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Investing in Least Developed Countries: The Aynak Mine Project

Roosevelt Barfield
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Roosevelt Barfield

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Investing in Least Developed Countries: The Aynak Copper Mine Project

by

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MSA, Central Michigan University, 2003

BA, University of Kansas, 1985

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

May 2016

Abstract

The rise of market globalization creates challenges for business executives seeking to pursue foreign direct investment (FDI) in least developed countries (LDC), such as Afghanistan. Multinational corporate (MNC) executives need strategies that will improve the timely delivery of minerals for mining projects in LDCs. Guided by the force field analysis theory, the purpose of this holistic, single-case study was to explore the strategies that 5 MNC executives in Beijing, China, used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan.

Semistructured interviews were used to elicit detailed narratives from MNC executives about their experiences to develop strategies for mining projects in LDCs. A review of company documents, as well as member-checking of initial interview transcripts, helped to bolster the trustworthiness of final interpretations. Study results included 2 themes.

Theme 1 was determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs that included an exploration of driving forces, restraining forces, neutral forces, and the effect of those forces. Theme 2 was FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs that included the comparison of cost leadership strategy, differentiation strategy, and combination of cost leadership and differentiation strategies. By implementing a cost leadership strategy and best practices, MNC executives were able to achieve greater success to improve timely delivery of minerals associated with FDI copper mine projects in LDCs. Social implications include ongoing efforts of Afghan government leaders to implement effective economic policies that decrease unemployment while reducing poverty.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to wife, Patricia Cole. Thank you for all of your patience, love, support, and encouragement throughout my doctoral journey. You put up with many late nights and missed lots of quality time. I could not have done it without you.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Economic and security conditions in Afghanistan are best described as extreme and unstable (Wishnick, 2012). These conditions, combined with market globalization, create challenges for business executives seeking to pursue foreign direct investment (FDI) in Afghanistan (Contractor, 2013; Saleem, Ali, & Shroder, 2011). Of the \$49.08 billion in total revenues for 2011 reported by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), \$45.79 billion came from foreign aid and only \$3.29 billion from domestic business sources (Miszak & Monsutti, 2014; Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction [SIGAR], 2011). As the United States and other nation's reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan diminish, GoA officials remain focused on pursuing and implementing business development initiatives using FDI as a part of their overall economic development strategy (Miszak & Monsutti, 2014; Spector, 2012). It is possible for least developed countries (LDCs) with extractive resources (e.g., minerals, coal, gas, and oil) to attract FDI as a way to build or jump-start business development.

Background of the Problem

Foreign aid is not the only answer to economic development, but GoA can use it as a foundation (Saleem et al., 2011). In 2009, officials of the Afghanistan Geological Survey projected a possible \$1 trillion gain in domestic revenues over the next decade from the mining industry alone (SIGAR, 2011). The pursuit of FDI in many LDCs has often contributed to domestic economic growth and long-term stability (Chien, Zhong, & Giang, 2012; Driffield, Jones, & Crotty, 2013). This study is an exploration of the

strategy employed by MNC executives and the factors that drive and restrain the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine in Logar Province, Afghanistan.

The concept of force-field analysis served as the conceptual framework for this study. Researchers use force-field analysis, an analytical technique, to identify those forces likely to influence an organization or process (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The intent of this study was to identify the driving and restraining forces associated with the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project. The primary factors affecting the business strategy for the project were the governing efforts, regulatory controls, and economic policies implemented by the GoA officials (XYZ, 2015). Many MNC executives, such as the China Metallurgical Group Corporation (XYZ) operating in LDCs similar to Afghanistan, often lack strategies that improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with mining projects (Sampathkumar, 2012). Notwithstanding operational delays, the Aynak mine project served as the representative case for this study.

Problem Statement

At the 2012 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, members reported that between 2010 and 2012, LDCs received \$91 billion (68%) of the \$134.1 billion in FDIs for mining projects (Kennedy, Bardy, & Rubens, 2012); even though MNC executives reported significant financial losses. During this timeframe, significant operational delays occurred, which resulted in financial losses for three out of every four mining investment projects in LDCs (De Haan & Thorat, 2012; Driffield et al., 2013). The general business problem was the inability of some MNC executives responsible for mining investment projects in LDCs to reduce the risks associated with the timely

delivery of minerals; this resulted in a loss of business profitability. The specific business problem was that some MNC executives often lacked strategies to improve the timely delivery of minerals for mining projects in LDCs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, holistic, single-case study was to explore the strategy that MNC executives from XYZ corporation used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan (an LDC). The target population consisted of MNC executives from XYZ corporation in China. I conducted interviews with five executives from the XYZ corporation. The participants' location was China; therefore, I used Skype for the interviews. The implications for social change included more available jobs leading to decreased unemployment supported by improved business practices from firms that chose to engage in mining projects in LDCs.

Nature of the Study

Yin (2013) stated that a qualitative method using a holistic approach allows the user to summarize facts, checks data coherence, and interpret the data analysis about the identified phenomenon. A qualitative method is an appropriate method for this single case study used to explore evidence of the strategies that some MNC executives used to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak mine project. Not appropriate was the quantitative method because my study, did not call for closed-ended questions, which did not allow for discovery of new facts or evidence to support the unit of analysis—the

Aynak mine project. Similarly, a mixed-method approach was not appropriate because my study is qualitative and does not require a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

I selected a case study design because it allowed me to explore a representative case—the Aynak mine project—and thus develop a holistic understanding of it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I did not select a phenomenological design because my study was not about lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I did not choose an ethnographic design because I did not need to know about the shared behavioral patterns of many individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Research Question

The aim of this study was to identify forces that drive and restrain the strategy employed by CGMC for the Aynak mine project in Afghanistan. The central research question was as follows: What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project?

Interview Questions

The data analysis section includes interview questions for the study participants. The interview questions are:

1. What strategy did you use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the
2. Aynak copper mine project?
3. What were the primary driving and restraining forces that you addressed in your strategy to ensure the success of the Aynak copper mine project?
4. What are the operational milestones listed in your strategy for the Aynak
5. Copper mine?

6. What is your current and projected progress timeline relative to your strategy milestones?
7. In what ways did you overcome the lack of Afghan regulatory controls and economic policies to win the bid for the Aynak copper mine project?
8. What measures did you include in your strategy to overcome the factors that posed the most risk to achieving success and the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project?
9. What actions did you take to minimize the effects of any operational delays for Aynak copper mine project?
10. What factors did you address to ensure that the strategy supported a positive return on your investment in the Aynak copper mine project?
11. What lessons may other MNC executives apply from the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project to achieve success in future copper mine projects in Afghanistan?
12. What other information can you share, which was not asked, regarding this topic?

Conceptual Framework

The concept of force-field analysis (FFA) was appropriate as the conceptual framework for this case study and served as the foundation for answering the guiding question, What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? In fact, the exploration of strategies that improved the timely delivery of minerals helped in establishing best business practices.

Created in 1951 by psychologist Kurt Lewin, researchers use the technique to examine the effects of three elements: driving forces (e.g., factors that encourage), restraining forces (e.g., factors that discourage), and neutral forces (e.g., factors that both encourage and discourage) on processes and decisions (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Using FFA enables researchers to identify how driving forces and restraining forces affect the achievement of a strategy that supports the successful execution of a project (Burnes & Cooke, 2013).

Blonigen and Piger (2014) noted that forces associated with FFA are synonymous with determinants of FDI. The identification of these determinants aided in the exploration of the unit of analysis, the Aynak copper mine project. The primary determinants of FDI included good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, control of corruption, security, infrastructure, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment (Blonigen & Piger, 2014).

Operational Definitions

Economic development. This activity is associated with policy, regulatory control, and governing that is designed to create an attractive economic climate and to develop markets within a host country (World Bank, 2012).

Foreign direct investment. Foreign direct investment is an investment in international business's assets into domestic structures, equipment, and organizations, for profit (Ardiyanto, 2012).

Good governance. The concept of good governance refers to a manner of governing through directing, guiding, or regulating the actions of individuals, organizations, or nations (Shank, Hill, & Stang, 2013).

Human development index. The human development index, as defined by the United Nations, is a comparative measure of a country's life expectancy, literacy, education, and standards of living (Transparency International, 2013).

Least developed country. A country that lacks good governance, is marked by ongoing or continuous conflict, and has the lowest socioeconomic and human development index ratings in the world is called a least developed country (World Bank, 2012).

Provincial reconstruction teams. Teams composed of civilian experts and military personnel and deployed to (a) advise the provincial governors on road construction and other projects, (b) impose law and order, and (c) restore essential services are provincial reconstructive teams (Bojor & Cosma, 2013).

Reconstruction opportunity zones (ROZ). Reconstruction Opportunity Zones are export processing and free trade zones representing two main types of trade policy programs that governments of LDCs can offer foreign firms (SIGAR, 2011).

Subject matter expert. A bona fide expert or person who is an authority on a particular area or topic special, with in-depth knowledge of what it takes to do a particular job is a subject matter expert (Ekekwe, 2013).

Tender. A tender is a formal offer or set of offers of a particular resource by the tenderer (in this case, the Afghan government) described in a public contract offering that becomes a project upon completion of the bidding process (Ministry of Mines, 2015).

World trade organization (WTO). The World Trade Organization is an international organization that regulates trade between participating countries (World Bank, 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Researchers need to address the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of a study to prevent misrepresentation of the research data (Karlsen, 2014; Simon & Goes, 2013). I created instruments to help capture empirical data and thus confirm or deny assumptions and to describe the limitations and delimitations (scope) of the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements that are believed to be true but cannot be verified with empirical evidence (Simon & Goes, 2013). The primary assumption in this study was that I would gather enough data to fully answer the central research question. This assumption was proven true because I was able to garner sufficient data to answer the research question. Another assumption was that the study participants would provide truthful responses to the interview questions. This assumption was also proven true because I verified participant responses with empirical evidence from company documents and information contained in the literature review.

Limitations

The limitations of a research study are weaknesses that are mostly out of the researcher's control, given the choice of research design or other factors (Simon & Goes, 2013). A potential limitation was the use of a single-case, the Aynak copper mine project, to explore strategies used by MNC executives to improve the timely delivery of minerals was not a limitation. Yin (2013) stated that single case studies do not limit data collection if it is representative of the phenomena or issue. Another potential limitation was that the U.S. Government limits access to GoA officials to those with official business in during periods of conflict (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013). Therefore, I determined that access to GoA officials was not a limitation to data collection. The population and sample size was a limitation, but not significant enough to hinder data collection. The data collection process must permit the researcher to unbiased data collection. I mitigated research bias through member checking, transcript review, and did not use personal opinions.

Delimitations

Simon and Goes (2013) described delimitations as those characteristics that limit the scope of a study, define its boundaries, and are in the researcher's control. This study required the participation of a minimum of five executives from XYZ who made contributions to the development and selection of the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project. The five executives selected for interviews were the primary source of information for this study at the exclusion of all other XYZ executives. Delimitations also

included the expectation that the time allowed by Walden University was adequate for carrying out the research.

Significance of the Study

In this subsection, I elaborate on the study's contribution to business practice and the implications for social change. A contribution to business practice should enable company leaders to adopt best practices to improve overall operational efficiency (Morrissey & Udomkerdmongkol, 2012). The results of the study should contribute to positive social change in Afghanistan or any LDC.

Contribution to Business Practice

This qualitative, single-case study is of value to business leaders because it contains insights into what forces drove and restrained the strategy used by XYZ executives for the timely delivery of minerals to the Aynak copper mine project. Exploring the Aynak copper mine project as a representative case led to the improvement of business practices for future copper mining projects in LDCs, such as Afghanistan. Using the analysis of this study's findings, MNC executives can develop strategies—including public-private partnerships—to spur future investment in Afghanistan and other LDC mining industries (Park, 2012; Pellillo, 2012). Last, as supported by the investment strategy analysis of Girod (2012), findings from this study should help inform MNC executives on how to develop successful strategies for future mining projects in LDCs such as Afghanistan.

Implications for Social Change

Results from this study might contribute to positive social change if GoA officials align economic development projects with good governance initiatives. Good governance

is a major factor in analyzing the relationship between host country business development and FDI strategies employed by MNC executives in LDCs (Ardiyanto, 2012; Ferreira, 2012; Girod, 2012). High mortality due to poverty in LDCs such as Afghanistan contributes to an ongoing deterioration in social conditions (Ramanaiah, Babu, & Gowri, 2013; SIGAR, 2011). With 42% of the Afghan population in poverty, Afghanistan currently ranked 19th on the United Nation's list of the 20 LDCs (World Bank, 2012). It is expected that good governance policies enacted in support of the Aynak copper mine project will contribute to Afghan government leaders' ongoing efforts to implement effective economic policies to reduce poverty. Also, the findings of this study contain insights and recommendations that the United States and other international policymakers can use to promote positive social change in Afghanistan and thus reduce poverty significantly.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The review of the professional and academic literature includes a critical analysis and synthesis of the various sources and an explanation of the strategy used by MNC executives for the Aynak copper mine project. It starts with the organization of the review. Table X summarizes the frequencies and percentages of the minimum 60 peer-reviewed articles published within the last five years. Of the total sources, 85% were peer reviewed.

MNC executives that seek to employ FDI in LDCs, such as Afghanistan, must account for forces that drive or restrain the success of their investment strategy (Saleem et al., 2011). The successful strategy used in the Aynak mine investment project served as

the proof of principle for MNC leaders that sought to invest in LDCs (Driffield et al., 2013; SIGAR. 2011). This literature review consists of an examination of peer-viewed journals, dissertations, books, financial and international agency databases, U.S. government databases, business, and international websites, reports and archival data, magazine and news articles. I used 16 databases and portals in the literature search: Sage Research Methods online database, ProQuest all-dissertation database, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, EBSCO ebooks, LexiNexis Academic, Military and Government Collection, Sage Premier, Department of State, Department of Defense, Harvard Business Review, GoogleScholar, SageStats, and ScholarWorks. In addition, four business and management databases, three policy and administration databases, three military and security databases, and three multidisciplinary databases were used.

Researchers use literature reviews to (a) add support to the topic, (b) identify the literature that will make a contribution to the research, (c) build an understanding of the conceptual framework and literature, (d) establish a bibliography of sources, and (e) analyze results (Borrego, Foster, & Froyd, 2014; Rowley, 2012). Yin (2013) stated that a literature review helps researchers avoid duplication of existing research while contributing to the existing body of literature. The literature review contains in-depth inquiry into the business problem, The specific business problem was that some MNC executives lack strategies to improve the timely delivery of minerals for mining projects in LDCs.

Organization of the Review

The literature review includes an opening narrative that contains a brief discussion of the literature content, including the following: evidence of critical analysis and syntheses, organization, search strategy, and a summary of frequencies and percentages or dates of peer-reviewed articles. In addition, the application of the applied business problem includes the purpose, critical analysis and synthesis pertaining to the conceptual framework, and a critical analysis and synthesis pertaining potential themes and phenomena. I organized the application of the applied business problem into two sections that represents the three main tenets with supporting topics: the FFA concept, determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs, and delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project.

Search Strategy

I used the search strategy to show the application to the business problem and the relevance of the literature. I used search terms directly and indirectly related to the problem statement and the research question for conducting searches using these databases. The following search terms were used: *Aynak mine, institutions, Foreign Direct Investment (), mines, business environment, economic development, regulatory controls, Afghan reconstruction, and investments, insurgency, social conditions, mining industry, GDP, corruption, trade and treaties, policy, and governance*. To obtain relevant information, I searched peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and theses, seminal books, and newspaper articles, papers, and reports, government and business websites.

