a qualitative multiple case study design to address my research question. Other research designs that were considered were ethnography and phenomenology. Researchers use ethnography to study social interactions and behaviors, individually or in a group typically, in order to focus on observations and exploring social life (Kian & Beach, 2019). Ethnography was not chosen as the research design because I was not studying social interactions and behaviors. Researchers use phenomenological design to study meanings of individual human experiences and observed moments (von Lehn, 2019). Phenomenology was not selected for this study because I did not study personal meanings of individual human experiences. Researchers use case study designs to perform in-depth analyses of individuals, groups, and social units (Schoch, 2020). Researchers use multiple case studies to observe and compare findings across multiple organizations versus focusing on single sites of unique interest (Rashid et al., 2019). Researchers also use multiple case studies to provide richer data to increase generalizability of findings (Rashid et al., 2019). I selected a multiple case study design to enable more valid comparisons as opposed to a restricted single case study.

Research Question

What strategies do senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance?

Interview Questions

1. What is your experience with creating a diverse workforce in the health and human services field?
2. What strategies are being implemented to create a diverse workforce?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of strategies for creating a diverse workforce?
4. Of the strategies identified, which ones are more effective in creating a diverse workforce?
5. How, if at all, have your strategies for creating a diverse workforce changed over time?
6. What were the key challenges to implementing strategies for creating a diverse workforce?
7. How did you address the key challenges to implementing your organization's strategies for creating a diverse workforce?
8. What else would you like to say about strategies that you use to create a diverse workforce and increase employee performance?

Conceptual Framework

Lewin's force field theory was the conceptual framework for my study. Kurt Lewin developed this theory in 1936. It involves exploring sequences of interaction

among individuals and surrounding environments (total field) in which they live (Lewin, 1942). The key concept in terms of the field theory is that researchers should examine behaviors within the right context, considering forces that can affect behavior (Lewin, 1942). I also connected constructs of Lewin's change theory with the force field theory.

Based on research, Lewin proposed six metatheoretical principles that form the foundation of the force field theory. They are the constructive method, dynamic approach, psychological approach, analysis beginning with the situation as whole is the fourth principle (Lewin, 1942). The fifth principle is behavior as a function of the field (life space) at the time it occurs, and the sixth principle is mathematical representations of the psychological situation (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The sixth principle was not relevant to my study because I did not seek a mathematical representation of strategies to create a diverse workforce in order to increase employee performance.

Using the force field theory enabled me to identify and understand participants' successful strategies for creating a diverse workforce. Furthermore, this theory facilitated identifying key development and implementation processes, and how employees adapted to changes stemming from deploying strategies.

Operational Definitions

Cultural intelligence: An individual's ability to function successfully in situations that are characterized by cultural diversity (Wang & Goh, 2020).

Functional diversity: Team members from different departments and/or levels working together (Zhou et al., 2023).

Motivational interviewing: Technique that evolved from the treatment of alcoholism and other substance abuse issues that focuses on facilitating behavior changes through exploring and resolving uncertainty (Chawla et al., 2022).

Social categorization: Individuals use similarities and differences in terms of demographics to classify themselves and others into one of two groups which are in groups and out groups (Moon & Christensen, 2020).

Structural empowerment: Practices and policies developed by management aimed at flowing power down through lower levels of organizations which provide employees with support and resources that will help them learn and grow (Amor et al., 2020). This also results in empowering working conditions (Amor et al., 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are beliefs and ideas that are held to be true. Many times, assumptions lack evidence and are not statistically tested (Tenny et al., 2022). There were two assumptions in this study. I assumed participants in this study were representative of senior managers in the health and human services industry. I also assumed participants gave honest and truthful responses to interview questions.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses within a study that are out of the researcher's control (Yin, 2018). There are two limitations associated with this study. One limitation is the small sample size. Another limitation is that participants used self-reporting when answering interview questions.

Delimitations

Delimitations are characteristics of the study that limit the scope and define study boundaries (Coker, 2022). Participants were senior managers within the health and human services industry. I excluded managers within other industries.

Significance of the Study

Managers in the health and human services industry are challenged with developing strategies to increase employee performance (Saxena, 2015). One means to increase employee performance is identifying strategies managers can use to create a diverse workforce. Van Zyl (2019) asserted employee performance is increased when management teams are more diverse. Employees who feel more involved in vital organizational processes are more likely to feel welcomed and valued in their work environments (Roberson, 2019). The study findings are potentially significant to business improvement in that health and human services senior managers may be able to better understand strategies to create a diverse workforce and increase employee performance which could decrease costs.

Benefits to social change potentially include senior managers using findings from the study to implement strategies to employ underrepresented workers. This may lead to positively contributing to local communities through economic growth and improved quality of life. Further benefits include increased revenue for businesses which could result in employment for more people and reductions in the local unemployment rate. This may be achieved through higher levels of diversity within organizations, which leads to increased appreciation for different ideas.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully used to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. In this literature review, I explore current literature on this topic.

I begin with a discussion of my conceptual framework, followed by supporting and contrasting theories that include the complex systems theory (CST), motivational interviewing, and self-determination theory (SDT). Following that, I review literature on the effects of creating diverse workforces to enhance employee performance in the health and human services industry. In this section, I discuss relational coordination and structural empowerment, perceptions of diversity and organizational performance, effects of research and development on workforce diversity and organizational performance, workforce diversity in manufacturing companies, workforce diversity in social enterprises, and workforce diversity and employee performance. I also discuss diversity management through human resources management. I used the following databases: Walden Library, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, SAGE Journals, Business Source Complete, and EBSCOHost. I used the following keywords: *organizational change*, *Lewin's force field theory*, *Kurt Lewin*, *workplace diversity*, *organizational productivity*, *diversity*, *diverse workforces*, *employee performance*, and *change management*.

The literature included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and government sources on the topics of workforce diversity and employee performance. I included 141

sources, of which 85% were peer-reviewed. Of these, 86 were published between 2020 and 2024, or 72%. Other sources included seminal sources related to theories (4%).

Lewin's Force Field Theory

The conceptual framework for my study was Lewin's force field theory in connection with Lewin's change theory. Lewin created approaches to address organizational change which includes field theory, group dynamics, and the three-step model of change (Lewin, 1942). Burnes and Bargal (2017) argued Lewin's force field theory involves examining patterns of interactions between individuals and the total field or surrounding environments. Change will only succeed if group perceptions and deeper group values are moved (Burnes, 2020). There is a social field at the group level which includes the group and environment for the group at any given time (Kump, 2023). Therefore, the most prominent feature of the group is interdependence (Kump, 2023). Interdependence among group members can be due to several reasons such as formal contracts, economic dependence, loyalty, and feelings of belonging (Kump, 2023). Change will only happen when participants can change their perceptions and act (Burnes, 2020). Change is more successful through group interactions.

The force field theory is based on physics and psychology (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). The Gestalt school of psychology is that individual, group, and organizational behaviors are the result of total situations in which they take place (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The total situation was the life space (or field) in which interdependent forces play a role (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Lewin, 1942). This field consists of individual characteristics such as knowledge,

attitudes, and physical aspects (Kump, 2023). The field also consists of environmental characteristics as they are perceived by individuals (Kump, 2023). The life space is comprised of total facts that determine individual behaviors (B), groups, or organizations (Lewin, 1942). The life space (L) represents the total of possible events and includes the person (P) and environment (E). Lewin's force field theory formula is as follows: $B = f(P,E)$ (Lewin, 1999). Each of these factors work together to influence behaviors of individuals, which also affects their perceptions of their environments.

Principles of the Force Field Theory

Lewin developed six metatheoretical principles that form the foundation of field theory. The first is the psychological approach. All psychological phenomena could be explained in psychological terms, even though Lewin used terms such as tension, vector, and field, which are physics terms (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Lewin, 1942). Lewin stressed the importance of creating a coherent framework of constructs (Mittlemark et al., 2022). In accordance with the constructivist tradition, Lewin argued psychological phenomena are real, and field influences should not be explained with physics (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Phenomena should be explained in terms of how it exists for individuals at a given time (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Psychological and social fields are significantly interconnected because individual social environments are the most important environmental factors influencing behavior (Kump, 2023; Lewin, 1951). The psychological approach is important because it involves placing emphasis on constructivist ideals and environmental influences. The social environment is a crucial

factor in fostering change through group interaction. These environmental factors lead to the second principle of the force field theory.

The second principle of Lewin's force field theory is emphasis on the total situation. Researchers should focus on relationships between specific groups that are under investigation and group interactions with internal and external forces (Burnes, 2020; Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Lewin's theory involves forces that are moving toward a goal (helping forces) or blocking movement toward a goal (hindering forces; Kump, 2023). The field theory includes a wide range of different intrinsic and extrinsic forces of change (Kump, 2023). The second principle is important because it includes external and internal forces that affect group interactions. These forces can either be helpful or hindering when a group is working toward change or achieving a goal. This emphasis leads researchers to focus on immediate situations where behaviors take place (Burnes & Bargal, 2017).

The classificatory versus constructive approach is the third principle. Via the classificatory approach, there is an emphasis on generalization from a specific to ideal object (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). This is an abstraction of a particular object. The constructive approach involves focusing on relational concepts (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Applying the constructive approach to the creation of a life space can establish relationships between the life space and its elements (Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Lewin, 1942). This principle is important to the study because it highlights the constructive approach which is appropriate in group situations for relationships between individuals

and characteristics of their environments. Via the constructive approach, diverse workforces can enhance employee and organizational performance.

The fourth principle is present time versus historical concepts of causation. Derivation of behavior from past experiences to the present state is invalid (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Past experiences of individuals or groups count only in terms of expressions in the present field (Burnes & Bargal, 2017; Lewin, 1942). Therefore, the present field has more impact on causation as compared with other principles. This is important to my study because to address the significance of present situations and how they can affect individual behaviors and foster change. This assertion is linked with the fifth principle.

Lewin's fifth principle is the dynamic approach. With this approach, the behavior of a person or a group is analyzed within the context of forces that enhance efforts to achieve goals when constraining forces obstruct those efforts (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Reality is perceived as a constantly changing process of achieving equilibrium, which is continuously interrupted by the field of forces (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). This is also referred to as behavior as a function of the field, or life space, at the time it occurs (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Therefore, the dynamic approach involves perceptions of reality and how the environment affects it. The dynamic approach is important because it involves how groups are able to overcome constraining forces or challenges they may encounter while working towards a goal. How these challenges are addressed is affected by perceptions of reality and how this can influence group processes.

The sixth principle is mathematical representations of psychological situations. For psychology to be seen as a scientific discipline, it should represent behavior in mathematical terms (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Mathematics was logical and strict and in line with the constructive method, which emphasizes establishing relationships between the life space and its elements (Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Lewin, 1942). Change is more likely to occur through group interactions.

Attempts to change individuals through lectures or other means were less likely to lead to sustained change than group interactions (Crosby, 2022). This was the case even with lectures in group settings (Crosby, 2022). Developing productive and cooperative learning environments could lead to positive outcomes (von Fircks, 2022). If a group was given information and then permitted to discuss it among themselves, the rate and length of change was increased significantly (Crosby, 2022). This leads to Lewin's three Ds of change, which are group dynamics, dialogue, and group decision (Crosby, 2022). Group decision refers to the effect on individuals if groups they belong to change direction (Crosby, 2022). Therefore, if a workgroup or any group facing a challenge can have open dialogue, develop, and implement their own solutions and assess their progress, there will be a greater chance of successful and sustainable change (Crosby, 2022).

Organizational change should be a process that is ongoing and open-ended (Ratana et al., 2020). Specifically with the field theory, different types of forces then act upon situations and either motivate or hinder change (Roşca, 2020). One of the strongest motivators of social change was communication. The more open, diverse, and intense the communication involving a change issue, the more likely change will occur (Roşca,

2020). Communication through group interactions is crucial to the development of innovative ideas and promoting change that is sustainable. This stability is achieved in part through understanding individual situations.

There were two approaches to understanding individual situations. The first approach is to base conclusions on history or past experiences (Lindorfer, 2021). The second approach is to use diagnostic tests (Lindorfer, 2021). The former approach is risky because human beings are not closed systems and focusing on the past as indicative of the present or future is not reliable (Lindorfer, 2021). It is necessary to analyze the present while recognizing the influence of the past so projections of the future will be seen in terms of present conditions (Lindorfer, 2021). Analysis of the present is important because it emphasizes the significance of the present and future. Individual events should be considered in their settings (Burnes, 2020).

One of the most important factors in terms of motivating social change is communication. In order for change to occur, communication involving the change issue must be open, diverse, and intense (Roşca, 2020). This type of communication is integral for health and human services senior managers in terms of creating diverse workforces and enhancing employee performance.

Lewin's Change Theory

For this study, Lewin's change theory will be utilized in connection with field theory as the framework. The change theory is connected to the force field theory because Lewin based change theory from his earlier works with the force field theory (Burnes, 2020). The force field theory is the foundation of all of Lewin's work (Szabla,

2021). Lewin described social change as changes in the force field and suggested that the change agent focuses on how the existing level of the field is transformed into the desired state (Burnes, 2020; Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Changing the attitudes of individuals is paramount in breaking established customs and social habits (Burnes, 2020). As mentioned previously, changing individual attitudes is most successful through group interactions and communication. Lewin referred to social habits as inner resistance to change because they play a significant role in preventing change (Crosby, 2020). Inner resistance to change can be overcome through the application of an additional force to break or “unfreeze” the custom (Crosby, 2020). These social habits must be addressed in order for the change theory to be effective. This is important because social habits are more likely to be changed in social situations (i.e., group interactions). These forces can work together in bringing about change within individuals.

Lewin stated that behavior is a balance of forces that work in opposing directions (McCardle & Speck, 2020). Lewin asserted that these driving forces facilitate change because they tend to push individuals in the desired direction (McCardle & Speck, 2020). Lewin further argued that restraining factors prevent change because they tend to push individuals in the opposite direction (McCardle & Speck, 2020). Lewin concluded that learning was only the beginning of the change process which leads to the willingness to change (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Being able to address restraining factors leads to the willingness to change, which fosters the second step in Lewin’s change theory, as described below. The factors of learning and willingness to change led Lewin to the development of the change theory.

Lewin developed a change process that consists of three stages which are unfreezing, moving, and refreezing or freezing (Crosby, 2020; see Figure 1). This theory was developed in 1951 (McCardle & Speck, 2020). The first stage is unfreezing of the present customs and/or habits (Crosby, 2020). Lewin argued that it is necessary to break out of complacency and self-righteousness (Burnes, 2020; Lewin, 1951). To change attitudes and behaviors, the person should be emotionally stirred to experience what is referred to as catharsis (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defined catharsis as “a purification or purgation that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension” (para. 2). Unfreezing, according to Lewin, is necessary to overcome the strain caused by individual resistance and conforming to the group (Lewin, 1951). In the three-step change process, it can be more challenging to complete the first step of unfreezing. This is important because Lewin focused on different approaches to foster unfreezing. These approaches are described next.

Lewin stated that there are three methods to achieving the unfreezing phase. The first method is to increase the driving forces that move behavior away from the status quo (Leonard et al., 2023). The second unfreezing method is to decrease restraining forces that can negatively affect the movement from the status quo (Leonard et al., 2023). The third method is to find a balance between the driving and restraining forces to shift the direction toward the change (Leonard et al., 2023). Lewin posited that gained knowledge helps to equip individuals for future change (Burnes, 2020). This gained knowledge can be obtained through group interactions and communication, along with finding the balance between driving and restraining forces.

All of these are important factors in achieving sustainable change. Unfreezing is a natural occurrence which allows the change to start taking place. This, of course, leads to the second stage in Lewin's process.

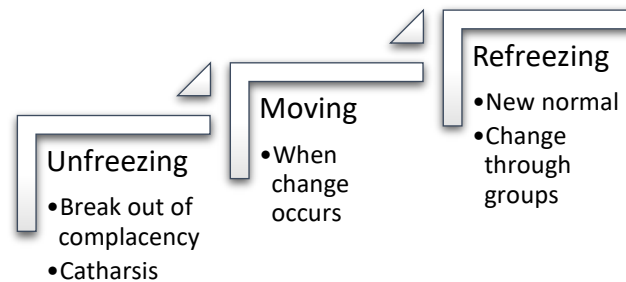
The second stage in Lewin's change process is moving when the change occurs (Crosby, 2020). During the second stage, the individual is moved to a new level of stability (Deerhake, 2021). The moving stage is when individuals are persuaded that the status quo is not beneficial, and they are encouraged to look at the problem from a new perspective (Deerhake, 2021). Individuals are also encouraged to work together to find new information and to support the change (Deerhake, 2021). Lewin posited that moving occurs when the forces pressing for change are greater than interaction and communication. This is important because by working together in a group, employees can discover innovative ideas that promote positive change and performance. As described next, sustainability is vital when it comes to the change process.

The third stage is freezing or refreezing (Crosby, 2020). The third stage is when the new habit or custom is adopted and becomes the new norm (Crosby, 2020). Lewin determined that the most effective way to implement change in individuals is through group situations (Crosby, 2020). Lewin argued that a better world could be realized using force field theory to change behavior in groups (Burnes, 2020; Burnes & Bargal, 2017). Freezing aims at stabilizing the behavior at a new stationary equilibrium so that it is relatively safe from regressing (Burnes, 2020). Refreezing and stabilizing the behavior or change is important because it connects the force field theory, and the change

theory and refreezing also allows the change to become the new normal. Figure 1 provides an overview of each stage of Lewin's theory of change.

Figure 1

Lewin's Theory of Change



There is some criticism for Lewin's three step theory of change as to its appropriateness and efficacy. Furthermore, there have been multiple attempts to elaborate on Lewin's three step theory (Burnes, 2020). Some critics state that Lewin's planned approach is more group-based and slow (McCardle & Speck, 2020). Because of this, critics maintain that some organizations can lose their edge and become too bureaucratic and slow to change (McCardle & Speck, 2020). Critics of the theory also argue that detailed plans are impossible, and that flexibility is vital to the change process (McCardle & Speck, 2020). This supports the argument that organizations should be supported by shared values and culture and employees should be encouraged to use their own initiative (McCardle & Speck, 2020). While shared values, organizational culture, and autonomy are important, they should be interconnected with group interactions and communication. Despite the criticisms, Lewin's three step theory of change remains a cornerstone of change management.

Although Lewin's theory has been criticized by some, his research and theories on change management remain highly respected. There are those who believe that Lewin provided the foundation for all theories of change and that subsequent theories are linked to Lewin's classic theories (Deerhake, 2021). Many regard Lewin to be the founding father of change management with his change theories being regarded as the "fundamental" or "classic" approach to change management (Deerhake, 2021, p. 145). Lewin's theory has also proven timely for issues facing modern organizations (Burnes, 2020). This includes workforce diversity and employee performance. This is important because the issues that are facing modern organizations include effective change management, diversity management, and employee performance. Of course, there are other change theories besides Lewin's. Some of these will be discussed in the next section.

Supporting and Contrasting Theories

In this section, I discuss supporting and contrasting theories. This will include CST, motivational interviewing, and SDT developed by Miller and Rollnick.

CST

CST, sometimes referred to as complexity theory, is a contrasting theory. In CST, different phenomena surface through interactions of elements in a system (Burton et al., 2019). This theory was initially developed in the natural sciences and used to explain biological and physical change (Durie & Wyatt, 2007; Hawe, 2015). However, CST has been further developed by other fields including the social sciences and humanities (Burton et al., 2019). Researchers who apply CST agreed that a complex system consists

of many elements that interact cooperatively with each other and the environment (Burton et al., 2019). Therefore, complex systems are constantly co-evolving (Burton et al., 2019). A significant tenant of CST is that the whole cannot be understood through analysis of its parts in isolation (Sosulski, 2022). Furthermore, complex systems are open and continually responding to change in the environment (Burton et al., 2019).

Emergence is a vital part of CST. This means that complex systems have behavior that is not easily apparent from individual components (Sosulski, 2022). Based on this evidence, it can be concluded that CST can be beneficial in a strategic capacity for facilitating change (Burton et al., 2019). Additionally, CST has a proven track record for facilitating community-led transformations (Burton et al., 2019), which can be a successful part of group interactions. This is important because change is most likely to remain stable when it is achieved through group interactions and communications. Emergence can often be achieved through motivational interviewing, which is described in detail below.

SDT

A supporting theory is motivational interviewing along with SDT. Motivational interviewing evolved from the treatment of alcoholism, smoking, and other substance abuse issues (Chawla et al., 2022). Motivational interviewing is often viewed as a useful intervention strategy and it is an evidence-based strategy for changing behavior (Gregory et al., 2022). Miller and Rollnick (1991) developed motivational interviewing into a theory and defined it as “directive, client-centered counseling style for eliciting behavior change by helping clients to explore and resolve ambivalence” (p. 305). Motivational interviewing employs such techniques as reflective listening, shared decision-making,

and provoking change talk (Gillam & Yusuf, 2019). This type of interviewing is goal driven and directional (Gillam & Yusuf, 2019). This is important because reflective listening and shared decision-making can help facilitate positive change. The next paragraph will give details on why motivational interviewing is successful.

Although motivational interviewing did not start out as a theory, researchers have started utilizing SDT as a model in determining how and why motivational interviewing is successful (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). SDT utilizes a continuum of human motivational regulation ranging from unmotivating to intrinsic motivation (Vasconcellos et al., 2020). Resnicow and McMaster (2012) asserted that, using SDT, individuals can experience multiple types of motivation at the same time. Two of the core hypotheses of SDT are that (1) providing more autonomy in motivation will lead to enhanced engagement and wellness, and (2) supporting basic psychological needs facilitates this motivation and the opposite will undermine motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Both of these hypotheses can be helpful in managing a diverse workforce. These hypotheses are important because they highlight the importance of ensuring a balance between autonomy and group interactions. There are four core skills that managers can learn to help make motivational interviewing more successful. These skills are described below.

Motivational interviewing is aimed at helping clients identify things about their current or potential problems and is useful for those who are reluctant to or ambivalent about change (Magill & Hallgren, 2019). Motivational interviewing strategies are more persuasive rather than coercive and more supportive than argumentative (Magill & Hallgren, 2019). There are four core skills that those utilizing motivational interviewing

would find useful. These skills form the acronym OARS, which stands for open-ended questions, affirmation of strength, reflective listening, and summarize (Beckwith & Beckwith, 2020). These core skills/strategies are important because they can also be used when facilitating change through group interactions among diverse team members. The overall goal of motivational interviewing is to emphasize the client's intrinsic motivation to allow change to occur from within (Magill & Hallgren, 2019).

One important skill, reflective listening, is a core component of motivational interviewing. Researchers concluded that reflections typically begin with “it sounds like...” phrases or phrases such as, “you are having trouble with...” (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012, p. 3). The goals of reflective listening include demonstrating that the listener has heard the individual and is making every effort to understand what the other person is saying as well as affirming the person's thoughts and feelings without judging (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). This technique also helps the person to continue the process of self-discovery (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). An important aspect of motivational interviewing is to not respond with questions or preemptive advice (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Utilizing reflective listening effectively shows that the interviewer is genuinely listening and helps the participant feel respected (Beckwith & Beckwith, 2020). This is of importance because the reflective listening technique can also be used in group situations. Reflective listening is an important part of motivational interviewing and will be discussed in more detail below.

In connection with reflective listening, in motivational interviewing, there are six levels of reflection. These levels are (a) content reflections, (b) feeling/meaning

reflections, (c) rolling with resistance, (d) amplified negative reflections, (e) double-sided reflections, and (f) reflection on omission. These six levels will be discussed next. The first two levels are content reflections and feeling/meaning reflections. Content reflections are utilized to determine the basic facts and can lead to more empathic behavior in motivational interviewing (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Content reflections are significant when gathering background information and building rapport (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Feeling/meaning reflections are a second level of reflection. These types of reflections typically include statements such as, “You are feeling xxx about xxx because of xxx” (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012, p. 4). Meaning reflections can also include statements about why someone is feeling a certain way, the meaning of the emotion, or how the feeling could be related to other aspects of the person’s life (Cabebe et al., 2023). This is important because when attempting to facilitate change, it is a good idea to consider both the content (facts) and the feelings/meanings. The third level of reflection will be discussed next.

Rolling with resistance is the third level of reflection. Confrontation can run the risk of alienating individuals and can cause them to shut down (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Therefore, interviewers tend to roll with resistance instead of causing arguments (Cabebe et al., 2023). The person conducting the interview agrees with the person’s statements even if those statements are incorrect or unfair (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). The interviewer accepts the interviewee where they are and listens and reflects with empathy (Beckwith & Beckwith, 2020). The interviewer then points out any discrepancies in a nonconfrontational manner (Beckwith & Beckwith, 2020). These types

of reflections help to capture the client's reasons for resisting change and allow the client to express this resistance without pressure (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Rolling with resistance is important because in group situations, it can be helpful to address disagreements while avoiding confrontation. The fifth level of reflection is described next.

Amplified negative reflections is another level of reflective listening. When rolling with resistance is not sufficient to help the client move forward, amplified negative reflections are a way of positioning against the change by over exaggerating the benefits of the change or minimizing the harm associated with not changing (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). This method can extinguish a client's negativity and help them to reverse their course and cause them to consider change (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). However, this method can run the risk of backfiring. Double-sided reflections can help focus on a person's ambivalence and communicate that the interviewer has heard the reasons for and against the change (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). This type of reflection helps the interviewer convey that they are not going to push the person to change (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). It is important to remember that empathy is a key component of motivational interviewing, and it is also important to support self-determination and autonomy (Cabebe et al., 2023). Negative reflections are an important level of reflection. However, this level of reflection may not be effective in workforces or group situations. The final levels of reflection are discussed next.