I conducted a critical analysis and synthesis of potential themes associated with the conceptual framework. Next, I compared alternative views from the literature review. I also compared different points of view and the relationship of the study to previous research and findings. The analysis supported my discovery of potential themes to support or contrast with the key tenets of the conceptual framework. Thus, the analysis of the data helped me answer the research question, What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project?

Summary of Frequencies and Percentages of Peer-Reviewed Articles

The content of the literature review includes peer-reviewed articles, dissertations and theses, seminal books, and newspaper articles, papers and reports, government and business websites to obtain information relevant to the research topic. My study included 80 peer-reviewed sources of which 67 were peer reviewed articles. Displayed in Table 1 is a summary of frequencies (number of times used) for the peer reviewed sources listed in the literature review.

Table 1

Frequencies of Sources Researched in Literature Review

Reference Type	Quantity	Frequency
Peer Reviewed Journals	67	201
Dissertations and Theses	12	70
Seminal Books	1	1
Total	80	255

There are 144 sources used in this study, of which 91% are peer reviewed, and 94% are within 5 years of expected CAO approval in 2016. Accordingly, a minimum of 60 peer-reviewed articles is included in the literature review. Depicted in Table 2 is the percentages of all sources including peer-reviewed journals, dissertations, theses, and seminal books. Other sources included in Table 2 are websites, papers, reports, and newspaper articles comprising 9.3%.

Table 2

Percentages of Sources Researched in Literature Review

Reference Type	Total	%	<5 years	>5 years
Scholarly and peer-review journals	13	79.0	112	1
Dissertations and theses	14	9.8	13	1
Seminal books	3	2.1	2	1
Magazine articles	1	.07	1	0
White Papers and reports	3	2.1	0	3
Government, company, and international websites	10	7.1	7	3

Application to the Applied Business Problem

Included in the application to the applied business problem is a restatement of the purpose of the study and a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature pertaining to the conceptual framework. I incorporated a critical analysis and synthesis of the literature pertaining to potential themes and the phenomena (the Aynak copper mine project). In addition, I compared and contrasted different points of view and the relationship of the

study to previous research and findings. Overall, the application to the applied business problem contains a comprehensive critical analysis and synthesis of the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, holistic single-case study was to explore the strategy that MNC executives from XYZ corporation used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan (an LDC). The target population consisted of five MNC executives from XYZ corporation that developed the strategy used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Afghan Aynak mine project. I conducted interviews with five executives from XYZ. The study participants' location is in China; therefore, I conducted Skype interviews with the XYZ executives. The implications of social change included more available jobs and decreased unemployment supported by improved business practices for firms that chose to engage in mining projects in LDCs.

Critical Analysis and Synthesis of the Conceptual Framework

Force-field analysis was the conceptual framework chosen for this case study. Researchers using psychologist Kurt Lewin's FFA technique (2013) will identify forces such as driving forces (e.g., factors that encourage), restraining forces (e.g., factors that discourage), and their effects on FDI projects. FFA is an analytical technique, not a problem-solving tool designed to help decision makers identify, document, and understand those forces likely to influence a program or process (Blonigen & Piger, 2014; Shera & Meyer, 2013; Swanson & Creed, 2014).

In contrast to the FFA model, both the Schein triadic model and the Burke-Litwin model are analytical techniques used in decision making that focuses on individual assumptions, cognition, and beliefs, not on business determinants. In support of Lewin's FFA, Meissonier, Houzé, and Bessière (2013) stated that the Schein triadic model addresses a culture of friction where assumptions, facts, and suppositions coexist to affect basic decision making. Meissonier et al. stated that the Schein triadic model uses unconscious beliefs while the FFA model is a technique for identifying forces (quantitative and qualitative) to support decision making. Meissonier et al. (2013) described this model as an analytical tool that supports the use of unconscious beliefs in decision-making to make sense of situations. Meissonier et al. concluded that decision makers use a set of basic assumptions as part of shared cognitive reasoning to guide the decision-making process. The basic assumptions are (a) ego orientation in the business context refers to saving face over gaining profits and (b) social orientation in a business relationship implies mutual trust and conflict avoidance at all costs (Meissonier, Houzé, & Bessière, 2013).

Boone (2012) posited that the Burke-Litwin model is a useful tool for examining the organization's climate as the primary factor in decision making. Boone stated that the Burke-Litwin model of organizational performance and change contained the guide for an individual to look at factors as a symptom of employee morale and organizational culture. In contrast to the focus of FFA that identifies driving and restraining forces affecting decision making, the focus of the Burke-Litwin model focuses is on factors affecting performance management. Business leaders employ the Burke-Litwin model to

promote change and subsequently create positive linkages within the organization (Boone, 2012).

Based on information gleaned from a FFA, business leaders can leverage driving forces and mitigate restraining forces to develop practical action plans and effective organizational practices that are multidimensional and focused on high-leverage issues of economic development (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The primary objectives of using FFA are to:

1. Describe the current situation.
2. Identify the forces affecting the current situation as either driving or restraining.
3. Assess strengths among the forces.
4. Assess the effects of the forces on the stated goal or goals (Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Card, 2013; Holloway-Cripps, 2013).

A logical step for leaders after identifying the forces working for and against change is to determine priorities and set goals within the context of the business or governing environments (Burnes & Cooke, 2013; Holloway-Cripps, 2013). Card (2013) stated that the forces associated with FFA are synonymous with such terms as factors, elements, and determinants, and they become forces when they have opposing effects on the status quo or equilibrium of a program or process. Using FFA as the conceptual framework assisted in the exploration of the case study unit of analysis, the aynak copper mine project. Throughout the study, the process of FFA served as the underlying principle to answer the research question, What strategy did some MNC business

executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project?

Potential Themes and Phenomena

The critical analysis and synthesis of the literature included potential themes. The potential primary theme was the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs with several subthemes that were supported by peer-reviewed literature. In addition, the phenomena, delivery of Minerals from the Aynak copper mine project, was also the unit of analysis. I identified a potential primary theme, potential subthemes, and the phenomena as listed in the purpose statement.

Determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs. Determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs was the primary theme and the phenomena. The content of the literature review depicted the relationship between LDCs and how FDI determinants acted as driving and restraining forces. Subsequently, these forces affected the strategy used by XYZ executives to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project. MNC executives who choose to conduct business in LDCs must account for immature or non-existent business structures operating within the chosen LDC (Driffield et al., 2013; Girod, 2012;). MNC executives should identify and analyze the forces controlled by the LDC government as FDI determinants when developing a business strategy. The forces include good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, control of corruption, security, road reconstruction, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment.

Good governance. Afghanistan's economic development goal as supported by good governance policies is to attract FDI by MNC executives to build a market-based economy (Coyne & Pellillo, 2012; Gour & Haider, 2014). Good governance is an action that directs, guides, or regulates nations (Othman & Rahman, 2014; Singh, 2013). The concept of good governance signifies a participative manner of governing, through government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption (Ferreira, 2012; Miszak & Monsutti, 2014). The objective of government officials to enact good governance is to implement legislative initiatives practices to achieve economic development (Garrett-Howard, 2012; Shank et al., 2013).

The legislative initiatives addressed so far by GoA officials have produced some progress toward spurring increased FDI (Coyne & Pellillo, 2012; Derado, 2013; Saleem et al., 2011). Legislative initiatives are means by which Afghanistan's provincial governors can support FDI projects located within their provinces (Blunt, Mamundzay, Yama, & Afghan, 2015; Oumar & Sama, 2015). One successful legislative initiative implemented by leaders of the GoA is the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program. The results of this program revealed the positive economic effects of integrating refugees and former insurgents into the workforce, thereby, providing labor for FDI projects associated with the mining sector (Gour & Haider, 2014; Saleem et al., 2011). The National Solidarity Program is another successful legislative initiative of GoA leaders that empowered provincial governors with the authority to prioritize economic development funds aimed at creating a business environment suitable to sustain FDI projects (Morrissey & Udomkerdmongkol, 2012; SIGAR, 2011; Wishnick, 2012).

According to Ardiyanto (2012), three aspects of good governance are viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, and control of corruption. The first component, viable economic institutions—the alignment of social and economic goals in government—is accomplished through the application of best practices designed to ensure economic safeguards (Ardiyanto, 2012). The second component, regulatory controls, is government official ensuring accountability, due processes of law, and related economic safeguards (Ardiyanto, 2012). The third component, control of corruption, is contingent on government oversight and provides legitimacy to business leaders that implement development initiatives (Ardiyanto, 2012). If addressed by the strategy employed by the MNC executives, these three aspects can act as driving forces for FDI projects.

Viable economic institutions. In Afghanistan, viable economic institutions are sustained through shared responsibility between the central and provincial governments (Coyne & Pellillo, 2012; Miszak & Monsutti, 2014). Successful leaders of economic institution building in Afghanistan require the government's leaders to design an integrated plan to enhance security, rehabilitate infrastructure, build formal economic institutions, and enhance social conditions (Blunt et al., 2015; Ramanaiah et al., 2013; Wishnick, 2012).

The following three projects and funding sources illustrate the kinds of efforts directed at building viable institutions in Afghanistan designed to spur FDI. First, officials from the United States spent billions of dollars in reconstruction contracts to empower provincial governors, build Afghan institutions, and promote economic development

(SIGAR, 2011). Second, UN and World Bank officials created the National Community Empowerment Program a Program for use by the GoA leaders to promote the creation of viable institutions (World Bank, 2012). Third, the regulations included in the Performance-Based Governors Fund provided a means to train managers of provincial and GoA-level institutions to improve their overall management capacity (SIGAR, 2011). Despite the delayed creation of viable economic institutions, GoA officials were able to negotiate an effective strategy for managing FDI projects with MNC executives.

Regulatory controls. Approval from the High Commission on Investment included a provision of the Afghan constitution that prohibited the use of FDI in the exploitation of natural resources without prior(SIGAR, 2011). Many experts believe that tying regulatory controls for trade to FDI projects is an essential control in LDCs, specifically Afghanistan (Pahlavani, Sheykhzadeh, & Hoseini, 2012; Pellillo, 2012). In 2009, to implement trade among the border provinces of Pakistan and Afghanistan, GoA officials enacted the policy of using reconstruction opportunity zones (ROZs) to create an environment conducive to foreign investment (Ardiyanto, 2012; SIGAR, 2011). The policy decision by GoA leaders included the use of resources within ROZs to aid in the facilitation of FDI projects such as; oil, gas, and mining in the Afghan-Pakistan border provinces (SIGAR, 2011). An opportunity to create an ROZ exist in the Logar province bordering the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in Iran (Bojor & Cosma; 2013; Pahlavani et al., 2012). Similar to Iran, GoA officials should avoid Iran's mistake of failing to use available funds to develop the mining industry using their abundance of mining resources (Pahlavani et al., 2012; Sampathkumar, 2012). The leaders of the neighboring countries

of India, Pakistan, and China have all signed trade agreements with GoA officials to establish ROZs between their border provinces (Pellillo, 2012; Sharan, 2012; Wishnick, 2012). Similar to Mauritius, as noted by Sooreea-Bheemul and Sooreea (2012), GoA officials can gain entry and leverage membership in various regional organizations, thereby, attracting more FDI. Regulatory controls have the potential to restrain GoA officials to manage efficiently trade when tied to FDI projects. As a potential driving force, regulatory controls should support increased FDI projects similar to those in Vietnam that generated a four-fold increase in GDP over a span of 5 years (Chien et al., 2012; Kennedy et al., 2012).

Control of corruption. Instances of corruption reported by some GoA leadership often restrain the growth of FDI projects (Spector, 2012; Majeed, 2014). Corruption is the extent to which governments lack easily discernible and widely accepted practices, specifically when MNC executives conduct business in LDCs (Freckleton, Wright, & Craigwell, 2012; Mukherjee & Roy, 2014). Authors of a recent UN report indicated that 59% of Afghan citizens found it impossible to obtain any public service without paying a bribe illustrating the pervasive nature of corruption (Unruh & Shalaby, 2012). Listed in the 2013 Corruption Perception Index, the ranking for Afghanistan is 174 out of 176 countries based on the level of corruption reported for public sector institutions (Belniak, 2015; Transparency International, 2013; World Bank, 2012). Leaders of the GoA used approximately \$10 billion of the \$60 billion in foreign aid received between 2002 and 2010 for programs designed to strengthen governance and fight corruption (Spector, 2012). Regulatory policies enacted by the GoA officials since 2009 have resulted in the

reduction of corruption by enabling more efficient contract enforcement associated with FDI projects (Spector, 2012). Corruption and lack of accountability among foreign contractors remain challenges, but GoA officials have reduced it to a point where it has a minimal effect on restraining the success of FDI projects (Ferreira, 2012; Freckleton et al., 2012; SIGAR, 2011). The Afghan private investment law serves a mechanism for resolution of contract disputes between local firms conducting business with MNC executives through anticorruption programs as part of good governance initiatives (Ferreira, 2012; SIGAR, 2011; Spector, 2012). To coordinate anti-corruption efforts, GoA officials created the Afghan High Office of Oversight and Anti-Corruption to supervise the implementation of national anticorruption strategies (Spector, 2012; U.S. Agency for International Development, 2011).

Although deleterious to attracting FDI in developed countries, leaders of MNCs view corruption as beneficial to attracting FDI in LDCs, acting as a helping hand for investment success (Ardiyanto, 2012; Aziz & Makkawi, 2012; Monsutti, 2012). Even though increases in corruption have financial costs for MNCs, these costs most often do not have a negative effect on their relationship with the host country (Kolstad & Wiig, 2013). The employment of good governance concepts by LDC officials can counteract the growth of corruption by providing the discipline needed to enforce FDI agreements (Eigen, 2013). Since 2009, GoA leaders have implemented good governance through regulatory controls aiding in the steady decline of corruption (Shank et al., 2013).

As a potential driving force, when leaders of host nations place emphasis on the combined effectiveness of viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, and the

control of corruption, good governance becomes a potential driving force (Shank et al., 2013; Viswanathan, Becker, Hansen, Kumar, Kumar, Niayesh, & Vora-Sittha, 2012). If GoA leaders can achieve and sustain good governance, improvement in security should follow, thus, attracting increased FDI.

Security. A consequence of the insurgency in Afghanistan, if not mitigated, is the undermining of security gains that deter MNC executives from pursuing FDI (Saleem et al., 2011; Sultana & Aquil, 2012). Between 2007 and 2009 the number of terrorist attacks tripled which hindered development efforts, especially in the mining industry (Saleem et al., 2011; Sultana & Aquil, 2012; Wishnick, 2012). A report authored by the World Health Organization personnel, illustrating the increased violence in Afghanistan since 2010, agreed that violence in war-torn countries often stifles economic development and the success of FDI projects (SIGAR, 2011; World Bank, 2012). A comprehensive approach to addressing security concerns requires a coordinated focus on root causes (Saleem et al., 2011; Savun, & Tirone, 2012; Sultana & Aquil, 2012). To address some of the root causes, GoA officials provided additional security forces, resulting in fewer work stoppages and more on time completion of FDI-related projects associated with the Aynak copper mine project, similar to those efforts employed in Nigeria (Audu & Okumoko, 2013; SIGAR, 2011; Wishnick, 2012).

GoA officials enacted the Afghan Peace and Reintegration Program that subsequently reduced the number of security-related events (Ayman, 2013; Blunt et al., 2015). Implementation of this program has led to better security conditions in most of the provinces, especially in the Logar province which is the location of the Aynak copper

mine project (SIGAR, 2011; World Bank, 2012). Security can serve as driving force if tied to good governance initiatives that address the social issues that insurgents are using to create discontent. Security is a major component in creating an infrastructure through road reconstruction that supports the Aynak copper mine project.