Reflection on omission is the sixth level of reflection. Reflection on omission is when an interviewer reflects on what an interviewee has not said (Resnicow &

McMaster, 2012). This means that the interviewer reflects on the person's silence or reluctance to talk about an issue (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Sometimes, reflection on omission is viewed as an extension of rolling with resistance (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Finally, another level of reflection is action reflections. This level of reflection incorporates possible solutions to the person's barriers as well as potential courses of action (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Furthermore, action reflections consist of choices to support the person's autonomy (Resnicow & McMaster, 2012). Supporting autonomy can be a contributor to enhanced employee performance. Motivational interviewing has been found to be effective in improving psychiatric symptoms (Dikeç et al., 2022). Reflection on omission is important because this approach allows the group to address any issues that are causing reluctance to change. This type of reflection is interconnected to action reflection because it helps the group to determine the next steps.

Additionally, motivational interviewing has been viewed as an effective and evidenced-based model for helping to change behavior (Cox, 2020). The acronym, PACE, can be seen as the heart of motivational interviewing. PACE stands for partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation (Cox, 2020). Partnership is seen as working together with mutual respect (Cox, 2020). Acceptance is acknowledging the person's worth, showing empathy, supporting autonomy, and affirming strengths, barriers, and demonstrating respect (Cox, 2020). Compassion is looking out for the individual's best interests (Cox, 2020). Evocation involves eliciting ideas and plans from individuals rather than providing them (Cox, 2020). Complex reflections such as those associated with the levels of reflection and PACE, are important because they are more

effective for facilitating change and motivation (Magill & Hallgren, 2019). Next, discussion will include how successful motivational interviewing is at fostering changes in behavior.

Researchers have found that motivational interviewing is effective at helping individuals change behavior and that it is more effective than traditional advice by at least 80% (Patel et al., 2019). This type of interviewing has also been shown to help patients change their behavior regarding body mass index, cholesterol, and blood pressure (Patel et al., 2019). Patients are eventually able to comfortably express positive and negative facets of their behavior (Cabebe et al., 2023). Therefore, motivational interviewing is especially helpful for individuals who are reluctant to change their behavior (Patel et al., 2019). This is of importance because when people can express all aspects of their behavior, they are in a better position to analyze the behavior and make changes. In the next section, discussion will include concepts related to the effects of creating a diverse workforce on employee performance.

Effects of Creating Diverse Workforces on Employee Performance

In this section, I discuss (a) relational coordination and structural empowerment, (b) diversity management through human resources management, (c) perceptions of diversity and organizational performance, (d) concepts related to theorizing diversity issues, and (e) the impacts of research and development on workforce diversity and organizational performance. Two opposing views on workforce diversity and organizational performance and functional diversity will also be discussed. Two aspects

of functional diversity will be discussed. These concepts are important to understanding the relationship between diverse workforces and employee performance.

Relational Coordination and Structural Empowerment

Relational coordination and structural empowerment are vital in understanding the relationship between diversity and employee performance. Relational coordination theory includes three main components: relational coordination as a mutually reinforcing process for coordinating work, the cross-cutting structures theorized to strengthen it, and the outcomes theorized to result from it (Bolton et al., 2021). Structural empowerment involves a focus on practices and policies developed by management which are aimed at flowing power down through the lower levels of the organization (Amor et al., 2020). Access to such structural empowerments is helpful in improving the overall effectiveness of the organization as well contributing to positive employee attitudes (Amor et al., 2020). If employees have positive attitudes, they may be more open to changes, and it may positively affect their performance. This is important because based on structural empowerment, positive attitudes start with leadership and sets the tone for employees. The discussion will continue with the different components of relational coordination.

In the first component, relational coordination is defined as a mutually reinforcing process of communicating and relating for the purpose of task integration (Bolton et al., 2021). Relational coordination includes certain dimensions through which stakeholders coordinate their tasks (Bolton et al., 2021). There are three main dimensions included in relational coordination in which stakeholders can coordinate their work. These dimensions are shared goals, shared knowledge, and respect for the work of others

(Bolton et al., 2021). Shared goals motivate stakeholders to act with greater consideration for the whole (Asif et al., 2019). Shared knowledge allows systems thinking by way of informing stakeholders on how their tasks and the tasks of others can contribute to the whole (Knight et al., 2019). Finally, respect for the work of others encourages stakeholders to value others' contributions and to think about the effects of their actions on others which reinforces the idea of acting on behalf of the whole (Asif et al., 2019). Shared goals, shared knowledge, and respect are vital parts of teamwork. These dimensions work towards fostering teamwork among employees, which in turn, may also enhance performance. The dimensions are interconnected to the second component of organizational structure.

The second component of relational coordination is the cross-cutting structures that are theorized to support relational coordination (Bolton et al., 2021). In this theory, the strength of relational coordination is dependent upon the design of the organizational structures (Amor et al., 2020). Relational coordination was seen to be more reliable when opportunities for coordination were built into organizational structures via human resources practices and coordinating mechanisms (Bolton et al., 2021). Human resources practices can be developed to connect across roles to increase attention to the whole and assist stakeholders in managing their interdependence (Bolton et al., 2021). Coordinating mechanisms (shared information systems, shared protocols, shared interdisciplinary meetings) can strengthen relational coordination through connecting across roles and helping stakeholders within and across organizations (Bolton et al., 2021). This is important because cross-cutting structures help to support the interconnectedness among

the entire organization. Strong relational coordination leads to specific outcomes which are explained next.

The third component of relational coordination is specific outcomes that are theorized to result from strong relational coordination. Relational coordination is an example of a fundamental process improvement that focuses on stakeholders within specific departments, roles, or organization to move out of their production possibilities to a more favorable position, allowing them to achieve multiple outcomes (Sánchez et al., 2021). By strengthening relational coordination among those performing at different functions in a process, interdependence is managed more seamlessly with fewer redundancies, errors, or delays (Bolton et al., 2021). This focus on specific outcomes is important because it leads to fostering growth among all stakeholders. Therefore, relational coordination is beneficial for the entire organization.

Relational coordination has been found to promote desired outcomes for multiple stakeholders within organizations (Bolton et al., 2021). In their research on relational coordination as a mediator, Lee and Kim (2020) identified two critical challenges to the link between organizational performance and workforce diversity. These challenges included lack of clarity around specific mechanisms to explain the effects and the importance of contextual factors (Lee & Kim, 2020). It is important to explore these challenges as the topic being explored for this study is strategies used to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance.

The first challenge, lack of clarity, meant that although the effects of workforce diversity and organizational performance had been identified, the specific mechanisms to

explain these effects remain unclear (Lee & Kim, 2020). Lee and Kim suggested that relational coordination plays a pivotal role in explaining the mechanisms in which workforce diversity affects organizational performance. Lee and Kim also asserted that the influences of workforce diversity are extremely broad and complex which can result in varied perspectives and effects. Diversity can present implications for multiple processes including cooperation, complex problem solving, conflict management, and effective communication (Lee & Kim, 2020). It should be noted that different engagement strategies should be used for diverse employee groups (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). It is important to determine the different engagement strategies needed for specific groups as this will foster performance. Therefore, managers must consider contextual factors.

The second challenge is the importance of contextual factors (Lee & Kim, 2020). Contextual factors include human resource practices that encourage diverse workforces that put significant efforts into interpersonal coordination (Lee & Kim, 2020). Contextual factors can be environmental or personal. Environmental factors are not within a person's control and include family, work, laws, and cultural beliefs (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). Personal factors include race, gender, age, and educational level (Yadav & Lenka, 2020). Lee and Kim posited that inconsistencies in research findings on diversity indicate that contextual variables need to be considered. Most notably, human resources practices develop a work context which encourages diverse workforces to put considerable effort into interpersonal coordination (Lee & Kim, 2020). Contextual factors are important because they are directly connected to interpersonal components which are crucial to

effective communication and performance among employees. This interpersonal coordination is fostered through establishing authority for lower-level employees.

In structural empowerment, organizations structurally assign authority and responsibility to employees within lower positions of the organizational hierarchy (Lee & Kim, 2020). The structural approach focuses on policies and practices that are established by management to trickle power down to the lower levels of the organization (Amor et al., 2020). Researchers have found that granting decision-making authority over which tasks to perform is beneficial to individual performance and well-being (Amor et al., 2020). Researchers have also concluded that when jobs are restructured to give employees more autonomy, it positively affects employee attitudes, motivation, and effort (Amor et al., 2020). These types of outcomes are important because they help to encourage innovation among workgroups which can naturally lead to enhanced performance. This fosters a workplace where everyone is working toward the same goals.

Structural empowerment is intended to create a workplace environment in which all employees feel responsible for the success of the organization and share the importance of effectively coordinating their actions (Lee & Kim, 2020). Fotiadis et al. (2019) suggested that policies and practices focused on increasing employee autonomy rather than how to perform tasks, can lead to better overall performance and well-being. This type of environment is created to address limitations of some organizational practices that may restrict communication among employees (Lee & Kim, 2020). Structural empowerment also highlights the advantages of diversity and aims to motivate employees to learn new skills and knowledge from one another (Lee & Kim, 2020).

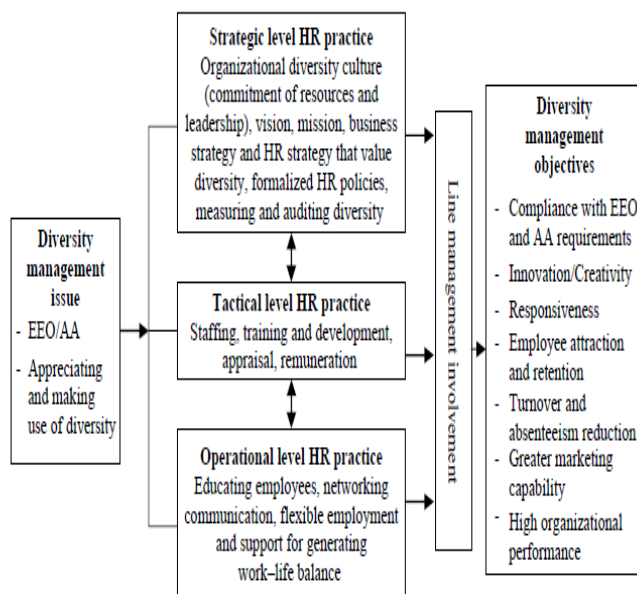
When authority and responsibility is delegated, employees are more likely to gain ownership of their work and are also more motivated to initiate changes and innovations within the organization (Lee & Kim, 2020). Thus, structural empowerment encourages organizational members to communicate and build positive relationships with individuals of different backgrounds and perspectives (Lee & Kim, 2020). This communication and the establishment of positive relationships is important because the research topic includes creating diverse workforces in addition to enhancing employee performance. Discussion will continue with the psychological connection to structural empowerment.

There are some psychological mechanisms underlying the benefits of structural empowerment and enhanced employee performance and well-being. When employees are offered more autonomy in their job, it positively affects their well-being by providing increased learning opportunities and it provides psychological growth needed for enhanced well-being (Amor et al., 2020; Fotiadis et al., 2019). Furthermore, allowing employees to have more autonomy leads to growth opportunities and the ability to utilize newly acquired skills to enhance performance (Amor et al., 2020). This type of autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction. This is important because increased job satisfaction can lead to enhanced performance. Additionally, growth opportunity and new skills can lead to working with diverse team members which will be beneficial for both individuals and organizations.

Diversity Management Through Human Resources Management

Diversity management through human resources management is a management strategy that is important for understanding how to create a diverse workforce to improve

employee performance. Shen et al. (2009) found that the first step in human resources diversity management is measuring diversity and diversity management practices. It has been suggested that organizations measure demographics of defined workgroups, the organizational culture, and the perceptions of workgroups (Showkat & Misra, 2022). Organizations should use these data to identify cultural barriers which could negatively affect participation of all employees (Shen et al., 2009). Shen et al. also recommended that organizations conduct a critical analysis of current human resources diversity practices, including procedures for recruitment and selection, criteria for job entry, selection tools, diversity training, performance appraisal, and compensation. In support of diversity management through human resources management, researchers have concluded that increased involvement in organizational activities, equity, and fair treatment will lead to enhanced employee cooperation, commitment, and loyalty (Showkat & Misra, 2022). Additionally, Mousa (2021) found that when organizations invest in their staff (through salary, promotion, development, information, etc.) there are consistently positive returns in the form of performance, commitment, and behavior.

Figure 2*Framework of Human Resources Diversity Management*

Note. Shen et al., 2009, p. 245

Shen et al. (2009) found three significant features of human resources diversity practices: discrimination, restrictions on hiring, and equality. When these three features are effectively managed, researchers have concluded that diversity through human resources management can be successful if it is strategically managed (Showkat & Misra, 2022). The first feature is that despite growth in the commitment to equal employment opportunity, discrimination in employment remains widespread. This is seen in the low employment of women and minorities as well as the lack of minority representation in higher-level positions (Shen et al., 2009). The second feature is that human resources diversity management is typically restricted to hiring by numbers (Shen et al., 2009). Shen et al. posited that there is little done on certain HR activities such as training,

management development, individual-based appraisal, and pay. The third factor is that a major focus in human resources diversity management is placed on equality, especially fairness and workplace discrimination (Shen et al., 2009). These factors are important because if they are addressed and managed effectively, diversity through human resources management can be effective in creating diverse workforces and enhancing employee performance. Based on these factors, diversity through human resources management can positively affect employee performance.

Perceptions of Diversity and Organizational Performance

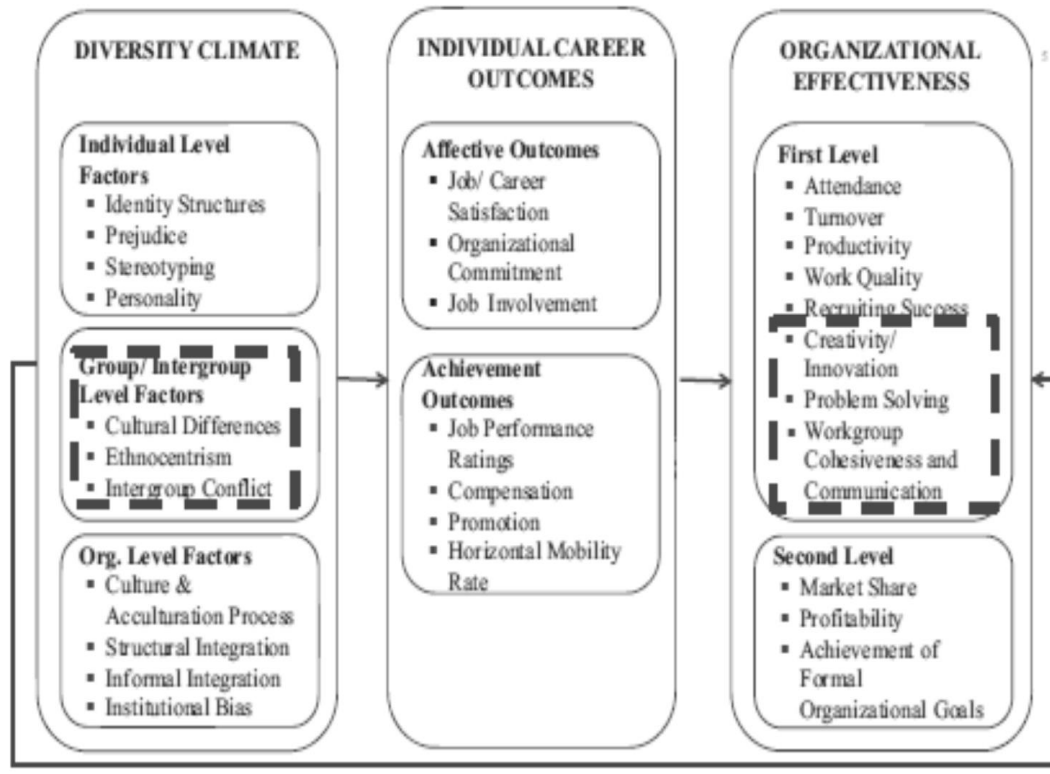
Researchers have found that when an organization's team members have positive diversity climate perceptions, there is a positive effect on innovation and performance within the teams (Blouch & Azeem, 2019; Kadam et al., 2020). In a research study published in 2022, results supported that diverse and inclusive teams are more creative and innovative than homogenous teams (van Knippenberg & van Ginkel, 2022). Blouch and Azeem (2019) found that employees at all levels view diversity positively, but responses to diversity vary among hierarchal levels. It has also been found that employee perception of diversity is positively linked to perceived organizational performance. This positive relationship got stronger with the presence of perceived organizational justice (Blouch & Azeem, 2019). Based on this data, it can be concluded that perception is crucial to successful diversity management. Successful diversity management is crucial to my study because the exploration includes how this diversity can enhance employee performance. It is important to note that there are also some issues related to diversity perceptions.

There is a critical challenge faced by multicultural teams in the underlying differences in cultural values (Kadam et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is evidence that diverse teams led to conflict, discrimination, communication barriers, and poorer performance (Kadam et al., 2020). Trenerry et al. (2023) found that current human resource approaches to diversity management are lacking in strategic development which includes ways to implement workforce diversity and anti-discrimination strategies at all levels of the organization. Conversely, Al Doghan et al. (2019) found that cultural diversity can lead to gains through increased creativity and satisfaction. When there are positive diversity climate perceptions, the effectiveness of multicultural teams can be positively affected (Kadam et al., 2020). Furthermore, positive diversity climate perceptions can increase team innovation and team member performance (Kadam et al., 2020). When team members have positive perceptions of diversity, they can be more open to new ideas and more receptive to change. This is important because positive diversity perceptions are more likely to occur when differences in cultural values are recognized and respected. This innovation and performance are supported by cultural intelligence.

One critical component of a multicultural team is the cultural intelligence of team members. Cultural intelligence within multicultural teams can decrease social categorization and have a positive impact on innovation and performance (Kadam et al., 2020). Cultural intelligence can provide strategies that help individuals navigate those barriers and challenges previously mentioned (Kadam et al., 2020). With cultural intelligence, team members have the skills needed to work with others who are culturally

different (Kadam et al., 2020). Azevedo and Jugdev (2022) maintained that cultural intelligence helps to alleviate negative interpersonal dynamics that can occur in diverse teams, and it can be positively associated with team performance. When team members are able to work together effectively, there is a positive influence on cultural intelligence. Therefore, the higher the cultural intelligence, the more positive the team performance. When cultural intelligence is high, culturally diverse teams work together to meet shared goals and outcomes.

There are many ways in which cultural diversity in teams can lead to positive outcomes for individuals and organizations. Positive diversity climate perceptions can have a positive effect on individual achievement and outcomes as well as organizational level outcomes (Kadam et al., 2020). Schneider et al. (2013) defined climate as “the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviors they observe getting rewarded that are supported and expected” (p. 362). Figure 3 illustrates an interactional model of cultural diversity and how it can lead to significant positive outcomes. Cox (2020) developed the interactional model of cultural diversity in 1993 (Kadam et al., 2020). Cox suggested that various phenomena related to differences in group identities of workers combine to create significant effects on career experiences. Cox also posited that diversity has a direct effect on certain performance measures or work outcomes (Cox, 2020). Figure 3 below illustrates the interactional model of cultural diversity.

Figure 3*Interactional Model of Cultural Diversity*

Note. Kadam et al., 2020, p. 304

The interactional model of cultural diversity is important because it shows the interconnectedness of diversity climate, individual outcomes, and organizational effectiveness. Implementing the interactional model can help managers with addressing diversity issues.

Concepts Related to Theorizing Diversity Issues

Diversity theories cover multiple concepts. Lakshman and Lakshman (2020) identified six broad concepts related to theorizing diversity issues which are critical to organizations. Further, researchers have noted that diversity management practices have

positive effects on firm performance (Kundu et al., 2019). The first concept was multifarious experience. Lakshman and Lakshman found that male study participants reported diversity issues in a broader range of areas than female participants. Female participants encountered challenges with diversity in gender, age, religion, and language (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Male respondents reported diversity challenges in education, region, rural/urban, caste, culture/personality, and community (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Based on these results, it would seem that males view diversity in more broad concepts, while females view diversity in more individual concepts. These results are important because group performance could be more successful if all members were able to view diversity in both broad and individual concepts. This leads to the second concept which is described next.

The second concept was mindset versus characteristics. People in Lakshman and Lakshman's (2020) research reported that diversity involves encouraging and respecting differences. All genders also indicated that work experience and skill set is more important than diversity (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Study participants also indicated that diversity involves the mindset of individuals (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Findings further indicated that women tended to focus more on mindset and cognitive factors which could be contributed to women's experiences of being stereotyped, undervalued, and disrespected (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020).

Additionally, researchers found that educational level and organizational tenure are more positively associated with inclusion with gender and race being more negatively associated (Adams et al., 2020). This data presents some interesting results. There is an

emphasis placed on mindset, especially with females who have a history of being discriminated against. This data is important in addressing human resources challenges including discrimination. Mindset could play an important part in management approaches, which leads to the next concept.

Managerial characteristics was the third concept identified. In Lakshman and Lakshman's (2020) study, about half of the participants reported that men and women managers were similar, but the other half of participants stated that men and women leaders are different. The female respondents described male managers but did not describe female managers. The authors indicated that this was because there were fewer to no women managers in nearly every industry (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Male study participants described female managers as being fair leaders, more skilled in human resources, having good communication skills, empathetic, and less strict than male managers (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). The male study participants described male managers as strict in business, focused on performance, having strong communication and collaborative skills, conservative, and skilled at motivating and rewarding employees (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). It is important to note the dominance of male managers. This dominance contributes to more homogeneous groups and does not allow much room for diversity. These data are important because overall, organizations with a climate that is conducive to inclusion as well as inclusive practices and strong commitment from leaders, had increased respect among employees and enhanced employee performance and leadership behavior (Adams et al., 2020). Some of these differences between males and females can be related to the fourth concept, which is described next.

The fourth concept was prudent versus human strategies. Both men and women are aware of the effect that diversity has on their organizations and are aware of the importance of managing issues related to diversity (Adams et al., 2020). Lakshman and Lakshman (2020) found that men and women have different approaches to addressing diversity challenges. The male participants indicated a decision-making approach where data were gathered through observation and used to make long-term decisions, whereas females utilized a more human approach in addressing diversity challenges (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). These results show that males use more prudent approaches, while females use more human strategies. The results are important because perception is key when addressing challenges. Challenges are what the fifth concept is about.

The fifth concept was few versus many challenges. The participants had similar and different perceptions on issues within the diversity domain (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Researchers have found that employee perceptions of diversity are positively connected to perceived organizational performance (Blouch & Azeem, 2019). Additionally, this relationship was strengthened with the presence of perceived organizational justice (Blouch & Azeem, 2019). All genders indicated that language and cultural differences were the most challenging within the manufacturing and agricultural industries (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). All genders also reported instances of age discrimination with older and younger employees (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Additionally, the researchers found that women tend to emphasize more human issues such as being respected and valued and not being stereotyped (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Conversely, men focused on differences between people across regions, gender,

and educational levels (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Women addressed these issues by drawing on their experiences of being treated differently while men addressed the issues through looking at how they should treat others (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). These differences in addressing issues are important because, as previously mentioned, the same trend persists in addressing challenges with diversity. Females focus more on human issues while males emphasize issues such as location, gender, and education. These two opposing views could lead to issues with perception.

Misconceptions about diversity was the sixth and final concept. It is important to note that perception leads to reality within organizations (Blouch & Azeem, 2019). While the study participants indicated many misconceptions about diversity issues and how to address them, there were two that were significant (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). The first is that many participants focused on stereotyping based on gender, age, ability, and regional differences (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). The second is that many participants reported that diversity which has multiple dimensions is reduced to the single dimension of gender inequality (Lakshman & Lakshman, 2020). Addressing misconceptions about diversity issues is important because working in more diverse teams could help change the perception that diversity only has one dimension. Employees can work together and learn from each other as discussed below through a research and development lens.

Effects of Research and Development on Workforce Diversity and Organizational Performance

Researchers have examined the effects of research and development workforce diversity on organizational performance. Bae and Han (2020) analyzed performance as organizations used internal and external knowledge acquired from research and development outsourcing. They found that age and education diversity have a positive effect on the relationship between research and development outsourcing and organization performance (Bae & Han, 2020). The concept of organizational diversity has been categorized into two major themes. The first theme is social categorial diversity (bio-demographic diversity). This is readily observable individual differences such as sex, age, and ethnicity (Bae & Han, 2020). The second theme is task-related (job related) diversity which refers to less visible attributes such as career, major, or educational background (Bae & Han, 2020). Additionally, there is a positive association between workforce diversity and occupational well-being and governance (Fine et al., 2020). These themes are important because they highlight that diversity is a multidimensional concept. Some studies have provided inconsistent data on the relationship between diversity and organizational performance. However, as mentioned previously, when there are more diverse teams, increased innovation and performance can be fostered.

There are several empirical and theoretical researchers that have presented data that concluded diversity had a positive effect on performance (Blouch & Azeem, 2019). For example, when there were higher levels of categorical diversity (age and gender), it led to more positive outcomes including group performance and market share (Blouch &

Azeem, 2019). Furthermore, higher levels of gender diversity led to increased social interaction (Bae & Han, 2020). This social interaction provided greater acceptance and familiarity of working relationships and led to positive performance (Duggan et al., 2020). This data is important because social interaction and acceptance among employees help to encourage positive working relationships and enhanced performance. Positive performance can also be fostered by a diverse upper-management team.

Researchers have found that diversity within upper management has a positive effect on business model innovation and organizational performance (Hemmert et al., 2022). When diversity was at a higher level among upper management, this effect was even more pronounced (Hemmert et al., 2022). Efficiency is increased further when there is tenure among diverse managers (Hemmert et al., 2022). This increased efficiency included higher levels of diversity in gender, race/ethnicity, education, and sexual orientation (Tamunomiebi & John-Eke, 2020). These results are important because it can be concluded that by setting the example, upper management can increase efficiency among employees and increase organizational performance. Several areas of workplace diversity can help enhance organizational performance.