Road reconstruction. Promoting infrastructure development through road reconstruction is a crucial component to aiding the post-war economic recovery in Afghanistan (Unruh & Shalaby, 2012). The Minister of Public Works' road sector master plan was \$30 million to build and maintain roads, which will in part support the Aynak copper mine project (SIGAR, 2011). The use of foreign assistance received from donors, including XYZ corporation, supported the completion of 1,600 km of regional and national highways (SIGAR, 2011). Leaders from the GoA sent reconstruction aid to provincial governors aimed at providing training for local Afghans to support contracts in support of FDI projects (SIGAR, 2011). Provincial reconstruction teams comprised of U.S. and GOA officials assisted the provincial governors in addressing security and economic development issues related to FDI projects (Bojor & Cosma, 2013; Maley, 2012; Unruh & Shalaby, 2012). Road construction, however, presents a conundrum, because roads support economic development, but are heavily targeted by insurgents (Unruh & Shalaby, 2012). As listed in the SIGAR (2011) report, a decrease in overall security negated the benefits gained through road reconstruction, thus, hindering (restraining) the progress of FDI projects with deleterious effects on social conditions.

Social conditions. The effects of deteriorating social conditions can affect sustained economic progress as much as poverty and high mortality do (World Bank,

2012). The government's FDI strategy listed the goal of providing unfettered access to basic services to enhance social conditions (Coyne & Pellillo, 2012; Hyun & Hur, 2013). The associated economic development projects gained from FDI projects should help achieve this goal, thus, decreasing poverty (Ardiyanto, 2012; Maley, 2012). As a country marked by insurgency, GOA leaders should adopt the lessons learned in Thailand, in which they tied employment, roads, water, and other services as part of the contract for approved FDI projects (Savun, & Tirone, 2012; Viswanathan et al., 2012).

One consequence of increased poverty is high mortality, especially among young children (World Bank, 2012). Since 2010, Afghanistan has had the third highest child mortality rate in the world, with more than 300,000 deaths of children aged five years and younger (Viswanathan et al., 2012). A major cause of the high mortality rate in Afghanistan is poor (a) preventive medicine, (b) health care support, (c) health system development, and (d) disease surveillance (World Bank, 2012). If all economic variables remain constant, and infrastructure should increase by only 1%, then mortality rates should decrease by 9% (Ahmed, Ramzan, Riaz, Qazi, & Jabeen, 2012; Viswanathan et al., 2012). The GOA plan is to use revenues generated from mining projects, specifically, the Aynak copper mine project to root causes of poverty Ministry of Mines, 2015). Leaders from GoA and XYZ corporation agreed to include power, water, and irrigation systems projects as part of the approved Aynak copper mine project Ministry of Mines, 2015; XYZ, 2014). In addition, GoA officials made it a requirement for the bidding process in future mine tenders (Chu, 2012; World Bank, 2012). Social conditions serve a restraining force when it increases poverty and unemployment and acts as a driving force

when economic development programs, if included as part of a comprehensive FDI strategy.

FDI strategy of the host nation. In light of Afghanistan's low economic output and 40% unemployment, as noted by Brzezinski (2012) using a comprehensive FDI strategy should lessen the effects of these factors on the success of FDI projects (Oumar & Sama, 2015). The employment of a comprehensive FDI strategy by GoA leaders should assist in developing their lucrative mining industry, valued at more than \$1 trillion (Girod, 2012; Driffield et al., 2013; Sharan, 2012). In formulating FDI strategy, GoA officials will better support contractual arrangements by employing an interactive business model (Ardiyanto, 2012). The employment of a comprehensive FDI strategy by GoA officials should yield a higher inflow of FDI to Afghanistan, and other LDCs with vast natural resources (Pahlavani et al., 2012; Shera & Meyer, 2013). Recognized as growth enhancing, the use of this type of strategy by MNC executives for attracting FDI projects has increased the economic growth in LDCs more than nine-fold (Saleem et al., 2011; Shera & Meyer, 2013).

For FDI projects in LDCs, better results occur when MNC executives pursue either a cost leadership or differentiation business level strategy, not a combination of both (Girod, 2012; Shinkle, Kriauciunas, & Hundley, 2013). The benefits of a pure strategy diminishes when the institutional environment has a low degree of market orientation but is increased when the institutional environment is more market-oriented (Girod, 2012; Shinkle et al., 2013). MNC executives often employ FDI strategies such as; a horizontal FDI strategy that sells only in the host markets or in the country, a vertical

FDI strategy that export back to the MNCs' markets, or a combined horizontal and vertical FDI strategy (Gilbert & Heinecke, 2014; Hyun & Hur, 2013). Gilbert and Heinecke (2014) proposed that MNC executives pursue regional FDI strategies for LDCs with transition economies aimed at building global integration and local responsiveness. Alternatively, MNC executives pursuing FDI in LDCs with low market orientation should consider the business environment FDI strategy of the host nation as complementary driving forces.

Business environment. Aside from the Aynak copper mine, the GoA minister of mines has limited mineral production to small-scale operations of construction materials (sand, gravel, and crushed rock) and artisanal operations of gemstones (Kuo, 2013; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). However, the authors of a 2012 report, noted the mineral sectors in Afghanistan as having the most potential to support economic development and promote reconstruction efforts (Buchanan, 2013; World Bank, 2013). As an indicator of progress toward this potential, the GoA officials are taking steps to increase investment, both domestic and foreign (World Bank, 2012). If leaders from governments, institutions, and businesses collaborate, MNC executives, they can achieve favorable results from FDI (Bardy, Drew, & Kennedy, 2012; Gandy, 2015). GoA leaders stated that the country's progress toward stabilization, institutional capacity building, and government capacity building has enabled FDI within the mining sector, generating domestic revenue (Sampathkumar, 2012; Wilson, 2012). The vision of the president of GoA is to improve Afghanistan's business environment supports efforts that achieve sustainable FDI in mineral and energy projects (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). In addition, GoA leaders

should continue to develop legal and regulatory frameworks aimed at creating a market more conducive to FDI in markets with low-orientation (Ekekwe, 2013; Gandy, 2015; Jenkins, 2015). In the mining sector, the fiscal regime is attractive for MNC executives because of

- low corporation tax and no import duties on mining or related equipment,
- mining companies having an unlimited loss carried forward,
- depreciation on a straight-line basis over five years, and
- preproduction expenses recoverable over 15 years or the life of the mine, whichever is shorter (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Sampathkumar, 2012).

Afghanistan's ranking is last out of 185 economies in investor protections based on the average of these three indices: (a) extent of disclosure, (b) extent of director liability, and (c) ease of shareholder suits (World Bank, 2012). However, GoA leaders adopted the World Bank's policies for protecting investments by MNCs that exceeds the specific requirements of the Aynak copper mine project (Ministry of Mines, 2015; World Bank, 2012). Investor protections assist firms to grow, innovate, diversify, and compete in a favorable business environment (Wilson, 2012; World Bank, 2013). If laws of the host country do not provide such protections, MNC executives are reluctant to invest (World Bank, 2013). Starting in 2012, leaders of the GoA implemented reforms to strengthen investor protections, such as investment disclosure requirements and available legal remedies to attract additional FDI (Ministry of Mines, 2015; World Bank, 2013).

In today's globalized world, to attract FDI, it is important for leaders of LDCs to facilitate trade agreements (World Bank, 2013). In a report by at the World Bank (2012),

researchers listed the GoA's ranking as 178 out of 185 economies in ease of trading across borders (World Bank, 2012). GoA officials have taken steps to make it easier to affect trade across borders with the adoption of ROZs (SIGAR, 2011; World Bank, 2012). Leaders of LDCs thrive when they have introduced policies to facilitate trade and contract enforcement (De Haan & Thorat, 2012; World Bank, 2012). Leaders of LDCs similar to Afghanistan often help businesses expand their networks and markets through effective contract enforcement, through well-functioning courts (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011; World Bank, 2012). MNC executives are more likely to achieve a successful FDI strategy for mining projects in LDCs when it is an integral part of the business environment (Liu 2013; World Bank, 2013). Supported by a comprehensive FDI strategy, GoA officials can create a business environment that serves as a driving force when buoyed by effective contract enforcement.

In sum, MNC executives should take into account how FDI determinants will affect the success of any business strategy employed in LDCs. Exploring what are the determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs should reveal driving and restraining forces. The results of my literature review revealed the driving forces as good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment. In addition, the restraining forces were control of corruption, security, road reconstruction, and social conditions. The FDI determinants described in this section served as a baseline for any strategy employed by MNC executives for FDI mining investments in LDCs. The success of the strategy that XYZ executives employed to deliver timely minerals must balance the effects of these common

driving and restraining forces as well as those specific to the Aynak copper mine project.

Aside from the Aynak copper mine, mineral production is

Delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine. As identified in the purpose statement, the delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project is the phenomena for this study. In 2009, the Afghan minister of mines announced that the Aynak copper mine deal is the biggest Project in Afghanistan (SIGAR, 2011; Wishnick, 2012). The Aynak copper mine project operated by XYZ is worth \$3.5 billion (Dhaka, 2014; Sharan, 2012; Wishnick, 2012). The leaders of GoA projected annual income from mineral production would yield \$1.2 billion per year for the first 5 years and \$3.5 billion per year, after that (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Despite the undetermined social effects, the Aynak copper mine contract represents a significant benchmark for a GoA-managed tender process (Saleem et al., 2011; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). I will describe the XYZ corporation's investment strategy and Aynak mine tender process, operational progress and describe the economic and social effects on the delivery of minerals.

XYZ investment strategy. The newness and inexperience of GoA officials added to the complexity of the mine development process; this reality necessitates leveraging the Aynak investment for broader economic development (Cho, 2014; Saleem et al., 2011; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). Because the Aynak copper mine is the first effort at developing the mining sector, GoA officials acknowledged that the venture will test laws, policy frameworks, and regulations enacted by legislators of the central government (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). Representatives of the World Bank have advised the minister of finance that a clearly defined development program for the copper deposit

would create an immediate benefit for the Afghan nation (Kumar, Dhingra, & Saihjpal, 2012; World Bank, 2012). Despite inherent challenges, MNC executives view emerging markets in LDCs as important sources of FDI (Arita, 2013; Audu & Okumoko, 2013). The business environment is a potential driving force that can effects the effect of other driving and restraining forces on the timely delivery if minerals for both the Aynak copper mine and future mining projects in Afghanistan.

MNC executives often seek to attain sustainable development as the main component of their investment strategy (Kommadath, Sarkar, & Rath, 2012). Sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) uses transformational leadership to predict how they will minimize the negative effects before, during, and after a crisis to sustain optimal operational competitiveness (Liu, 2013). XYZ executives used SCA as part of their investment strategy to mitigate the potential effects of such factors as operational delays (Kommadath et al., 2012; SIGAR, 2011). If MNC executives use SCA, they will proactively manage operations in turbulent business environments (Liu, 2013; Tole & Koop, 2013). MNC executives such as those in the XYZ corporation often have better results pursuing a single strategy approach combined with a business level strategy of either cost leadership or differentiation, for projects in LDCs (XYZ, 2015; Girod, 2012; Shinkle et al., 2013).

XYZ executives chose a single strategy approach combined with a business level strategy of cost leadership for the Aynak copper mine project, because of Afghanistan's low market orientation (XYZ, 2015). A cost leadership strategy is a strategy used by business executives to create a low cost of operation within their niche (Gehani, 2013).

The use of this strategy is to gain an advantage over competitors by reducing operation costs below that of others in the same industry (Gehani, 2013). A single strategy approach includes a limited set of activities, such as marketing for differentiation or operations for cost leadership (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė, Grunda, & Bartkus, 2012). A differentiation strategy is an approach under which a business executive aims to develop and market unique products for different customer segments (Shinkle et al., 2013). MNC executives employ this strategy when a firm has clear competitive advantages, and can sustain an expensive advertising campaign (Shinkle et al., 2013). When choosing this approach, MNC executives adapt to the regulations, business environment, and enforcement mechanisms present in the host nation (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). The institutional environment will influence a business leader's flexibility in areas operations, trade, contract enforcement, and corruption (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). Business leaders stated that institutional environments with low market orientation include political favoritism along with a higher level of uncertainty (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). Also, in a nation with low market orientation, the use of a pure strategy approach reduces risks because there are few competitors (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). The benefits of a single strategy approach includes a clear direction and avoids complexity, helps business leaders avoid mutually exclusive trade-offs with less market flexibility, and reduces uncertainty through a clear market position (Shinkle et al., 2013).

Alternatively, business executives use a mixed strategy approach that combines both the differentiation and cost leadership strategies to help a firm meet current market requirements and prepare for competitors and is best for nations with high market orientation (Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). Similar to the XYZ leaders, MNC executives often achieve success when they pursue a cost leadership strategy to reach a lower cost for a product or service than its competition (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). A mixed strategy combines the cost leadership and differentiation strategies simultaneously address the cost of operations, create market niches, and respond to competition (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013). MNC executives employ this strategy where there are many competitors, and the market is constantly changing (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013).

A business leader can achieve a higher profit margin and lower costs if they employ this strategy (Gehani, 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). The pros and cons are as follows:

- A cost leadership strategy is advantageous because business leaders can sell their products with or without a profit while achieving a bigger market share.
- This strategy can help business leaders successfully address potential competitors by lowering prices to decrease profit margins, making the market less attractive.
- Cost leadership is ideal for low market orientation because a business leader can gain a controlling market share.

- A downside is that fluctuations in market prices will cause the firm to raise prices so that others can compete. (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle, Kriauciunas, & Hundley, 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012)

In contrast, a business leader can create a product or service that's unique from its competitors when using a differentiation business level strategy (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). The pros and cons are:

- If chosen, the firm can charge premiums without any financial risks because it has market acceptance.
- Differentiation works well in high or low market orientations because there is no available substitutes or alternative.
- The downside is that market changes will reduce market acceptance over time. (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012)

XYZ executives stated that the Aynak copper mine project and the low market orientation in Afghanistan best supports the use of a cost leadership strategy (XYZ, 2015; Gehani, 2013). Despite Afghanistan's low market orientation and its dependence on foreign aid, the minister of mines identified the development of the minerals sector as important to creating employment and raising revenues (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). XYZ executives noted that their mining investment strategy works well in Afghanistan because it is an LDC with high corruption and weak governance and should yield a high return on investment (XYZ, 2015). The investment strategy used by XYZ executives should serve as a driving force for successful delivery of minerals from

the Aynak copper mine project. LDCs should award mine tenders through a competitive award process using a public–private partnership concept (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011).

Aynak mine tender process. The Aynak mine tender process began in 2004, followed by the issuance of the bid package in 2007, and selection of the winning bidder in 2008 (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The GoA’s minister of mines selected Aynak as the initial tender because of the relatively secure working environment and the advanced geologic exploration (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). As the first multibillion-dollar investment for the GoA, the Aynak copper mine tender represented a milestone in the overall economic policy to attract FDI (Kuo, 2013; Park, 2012; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The Aynak mine tender process’s broad scope of work consisted of the following eight steps:

1. Preparation of tender plan. The transaction adviser crafted a tender plan in October 2005, after consulting with both the British Geological Survey and the Afghanistan Geological Survey on geologic data support.
2. Solicitation of expressions of interest. The request for expressions of interest published in September 2006 provided information on prequalification, data availability, and the application process, following principles for open international bidding.
3. Prequalification of bidders. In December 2006, the transaction adviser used a quantitatively scored evaluation matrix defined in the tender plan for each firm’s technical capacity, financial capacity, and regional experience.

4. Preparation of bid package. The bid package, or request for proposals, was the basis for obtaining indicative bids from prequalified bidders in January 2007; it included instructions to bidders, rules for negotiation, a draft model contract, fiscal and regulatory guidance, and a summary of available geological data.

5. Bidder's due diligence. From January to June 2007, this task allowed qualified bidders to access a data room and to perform preliminary due diligence, regardless of whether they intended to prepare a bid.

6. Receipt of submissions and selection of responsive bids. The transaction adviser managed the receipt of final bid submissions and helped the evaluation committee check for compliance with instructions to bidders and for all deadlines and requirements, in July 2007.

7. Technical and financial evaluation of responsive bids. From July to November 2007, the technical and financial data of the five companies that submitted responsive bids were considered simultaneously, regarding the size and scope of the technical and financial commitments required. Of the five MNCs, only the leaders of the XYZ and Phelps Dodge International corporations provided enough significant detail regarding their plans for developing the project and the benefits that would accrue to Afghanistan.

8. Negotiation with selected bidder and award of the tender contract license.

(Ministry of Mines, 2015; Park, 2012; Pellillo, 2012)

When offering a mineral tender bid, LDC officials often insist on a package of economic, environmental, and social linkages to occur within the mine and across the

broader economy (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011, World Bank, 2013). The bid package included bundles mine and infrastructure or otherwise convey how the developer and government would work to address the issue jointly (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). LDC officials and MNC executives recognized the potential contribution of early infrastructure in catalyzing regional benefits and fostering economic diversity (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The more complete the bid specifications, the more efficiently the project will achieve contractual closure (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). MNC executives noted that dedicating the time up front to improve the quality of the bid package can help accelerate the closure of a tender (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). An efficient award process includes the following characteristics:

- transparent, competitive, and nondiscretionary procedures for awarding exploration, development, and production rights;
- clear legal, regulatory, and contractual framework;
- well-defined institutional responsibilities; and
- clearly specified environmental and social safeguards (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011).

The use of a public–private partnership by MNC executives ensures the success of a contract tender process because it provides a system of checks and balances against corruption while strengthening good governance (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The leaders of GoA noted that the Aynak mine tender was a public–private partnership centered on infrastructure projects and packaged with key requirements and incentives (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). GoA officials have the authority under a public–private

partnership to regulate and administer mine development—awarding contracts and licenses, monitoring operations, enforcing environmental protection and social mitigation requirements (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). XYZ executives sought to develop, produce, and sell the mineral while complying with all license, contract, and regulatory conditions of the GoA (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The Aynak copper deposit in Afghanistan is an example of a public–private partnership marked by a competitive award process for the rights to exploit the mineral resources within a 30-year time frame (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011).

The Afghanistan minister of mines selected nine companies to submit comprehensive technical and financial proposals for the development of the Aynak copper deposit. They included Bahar Consortium, of Australia; Hindalco Industries Ltd., of India; Hunter Dickinson, Inc., of Canada; and Kazakhmys Corporation LLC, of Kazakhstan (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Others were XYZ of China; Phelps Dodge Corporation, of the United States; StrikeForce Limited, of Russia; Tyazhpromexport, of Russia; and Zijin Mining Group Company Limited, of China (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Officials from the GoA selected XYZ as the winner of the Aynak mine tender in December 2007 and signed a 100% mining rights agreement with the Afghan government for the Aynak copper project on May 25, 2008 (Ministry of Mines, 2015). The ranking of the XYZ corporation is 280th among the world’s Fortune 500 companies with natural resources exploitation as its largest business segment (XYZ, 2015). Officials from the World Bank and an American consulting firm oversaw the bidding process for the Aynak project to prevent corruption (Kuo, 2013; Kolstad & Wiig, 2013). Drafters of the 2008

Afghanistan National Development Strategy acknowledged the need to increase the central government's efforts to improve the mine tender through lessons learned from the Aynak tender (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Nazminia, 2013). As a potential driving force, the mine tender contract process provides a baseline for exploring the operational progress, and economic and social effects of the Aynak copper mine project, and economic and social effects of the Aynak copper mine project.

Operational progress. Officials from the GoA stated that the success of the strategy employed by XYZ depends on the efficient operations to timely deliver minerals from the Aynak copper mine project (Ministry of Mines, 2015; SIGAR, 2011). Estimates by GoA's minister of mines includes a yearly extraction potential for the Aynak copper mine is 150,000–250,000 tons per year, valued at \$390 million over the 30-year life of the mine (Ministry of Mines, 2015). The technical proposal provided by XYZ executives estimates production of 220,000 tons of refined copper per year, making it the eight largest mine in copper production in the world (Ministry of Mines, 2015; World Bank, 2012). Over the life cycle of the mine, XYZ executives calculated the delivery of 11.3 million tons of 1.56–2.3% grade copper, the average grade of copper ore being below 0.6% (Ministry of Mines, 2015).

A typical mining cycle consists of four stages with corresponding six phases (Oviir & Utouh, 2010). Stage 1 (exploration/feasibility), covered a period of 1–3 years and encompasses Phases 1 and 2 (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). The first phase of the mining cycle consisted of an exploratory search for mineral deposits to determine the size of the mineral deposit and its value; in this phase the contract bid

process was finalized (Sampathkumar, 2012). The second phase was the assessment and approval; identification of labor housing, and environmental assessments and permits were approved (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Stage 2 (construction/development), lasts between 1–5 years which included phases 3 and 4 (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Phase 3 included construction of the mine and associated buildings and power generation (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). This phase involved the attainment of road and water access, staging of equipment, and hiring/training of personnel (Allan, 2011; Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Phase four included, mine operations start, waste disposal, mine expansion, and transportation of ore to a refinery (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Stage 3 (exploitation/production), encompassed a period of 1 year until mine depletion that included phase five (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). In phase five, the mine is at its full production capacity; the phase comprised processing and refining, community relations, waste and ore separation, and closure and post-closure planning (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Stage 4 (closure/reclamation), is a period of 1–10 years and incorporates phase 6 (Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). Mine closure is the phase six of the mining cycle; it involves disengagement of labor, removal of equipment, the dismantling of facilities, safe closure of all mine workings, and reclamation (Allan, 2011; Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Sampathkumar, 2012). A mine is not considered operational until it reaches phase three (Oviir & Utouh, 2010). The projected start of stage four (mine startup operations) of the Aynak copper mine is early 2016 (XYZ, 2015; Ministry of Mines, 2015).

Despite a delay from 2014 to 2016 for the operational startup of the Aynak copper mine project due to artifacts removal and security concerns, officials from the GOA and XYZ corporation predicted minimal effects on projected profits (XYZ, 2015; Ministry of Mines, 2015). As a restraining force, XYZ executives overcame the 2013 archeological artifacts recovery by adding more workers resulting in minimal change in the projected start of operations from the end of the year 2014 to mid-year 2015 (Ministry of Mines, 2015). As a restraining force, XYZ leaders addressed security concerns by building security fences around the mine site and hiring a 1,500-strong Afghani protection unit, resulting in no incidents or major work stoppages at the Aynak copper mine site (Aziz & Makkawi, 2012; Kuo, 2013). The president of XYZ corporation emphasized that the successful delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine will play an essential role in providing a positive economic and social effects for Afghanistan and specifically the people of Logar Province (Allan, 2011; XYZ, 2015).

Economic and social effects. Described in this section are the economic and social effects gained through the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine. XYZ executives committed to \$808 million in timed cash payments tied to development benchmarks created by officials from the GoA's development benchmarks: \$80.8 million paid for award approval in 2008, \$161.6 million payable upon approval of the feasibility study in 2009, and \$565.6 million payable upon commencement of commercial production (Kuo, 2013; Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). Projected domestic revenues paid to the GoA are \$350–\$500 million in taxes and annual income each year, for a total of \$40 billion over the life of the mine and are

contingent upon the employment of Afghan workers, completion of feasibility study, and production startup by the XYZ executives (Kuo, 2013; Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). In addition, XYZ executives committed to building infrastructure projects valued at \$3.4 billion (Kuo, 2013; Ministry of Mines, 2015).

One infrastructure project was a railway connecting the Aynak copper mine to Torkham, on the border with Pakistan, to Hairatan through which half of Afghanistan's trade now passes (Wishnick, 2012). GoA officials stated that these rail links would facilitate the development of the mine and the export of its resources to Central Asia, China, and Pakistan (Wishnick, 2012). The railroad agreement was of particular importance because it committed XYZ executives to building a railroad that creates access shared with many other parts of Afghanistan (Kuo, 2013; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). Also, XYZ executives agreed to build a 400 MW power plant requiring 1.2 million tons per year of Afghanistan's plentiful coal to support mine operations (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Additionally, XYZ executives committed to constructing transmission lines to deliver 200 MW to Aynak, with the remaining 200 MW distributed on the national grid (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The XYZ leaders committed to providing secondary roads, hospitals, schools, mosques, and water sources estimated at \$8.5 billion (Ministry of Mines, 2015).

As of 2014, XYZ executives submitted social scoping reports for the Aynak mine and its five other related projects—(a) security, (b) production of 400 MW of electricity from coal, (c) water supply, (d) annex minerals, and (e) rail line. As a result of operating these projects, GoA officials expect to employ 8,000 Afghans directly and 30,000 more

indirectly (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Consequently, GoA officials established the Aynak Authority that supported good governance in Logar Province by strengthening its leaders' ability to address social effects (Ministry of Mines, 2015; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). Leaders of the GoA lack the ability to oversee the approval of social effects assessments, resettlement action plans, and broader social policies in the mining sector (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The administrators of the Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Project (SDNRP), an independent body, ensured improved social conditions, competition, and fairness in procedures for the Aynak project that led to contracts for Afghan businesses and workers (Saleem et al., 2011; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The minister of mines required XYZ executives and any MNC leaders with a mining contract to consult with affected Afghan communities before and throughout exploitation of a mining project aimed at improving communication and build trust (Ekekwe, 2013; Ministry of Mines, 2015; Saleem et al., 2011; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011).

Comparing Points of View that Differ from Previous Research

In comparison, Pahlavani et al. (2012) stated that although the MNC executives gained profitability from FDI focused on Iran's mining sector in the provinces that border Afghanistan, they failed to add value to the economic sectors of the country. The primary reason was that the government priorities regarding education and health prohibited the realization of the full economic potential of Iran's mining industry (Pahlavani et al., 2012). Similar to the Aynak copper mine project, forces such as corruption, infrastructure, social conditions, and security restrained the strategy used by MNC executives to exploit the profits of the mining projects, thus, enabling a greater share for

the host country. These forces enhanced the reluctance of private sector business leaders to invest in the mining sector or support the larger MNC projects in which mostly individual laborers were used (Pahlavani et al., 2012). The authors recommended that the host nation government eliminate or reduce the effects of these forces during the first phase of the mining projects and pursue future FDI projects in the areas of gold, copper, and other industrial use minerals (Pahlavani et al., 2012).

In contrast, Mihalache (2011) posited that MNC executives can achieve short-term profitability, but profit loss and project failure over the long term when introducing FDI into LDCs marked by ongoing or recent conflict. MNC executives posited that the extended presence of FDI tends to increase conflict, thus, enhancing forces that restrain the success of strategies, and in particular security (Mihalache, 2011). In this case, security acts as a driving force that restrains the effects of other driving forces while simultaneously controlling the actions to overcome it. The mining sector is most susceptible to this condition because mining is a long-term effort. MNC leaders benefit from the short-term from early operational production and profits for FDI in mining sector projects because forces are manageable (Mihalache, 2011). However, MNC executives stated that long term FDI projects often increase conflict due to the cumulative effects of corruption, lack of good governance, lax regulatory controls, and increased degradation of social conditions (Mihalache, 2011). In a study conducted by Mihalache (2011), he stated that successful FDI strategies implemented by MNC executives must focus on medium- and long-run socioeconomic and political consequences, and not just short term profits.

In a study by Nazminia (2013), stated that the success of the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project is dependent upon how well the executives from GoA and XYZ corporation addresses infrastructure, regulatory controls, and governance. Similar to my literature review, other forces affecting the success of the project include security, social conditions, and corruption. The author concluded that MNC executives must confer with officials from the GoA on a collective strategy as part of a government to business venture to ensure financial success and maximize profits for the Aynak copper mine project (Nazminia, 2013). As noted by the authors Mihalache (2011), Nazminia (2013) and Pahlavani, Sheykhzadeh, & Hoseini, (2012), the success of FDI projects implemented in LDCs is dependent upon how well leaders of MNCs address driving and restraining forces.

Overall, my analysis of the literature review represents a primary theme and six subthemes that correlate to forces described in FFA. They include good governance, viable institutions, regulatory controls, security, road reconstruction, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment. The delivery of minerals from Aynak copper mine project is the phenomenon which includes four subthemes or forces; XYZ investment strategy, Aynak mine tender process, operational progress, and the economic and social effects. Overall, the review includes 13 subthemes; six appear to be driving forces, and three appear to be restraining forces while four appear to be both. XYZ executives appear to have addressed the direct and indirect effects of the common FDI determinants for LDCs about these forces in the development and implementation of their strategy. Leaders from both the GoA and XYZ corporation reported that they have

overcome all obstacles affecting the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine (XYZ, 2015; Ministry of Mines, 2015).

Summary and Transition

Section 1 contained the problem statement and purpose statement, as well as the nature of the study that justified my using a qualitative method and holistic single case study design. Section 1 also included the (a) interview questions (Appendix A), in addition to the (b) conceptual framework, (c) assumptions, (d) limitations, and (e) delimitations of the study. Section 1 contained the conclusion with the significance of the study and a review of professional and academic literature.

The application to the applied business problem section contains a literature review of previous literature relating to the following sections and subsections: (a) FFA concept, (b) determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs, (c) good governance, (d) viable economic institutions, (e) regulatory controls, (f) control of corruption, (g) security, (h) infrastructure, (i) social conditions, (j) FDI strategy of the host nation, (k) business environment, (l) delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project, (m) XYZ investment strategy, (n) Aynak mine tender process, (o) operational progress, and (p) economic and social effects.

Section 2 contains (a) the business project purpose, (b) the role of the researcher, (c) the selected participants, (d) a detailed description of the research methodology and design, (e) the population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments and technique, (h) data organization technique, (i) data analysis, and (j) reliability and validity.

Section 3 begins with an introduction including the purpose statement, research question, and findings. Section 3 includes application to professional practice, implications for social change and or behaviors, recommendations for action and further study, and contains the conclusion of my (e.g., researcher) reflections.

Section 2: The Project

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, holistic, single-case study was to explore the strategy that MNC executives from XYZ corporation used to improve the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan (an LDC). The target population consisted of MNC executives from XYZ corporation in China. The implications for social change are improved business practices for firms that choose mining projects in LDCs, more jobs and thus decreased unemployment..

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I served as the primary data collection instrument. I was familiar with the study topic because I had familiarity with the process used by GoA officials to facilitate small business contracts as part of FDI-funded projects. I maintained ethical standards throughout the study by adhering to the protocols outlined in Walden's Institutional Review Board for Ethical Standards in Research document and the Belmont Report (Institutional Review Board for Ethical Standards in Research, 2014; Jenkins, 2015; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). As posited by Unluer (2012), I collected the data in a trustworthy manner to mitigate bias. A researcher should make every effort to reduce or eliminate bias from the study (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Xu, & Storr, 2012).

I did not use my personal opinions and experiences to validate the analysis and conclusions. I viewed the data from a personal lens through the use of reflexive inquiry as documented in a reflective journal. Reflexive inquiry is a research technique that helps in

understanding how experiences, assumptions, and subjectivities affecting the adherence to ethical standards when conducting research (Yin, 2013). An interview protocol is a tool that helps the researcher create a plan for interviewing study participants to gain their perspectives on a specific topic (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). For this study, I sought to enhance each interview session by using an interview protocol that outlines procedures to conduct interviews with the research participants.