Bae and Han (2020) found that age and education diversity among the workforce had positive effects on the relationship between research and development outsourcing and firm performance. Bae and Han concluded that organizations should utilize differentiated approaches to diversity management in research and development workforces based on whether their strategy is internal or external. When organizations internalize external knowledge, diversity has a positive effect on generating innovative

ideas and transforming valuable resources (Bae & Han, 2020). Furthermore, researchers have found that increased educational diversity has a positive effect on both internal and external research and development (Bae & Han, 2020). Employees who are diverse in age and education can, and do, collaborate well (Lee & Kim, 2020). Additionally, age and education diversity are extensively linked to relational coordination which can positively contribute to organizational performance (Lee & Kim, 2020). These approaches are important because managers should consider both internal and external approaches when determining how to best manage diversity. It is important to note that different dimensions of diversity may have different effects on performance.

Researchers have found that racial and tenure diversity typically have a positive relationship on organizational performance and functional diversity has a negative relationship (Moon & Christensen, 2020). Functional diversity in organizations is when team members from different levels and/or departments work together (Zhou et al., 2023). Further analysis by researchers revealed that a diverse climate has a positive relationship on racial diversity, functional diversity, tenure diversity, and organizational performance (Moon & Christensen, 2020). This analysis is important because when there is a diverse climate, diversity overall is more effectively managed which can lead to a positive effect on performance. Additionally, when implemented effectively, internal, and external approaches can create positive perceptions of diversity.

Two Opposing Views on Diversity and Organizational Performance

There are two contrasting views related to how diversity affects organizational performance: social categorization theory (SCT) and information/decision-making

theory. SCT evolved from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Social identity theory (SIT) is a psychological theory that was first developed by Henri Tajfel in 1978 and further developed by Tajfel and Turner in 1979. In SIT, individuals categorize themselves as belonging to certain groups such as professional groups, those with or without children, or even a fan base of a music band (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Later, in 1999, John C. Turner proposed self-categorization theory (social categorization theory) which differentiates social and personal identity (Turner, 1999). Social identity is how individuals define part of their identity through the groups they belong to (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). This includes identifying as a woman, student, or a fan of a certain sports team. Scheepers and Ellemers posit that social identities vary in strength and content. The strength factor relates to social identification, such as identifying strongly with a social group (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). The content factor is determined by the social groups features and established norms such as team colors (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). With personal identity, Turner believes that it is a personal collective identity that includes other individuals seen as members of one's own group (Zakiryanova & Redkina, 2020). Turner posits that social identity consists of social self-categorization which leads to group phenomena (Zakiryanova & Redkina, 2020). These components are important because they make up the foundation of SCT. Another crucial part of SCT is how people classify themselves, which is discussed next.

In SCT, people classify themselves and others into one of two groups, “in-group” and “out-group” (Moon & Christensen, 2020, p. 144). This classification is achieved using similarities and differences in demographic features (Moon & Christensen, 2020).

Social categorization is the idea that people are defined and understood as individuals and also as belonging to particular social categories such as age, economic, or cultural (Zakiryanova & Redkina, 2020). In SCT, through the social comparison process, individuals maintain high self-esteem through surrounding themselves with those who are similar (Moon & Christensen, 2020). According to SCT, by maximizing in-group and out-group distinctions and by viewing individuals in the out-group as less attractive, people can enhance and achieve positive social identity (Moon & Christensen, 2020). Moon and Christensen added that this type of bias and categorization can lead to relational conflict and communication challenges. Furthermore, this type of division led to decreased social integration and increased affective conflict (Moon & Christensen, 2020). These challenges can negatively affect organizational performance (Moon & Christensen, 2020). These results are important because based on these challenges, it could be concluded that SCT would not foster diverse workgroups. The second view on how diversity affects organizational performance is discussed next.

The second view on how diversity affects organizational performance is information/decision-making theory (IDT). In IDT, diverse work groups tend to outperform their homogeneous counterparts (Moon & Christensen, 2020). The primary principle of IDT is that a diverse workgroup is more likely to have a wider range of task-relevant resources such as skills, knowledge, and innovative ideas that can positively influence organizational outcomes (Moon & Christensen, 2020). With IDT, this type of diversity can foster communication, integration of experience, knowledge, and ideas related to the achievement of organizational goals (Moon & Christensen, 2020).

Additionally, with IDT, in diverse groups of people with different backgrounds and experiences, there is an effect on which decisions are made and how they are made (Mikkonen et al., 2021). Depending on how much these varied perspectives are considered, group outcomes will be improved even if diversity is negatively influencing group functioning (Mikkonen et al., 2021). Every team member is encouraged to present information. Other advantages include encouraging team members to develop more creative and unique solutions to complex problems (Moon & Christensen, 2020). These types of encouragement are important because they can lead to enhanced performance and better organizational outcomes. Discussion will continue with more details on functional diversity.

Functional Diversity

As previously mentioned, functional diversity is when team members from different departments and/or different levels work together (Zhou et al., 2023). Functional diversity is sometimes seen as crucial to achieving organizational outcomes (Zhou et al., 2023). Functional diversity is important in many organizational aspects, including board membership. Researchers have discovered that many organizations consider diversity of functional experience to be critical in the effectiveness of their board (Goyal et al., 2019). Boards that are functionally diverse tend to manage more effectively and overcome challenges more efficiently leading to improvement in corporate governance (Goyal et al., 2019). Based on this information, it is also important to promote diversity among board members. Functional diversity among board members is important because the results highlight the conclusion that more diverse groups can yield more sustainable

change and positive outcomes. This type of diversity can naturally lead to increased inclusion.

Functional diversity can also be utilized to encourage more inclusion within the workplace. Functional diversity in this aspect is used as a better way to understand and accept individuals with disabilities or those who are functionally different (Gallardo-Montes et al., 2023). Disability is not limited to physical impairments but also includes those with mental, emotional, and sensory issues (Gallardo-Montes et al., 2023). Functional diversity focuses on a spectrum of ability instead of a one size fits all version of ability (Gallardo-Montes et al., 2023). Functional diversity has been found to be a vital component of role effectiveness (Goyal et al., 2019). Functionally diverse groups are able to more effectively manage external dependencies and more efficiently challenge assumptions which leads to improvement in performance (Goyal et al., 2019). These results are important because functional diversity can contribute to increased job satisfaction, which will lead to enhanced performance. There are specific components to functional diversity which will be discussed below.

Researchers have proposed that functional diversity leadership requires three components. The first is knowledge of positive and negative processes that can be brought about by diversity (Homan et al., 2020). The second component is knowledge of task and person focused leadership behaviors needed to address team needs (Homan et al., 2020). The third is having the competencies to predict and identify team needs and having the ability to apply the necessary leadership behaviors to address those needs (Homan et al., 2020). Managers should be aware of and understand each of these three

components in order to practice more effective diversity management. These components are important because they help managers to predict, identify, and address the needs of their team and allow them to recognize that functional diversity is an important part of understanding how to manage a diverse workforce. Learning these skills could also help managers to effectively address functional diversity throughout the organization.

There have been mixed results in research studies related to functional diversity, including geographical diversity and the level and type of cultural diversity. Some results have revealed that the overall performance of a team is not related to diversity (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). Additionally, some results have suggested that team performance is positively associated with increased creativity, but there is a decrease in performance due to more conflict and less cohesion and social integration (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). Stahl and Maznevski found that diversity was positively related to three types of conflict which were task conflict, relationship conflict, and process conflict. Conversely, results have shown that culturally diverse teams have effective communication and higher satisfaction when compared to homogeneous teams (Stahl & Maznevski, 2021). Further, researchers have found that there is limited diversity in the health and human services field in at least three areas which are gender, geography, and income level (Bhaumik & Jagnoor, 2019). Bhaumik and Jagnoor found that diversity among workgroups may promote balanced perspectives, foster equity, and fairness, and provide role modeling for future workgroups. These results are important because it can be concluded that the more diverse employees are throughout the organizational structure, the more positive the outcomes will be. Finally, functional backgrounds of managers are critical components of

their experience and an important source of knowledge that can be used (Zhou et al., 2023).

Summary

The scholarship addressed in this review covered the conceptual framework of Lewin's force field theory for this study of strategies that health and human services senior managers use to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance. Discussion also included supporting and contrasting theories and frameworks, which were complex systems theory and motivational interviewing and self-determination theory. The scope of the review focused on diverse workplaces and employee performance within health and human services organizations. Due to the fact that there is little research focusing on health and human services organizations, research on strategies to enhance employee performance through workplace diversity is necessary for optimal organizational outcomes.

Transition

This literature review included current knowledge related to the study topic. I described the conceptual framework and supporting and contrasting theories. The conceptual framework for this study was Lewin's force field theory in connection with Lewin's change theory. Critical communication components of these theories were significant in terms of determining strategies that health and human services senior managers use in creating diverse workforces and enhancing employee performance. The literature review concluded with an in-depth discussion of the effects of creating diverse workforces to enhance employee performance in the health and human services industry.

Health and human services senior managers can better understand strategies to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance, which may lead to enhanced overall organizational performance and decreased business costs. Using these same strategies may also help managers employ more underrepresented workers. This in turn could lead to positively contributing to local communities and economic growth.

Section 2 includes the purpose statement, my role as the researcher, participants, research method and design, and population and sampling. I discuss ethical procedures, data collection instruments, and techniques. Section 2 concludes with information about data organization techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 includes presentations of findings as well as applications to professional practice. Section 3 also includes discussion of implications for social change and recommendations for action and future research.

Section 2: The Project

This section includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, and participants. Section 2 also includes information about the research method and design, population and sampling, and ethical procedures, including Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. I also explain data collection instruments and techniques, data organization techniques, and data analysis. I also describe how reliability and validity of data were ensured.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce in order to enhance employee performance. The study included three senior managers from three health and human services agencies in North Carolina who have successfully created strategies to diversify workforces to increase employee performance. Benefits to social change potentially include managers using findings from this study to better implement strategies to create diverse workplaces, which may positively contribute to local communities through increasing economic growth and improved quality of life for local residents.

Role of the Researcher

For this qualitative research study, I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Researchers should aim to develop positive and trustful relationships with participants, which encourages more detailed explorations and insight (Roberts, 2020). Researchers should also be knowledgeable and understanding of ethical

issues that may be associated with the study and guide interviews in such a way they do not encourage participants to support predetermined ideas (Roberts, 2020). Researchers must also work to protect the rights of participants and understand unique perspectives while also allowing them time to reflect on their experiences (Roberts, 2020). Finally, researchers should respect individual participants and their autonomy (O'Sullivan et al., 2021).

In this study, my role as the researcher included determining the research method and design along with gathering accurate data. As the researcher, I was also responsible for developing the protocol for interviews and contacting participants. Additionally, I asked participants interview questions while not allowing my personal views to affect my understanding of the topic. I was responsible for analyzing data and identifying patterns and themes.

I am familiar with the topic because I have obtained skills and knowledge through my experiences working within the health and human services industry. I also gained experience as a leader within a nonprofit organization that serves the community. I have had only limited relationships with participants as they are fellow leaders within the health and human services industry at different organizations.

Researchers are tasked with gathering accurate data in an ethical manner and striving to reduce bias throughout the process. I followed the tenets outlined in *The Belmont Report*. Published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Human Research Protections (USDHHS), this report was developed by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral

Research. The three basic tenets of ethical research are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (USDHHS, 2020). Researchers must ensure respect for persons in terms of autonomy, informed consent, information, comprehension, and assurance of voluntariness (USDHHS, 2020). Participants were involved on a voluntary basis and had the option of leaving the study at any time. Participants received information regarding the study, and any questions they had were answered. Participants had the opportunity to review study information and choose whether to provide consent.

Beneficence involves doing no harm and helping participants according to their best judgement (USDHHS, 2020). This includes assessment of risks and benefits. As the researcher, I ensured no harm came to participants due to being involved with the study and answered any questions and provided needed information. Finally, as the researcher, I ensured justice was addressed. Justice involves assessing who should receive benefits of research, who should bear burdens, and ensuring risks are distributed equally (see USDHHS, 2020). As the researcher, I informed participants about how results would be used and how data would be published so no identifying information would be shared.

Researchers must understand bias can negatively affect the quality of their research. Bias can be mitigated by taking note of personal views and reflections on data (Yin, 2018). In this research, I used semistructured interviews and document review to explore strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. One of the biggest challenges for researchers using interviews to collect data is controlling and minimizing biases (Zvereva & Kozlov, 2021). For this study, I mitigated bias and

avoided viewing data through a personal lens by recording semistructured interviews so they could be accurately transcribed, obtained supporting documentation through document reviews, took notes in a reflective journal, and employed member checking with participants. Participants took part in confidential audio-recorded interviews. They had the opportunity to review typed transcripts of their interviews and make corrections if needed. Finally, participants were able to speak with me once more after interviews to hear my interpretations and share feedback.

Development of an interview protocol assists researchers in gaining further understanding of the direction of interviews and ensure consistency throughout the interview process (Roberts, 2020). This protocol can also help researchers to ensure validity, reliability, and credibility of findings. Researchers should establish trust with participants which helps foster sharing of rich information that is based on their actual experiences (Roberts, 2020). For this study, I used open-ended questions that were prepared to encourage open discussions with participants.

Participants

Participants in this study were senior managers within the health and human services industry with demonstrated ability to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance. According to Schoch (2020), researchers conducting qualitative studies typically use a specific group of participants who are knowledgeable about the research topic. Participants were employed as senior managers within the health and human services industry and had success with creating diverse workforces to enhance employee performance and had at least 5 years of experience.

Organizations that were selected for the study were established health and human services agencies. These organizations were determined through a screening process including researching websites and publicly available documentation such as annual reports and financials. Organizations had been in business for at least 5 years and have annual incomes of at least \$300,000.

Address and contact information for organizations were obtained through public directories and organization websites. Contact information for executive directors were obtained through human resources departments. To gain access to participants, I emailed executive directors of organizations that were selected to participate. Specifically, to establish working relationships with directors of organizations, I emailed them to introduce myself and inform them about study specifics. I had them sign letters of cooperation. I worked with executive directors to determine which managers met participation criteria.

I used multiple strategies for establishing working relationships with participants. I worked with the selected study participants to schedule interview dates and times. Specifically, participants for the study were provided with consent forms via email prior to commencing with the study process and interviews. I also sent my contact information including a short bio along with a copy of the interview questions to study participants. I let them know that the study participants were selected based on the study criteria and that all information will be kept confidential. They agreed to participate by replying to my email with "I consent," I emailed them to schedule dates and times.

In summary, the participants for this study were senior managers in the health and human services industry with demonstrated ability to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance. The participants also had active employment as a senior manager in the health and human services field and at least 5 years of experience. I interviewed three senior managers that met the eligibility criteria for this study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

There are three main research methods that researchers use which are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method (Asenahabi, 2019). Each of these methods were considered when choosing the research method for this study. I used a qualitative research design. Qualitative methodology is used to explore the focus of the research thoroughly (Asenahabi, 2019). Qualitative research involves creative approaches that include open-ended methods that can result in multiple interpretations (Konecki, 2019). This openness helps qualitative researchers gain valuable information from the experiences of participants. Qualitative research methods can help the researcher to have insight into the actions, connections, beliefs, and experiences of the participants (Renjith et al., 2021). I used qualitative research methodology so that I could explore personal views of the participants through asking open-ended questions during the interview process and then analyzing the data gained.

The qualitative method was preferable because it was best aligned with this study. Because this study was exploratory in nature, the quantitative and mixed methodologies were not utilized. In the quantitative method, researchers test theories through data

evaluation to explain variables and it is a more analytical approach to research (Asenahabi, 2019). Quantitative research involves deductive analysis and formal logic (Bloomfield & Fischer, 2019). Researchers using a mixed method design collect two sets of data (Asenahabi, 2019). These two data sets are for the qualitative method and another data set for the quantitative method.

The mixed method approach allows the researcher to combine rich meanings and experiences with numerical data (Dawadi et al., 2021). The mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because I did not combine experiences with numerical data. The qualitative approach was utilized in this study to explore what strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance.

Research Design

The qualitative multiple case study research design was selected to address the research question. I considered other research designs including ethnography and phenomenology. Researchers use ethnography to study social interactions and behaviors either individually or in groups (Kian & Beach, 2019). Researchers also use ethnography for observation and exploring social life (Kian & Beach, 2019). For example, in studying health care, the ethnography design helps to show that individuals from different cultures, subcultures, and groups tend to connect health beliefs into their lives differently (Verd et al., 2021). Additionally, in studies of the workplace, ethnography has been used to show that technological work systems are interwoven with worker knowledge and reasoning, which bring about the work actions and activities that make them understandable (Verd et

al., 2021). Ethnography was not chosen because I did not study cultures, cultural social interactions, or behaviors.

Researchers use phenomenology to study meanings of individual human experiences or observed moments (von Lehn, 2019). Researchers also use phenomenology for knowing in addition to intellectual engagement and finding understanding of individuals in their world at a conscious level (Zahavi & Martiny, 2019). Phenomenology is also used to foster understanding of the individual/subject in relation to a particular event that is related to that person's life (Zahavi & Martiny, 2019). Phenomenology was not selected for this study due to the fact that I did not study the personal meanings of individual human experiences.

Researchers use a case study design to perform an in-depth analysis of individuals, groups, or social units (Yin, 2018). The multiple case study is especially valuable in examining the links between social, personal, psychological, behavioral, organizational, environmental, and cultural factors which contribute to leadership development (Halkias & Neubert, 2020). Furthermore, researchers use multiple case studies to observe and compare findings across multiple organizations rather than focusing on single sites of interest (Coplan & Evans, 2021). Researchers also use multiple case studies to provide reliable data to increase the generalizability of the findings (Coplan & Evans, 2021). I selected a multiple case study to compare findings across multiple organizations.

Data saturation was ensured by asking the participants the set interview questions until no further information can be gained and after similar strategies are identified from

multiple participants. Mwita (2022) has identified five factors that affect data saturation. These factors are predetermined codes and themes, sample size, relevancy of the research participants, the number of research methods, and length of data collection sessions (Mwita, 2022). Additionally, Alam (2021) proposed that there are three stages to data saturation. The first stage is information redundancy, the second stage is referring to the participants already considered in the study without knowing about the data collection and their responses (Alam, 2021). The third stage is using the NVivo open coding process in which saturation is achieved when there is a decrease in references to a certain position or due to fewer outcomes or lack of information (Alam, 2021). By analyzing the data and identifying and coding themes, the researcher can determine to what extent the data contributed to the theme reached saturation for the interviewees (Braun & Clarke, 2021). If data saturation was not reached through asking the three participants the set interview questions, I would have reached out to the organization executive directors to identify additional participants to interview.

Population and Sampling

Purposeful sampling was utilized in the selection of participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to identify and select cases rich in information related to the phenomenon being studied (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). Researchers implement a purposeful sampling technique to select participants with a background related to the research topic as well as their knowledge and experience, which improves the thoroughness of the study and the reliability of the data and results (Campbell et al., 2020). There are two subtypes that fall under the umbrella of purposeful

sampling. The first is quota sampling. Quota sampling involves the researcher deciding on the number of participants and the participant characteristics (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). The second subtype is maximum phenomenon variation sampling. Maximum phenomenon variation sampling is used to ensure that the entire extent of the qualitative phenomenon is investigated (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). This study focused on quota sampling.

In qualitative research, the researcher identifies study participants who can provide information to answer the research question or questions (Gill, 2020). The participants should have experience and knowledge of the study topic and be willing to share and reflect on this knowledge (Gill, 2020). Other sampling methods for qualitative research include convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and theoretical sampling. Convenience sampling was not chosen for this study because would not result in participants who can share the best or most relevant information (Gill, 2020). Snowball sampling was not chosen because I did not plan to ask study participants for referrals willing to participate in the study (Gill, 2020). Theoretical sampling was not chosen for this study because it is more suitable for utilizing grounded theory as the research design (Gill, 2020).

Many researchers have expressed that there are no formal criteria for determining sample size in qualitative research (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). However, researchers should have some idea for the size that is most likely to achieve the study purpose (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). According to Yin (2018), the design of multiple case studies follows what is known as an analogous logic. This means that when

a finding is discovered from a single experiment, a significant priority would be the ability to replicate the finding through conducting a second, third, or more experiments (Yin, 2018). Evidence obtained from multiple case studies is typically considered to be more compelling and robust (Yin, 2018).

The number of participants for this study were three senior managers in the health and human services industry. Some researchers have concluded that justification for the number of participants is based on data saturation (Gill, 2020). This means that researchers show that the data they have collected is of sufficient depth that no new relevant information is obtained from interviews or observations (Gill, 2020). The number of participants for this study was determined based on what I anticipated needing to achieve data saturation. Omeihe (2021) posited that there are variations in sample sizes for qualitative interviews noting that a range of 4 to 12 participants may be acceptable when selecting from homogeneous groups. Furthermore, researchers have recommended citing precedence set by similar research studies (Omeihe, 2021). Previous case studies on workforce diversity were reviewed and many researchers elected to include a single organization in their research. For example, in their case study on managing workforce diversity in organizations, Khan et al. (2020) focused on a single organization within the health services industry. Other researchers implementing case studies on workforce diversity and using qualitative interviewing reported a range in the number of participants. Some researchers suggest between 15 and 20 participants (Omeihe, 2021). Young and Casey (2019) conducted a study to examine the sufficiency of smaller sample

sizes in qualitative case studies. Based on this study, it was found that researchers can achieve rich qualitative findings with small sample sizes.

I selected three senior managers who met the eligibility criteria for the study from the population of eligible people who fit the study criteria. I ensured that data saturation was reached by interviewing the three participants and reviewing documents in exploring strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. As previously mentioned, data saturation was ensured by asking the participants the set interview questions until no further information can be gained and after similar strategies are identified from multiple participants. Data saturation occurs when no new relevant information is being obtained from interviews and document review (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). If data saturation was not reached through interviewing the three participants, I would have reached out to the organization executive directors so that additional participants could be identified and interviewed for the study.

With purposeful sampling, the researcher selects participants that have knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, for this study, participants had active employment as a senior manager within the health and human services industry and success in creating diverse workforces to enhance employee performance. Participants also had at least 5 years of experience. The participants in this study had demonstrated success in the creation of diverse workforces and enhancing employee performance. Researchers have found that videoconferencing is a viable option for collecting qualitative data due to ease of use, cost effectiveness, data management features, and

security options (Archibald et al., 2019). Interviews were conducted via videoconferencing and were recorded using the videoconferencing platform. This method is appropriate for qualitative case studies.

Ethical Research

Informed consent was utilized for each participant in the study. Informed consent means that participants should be able to make their own decision as to whether to participate in the study or continue their participation in the study (National Institutes of Health, 2016). Informed consent includes the purpose of the study, study methods, any risks associated with the study, the benefits, and any alternatives (National Institutes of Health, 2016). The participants for this study were given informed consent and they were fully informed of the specifics of the study. I emailed each participant an electronic copy of the consent form and asked them to reply with, "I consent." I also reviewed the main elements of the consent form with each participant at the beginning of the interview.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were able to withdraw from the study by letting me know that they wish to withdraw. This could have been done in writing via email, text message, or a formal letter. The participant did not have to provide a reason for leaving the study. There were not any incentives for participating.

The tenets of *The Belmont Report* were followed to assure the ethical protection of the participants. *The Belmont Report* was developed by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. The report outlines three basic tenets: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (USDHHS,

2020). Respect for persons includes autonomy, informed consent, information, comprehension, and assurance of voluntariness (USDHHS, 2020). The tenet of beneficence involves doing no harm and helping participants according to their best judgement (USDHHS, 2020). Beneficence also includes assessment of risks and benefits. The third tenet of *The Belmont Report* is justice. This involves assessing who should receive benefits of the research, who should bear the burden, and ensuring that risks are distributed equally (USDHHS, 2020).

Data will be stored securely for 5 years to protect confidentiality and rights of participants. The final doctoral manuscript contains the Walden IRB approval number and the document does not contain any identifiable information about the individuals or organizations. The names of the participants and the organizations in the study are kept confidential. This was achieved using pseudonyms. Participant 1 was identified as “P1”, and Participant 2 was identified as “P2”, and so forth. Each organization was assigned a pseudonym as well. For example, organization 1 was identified as “O1.”

In summary, ethical research was ensured for this study through several strategies. First, each participant was provided informed consent so they could make their own decisions about participating in the study. Additionally, the tenets of *The Belmont Report* were followed so that ethical protection of the participants was ensured. Data will also be stored securely for a period of 5 years while protecting participant rights and confidentiality. The final doctoral manuscript contains the Walden IRB approval number (# 08-25-23-0758089) and the document does not contain identifiable information about

the participants or the organizations. Names were kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument for this study. The primary data collection took place through semistructured interviews with participants. The secondary data collection occurred through the review of organizational documents, including policies and procedures, and reports. Semistructured interviews are used to obtain subjective responses from participants about a situation or phenomenon they have experienced (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Semistructured interviews consist of a detailed interview guide and are typically used when there is adequate objective knowledge about the phenomenon and subjective knowledge is lacking (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021).

I used an interview protocol for my semistructured interviews. The interview protocol is included as the appendix. The protocol is based on the narrative inquiry method. This relates to semistructured interviewing because both approaches encourage participants to give responses based on their own experiences and tell their own stories. The narrative inquiry method focuses on responses that are contextually rich which consists of the research participant sharing their first-hand experiences that are remembered more vividly (Rice, 2023). Additionally, when participants recall personal experiences, these are more memorable and are given more weight which can lead to guiding behavior (Rice, 2023). Participants were encouraged in an unbiased manner throughout the interview to describe in detail their perceptions of personal experiences

regarding the research topic (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). This allowed the data to be based on personal experiences in answering the research question.

I utilized member checking with the study participants to verify the accuracy of their responses prior to coding and analyzing the data. Member checking is a validation strategy that is used to improve the credibility, reliability, and validity of data for qualitative studies (Candela, 2019). For the member checking process, I created a summary of the participant responses and scheduled a follow-up phone call with the participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the summary.

After obtaining the informed consent from the participant, I briefly reviewed the consent form with them at the beginning of the interview. The interviews were set to last for 60 minutes, and I reviewed the questions on the interview protocol. I also asked for any relevant publicly available organizational documents. The member checking process included scheduling a follow-up phone call to review a summary of responses with each participant to verify the accuracy of the data.