Participants

A qualitative study is typically conducted using multiple participants—in this case, a purposeful sample of five executives from XYZ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013)—in the same setting (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Yin, 2013). Only those executives who designed the strategy for delivering minerals from the Aynak copper mine were eligible (XYZ, 2015; Nazminia, 2013). Among the five, there were three independent, nonexecutive directors and two supervisors who evaluated all mines operations, planned for future business ventures, and conducted personnel management activities for the mine. All participants were performing or had performed duties and responsibilities related to improving the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project?

I gained access to participants through the organization's student support point of contact, who forwarded research invitations to the participants. Additionally, I identified the participants using public records which met the qualifications outlined in my research proposal and consent form. Each prospective participant received an invitation and an informed consent form to participate via e-mail (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Denzin

& Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I asked the participants to sign and return the form by email to me within three days indicating their agreement to participate.

A successful qualitative research usually requires the building of a working relationship with participants (Hanson, Stephens, Pangaro, & Gimbel, 2012; Yin, 2013). I made my intentions clear when establishing a working relationship with the participants (Valentine, Nam, Hollingworth, & Hall, 2014). I worked to ensure that the participants felt comfortable withdrawing from the research study at any point in the research process. As outlined in Valentine et al. (2014), I remained cognizant of my ethical research responsibility to the participants through consistent communication and maintained principles of the researcher's responsibility to the participants. In addition, I sought to establish a working relationship with the participants in regular contact via email.

Research Method and Design

When selecting a research method and design, the investigator can identify the most effective method of achieving the goals of the study and answering the research question. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that qualitative research aids the researcher in the exploration of an issue or problem through a situated activity. I used a qualitative, holistic, single case study design to explore the strategies that some MNC executives used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan (an LDC).

Research Method

The qualitative method was appropriate because I interpreted the data from a pragmatic worldview that is both problem-centered and real-world oriented (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2011; Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). A qualitative method focuses on a single phenomenon, facilitating interpretations of data, and collaborating with participants (Li, Westbrook, Callen, Georgiou, & Braithwaite, 2013; Massis & Kotlar, 2014). The qualitative method will help me gather the data needed to answer the central research question. Therefore, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate method to explore strategies used by MNC executives to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with mining projects in LDCs such as Afghanistan. Heale and Forbes (2013) suggested that qualitative methods are most effective when used to identify initial themes and develop a coding matrix.

Qualitative researcher's focus on the meaning of the participants' perspectives and the collection of data through participant dialog (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, & Green, 2012). Based on answers to the research questions, I identified driving, and restraining forces associated with the Aynak copper mine (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). A quantitative method is not appropriate because my study does not call for closed-ended questions or hypotheses (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Quantitative research uses numerical data to prove or disapprove a hypothesis (Hoare & Hoe, 2012, 2013). Likewise, a mixed-method approach is not appropriate because my study does not combine the standards of qualitative and quantitative methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). Mixed-method is appropriate when neither a quantitative nor a qualitative approach is sufficient by itself to comprehend the research topic (Hayes et al., 2013; Wisdom et al., 2012). My intent was to explore the strategies that some MNC executives used to improve the timely delivery of minerals for copper

mine projects in LDCs. Thus, neither a quantitative nor a mixed-method approach was appropriate for this study because the qualitative research method alone should enable me to collect sufficient data to complete the purpose of this study.

Research Design

Narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, and case study are typical research design approaches for qualitative inquiry. The case study design was best for exploring processes, activities, and events (units of analysis; Yin, 2013). The guidance for conducting a case study contains extensive research knowledge about a real-life event to explain and define a particular phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I selected the holistic single-case study design rather than the embedded or multiple-case designs because it is best suited for exploring a unique real-life phenomenon (Moll, 2012; Yin, 2013). The embedded-single-case was not selected because it requires multiple subunits of the unit of analysis while the holistic single-case design requires an overarching unit of analysis (Yin, 2013). Multiple-case designs (embedded or holistic) were not selected because they require multiple units of analysis and a single case design does not (Yin, 2013). The Aynak copper mine serves as a representative case (unit of analysis) (Moll, 2012; Yin, 2013). Identifying and defining a unit of analysis with an operating definition formed the basis for the study's data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I used methodological triangulation for this case study technique to help me determine the confluence of quantitative, qualitative, and interview data from data collection and analysis (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014).

Similarly, a phenomenological design is not appropriate because my study did focus on the FDI process, not on the standard meaning several individuals have of their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Researchers using the phenomenological research design captures the experiences of individuals and uncovers themes that challenge structural or normative assumptions (Tirgari, 2012). I did not use an ethnographic design because this research study did not involve culture, but rather an exploration of driving and restraining forces (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). Ethnography requires researchers to become a part of the cultural group to study people of that culture over a prolonged time frame (Jeffrey & Troman, 2012). I selected holistic single-case study design over the other designs because it is most appropriate for addressing the unit of analysis and answering the research question for my study.

Data saturation linked to a purposeful sample size aided in collecting sufficient data to explore the research problem (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Walker, 2012). Through member checking and transcript review, I achieved data saturation by conducting initial interviews with the five participants and with follow-up interviews with two participants by getting their input on the transcribed interviews and my data interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I used the member checking process by conducting the initial review, interpreting what the participants shared, and sharing the interpretation with the participant for validation (Li et al., 2013; Walker, 2012). In addition, I used the transcript review process by conducting the initial review, writing word for word the participant's response, and sharing the transcript with the participant for validation (Walker, 2012; Yin, 2013). An appropriate number of

participants required to achieve data saturation in a qualitative study ranges from five to 50 (Dworkin, 2012). O'Reilly, and Parker (2012) stated that a researcher reaches data saturation within the first six interviews. Data saturation occurs when no new themes emerge, and there is enough information to replicate the study (Dworkin, 2012; Walker, 2012). Overall, the research design (case study) and sample size of participants (5) selected for this study, ensured data saturation.

Population and Sampling

A purposeful sample for this study was five participants. Purposeful sampling is appropriate for qualitative research such as case studies (Hanson et al., 2012; Walker, 2012). Qualitative study guidelines contain the idea that case studies, in particular, tend to use small samples, yet the samples must be representative of the target population (Nisha, 2012). The population for the study is five executives from XYZ corporation.

I sent a letter to eligible participants via email asking them to (a) return the signed consent form within 3 days, (b) participate in a 45-minute interview, either by Skype or by teleconference, (c) review the interview questions prior to the scheduled interview date, and (d) review the interview transcripts and return to me within five days. Eligible participants must have performed duties directly or indirectly related to the Aynak copper mine project. The XYZ executives must appear on the latest executive organization chart. In addition, the XYZ executives must be part of the team that assessed the business environment and won the contract for the Aynak copper mine project. The study participants must have direct knowledge of the setting for this study, which is the Aynak copper mine project in Logar province, Afghanistan (Yin, 2013). A holistic single-case

study is an appropriate design if participants are representatives within the same setting (Yin, 2013). XYZ leaders who did not meet all of these parameters were not eligible to participate in the study. Through the consent form, I ensured that all participants met these requirements.

I collected data by interviewing the participants in an appropriate interview setting. The interview setting offered a comfortable and non-threatening environment, enabling participants to be open and honest about their personal experiences (Yin, 2013). I conducted interviews at the participants' convenience in a setting that minimizes interruptions (Coenen, Stamm, Stucki, & Cieza, 2012; Yin, 2013). I conducted Skype or email interviews with the with five XYZ participants. Last, I scheduled an initial interview for all participants and a follow-on for two of the initial participants, that lasted between 30-35 minutes each.

Data saturation linked to a purposeful sample size aided in collecting sufficient data to explore the research problem (Walker, 2012). Through member checking, I sent the interview transcripts via email to the participants to review for accuracy. I asked the participants to review and send feedback to me within five days. I achieved data saturation by conducting interviews with the five participants with a follow-on interview with two participants (Robinson, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I used the member checking process by conducting the initial review, interpreting what the participant shared, and sharing the interpretation with the participant for validation (Li et al., 2013). In addition, I used the transcript review by conducting the initial review, writing word for word the participant's response, and sharing the transcript with the

participant for validation (Yin, 2013). An appropriate number of participants required to achieve data saturation in a qualitative study ranges from five to 50 (Dworkin, 2012). O'Reilly and Parker (2012) stated that a researcher reaches data saturation within the first six interviews. Data saturation occurs when no new themes emerge, and there is enough information to replicate the study (Dworkin, 2012). Overall, the research design (case study) and sample size of participants (5) selected for this study, should enable data saturation and sufficient data collection. I achieved data saturation by conducting an initial interview for all and follow-on interviews with two of the five participants through member checking. An appropriate number of participants required to produce data saturation in a qualitative study ranges from five to 50 (Marshall et al., 2013; Walker, 2012). Dworkin (2012) stated that a researcher achieves data saturation within the first six interviews. Data saturation occurs when no new themes emerge, and there is enough information to replicate the study (Walker, 2012). Overall, the research design (case study) and sample size of participants (5) selected for this study, enabled data saturation.

Ethical Research

Ethics pertains to avoiding harm, assuring trust, ensuring research integrity, and protecting participants (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; Taylor & Land, 2014). Steps taken in the planning phase of qualitative research should help researchers overcome or avoid potential ethical or moral distress to the participants (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). In this section, I will discuss the informed consent process, participant withdrawal procedure, incentives, ethical protection, data storage, and confidentiality protection.

I used a six-step process to ensure an ethical approach to this study. First, as part of the informed consent process and as described in the consent form (IRB #02-23-16-0224663), I provided background for the study and what I sought to accomplish. Second, I informed all participants that they may withdraw from their interview or withdraw their data at any time, and will receive no incentive. Third, participants received no incentives to participate in this study. Fourth, for the ethical protection of research participants, I sought the permission of the Walden University IRB before data collection. Upon IRB approval, I sent a participation inquiry (see Appendix B) to those who meet the criteria for participation in the study. I adhered to ethical research protocol for the study participants by making every effort to avoid compromising sensitive information or XYZ's intellectual property (Yin, 2013). The certificate of training completion familiarized me with the rules for conducting ethical research with human subjects. Fifth, I stored signed informed consent forms, interview recordings, and the final doctoral manuscript with IRB approval number (IRB #02-23-16-0224663) in a locked storage cabinet on a password-protected flash drive. I stored the password-protected flash drive. After the five years, I will destroy all consent forms, interviews recording, and transcribed data through shredding and then burn the password-protected flash drive. Last, to guarantee confidentiality and privacy protection of participants, I will avoid using the names and give each participant a unique alpha-numeric identifier (e.g., P1, P2).

Data Collection Instruments

Qualitative case study researchers often use interviews to collect data (Yin, 2013). I received IRB approval and signed informed consent forms from each participant before

data collection. I collected interview data using the interview protocol process. In this section, I am the primary data collection instrument. Additionally, this section includes the data collection instrument (interview protocol), the use of the data collection instrument and technique, and how to enhance reliability and validity of the instrument, and its location.

As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument. I used the interview protocol as the data collection instrument, which includes standard procedures to follow, research questions, follow-up questions, note space, and an acknowledgment statement for expressing gratitude to the participant (Granot, Brashear, & Motta, 2012). Each semistructured interview consists of 10 open-ended questions (see Appendix A) related to the strategy and the business environment of the Aynak copper mine project. Along with company documents and archival records, I used interviews to discover underlying themes and additional information related to the literature review (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). After receipt of the signed consent forms, I scheduled Skype interviews that lasted between 30-35 minutes for each interview. A successful interview consists of a shared understanding on the part of the participant and the researcher and conducting a second round of interviews if necessary (Hanna, 2012; Li et al., 2013). I encouraged potential participants to become part of the study by emailing them an invitation letter describing the study (see Appendix B).

I ensured that the research instrument was reliable and valid before conducting the interviews. Ekekwe (2013) recommended the use of at least two validation strategies for qualitative studies to ensure the reliability of the instrument. I used the member checking

and transcript review validation strategies to enhance the reliability and validity of the data collection instrument. Member checking is interpreting transcripts from interviews and sharing with participants to check for accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). Transcript review is writing word for word the participant's response and sharing the transcript with the participant for validation (Ekekwe, 2013; Yin, 2013). The timeline for member checking and transcript review included sending the participants the interview transcripts via email, then asking them to review and return their comments within five days. I will use the interview protocol as the data collection tool.

Data Collection Technique

Qualitative researchers can collect data through semistructured interviews using an interview protocol (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Tsang, 2014). I conducted 30-35 minute, semistructured interviews using Skype by following the steps outlined in my interview guide. I scheduled semistructured interviews via Skype teleconferencing for a mutually agreed upon time and date. I used Skype teleconferencing sessions for the semistructured interviews. A successful interview included ensuring the operability of the recording device, maintaining neutral expressions while interviewing, note taking, and keeping to the schedule (Rowley, 2012; Wilson, 2012). Therefore, for redundancy, I used an audio recording cassette player simultaneously with the Skype teleconferencing system. Based on the interview process listed in Wilson (2012) and Yin (2013), I employed the following steps for data collection:

1. I received approval of the interview guide through the IRB. I used an interview guide and the interview questions in Appendix A as part of the interview protocol.
2. I gathered contact information for potential participants.
3. Made initial contact with potential study participants and introduced the study via email that contained an informed consent form.
4. Upon receipt of the informed consent form, I followed up with potential study participants and clarified any questions.
5. Prior to the audio-taped recording of the interviews, I sent each participant, the interview questions and a description of how I would conduct the interviews via email.
6. I reminded each participant 24 hours before the interview of the location, time, and duration of the interview via email.
7. At the beginning of each interview, I reiterated the study participant rights for informed consent. I informed the participants before and during the interview that they may withdraw from the interview at any time.
8. I transcribed the audio-taped recordings and sent them back to the participants to check for accuracy.
9. When I received feedback on the transcribed data, I uploaded it into MAXQDA 11, a qualitative data analysis program.
10. I kept all participants' information and responses confidential, secured, and cataloged.

11. Last, I compiled the data, disassembled and reassembled the data, interpreted the meaning, and completed conclusions.

The advantages of conducting Skype interviews include (a) you can see the interviewee to gauge body language, (b) there are costs and time savings, because neither the interviewer nor the interviewee has to travel, and (c) the use of Skype is a normal part of communicating business and personal communication, and (d) the ability to audio and video record is available, because it can enhance the member checking and transcript review process (Hanna, 2012). The disadvantages of conducting Skype interviews include (a) you will have little or no control over choosing the setting, (b) unexpected communication disruptions sometimes occur with overseas and long-distance connectivity, and (c) it is time-consuming to conduct transcription, unless you use an audio-translating program such as Dragon (Hanna, 2012).

Yin (2013) stated that a pilot study occurs if the site is geographically convenient, the participants are unusually accessible, or the case is not representative of the phenomena. The location of the geographical site and the participants are in Afghanistan and China, respectively. Also, this case is representative of successful mining projects in LDCs. My proposed case study does not require conceptual clarification for its research design; therefore, I did not conduct a pilot study.

Member checking means presenting preliminary findings to participants to check for validating the intent of their responses to interview questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). I used member checking and sent the unedited interview transcripts to the interviewees. Transcript review is writing word-for-word the participant's response

and sharing the transcript with the participant for accuracy (Ekekwe, 2013; Yin, 2013). After receiving the interviewee feedback, I incorporated the data resulting from member checking to check the reliability and validity of the transcript translation before conducting data interpretation. Upon completion of the data interpretation, I sent both the corrected collected transcript and the data interpretation to the interviewee for feedback as part of the member checking process.

Data Organization Technique

A researcher can achieve confidentiality and anonymity for each participant by assigning them generic codes (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013; Wilson, 2012). I assigned generic codes to each participant to maintain confidentiality. I sought permission to audio record the interview through the signed content form. Using a reflexive journal, I took notes on critical comments during each interview in addition to audiotaping. My method of organizing and keeping track of all data collected for this study consisted of a reflective journal and the MAXQDA 11 software program. As part of organizing my data, I uploaded the transcribed interview data verbatim into MAXQDA 11.

Secondary to the interviews I collected mining records, and I removed any irrelevant data to ensure data alignment and relevancy. I kept folders containing the transcribed interview and written records for each study participant (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Yin, 2013). I ensured confidentiality of the data and protection of the rights for all my research participants (Gibson et al., 2013; Taylor & Land, 2014). Therefore, I stored raw data on a password-protected flash drive in a locked storage container, and it will

remain there for five years. After that time, I will shred paper notes and destroy the flash drive using a licensed organization that shreds official documents.

Data Analysis

My data analysis included the type and logical sequence of the process, details of the software program, the identification of and correlation of key themes with the literature and conceptual framework. Qualitative data analysis consist of reviewing both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more direct analysis as themes become apparent (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, & Kyngas, 2014; White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012). Qualitative researchers can ask open-ended interview questions to collect data and explore meanings within the study (Wilson, 2012; Yin, 2013). Using one aspect of methodological triangulation (the interview protocol), I conducted semistructured interviews using open-ended questions as listed in Appendix A.

As outlined in Yin (2013), the sequence of the data analysis process I used included the following five steps: (a) compiling the data; (b) disassembling the data; (c) reassembling the data; (d) interpreting the meaning of the data, and (e) concluding the data. Buchanan (2013) used this method for data analysis for qualitative single-case studies and confirmed its appropriateness. I imported transcripts into MAXQDA 11 from transcribed data. Step one is compiling the data. Compiling is the process of organizing the data (Yin, 2013). After I had compiled the data, I disassembled the data, which involved a formal procedure for coding data to identify patterns and themes (Yin, 2013). Coding is the process of tagging segmented data with category names or descriptive words and then grouping the data (Wilson, 2012). I used the auto-coding feature in the

MAXDQA 11 software to identify similarities in data and prevalent themes, thereby observing consistencies from the perspectives of participants.

Once I disassembled the data, I used a process of reassembling the data.

Reassembling is the data analysis process involving considering the data under several arrangements until emerging themes are satisfactory (Yin, 2013). Successful reassembling is evident in the emergence of themes in data analysis (Yin, 2013). The next step of data analyzing is interpreting the meaning of the data (Yin, 2013). Interpreting the meaning of the data is the process of making sense of the data (White et al., 2012). The researcher's ability to understand and describe the data is critical for data interpreting (Parker, 2014). The final step in the data analysis is concluding the data (Yin, 2013). Concluding is the development of a sequence of statements noting the findings of a study from the viewpoint of a larger set of ideas (Buchanan, 2013; White et al., 2012). Concluding themes and patterns deriving from the central research question are needed to understand the findings of a qualitative research study.

In addition to data collected through semistructured interviews, I used methodological triangulation by introducing other data sources such as company and archival documents (Carter et al., 2014; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The purpose of my data analysis process was to uncover themes that answered the central research question. The most significant step in qualitative research was the process of data analysis (White et al., 2012). Data analysis involves looking at data to discover meaningful themes, patterns, and descriptions that answer the central research question, What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals

for the Aynak copper mine project? The themes of this case study included determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs and delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project. I selected the initial categories from analysis of the information in the literature review. No new information emerged during subsequent interviews.

Researchers use data analysis software for creating themes (De Laat, 2014; Garrett-Howard, 2012). I used the MAXQDA 11 software program to aid in my data analysis as opposed to the NVivo data analysis software program. I determined that the MAXqda data analysis software is similar to other data analysis programs, such as the NVivo data analysis software program. Additionally, I determined that MAXqda produces better graphical conversion of data, and it is less expensive than NVivo. I currently have it available to me because I used it for data analysis in previous Master's program courses. The MAXQDA 11 software program is a computer-assisted qualitative data program that analyzes data from text, multimedia, and multiple interviews (MAXQDA, 2012). Then, I quickly organized, evaluated, and interpreted the data using the MAXQDA 11 software program (MAXQDA, 2012). Also, the program includes the creation of easy-to-read reports and visualizations, supports multiple data format inputs, and promotes sharing for peer review (MAXQDA, 2012). Qualitative data analysis software provides an electronic audit trail that allows transparency of a researcher's techniques (Garrett-Howard, 2012).

I used the MAXQDA 11 software program to input, store, code, and explore themes and patterns. The MAXQDA 11 software program is suitable for identifying themes (Garrett-Howard, 2012). Advantages of using the MAXQDA 11 software

program includes the ability to keep data in a single location with easy access to information and the ability to use a continuous coding scheme (Houghton et al., 2013). By using the MAXQDA 11 software program, I will increase the rigor in qualitative research (Garrett-Howard, 2012). The MAXQDA 11 software program helped me align the collected data with previous literature (Houghton et al., 2013). Using the MAXQDA 11 software, I employed a two-step process to codify all collected qualitative data. Step 1 was developing the coding. Coding the information obtained from the data assisted in the organization and retrieval of the information during data analysis. I used in vivo coding as described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as a process that analyzes described words of the respondent(s), for data collected from all study participants. For this study, I used alphanumeric codes to mask the participant's identities. I assigned each participant an alpha-numeric identifier. I used the MAXQDA 11 software a qualitative data analysis program to input and store data for coding and exploration of themes. Step 2 was the actual analysis. I drew inferences from the various qualitative data sources, which validated the conceptual framework. The analysis revealed those factors that drive and restrain the strategy used by XYZ to provide timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project. Analyzed data contained in MAXQDA 11 revealed some linked cause-and-effect sequences of events involving the unit of analysis (Yin, 2013). In addition, qualitative data analysis revealed information that supports best practices when employing strategies to improve the timely delivery of minerals for mining projects located in LDCs.

The conceptual framework is the connection between the literature, methodology, and results of the study (Borrego et al., 2014). I analyzed the data as it and the factors outlined in the Kurt Lewin's FFA, which was driving and restraining forces working to keep equilibrium (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). The conceptual framework assisted me in identifying what forces drive or restrain the success of the strategy used by XYZ corporation for the Aynak copper mine project. Results of the data analysis revealed how XYZ executives addressed the effects of the driving and restraining forces to achieve equilibrium, thus, a successful execution of the business strategy. Through the lens of FFA, I identified themes and narratives and drew conclusions. Also, I used member checking and triangulation to verify the accuracy of data, frequency of recurring themes, and to validate the findings. All data analysis included a means to test the quality and reliability of the data.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the ability and the assurance for a researcher to replicate a previous study and get similar results if the research settings are the same (Street & Ward, 2012; Grossoehme, 2014). Demonstrating validity confirms that a study has sufficient rigor (Whiteley, 2012). A qualitative researcher will use various strategies to achieve validity.

Reliability

One way a researcher can demonstrate reliability is to document research procedures during the process in a research journal (Grossoehme, 2014). To ensure reliability, I recorded the sequences of the process through the stages of data collection,

analysis, and interpretation. I used member checking to achieve reliability by addressing the dependability and the creditability of the data (Elo et al., 2014; Yin, 2013).

Member checking is a technique that helps improve the dependability, credibility, and reliability of a qualitative study (Li et al., 2013; Yin, 2013). I used member checking to check the accuracy of the participant's responses to ensure that I had captured the accurate meaning. Member checking is the most valuable way to confirm the dependability and credibility of the study (Houghton et al., 2013; Li et al., 2013). Also, I cross checked transcriptions, questions, coding thematic, and notes from the reflective journal against the results of the MAXQDA data analysis. The use of member checking helped me ensure the dependability and creditability of the data, thus achieving reliability, which provided a basis for transferability and confirmability.

Validity

Credibility is pertinent to qualitative research (Wisdom et al., 2012). It includes an assessment of whether there is a match between the original source data and the researchers interpretation (Munn, Lockwood, & Pearson, 2014). Since I am the data collection instrument, I achieved credibility for my study based on my protocols, procedures applied, and my self-awareness during the research process (Houghton et al., 2013). In addition to the interview data, I collected company documents and employed methodological triangulation for these two data sources to enhance the credibility of the study results. Methodological triangulation requires the use of multiple data-gathering methods, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents (Denzin, 1970; Massis & Kotlar, 2014 Heale, R., & Forbes, D. (2013).). The concept of dependability is

aligned with that of reliability (Munn et al., 2014). In qualitative research, validity refers to the transferability and confirmability of data interpretations and findings (Yin, 2013). Confirmability refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data (Houghton et al., 2013). Whiteley (2012) suggested that researchers use various strategies in achieving both internal and external validity. To achieve internal validity, an investigator should review data for similarities among participants (Khan, 2014; Whiteley, 2012). Qualitative researchers can use validation procedures for documentation of accuracy (Yin, 2013). Therefore, strategies to establish validity for a case study should include an analysis of several sources of data the use of member checking (Travers, 2012).

Validity includes areas of dependability, trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability (Mayer & Boness, 2011). Examining the degree to which qualitative findings may transfer to other contexts or settings assesses transferability (Wisdom et al., 2012). Transferability refers to whether or not particular findings are transferable to another comparable situation or context, while preserving the meanings found (Houghton et al., 2013). For the purpose of enhancing the transferability of my study, I provided the reader with a rich and detailed presentation of findings that includes direct quotes from the participants. Houghton et al. explained confirmability is similar to dependability in that the processes for establishing both are alike. Confirmability refers to the neutrality and accuracy of the data (Houghton et al., 2013). The confirmability of the data established by running frequencies of words and themes within MAXqda will provide for accurate analysis.

Through member checking and transcript review, I achieved data saturation by conducting two sets of interviews; initial with all five participants and a follow-on with two participants. Using member checking upon completion of each interview, I shared the interpreted transcripts with the participants to check for accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2013). An appropriate number of participants required to achieve data saturation in a qualitative study ranges from five to 50 (Dworkin, 2012; Walker, 2012). A researcher reaches data saturation within the first six interviews when no new themes emerge, and there is enough information to replicate the study (Dworkin, 2012; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012). The intent of reliability and validity testing is to identify preliminary findings, and then validate the interpretations of the narratives from those findings.

Summary and Transition

In Section 2, I included an introduction, stated the purpose statement of my research study, addressed the role of the researcher, discussed the selected participants, and detailed the research methodology and design. Next, I described the (a) population and sampling method; (b) ethical research; (c) data collection instruments, technique, and organization; and (d) data analysis techniques. Section 2 contains a discussion of the methods and techniques for assuring the reliability and validity of my study and the conclusion.

Section 3 comprises an introduction, including the purpose statement and the research question. Next is the presentation of findings. Section 3 also includes (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c)

recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) researcher reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 contains the findings of the research study. In addition, Section 3 includes an (a) overview of the study, (b) presentation of the findings, (c) application to professional practice, and (d) implication for social change. Also, (a) recommendation for actions, (b) recommendations for further study, (c) reflections, and (c) summary and study conclusion are included in this section. I present the findings of the study by main themes.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this qualitative, holistic single-case study was to explore the strategy that MNC (XYZ) executives used to improve the timely delivery of minerals to the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan, an LDC. I conducted semistructured interviews with corporate executives—part of a multinational corporation in Beijing, China—to answer the following overarching research question: What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? I qualified each participant based on their knowledge of the strategy used to deliver minerals from the Aynak copper mine. The selected MNC (XYZ) executives had knowledge of the strategy related to the oversight of all existing mining operations, future business ventures, and management activities. Interviews took place in an environment where participants felt comfortable with providing detailed responses to answer each semistructured interview question. Participants responded to three demographic questions and ten semistructured interview questions (see Appendix A) related to their strategy. The results showed comprehensive responses from each

participant (Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2013). A review of company documents correlated with data obtained from the interviews.

As I described in Section 2, the Yin 5-step approach (Yin, 2013) is the basis for data analysis of collected data. After transcribing the five interviews and gathering company documents, I imported the transcriptions and the review of company documents into MAXQDA 11 qualitative analysis software for coding. I analyzed all the data and identified 13 subthemes (e.g., forces). The emergent themes derived from the subthemes contain information on strategies noted in company documents. The documents included an executive summary of future FDI projects, financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report. Once data saturation was reached, I entered the data into the qualitative analysis software tool, MAXQDA 11 to help me discover key themes and patterns to answer the central research question.

Based on analysis of interview responses and company documents, I identified 13 subthemes, which I grouped into two main themes: (a) determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs and (b) FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. The determinants for copper mine investment strategies in LDCs were (a) driving forces, (b) restraining forces, and (c) neutral forces. The FDI strategies for copper copper mine projects in LDCs were: (a) cost leadership (CL) strategy, (b) differentiation (Diff) strategy, and (c) combination CL and Diff strategies. The cost leadership strategy is appropriate for FDI projects in LDCs, such as the Aynak copper mine strategy, because it is more advantageous for achieving profitability.

Presentation of the Findings

The presentation and interpretation of findings include (a) listing of the overarching research question. Also, included are references to the 10 interview questions, (b) identification of each theme to include analysis and discussion of findings in relation to themes, (c) description of what ways the findings confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge in the discipline by comparing the findings with other peer reviewed studies from the literature review that include new studies since the writing of the proposal, (d) tie the findings to the conceptual framework, and (e) tie the findings and disputes to the existing literature on effective business practice. Themes, patterns, and relationships found in data collected are elements discussed in this section.

The findings of this study are congruent with the research question and the interview questions. I collected the data to answer the central reasearch question, What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? I used semistructured interviews to gain an understanding of the strategy used by XYZ executives to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project. In addition to semistructured interviews, I also reviewed company documents that included annual financial statements, mine progress reports, and the fairness report on the Aynak copper mine contract, and Aynak copper mine FDI design report to triangulate and confirm interview data. I scheduled the five semistructured interviews via Skype teleconferencing each that did not last more than 45 minutes.

Of the two data sources collected, I gained the largest amount of data from the

participant interviews. The data reached saturation when the interview data and documents review became repetitive and no additional information was added as discussed by Walker (2012). I entered the interview data and company documents into MAXQDA 11, a qualitative data organization software tool. Following the collection and analysis of data collected through semistructured interviews and a review of company documents, 13 subthemes emerged, which I grouped into two main themes. The first main theme is determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. The FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs is the second main theme.

The conceptual framework for this research project was the force field analysis (FFA) theory. All of the responses made by the participants supported the FFA theory. As noted by psychologist Kurt Lewin, the FFA technique will help researchers identify forces such as driving forces (factors that encourage), restraining forces (factors that discourage), and their effects on FDI projects (Blonigen & Piger, 2014). Blonigen and Piger (2014) posited that forces associated with FFA are synonymous with determinants of FDI. Identifying these determinants will aid in the exploration of the unit of analysis (e.g., the Aynak copper mine project). Related to the core subthemes, the primary determinants (e.g., forces) of FDI included good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, control of corruption, security, road reconstruction, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment (e.g., company documents). Other forces included the Aynak mine tender process, XYZ investment strategy, operational progress, and economic and social effects (P3; P4). The core subthemes for determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs are (a) driving

forces, (b) restraining forces, (c) neutral forces, and (d) effects. The FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs included (a) cost leadership (CL) strategy, (b) differentiation (Diff) strategy, and (c) combination CL/Diff strategies as core subthemes.

Within this study, I viewed the framework as it relates to their correlation with the findings to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the strategy used to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project. Burnes and Cooke (2013) stated that using FFA enables researchers to identify how driving forces and restraining forces affect the achievement of a strategy that supports the successful execution of a project. FFA is an analytical technique, not a problem-solving tool designed to help decision makers identify, document, and understand those forces likely to influence a program or process (Shera & Meyer, 2013; Swanson & Creed, 2014). A case study approach is an effective way to explore a phenomenon in a real-life setting (Yin, 2013).