Data collected through document review was achieved using the READ approach. READ is an acronym for Ready your materials, Extract data, Analyze data, and Distill your findings (Dalglish et al., 2020). For the first step, readying all materials, researchers set parameters around the nature and approximate number of documents they plan to review based on the research question. This step also involves planning how much time will be allocated to document analysis and establishing criteria around the topic, inclusion dates, and places to search for documents (Dalglish et al., 2020). I asked participants to provide relevant documents as part of the interview process in addition to

obtaining other publicly available documents on the organization websites. Step two is extracting the data. The data can be extracted in different ways depending on the research question and the nature of the documents (Dalglish et al., 2020). As I reviewed documents, I developed ideas and working theories that I documented in notes or memos. I then created an Excel spreadsheet where each row was a document, and each column was a category of information.

The third step in the READ approach is analyzing the data. Typically, during the data extraction phase researchers are already beginning to analyze the data and form theories (Dalglish et al., 2020). It is only when the data extraction phase is complete that the researcher can see the entire picture. Distilling the findings is the fourth step in the READ approach. The fourth phase is complete when one of three things occurs. One is completeness, that the researcher feels satisfied that they have gathered every document fitting the criteria, which is rare (Dalglish et al., 2020). A second is that the researcher has ran out of time and should have used more specific criteria. The third is that saturation has been reached and the researcher sufficiently understands the phenomenon being studied (Dalglish et al., 2020). To complete the fourth step, I reviewed my notes and memos and filled in any areas that were incomplete. I also reviewed the Excel spreadsheet created in step two to analyze the categories created. These findings were compared to what had been learned during the interviews so that relevant conclusions could be developed.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection occurred via semistructured interviews and document review.

Document review (or analysis) is a detailed procedure for reviewing and evaluating documents. This method can be used to learn additional context, develop questions, and supplement other types of research data (Dalglish et al., 2020). There is a step-by-step approach for document review for the health industry referred to as the READ approach (Dalglish et al., 2020). As previously mentioned, READ is an acronym for Ready all materials, Extract the data, Analyze the data, and Distill the findings (Dalglish et al., 2020).

I used semistructured interviews and document review to collect data from the participants of this study. I began by sending the consent form to participants and asking them to respond with the words “I consent.” During the interview, I used an interview protocol based on the narrative inquiry method. Prior to the interview, the participants received a copy of the interview questions so they could review them before the interview sessions. The open-ended interview questions helped to facilitate further discussion between the interviewer and interviewee. Open-ended questions also gave participants the opportunity to express their thoughts more freely (Roberts, 2020). Open-ended questions also allowed the researcher to probe further or ask additional questions (Yin, 2018). Open-ended questions are used extensively to allow researchers to explore and understand participant experiences and perspectives in many different fields (Feng & Behar-Horenstein, 2019). The interviews took place via videoconference.

Following the interview, I conducted member checking by reviewing a summary of interview responses with each participant to verify the accuracy. Document review was conducted using the READ approach as described above. I collected documents by asking participants for publicly available data supporting their comments as well as searching online. To ensure participant confidentiality, data was coded using pseudonyms. The data was revisited on an ongoing basis so that patterns and explanations could be identified (Bloomberg, 2019). Data was coded using both word-based and scrutiny-based techniques. The word-based technique involves quickly beginning to identify themes, while the scrutiny-based technique involves a more in-depth examination of documents to find themes which may not be as obvious (Bloomberg, 2019). I did not conduct a pilot study.

In qualitative research, interviews with participants are among the most common data collection techniques (Oliffe et al., 2021). Oftentimes, researchers prefer face-to-face interviews, however modern technology has given researchers more options for conducting interviews such as via email or online videoconference platforms such as Zoom (Oliffe et al., 2021). Interviews are the most direct approach to obtaining detailed data regarding a phenomenon (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). Semistructured interviews are used to ensure that data is obtained in key areas while allowing participants the flexibility to bring their own perspectives and personality to the discussion (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). There are also some challenges that interviews present to researchers. One challenge is that oftentimes interviews are recorded and will need to be transcribed before analyzing (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik,

2021). This can result in a time-consuming process that will require researchers to review interviews word-for-word multiple times (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Researchers must also use caution to avoid bias by asking leading questions or using non-verbal signals which may influence participant responses (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Semistructured interviews are effective in data collection when the goals of the researcher include collecting qualitative, open-ended data; exploring participant thoughts and beliefs about a topic; and delving deeper into personal and/or sensitive issues (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). One common disadvantage with semistructured interviewing is that some participants could be hard to engage in conversation or they may be reluctant to share on sensitive or personal topics (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Other common issues include failing to ask follow-up questions, not actively listening, failing to have an established interview guide with open-ended questions, or not asking questions in a sensitive way (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Document analysis for data collection has several advantages. One advantage is that it is an efficient and less time-consuming method for collecting data (Morgan, 2022). Another advantage of document review is the availability as many documents are public domain especially with many organizations posting documents on their web sites (Morgan, 2022). The cost-effectiveness of document review is another advantage as it is often the preferred method when collection of new data is not possible (Morgan, 2022). Another advantage of document review is the coverage in that documents provide coverage for a long period of time, over many events and settings (Morgan, 2022).

Document analysis also has some disadvantages. One is insufficient detail because documents are typically produced for purposes other than research (Morgan, 2022). Another disadvantage is biased selectivity. This is when there is an incomplete selection of documents and the documents that are available are aligned with organizational policies and procedures (Morgan, 2022). The documents may also reflect a focus of a specific organization department (Morgan, 2022).

Cho et al. (2017) utilized semistructured interviewing to explore the dynamics of workforce diversity, diversity management, and organizational performance in social enterprises. Tatli (2011) also used semistructured interviews in their multi-layered exploration of the diversity management field in the UK. Therefore, I used semistructured interviews to determine managerial strategies used to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance.

Data Organization Technique

Principles for data collection include having multiple sources of evidence, creating a case study database, maintaining a chain of evidence, and using care when collecting data from social media sources (Yin, 2018). Interview notes were sufficiently organized, formatted, labeled, and categorized for data analysis. Each transcript was saved in a separate document and each document was stored separately. Transcripts were stored electronically in a password protected Dropbox account and any hard copies were kept in a locked file cabinet. Interviews conducted via videoconference were recorded via the videoconferencing platform (Zoom). Recordings will be kept secure via password protection through the videoconferencing platform. The transcription was completed

using the audio transcription feature of Zoom. I also took notes to verify the quality of the transcripts.

A reflective journal was used to keep track of documents and observations. Data analysis was word-based, and scrutiny based with the assistance of software such as NVivo. Recorded interviews were saved with reference coding to ensure participant confidentiality, pseudonyms were structured as Participant 1 (or P1), Participant 2 (or P2), and so on. Recorded interviews, transcribed interviews, and documents were securely stored via Dropbox with controlled access rights. The data will be stored for 5 years and will be deleted 5 years after completion of this study. Buys et al. (2022) utilized semistructured interviewing when conducting a study with academic colleagues as participants. The authors of this study posited that semistructured interviews provide a flexible conversational style that allows researchers to gather rich and meaningful data (Buys et al., 2022). Farmanesh et al. (2020) also utilized semistructured interviewing in their study on examining the relationship between workforce diversity and organizational performance in the educational industry.

Data Analysis

Researchers utilize several different methods when conducting data analysis. For the research question on strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance, semistructured interviews with open-ended interview questions were utilized, along with collection and analysis of organization documents. Data analysis involves examining data for themes to establish categories which allows the researcher to

determine meanings (Yin, 2018). Researchers can do this using coding and theme analysis which are used frequently in qualitative studies (Bloomberg, 2019).

Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing the results from the semistructured interviews to the results from the document review to see if the results are similar. Because the results of both methods reached the same or similar conclusions, validity of the results was established. However, if the data had been contradictory, I would have conducted further analysis to determine the reason for this through further member checking.

There are four types of data triangulation which include data source triangulation, methodological triangulation, investigator triangulation, and theory triangulation (Natow, 2020). For this study, methodological triangulation was used for data analysis.

Triangulation is one method that researchers use to confirm that interpretations of the data are valid (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). Methodological triangulation consists of using more than one method in researching a phenomenon. This method of data analysis has been found to be successful in helping researchers confirm their findings, discover more comprehensive data, and in providing increased validity and understanding of the study topic (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

Many researchers utilize multiple data sources and multiple forms of data analysis when conducting triangulation (Natow, 2020). Triangulation can help researchers address threats to the validity of their data (Natow, 2020). For this study, triangulation was utilized focusing on two qualitative data collection procedures which are semistructured

interviews and document review. Additionally, all data (interview transcripts, documents, member checking) were analyzed.

Yin's five step process was utilized for data analysis. Yin's process includes the following steps compiling the data, disassembling the data, reassembling the data, interpreting the data meanings, and concluding the data (Yin, 2018). For step one, I compiled the data and reviewed it in NVivo to establish categories/themes. Step two involved disassembling the data to reduce invariant themes. For step three, I reassembled the data and identified main themes, subthemes, and frequency of each. In step four, I checked patterns with the interview transcripts and documents to determine the meaning of the data and provide supporting evidence. Finally, for step five, I summarized and concluded the data to establish individual descriptions of the themes and subthemes.

NVivo data analysis software was utilized to assist in the data analysis process. Software for qualitative data analysis can offer researchers tools for in-depth data analysis. Qualitative researchers use software to collect, organize, and analyze data. Software can be used to analyze data collected from interviews and help researchers determine meanings of the data (Jamil & Muhammad, 2019). Interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo to identify themes within the conceptual framework and in establishing codes for the data.

As previously stated, Yin's five step process was used in the data analysis process. For step one, compiling the data, I used semistructured interviews, document review, and NVivo. The semistructured interview transcripts and documents were

imported into NVivo for analysis. I coded them using pseudonyms. Participant 1 was coded as “P1”, participant 2 was coded as “P2”, and so forth.

For step two, disassembling the data, I focused on the development of a coding strategy. This was achieved by using the Memo Link feature in NVivo. This feature allowed me to identify key points within transcripts by linking previously created memos. For step three, reassembling the data, I used NVivo to identify main themes and patterns. This meant identifying ideas that are repeated multiple times throughout the interview transcripts. I used NVivo to create a research journal and develop and document a coding strategy.

For step four, interpreting data meanings, I made comparisons in order to determine meanings and provide supporting evidence. I used my documents to provide supporting evidence for my themes and to help enhance the definitions. Finally, for step five, concluding the data, I established individual descriptions of data themes and subthemes and connected the data back to the conceptual framework and the literature. I identified areas where my themes and subthemes aligned with the literature and conceptual framework and areas where they did not.

I focused on the key themes of the data after they were identified and analyzed them with Lewin’s force field theory and with the literature. I collected organization documents on strategies used to create diverse workforces and enhance employee performance to code and categorize emerging themes.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability refers to the researcher's ability to obtain the same results if the study were repeated (Morse, 2015). The research instrument is considered reliable when the study results are reproduced using similar methodology (Yin, 2018). The reliability of this study was ensured through utilizing the same interview questions with each participant, as well as confirming the accuracy of the data through the reviewing of documents and information obtained from the interviews and member checking. I conducted member checking by reviewing the summary of their interview responses with each participant (via email) to verify the accuracy.

Dependability of the data refers to stability (Morse, 2015). Dependability can be achieved through triangulation, an audit trail, and replication consisting of splitting the data and duplicating analysis (Morse, 2015). As previously mentioned, methodological triangulation was used to achieve dependability. In utilizing methodological triangulation, the within method was implemented focusing on two qualitative data collection procedures which were semistructured interviews and document review.

Validity

Transferability, credibility, and confirmability are the criteria needed to establish trustworthiness of the study. Validity refers to the accuracy of the data used in the research study (Bloomberg, 2019). Credibility (or validity) requires qualitative studies to be plausible to readers and approved by the individuals who supplied the information gathered during the study (Bloomberg, 2019). Credibility was achieved through

methodological triangulation. Triangulation involves using multiple sources of information and multiple methods of data collection (Bloomberg, 2019). I conducted member checking by reviewing a summary of interview responses with each participant to verify the accuracy. Document review was conducted using the READ approach.

Transferability refers to the how applicable the findings in one context (where the research is done) as compared to other contexts (where interpretations could be transferred) (Bloomberg, 2019). The reader determines transferability instead of the researcher (Bloomberg, 2019). Transferability was facilitated through very clear descriptions of the context of the research.

Confirmability refers to the quality of the findings from a study. The goal for confirmability is not to present objective findings, but instead present findings that illustrate the reflexivity of the researcher and that clearly address biases, set ideas, or subjectivity (Bloomberg, 2019). Confirmability was addressed through referencing literature and findings by other authors to confirm interpretations.