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The first three questions revealed the participants' demographics. Demographic questions included the number of years each participant served in corporate leadership, their current role in the Aynak copper mine project, and their participation in the bidding process for the Aynak copper mine tender contract. Additionally, demographic responses included their level of responsibility and position within the in XYZ's corporate structure. Participant 1 (P1) has served seven years in senior leadership as a leading business strategist while participant 2 (P2) has served 12 years as the leading international trade executive. Participant 3 (P3) has served 16 years as an executive for

engineering for FDI projects. Participant 4 (P4) has served as the executive in FDI project research and design for 15 years. Participant 5 (P5) has served six years as the senior executive accountant. All participants expressed that the current corporate executives of XYZ had, at least, 10 years of experience with mining projects in LDCs.

The initial interviews took place via Skype teleconferencing lasting between 30-35 minutes each with the two follow-on interviews at 15 minutes each. I asked each of the participant's 10 semistructured, open-ended, interview questions (Appendix A) with an interview protocol as a guide. Two of the participants responded to all 10 of the interview questions and three responded to nine. Concluding the interview, I collected an executive summary of future FDI projects, financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report. In closing, I thanked them for their participation in my research study. I then conducted member checking with the participants. To ensure that I accurately captured meaning and word choice, the use of member checking is critical (Houghton et al., 2013).

Theme 1: Determinants for Copper Mine Investment Strategies in LDCs

Determinants for copper mine investment strategies in LDCs is the first main theme. Participant responses to interview questions number two, five, six, and nine, identified the determinants used for mine investment strategies in LDCs. Specifically, responses to these questions included (a) a list of primary driving, restraining, and neutral forces, (b) ways to overcome the lack of regulatory controls and economic policies, (c) measures to overcome factors posing risk, and (d) lessons learned as they related to the Aynak copper mine project. The FFA categories for these subthemes for determinants of

mine investment strategies in LDCs were: (a) driving forces, (b) restraining forces, (c) neutral forces, and (d) effects. The primary determinants (e.g., forces) of FDI included good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, corruption, security, road reconstruction, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment (Blonigen & Piger, 2014). “We determined that those forces listed in the Aynak project design report were important factors in our decision to pursue the Aynak copper mine project” (P1, personal communication, March 2, 2016). As shown in company documents and participants’ responses, other forces included the Aynak mine tender process, XYZ investment strategy, operational progress, and economic and social effects. Overall, the findings indicated that there are 13 forces used in determining mine investment strategy for LDCs; six are driving forces, three are restraining forces, and four are neutral forces.

Driving forces. Responses to question two included a list of primary driving, restraining, and neutral forces associated with the Aynak copper mine project. As supported by company documents and participants’ responses, driving forces are FDI strategy of the host nation, road reconstruction, business environment, XYZ investment strategy, Aynak mine tender process, and good governance. “The driving forces were most important to making a strategy selection” (P4, personal communication, March 2, 2016). As the first multibillion-dollar investment for the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), the Aynak copper mine tender represented a milestone in the overall economic policy to attract FDI (Kuo, 2013; Park, 2012; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). The GoA minister of interior’s vision to improve Afghanistan's business environment supports

efforts that achieve sustainable FDI in mineral and energy projects (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). MNC executives often have better results pursuing a single strategy approach combined with a business level strategy of either cost leadership or differentiation, for projects in LDCs (Girod, 2012; P1; Shinkle et al., 2013). The use of foreign assistance received from donors supported the completion of 1,600 km of regional and national highways (SIGAR, 2011).

Whereas, findings indicated that the FDI strategy of the host nation and good governance created the environment that convinced MNC executives to bid for the Aynak copper mine tender (Ministry of Mines, 2015; P1). Afghanistan's economic development goal as supported by good governance policies was to attract FDI by MNCs (Coyne & Pellillo, 2012; Gour & Haider, 2014). The employment of a comprehensive FDI strategy by GoA officials should assist in developing their lucrative mining industry, valued at more than \$1 trillion (Girod, 2012; Driffield et al., 2013; Sharan, 2012). Therefore, MNC executives must identify and analyze the driving forces (e.g., FDI determinants) controlled by the LDC government when developing an FDI business strategy.

Restraining forces. Responses to question two provided a list of primary driving, restraining, and neutral forces associated with the Aynak copper mine project. The restraining forces are corruption, regulatory controls, and viable economic institutions as supported by (P2; P4; P5). Findings indicated that corruption, regulatory controls, and viable economic institutions restrained the sustained an early and sustained implementation of the strategy and supported by company documents and participants' responses. Some GoA officials reported that instances of corruption will lead to a

declining trend in the growth of FDI projects (Majeed, 2014; Spector, 2012). Regulatory controls have the potential to restrain GoA officials from efficiently managing trade when tied to FDI projects (Chien et al., 2012; Kennedy et al., 2012). Despite the delayed creation of viable economic institutions, GoA officials were able to use the financial leverage of these institutions to negotiate with MNCs on any strategy tied to managing FDI projects (SIGAR, 2011; World Bank, 2012). The MNC executives must identify and mitigate those restraining forces (e.g., FDI determinants) associated with the timely implementation of an FDI business strategy (P1). “The restraints to doing business in Afghanistan were similar to those we found in other mining ventures similar to Afghanistan” (P2, personal communication, March 2, 2016).

Neutral forces. Responses to question two provided a list of primary driving, restraining, and neutral forces associated with the Aynak copper mine project. Participants 1, 2 and 5 supported neutral forces that included social conditions, operational progress, economic and social effects, and security. Findings supported the notion that social conditions, operational progress, economic and social effects, and security have equal effects on the sustained and successful implementation of FDI strategies. Social conditions serve a restraining force when it increases poverty and unemployment and acts as a driving force when included as part of a comprehensive FDI strategy (Ahmed et al., 012; Chu, 2012). Despite a delay from 2014 to 2016 for operational startup of the Aynak copper mine project due to artifacts removal and security concerns, participants’ responses supported the position that the mine will incur minimal effects on projected profits. As shown in company documents, projected

domestic revenues paid to the GoA are \$350–\$500 million in taxes and annual income each year, for a total of \$40 billion over the life of the mine (Ministry of Mines, 2014). A consequence of the insurgency in Afghanistan, if not mitigated, is the undermining of security gains that deter MNC executives from pursuing FDI (Saleem et al., 2011; Sultana & Aquil, 2012). In sum, officials from both the GOA and the XYZ multinational corporation are responsible for the accomplishment of these collective actions to ensure the sustained and successful implementation of FDI strategies.

As posited by Blonigen and Piger (2014), forces associated with FFA are synonymous with determinants of FDI. The FFA technique contains guidances that contains emphasis on the effects of three elements: driving forces (e.g., factors that encourage), restraining forces (e.g., factors that discourage), and neutral forces (e.g., factors that both encourage and discourage) on processes and decisions (Burnes & Cooke, 2013), when applied to mine investment strategies in LDCs. Findings of this study indicated that identifying and mitigating the effects of these categories of forces is necessary for MNC executives to develop effective mine investment strategies in LDCs.

As posited by Swanson and Creed (2014), using FFA enables researchers to identify how driving forces and restraining forces affect the achievement of a strategy that supports the successful execution of a project. MNC executives can leverage driving forces and mitigate restraining forces to develop practical action plans and strategies for FDI business ventures (Shera & Meyer, 2013). Findings indicated that Afghanistan, similar to LDCs in Africa, provide MNC executives the opportunity to achieve sizeable

profits if they employ a strategy to address these forces in conjunction with the host nation's government (Nazminia, 2013).

Table 3 shows the subthemes (determinants) that emerged from the data analysis regarding the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. The determinants (forces) that emerged from the data analysis were (a) Aynak mine tender process, (b) business environment, (c) XYZ investment strategy, (d) corruption, (e) economic and social effects, (f) FDI strategy of the host nation, (g) good governance, (h) operational progress, (i) regulatory controls, (j) road reconstruction, (k) security, (l) social conditions, and (m) viable economic institutions. Table 3 is an illustration of the frequency of occurrences of themes and as such is affirmation that identification of determinants is essential to mine investment strategies. Through the executive summary of future FDI projects, financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report, and participant responses, the findings of the study indicated that the identification of determinants (forces) are essential to mine investment strategies in LDCs. These findings confirmed previous research by Blonigen and Piger (2014).

Table 3

Frequency of Themes for Determinants for Mine Investment Strategies

Themes	<i>n</i>	% of frequency of occurrence
Aynak Mine Tender Process	43	8.2%
Business Environment	76	14.4%
XYZ Investment Strategy	85	16.2%
Corruption	32	6.1%

Economic And Social Effects	27	5.1%
FDI Strategy Of The Host Nation	39	7.4%
Good Governance	53	10.1%
Operational Progress	21	3.9%
Regulatory Controls	32	6.1%
Road Reconstruction	46	8.7%
Security	19	3.6%
Social Conditions	27	5.1%
Viable Economic Institutions	26	4.9%

Note: n=frequency

My analysis of company documents and participants' answers showed that identifying driving, restraining, and neutral forces are essential to determining the primary determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. Building on the conceptual framework of this study, which is force field analysis theory, the research findings of the first main theme indicated leaders can leverage driving and neutral forces and mitigate restraining and neutral forces to develop effective FDI and strategies (Burnes & Cooke, 2013), and supported the need to identify the determinants for mine investment strategies. Through company documents and participant responses, the findings of the study revealed the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs are the same for the Aynak copper mine project. Previous researchers (Mihalache, 2011; Nazminia, 2013; Pahlavani et al., 2012) supported these findings.

Effects. As stated in main theme one, the FFA technique contains guidance to ensure the researcher looks at the effects of three elements. Relative to the strategy for the

Aynak copper mine project, responses to questions five and six provided ways that XYZ executives used to overcome the lack of regulatory controls and economic policies and measures to overcome risk posed by driving, restraining, and neutral forces. The three elements include: driving forces (e.g., factors that encourage), restraining forces (e.g., factors that discourage), and neutral forces (e.g., factors that both encourage and discourage) on processes and decisions (Burnes & Cooke, 2013) when applied to mine investment strategies in LDCs. Boone (2012) posited that the goal of using force field analysis is to identify the effects of forces on each other which determines the overall effect of the process or decision. Findings of this study revealed 13 forces as driving, restraining, and neutral forces, of which six have a significant enough effects to affect the employment and success of the Aynak copper mine strategy. Supported by company documents and participants' responses, those forces are the Aynak mine tender process, good governance, viable economic institutions, social conditions, and social and economic effects. When offering a mineral tender bid, leaders from LDCs often insist on a package of economic, environmental, and social linkages to occur within the mine and across the broader economy (Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011, World Bank, 2013).

The concept of good governance signifies a participative manner of governing, through government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption (Ferreira, 2012; Miszak & Monsutti, 2014). The concept of good governance signifies a participative manner of governing, through government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and control of corruption (Ferreira, 2012; Miszak & Monsutti, 2014). As a country marked by insurgency, leaders from the GOA should adopt the lessons learned in

Thailand, in which they tied employment, roads, water, and other services as part of the contract for approved FDI projects (Savun & Tirone, 2012; Viswanathan et al., 2012). Administrators of the Sustainable Development of Natural Resources Project ensured improved social conditions, competition, and fairness in procedures for the Aynak project that led to contracts for Afghan businesses and workers (Saleem et al., 2011; Stanley & Mikhaylova, 2011). In addition, social conditions, and social and economic effects are also listed as neutral forces.

As posited in the conceptual framework, determinants (forces) provide a baseline for the FDI determination process (Boone, 2012). MNC executives must assess the effects of the forces on the stated goal of the process or decision (Holloway-Cripps, 2013). Therefore, MNC executives must identify those determinants that have the most effects on mine investment strategies in LDCs. “Our internal analysis included solutions to mitigate or enhance the combined effects of forces on our chosen strategy” (P1, personal communication, March 2, 2016).

Table 4 shows the determinants that emerged from the data analysis regarding which ones that had the most effects on the theme, determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs. The determinants (e.g., forces) that emerged from the data analysis were (a) Aynak mine tender process, (b) business environment, (c) economic and social effects, (d) good governance, (e) social conditions, and (f) viable economic institutions. As Table 4 indicates, the frequency of occurrence of which determinants are in all of the categories of forces (driving, restraining, and neutral) affirmed that they will effects determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. Through the executive summary of

future FDI projects, financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report, and participant responses, the findings of the study indicated that determining which determinants (e.g., forces) have the most effects are essential to mine investment strategies in LDCs. Supported by responses from participants 2 and 4, the data analysis identified effects as those determinants (e.g., forces) with more than one occurrence in each of the three categories of forces (e.g., driving, restraining, and neutral). These findings confirmed previous research by Swanson and Creed (2014).

Table 4.

Frequency of Determinants Relative to Categories of Forces

Theme	<i>n</i>	<i>n1</i>	<i>n2</i>
Aynak Mine Tender Process	18	15	10
Business Environment	28	39	12
Economic And Social Effects	9	6	2
Good Governance	19	28	6
Social Conditions	16	7	4
Viable Economic Institutions	16	6	4

Note: n=frequency for driving forces, n1=frequency for restraining forces n2=frequency for neutral forces

The intent of addressing the effects of determinants (e.g., forces) will identify whether to enhance the effects of driving forces, mitigate the effects of restraining forces, and minimize the effects of neutral forces (Shera & Meyer, 2013). Therefore, as posited by Swanson and Creed (2014), using FFA enables decision makers to develop steps and

actions to address the effects of these determinants on the success of mine investment strategies for FDI projects in LDCs. MNC executives can adjust the specific elements within a strategy for FDI projects in LDCs to mitigate the effects of these forces on driving forces and neutral forces while mitigating their effects on restraining forces (Shera & Meyer, 2013).

Findings indicated that Afghanistan, similar to LDCs in Africa, provide MNC executives with the opportunity to achieve sizeable profits if they employ a strategy to address these forces in conjunction with the host nation's government (Nazminia, 2013). Responses to question nine included lessons learned as they applied to the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project. Identification of driving, restraining, and neutral forces are significant in the findings of main theme one. The research findings presented in this main theme are an illustration of the primary determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. As shown, in company documents and participants' responses, the determinants such as driving forces, restraining forces, and neutral forces are required to develop and analyze mine investment strategies in LDCs. Therefore, identifying the primary determinants of mine investment strategies in LDCs (e.g., company documents and participants' responses) helped answer the research question What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? As previously noted, force field analysis theory is effective for identifying those forces affecting a process of decision making (Burnes & Cooke, 2013), concerning FDI projects, such as the Aynak copper mine project. Therefore, the findings listed in

theme one, determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs, align with force field analysis theory.

Overall, the findings indicated that there are 13 forces used in determining mine investment strategy for LDCs; 6 are driving forces, and 3 are restraining forces while 4 are neutral forces. The direct correlation of Aynak mine tender process, good governance, viable economic institutions, social conditions, and social and economic effects forces are necessary because they serve as the foundation for any FDI strategy. These factors are a part of the strategies employed by MNC executives for copper mine projects in LDCs such as Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in Iran and Nigeria (Ekekwe, 2013; Pahlavani et al., 2012). The findings of this study indicated that identifying and mitigating the effects of these categories of forces is necessary for MNC executives to develop FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs.