Data saturation was ensured by asking the participants the set interview questions until no further information could be gained and after similar strategies were identified from multiple participants. If data saturation was not achieved after interviewing the three participants, I would have reached out to the organization executive directors so that additional participants could be identified and interviewed for the study.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included the purpose of the study, my role as the researcher, research method and design, and population and sampling. I addressed ethical research

procedures, data collection instruments and techniques, data analysis, and reliability and validity. The research method is qualitative, and the research design was a multiple case study. Purposeful sampling was used in selecting participants for this study. In this study, I selected three senior managers who met eligibility criteria. Ethical research was ensured through providing informed consent, making participation in the study entirely voluntary, and following tenets of *The Belmont Report*. As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument, and secondary data collection occurred via document review. Data collection occurred through semistructured interviews with participants and using the READ approach for document review analysis. Interview notes were sufficiently organized, formatted, and labeled for data analysis. Methodological triangulation and Yin's five step process were used for data analysis. This was achieved using NVivo data analysis software. Reliability was addressed through member checking. Validity was determined based on credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Section 3 includes applications to professional practice and implications for change. This section includes discussions and a presentation of study findings and recommendations for action and further research. This is followed by reflections and a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully used to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. The study included three senior managers from three health and human services agencies located in North Carolina who have successfully created strategies to diversify workforces to increase employee performance. There were six themes, which were cultural competence, hiring practices and policies, education and training, feedback, change and resistance to change, and commitment from leadership.

Presentation of the Findings

The research question for this study was: What strategies do senior managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance?

Figure 4

Themes Related to Strategies to Create Diverse Workforces to Enhance Employee Performance



Theme 1: Cultural Competence

The first theme was cultural competence. This involved intentionally fostering a sense of acceptance, respect, and trust among employees. Participants reported this was vital in creating positive working environments. Cultural competence also helped promote diverse and respectful organizational cultures. Cultural competence promotes ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. P1 stated, “Providing input on experiences I have had working as a woman of color in a workplace filled with Caucasian men and older women” had helped contribute positively to experiences with promoting cultural competence and creating diverse workforces. The theme of cultural competence was also identified when reviewing organizational policies and procedures, performance standards, and training records.

Cultural competence connects to the literature through positive diversity climate perceptions, which leads to positive team performance. Drawing on past experiences relates to the fourth principle of Lewin's force field theory. This principle is present time versus historical concepts of causation. This principle highlights the importance of present situations. Applying past experiences to the present can affect individual behavior and bring about change.

Theme 2: Hiring Practices and Policies

The second theme was hiring practices and policies. One practice reported by participants was hiring diverse individuals who can recognize barriers among family dynamics and have compassion for differences. Participants also reported success with having diverse interview panels, which helps to "ensure a fair and unbiased hiring process." Another hiring practice reported by participants was targeted recruitment. Targeted recruitment involves actively seeking candidates from diverse backgrounds. One example of targeted recruitment is the collaboration between Walmart and the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP) which allows Walmart to recruit older applicants. Targeted recruitment also involves disbursement of organizational information to specific groups with the goal that those groups will apply for employment with organizations (Volpone et al., 2013). Organizational change should be an ongoing and open-ended process. Additionally, in the case of field theory, different factors can act as barriers to change. Targeted recruitment is a factor that can foster organizational change. Through communication with specific groups of people, managers in the health and human services industry can build diverse workforces.

Obtaining applications from diverse groups and finding the right mix of employees was also reported by participants. Ensuring the right mix of diverse employees are in place was especially important for teaching, management, and leadership staff positions. Another strategy related to hiring practices and policies was updating human resources policies to focus on more holistic approaches to making organizations more culturally sensitive and diverse. Organizations have updated policies that included zero tolerance for racism and discriminatory behavior. The P2 stated, “This type of behavior will lead to consequences which results in a decreased chance of the behavior occurring.” Finally, participants reported that creating a diverse workforce should be included in the organization’s strategic plan. This includes creating a model and making adjustments when needed. The theme of hiring practices and policies was also identified through reviewing the organization’s personnel manual and human resources policies.

Theme 3: Education and Training

The third theme was education and training. Participants reported education and training was focused on the importance of diverse workforce environments. Another training focus was awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds. Training and education also included team building and mentorship opportunities. These types of programs provide guidance, advice, and advocacy for employees. Training on diversity and inclusion was also reported by participants. This included other topics such as overcoming bias and resistance. P3 emphasized the importance of leadership being champions of diversity “through allocation of resources to ensure that diversity efforts are integrated into the overall strategy of the organization.” Trying to change individuals

through lecture type settings was much less likely to lead to sustained change (Crosby, 2022). Instead, sustained change is more successful based on group interactions. When managers implement training in environments that are productive and cooperative, positive change outcomes result. The theme of education and training was also identified when reviewing organizational training plans and records.

Theme 4: Feedback

Feedback was the fourth theme. One area of feedback was ongoing self-assessment. Participants stated self-assessment gave them real time feedback on how strategies for creating diverse workforces were working. Another area of feedback was using surveys from families, clients, staff, and communities. Participants reported using surveys from employees gave them valuable feedback and insights into experiences and perceptions regarding diversity and inclusion efforts. Surveys from families and communities were used to better understand what was implemented within organizations. Feedback from human resources experts and legal representatives was also reported by participants. Participants stated it was beneficial to solicit support and advice from human resources experts and legal representatives to determine if strategies were attracting candidates from diverse backgrounds. Another important area of feedback was the organization's board of directors. Collaboration with the board of directors involved creating a strategic plan that addresses challenges for the good of organizations.

The theme of feedback relates back to Lewin's two approaches to understanding individual situations. Feedback specifically connects to the second approach which is utilizing diagnostic tests of the present. Obtaining feedback from processes such as self-

assessment and surveys allows managers to analyze the present situation while recognizing the influence of the past to plan for the future. The feedback theme was also identified through reviewing documents including survey results reports and self-assessment improvement plans.

Theme 5: Change and Resistance to Change

The fifth theme identified was change and resistance to change. Participants reported that oftentimes, employees feel threatened by changes that challenge existing norms. Resistance to change is a common challenge when implementing diversity strategies. This resistance can be linked back to Lewin's field theory and Lewin's theory of change. In Lewin's force field theory, change will succeed only when group perceptions and values are moved (Burnes, 2020). In Lewin's change theory, unfreezing is a necessity in overcoming individual resistance to change (Lewin, 1951).

Theme 6: Commitment from Leadership

Having commitment and support from leadership was the sixth theme. Participants emphasized the importance of leadership being committed to diversity and inclusion efforts. They reported that this commitment contributes to creating a culturally diverse workforce and an environment with a sense of belonging. Participants also reported on the importance of leadership being champions of diversity through allocating resources to ensure that diversity efforts are integrated into the overall strategy of the organization. Finally, participants reported that modern organizations are always changing and evolving, and that ensuring workforce diversity is essential. Participants also stated that having different points of view can help fulfill long-term goals.

The theme of commitment from leadership can be related to Lewin's third principle in field theory. The third principle is classificatory versus the constructive approach (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). This theme relates specifically to the constructive approach. The commitment from leadership theme was also identified through reviewing the organizational strategic plans, staff retention plans, and personnel policies and procedures.

Applications to Professional Practice

Health and human services organizational leaders work to provide essential services that help to improve the health, safety, and well-being of the citizens they serve. Leaders and managers in the health and human services industry should intentionally promote a workplace that is inclusive, equitable, and that reflects the community the organization serves. The findings from this study are relevant to improved business practices in the health and human services industry because managers can implement actions associated with the themes identified in this study. For example, to promote hiring a diverse workforce, organization leaders could provide required diversity training to all individuals responsible for hiring members of the workforce. By focusing on the implementation of the study findings, managers will create a more cohesive and productive workforce which will lead to better services for the community. Having a diverse workforce can also increase opportunities and improve outcomes for those served by health and human services organizations (Coronado et al., 2020).

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study contribute to positive social change by providing managers in the health and human services industry strategies to create diverse workforces to enhance employee performance. Diversity at all levels of an organization is essential to sustainability and the successful implementation of the organization's mission (NC Department of Health and Human Services, 2024). Diverse workforces also bring multiple perspectives on how to engage with clients and community partners, and how to design successful programs and address challenges to achieve success (NC Department of Health and Human Services, 2024).

Diversity in the health and human services industry also promotes inclusion of everyone in society and helps citizens become active stakeholders in their communities (Zou, 2023). Improving diversity in the health and human services industry will help foster needed skills to address the needs of an increasingly diverse client population (Zou, 2023). Additionally, managers and employees in the health and human services industry should work to address the needs of underserved populations which will promote diversity and positive relationships (Zou, 2023). These methods will help organizations reach their goals through a comprehensive service approach (Zou, 2023).

When managers implement effective diversity practices, they are working to ensure that the services provided are fair and accessible to all clients (Buckinghamshire Council, 2024). Furthermore, managers ensure that clients are treated equally and with dignity and respect (Buckinghamshire Council, 2024). When employees are treated as individuals rather than representatives of a culture, stereotyping can be avoided (George

Washington University School of Business, 2021). Managers can also hold leadership staff accountable through establishing tools to measure diversity efforts (George Washington University School of Business, 2021).

Recommendations for Action

Senior managers in the health and human services industry would benefit from implementing actions associated the themes presented in this study to create diverse workforces to enhance employee performance including (a) obtaining leadership commitment, and (b) offering education and training on the importance of a diverse workforce environment. The six themes presented in this study should be presented to leadership staff to strengthen their commitment to creating a diverse workforce. Specifically, commitment from leadership was one of the six themes identified. Participants reported that this commitment helps to foster culturally diverse workforces and working environments with a sense of belonging.

Education and training was another theme identified. Senior managers in the health and human services industry should offer education and training on the importance of a diverse workforce environment, awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds, and team building.

Another recommendation is to provide training on the six themes identified within this study. Leaders, managers, and employees at all levels would benefit from this type of training. This training would include education on cultural competence, awareness and understanding of different cultures and backgrounds, as well as training on diversity and inclusion and overcoming bias. As a result, workforces would become more diverse. For

example, in a recent study, one organization saw a 29% increase in underrepresented populations in its workforce (Llado-Farrulla et al., 2021).

The results of this research can be disseminated in various ways. One way would be to publish the results in literature such as scholarly journals. The results could also be presented via training for senior leaders in the health and human services industry. Training could be delivered at individual organizations or health and human services conferences.

Recommendations for Further Research

One recommendation for further research would be to increase the sample size of health and human services senior managers. An increased sample size could help further data saturation and increase validity (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Another recommendation would be to address the limitation of participants self-reporting when answering interview questions. Researchers can address these limitations by conducting observational studies or quantitative research. Observational studies consist of researchers collecting data from participants or study data already collected (National Cancer Institute, 2023). In observational studies, researchers follow participants over a time period (National Cancer Institute, 2023). Future research would include strategies to mitigate self-reporting bias arising from social desirability, recall period, or selective recall (Althubaiti, 2016).

Reflections

This research on strategies that senior managers in the health and human services industry use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance has

provided me with growth both personally and professionally. I have been able to learn and understand the different dynamics and strategies that are needed to be intentional with promoting diversity in the workplace. I also had the opportunity to further understand the perspectives of senior managers in the health and human services industry. This deeper understanding has provided confirmation that a diverse workforce can contribute to increased employee satisfaction and performance. The senior managers participating in this study agreed that the health and human services industry would benefit from implementing actions associated with the themes presented in this study.

During this research study process, I worked diligently to mitigate biases as the researcher and biases on the part of the participants. I took several steps to address any bias including recording and transcribing participant interviews, conducting document reviews, keeping a reflective journal, and conducting member checking. I implemented a rigorous data analysis process to identify the six themes based on the participant interviews. I have a greater respect for the entire research study process than when I first started this journey.

Conclusion

In this section, I provided a detailed analysis of the research study findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further research, and reflections. The findings provide insight into how the health and human services industry can enhance the quality of services provided and increase employee performance through creating diverse workforces. These results can be achieved through having commitment from leadership

and providing education and training on the importance of diverse workforce environments. It is important for organization leaders to provide required diversity training to all individuals responsible for hiring members of the workforce. This will not only address the education and training needs but will also reinforce the commitment from organizational leaders.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

I will reach out to the organization executive directors to introduce myself and inform them on the specifics of the study.

Introduce the interview and set the stage: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. In this interview, I would like to discuss strategies that managers in the health and human services industry successfully use to create a diverse workforce to increase employee performance. As you are aware, with your permission I will be recording our discussion, so that it can be accurately transcribed for research purposes. This interview should take approximately 1 hour.

I will let each participant know that their identity will be kept confidential. I will also inform them of their right to refuse to respond to any questions, refuse permission to record, and ensure that their privacy will be respected.

Interview Questions:

1. What is your experience with creating a diverse workforce in the health and human services field?
2. What strategies are being implemented to create a diverse workforce?
3. How do you assess the effectiveness of strategies for creating a diverse workforce?
4. Of the strategies identified, which ones are more effective in creating a diverse workforce?
5. How, if at all, have your strategies for creating a diverse workforce changed over time?

6. What were the key challenges to implementing strategies for creating a diverse workforce?
7. How did you address the key challenges to implementing your organization's strategies for creative a diverse workforce?
8. What else would you like to say about strategies that you use to create a diverse workforce and increase employee performance?

At the conclusion of the interview, I will express my appreciation to the participants for taking the time to participate, I will remind them that they will have the opportunity to review the transcribed interview to confirm accurateness. At this time, the recording will end.

I will then schedule the follow-up/member checking interview so that the participant will have the opportunity to clarify, correct, or add information as needed.