Theme 2: FDI Strategies for Copper mine projects in LDCs

FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs is the second main theme. Participant responses to interview questions number one, three, four, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten identified the FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. Specifically, responses to these questions included (a) strategy selected for the project, (b) operational milestones, (c) current and projected timelines for mine progress, (d) measures needed to overcome factors that posed the most risk to success, (e) actions that minimized operational delays, (f) actions to ensure a positive return on investment, and (g) lessons learned as they related to the Aynak copper mine project. Participant responses to question ten confirmed that XYZ executives verified the overall appropriateness and

profitability assessment of the Aynak copper mine strategy (P1; P5). The core subthemes for FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs were: (a) cost leadership (CL) strategy, (b) differentiation (Diff) strategy, and (c) the combination CL and Diff strategies. Participant responses to interview questions number one, three, four, five, six, seven, and nine indicated that MNC executives employ three primary FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. Research by Gehani (2013) listed the primary criteria for comparing strategies for mine development projects in LDCs that included market orientation, profit margins, implementation costs, ability to target markets, sustainable competitive advantage, capital growth, ability to imitate by competitors, and the ability to adjust to customer needs. Market orientation (low, medium, high) is a business approach or philosophy that focuses on identifying and meeting the stated or hidden needs or wants of customers (Gehani, 2013). Profit margins are the net profit after taxes divided by sales for a given 12-month period, expressed as a percentage, and lower is better (Gehani, 2013). Sustainable competitive advantage is achieving a long-term competitive advantage that is not easily duplicable or surpassable by the competitors (Gehani, 2013). Capital growth is an increase in the market price of an asset (Gehani, 2013).

The advantages of the cost leadership strategy are market orientation, implementation costs, profit margins (high), ability to target markets, sustainable competitive advantage, and capital growth, compared to the disadvantages of the ability to imitate by competitors, ability to adjust to customer needs (Gehani, 2013). Profit margins (medium), ability to target markets, implementation costs, and capital growth are advantages, while market orientation, sustainable competitive advantage, and the ability

to imitate by competitors, coupled with the ability to adjust to customer needs as disadvantages for the differentiation strategy (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). A combination of CL/Diff has the advantages of the ability to target markets, sustainable competitive advantage, ability to imitate by competitors, and the ability to adjust to customer needs, along with the disadvantages of market orientation, implementation costs, profit margins (low), and capital growth (Shinkle et al., 2013). Responses to question nine included lessons learned that XYZ executives used relative to the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project taking into account the analysis of these strategies.

Table 5 shows the advantages and disadvantages of each primary FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs that emerged from the data analysis regarding which strategy is most appropriate for the Aynak copper mine project. Supported by (P1; P3; P5), the strategies that emerged from the data analysis were (a) cost leadership (CL) strategy, (b) differentiation (Diff) strategy, and (c) combination CL/Diff strategies. As Table 5 indicates, affirmed that a comparison of advantages and disadvantages for each strategy is useful in determining which strategy is most appropriate for FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. Through the executive summary of future FDI projects, financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report, and participant responses, the findings of the study indicated that analyzing the primary mine strategies are essential in determining mine investment strategies in LDCs. These findings confirmed previous research by Shinkle, Kriauciunas, and Hundley (2013).

Table 5.

Comparison of Strategies used for Mine Development Projects

Criteria	Cost Leadership (CL)	Differentiation(Diff)	Combined CL/Diff
Market Orientation	Low-A	Medium-D	High-D
Implementation Costs	Low-A	High-Medium-A	High-D
Profit Margins	High-A	Medium-A	Low-D
Sustainable Competitive Advantage	A	D	A
Capital Growth	A	A	D
Ability To Target Markets	A	A	A
Ability To Imitate By Competitors	D	D	A
Ability to Adjust to Customer Needs	D	D	A

Note. A=Advantages, D=Disadvantages. Cost Leadership strategy has more advantages and less disadvantage than Diff and combination CL/Diff strategies.

Responses to question one affirmed the use of a cost leadership strategy for the Aynak copper mine project. “We stand by our decision to use a cost leadership strategy for the Aynak copper mine project” (P1, personal communication, March 2, 2016). The findings indicated that for FDI projects in LDCs, better results occur when firms pursue either a cost leadership or differentiation business level strategy, not a combination of both (Girod, 2012; Shinkle et al., 2013). The benefits of a pure strategy diminishes when the institutional environment has a low degree of market orientation but increases when the institutional environment is more market-oriented (Girod, 2012; Shinkle et al., 2013). XYZ executives chose a single strategy approach combined with a business level strategy of cost leadership for the Aynak copper mine project, because of Afghanistan’s low market orientation (XYZ, 2015). Business leaders that employ a single strategy approach

emphasizes only a limited set of activities, such as marketing for differentiation or operations for cost leadership (Gehani, 2013). In addition, in a nation with low market orientation, such as LDCs, leaders who use a pure strategy approach can reduce risks because there are few competitors (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012).

Supported by company documents and participants' responses, reinforced the value of using the force field analysis technique to assess various FDI strategies. Findings indicated that the FFA technique contains guidance for assessing the strength of the strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs (Burnes & Cooke, 2013). In alignment with the assessment step of the conceptual framework, P1, P3, P4 and P5 stated that an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the FDI strategies is the next step. This step is necessary before making a decision on an appropriate strategy for copper mine projects in LDCs. Differentiation and mixed strategies are best for nations with medium and high market orientation, respectively (Shinkle et al., 2013). As shown in financial statements, Aynak mine progress reports, and the Aynak copper mine project design report, and participant responses, that the cost leadership strategy is the most advantageous FDI strategy for copper mine projects in LDCs. Findings from this study align with empirical research that MNC executives have successfully employed a cost leadership strategy in LDCs with low market orientation for copper mine projects in Nigeria and the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in Iran (Ekekwe, 2013; Pahlavani et al., 2012; Audu & Okumoko, 2013; Wishnick, 2012).

Responses to question three affirmed that the operational milestones are still appropriate for the Aynak copper mine project. "As with all mining projects, you always

factor in a 3-5 year buffer when developing your operational milestones” (P4, personal communication, March 2, 2016). Operational milestones for the Aynak copper mine project includes (a) Stage 1, exploration and feasibility (1-3 years); (b) Stage 2, construction and development (1–5 years); (c) Stage 3, exploitation and production (1-20 years); and (d) Stage 4, closure and reclamation (1-10 years; XYZ, 2015; Ministry of Mines, 2015). A mine is not considered operational until it reaches phase three (Oviir & Utouh, 2010). Based on the cost leadership strategy described in the Aynak copper mine project design report, findings indicated that the projected start of stage four (e.g., mine startup operations) of the Aynak copper mine is early 2016 from the initial of mid-year, 2015 is congruent with the operational milestones and progress timelines (XYZ, 2015; Oviir & Utouh, 2010; Ministry of Mines, 2015; Sampathkumar, 2012). The winning bid by XYZ corporation for the Aynak copper mine tender was \$3.5 billion (Dhaka, 2014; Sharan, 2012; Wishnick, 2012).

Responses to question eight included a list of actions to ensure a positive return on investment when employing the cost leadership strategy for the Aynak copper mine project. Findings indicated that the economic effects associated with the mine investment strategy for the Aynak copper mine project would yield \$1.2 billion per year for the first five years and \$3.5 billion per year, after that over the 30-year life of the mine (Ministry of Mines, 2015; P5). Annual income is the total monies earned based on projected mine production and market cost for the minerals. Profits include the total income less startup costs, operating costs, host country royalty payments, international and domestic tariffs, and employee salary. P5 stated “The annual income and profit projections align with the

current price of copper at the average grade of copper ore being below 0.6%” (personal communication, March 2, 2016).

Table 6 shows the projected annual income and profits advantages and disadvantages of each primary FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs that emerged from the data analysis regarding which strategy is most appropriate for the Aynak copper mine project. As Table 6 indicated and supported by P1, P4, P5, the strategies that emerged from the data analysis were (a) cost leadership (CL) strategy, (b) differentiation (Diff) strategy, and (c) combination CL/Diff strategies. Responses to question four affirmed that the operational progress timelines are still appropriate for the Aynak copper mine project. Findings indicated that the operational milestones are (a) Supported by participants’ responses and company documents, Table 6 shows the projected profitability of the Aynak copper mine project that also corresponds to the operational milestones. As Table 6 indicates, financial statements and the Aynak mine progress reports affirmed that the projected profits for the Aynak copper mine project are \$52.75 billion over 30 years with recoupment of XYZ’s \$3.5 billion investment in year six after the start of mining operations. In response to question 10, (P1; P5) stated “The projected profitability indicates a high rate of success for determining strategies for copper mine investments in LDCs” (personal communication, March 2, 2016).

Findings indicate that XYZ corporation overcame the archeological artifacts recovery by adding more workers resulting in minimal change in the projected start of operations from the end of the year 2014 to mid-year 2016 (Ministry of Mines, 2015). Responses to question seven affirmed the veracity of the Aynak mine progress report,

despite the operational delays due to the actions require to complete archeological artifacts recovery at the mine site. In addition, of the most successful copper mines in the world, rated fourth is the copper mine in Adina, Chile with 249,861 million tons of production and the rated fifth is the copper mine in Toquepala, Peru with 152,000 tons of copper of production in 2014, compared to the projected yearly production for the Aynak copper mine at 220,000 tons (Investing News, 2015; P5). The findings and participant responses confirmed previous research by Card (2013).

Table 6.

Projected Profitabilty for the Aynak Copper Mine Project

Years	Annual Income	Profits ^{ab}
1-5	\$7.5 (billions)	\$2 (billion) ^a
6-10	\$15.5	\$10.15 ^b
11-15	\$15.5	\$10.15 ^b
16-20	\$15.5	\$10.15 ^b
21-25	\$15.5	\$10.15 ^b
26-30	\$15.5	\$10.15 ^b
Total	\$77.5	\$52.75

Note: ^aThe calculation for profits in years 1-5 are: annual income less startup costs (\$0.5 bil), operating costs (\$0.2 bil), and host country royalty payments. ^bThe calculation for profits in years 6-30 are: annual income less operating costs (\$0.2 bil) and 30% of host country royalty payments in years 1-5.

Furthermore, findings indicated that all three strategies have value, but the cost leadership strategy is most appropriate for copper mine projects in LDCs. Also, company documents and participants' responses supported the conclusion that cost leadership FDI strategy is more advantageous for copper mine projects in LDCs, specifically, the Aynak

mine project. Findings of this study indicated that identifying and mitigating the effects of these categories of forces is necessary for MNC executives to develop effective mine investment strategies in LDCs. Therefore, as posited by Swanson and Creed (2014), using FFA enables researchers to identify how driving forces, restraining, and neutral forces affects the achievement of a strategy that supports the successful execution of a project. MNC executives can leverage driving forces and mitigate restraining forces to develop strategies for FDI business ventures (Shera & Meyer, 2013). Findings indicated that when weighed against FDI determinants, FDI strategies employed in Afghanistan and similar LDCs, provide MNC executives the opportunity to achieve sizeable profits (Nazminia, 2013), thus, aligning with the conceptual framework.

Summary

Overall, the research findings were consistent with the purpose and significance of the study and related to force field analysis theory. As supported by company documents and participants' responses, all the main themes that emerged (see Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6), played an essential role in helping me understand the research phenomenon as well as answer the central research question. This study contains insight that can contribute to the understanding of the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs and FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. According to Gilbert and Heinecke (2014), MNC executives should pursue regional FDI strategies for LDCS with transition economies aimed at building global integration and local responsiveness. Gilbert & Heinecke (2014) suggested that pursuing FDI in LDCs with low market orientation must consider the FDI strategy of the host nation. Therefore, the findings

indicated that there are nine forces used in determining mine investment strategy for LDCs; four are driving forces, three are restraining forces, and two are neutral forces. Driving forces are FDI strategy of the host nation, road reconstruction, business environment, and good governance. The restraining forces are corruption, regulatory controls, and viable economic institutions. The neutral forces included social conditions and security.

Cost leadership (CL), differentiation (Diff), and a combination CL and Diff strategies are available for evaluating FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. The cost leadership FDI strategy is more advantageous for copper mine projects in LDCs, specifically, the Aynak mine project (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013; P1; P2; P5). Last, as supported by company documents and participants' responses, the economic effects assessment of a cost leadership strategy indicated that projected profits for the Aynak copper mine project is \$52.75 billion over the 30-year lifespan of the mine. P5 stated that projected profits will increase based on the price of the average grade of copper ore being below 0.6% compared to 1.56–2.3% grade copper for the Aynak copper mine. Previous research supported these findings (Mihalache, 2011; Gu, 2011; Nazminia, 2013; Onwudiwe, 2011; Pahlavani et al., 2012).

Applications to Professional Practice

This research study is meaningful to leaders of MNC who must have strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs in numerous ways. The primary objective of the study was to explore the strategy that MNC executives from XYZ corporation used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with copper Aynak mine project in Afghanistan a

LDC. The identification of determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs and FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs are critical to the FDI process and decision-making (Blonigen & Piger, 2014; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Participant 1 and 4 confirmed that they identified determinants as described by Shera and Meyer (2013) in the force field analysis theory as a means to help MNC executives develop a set of best practices. These best practices are appropriate for exploring strategies to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with FDI copper mine projects in LDCs. As found in both themes, determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs and FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs, P1 recommended that business leaders use a process to determine and apply determinants (e.g., forces) that will assist them in the identification of effectiveness strategies for FDI projects in LDCs.

The MNC executives can develop strategies that include public-private partnerships to spur future investment in Afghanistan and other LDC mining industries (Park, 2012; Pellillo, 2012). Therefore, MNC executives should develop strategies that achieve greater success to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with FDI copper mine projects in LDCs (Card, 2013; Holloway-Cripps, 2013). Participants 1, 2 and 4 confirmed previous research by Nazminia (2013) that stated cost leadership strategy and force field analysis theory are most determining FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. However, P1 and P5 noted that not all FDI strategies (e.g., differentiation, and combine CL/Diff) are appropriate for low market orientation countries, which are LDCs. “We will use the Aynak copper mine project as a blueprint for projected mining projects in Afghanistan” (P1, personal communication, March 2,

2016). As MNC executives understand how to develop successful FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs, the results of the study should assist them in creating a set of best practices for use in other LDCs.

Implications for Social Change

I listed the implications of social change in the significance of the study section of Section 1. The implications expressed regarding tangible improvements to individuals, communities, institutions, and societies of LDCs, are similar to Afghanistan. I found that understanding and assessing the effects of the social conditions, business environment, viable economic institutions, road reconstruction, Aynak mine tender process, social and economic effects, operational progress, security, XYZ investment strategy, and good governance were essential to promoting positive social change in Afghanistan and other LDCs. The strategies used by XYZ executives are appropriate to address current social conditions and perhaps prevent further deterioration.

Specifically, the high mortality in LDCs such as Afghanistan caused by poverty is a contributing factor to an ongoing deterioration in social conditions (Ramanaiah et al., 2013; SIGAR, 2011). In a survey conducted between 2006-2014, researchers reported that there was 12 million (42%) working-age adults of the total Afghan population are unemployed and live in poverty (World Bank, 2012). The execution of the Aynak copper mine project will reduce the total number of unemployed working age Afghani's by 31,000 (P1; P2; P4). P1 stated "There is a potential 620,000 more jobs when the 19 unbidden copper mine tenders are approved." I concluded that the adoption of good governance policies enacted in support of the Aynak copper mine project will contribute

to ongoing efforts by Afghan government leaders' to implement effective economic policies to reduce unemployment, thus reducing poverty.

The implementation of the findings of this study should provide insights and recommendations for use by U.S. and other international policymakers to promote positive social change in Afghanistan to reduce poverty significantly. As a country marked by insurgency, GOA officials have adopted the lessons learned in Thailand, in which they associate employment, roads, water, and other services as part of the contract for approved FDI projects (Savun, & Tirone, 2012; Viswanathan et al., 2012). Researchers should utilize the findings of the study to develop a greater understanding of how FDI strategies can generate revenues from mining projects, specifically, the Aynak copper mine project to address unemployment and other root causes of poverty in LDCs (Ministry of Mines, 2014).

Recommendations for Action

Business executives should consider evaluating their processes against those listed in the first main theme, which is the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. MNC executives need to ensure that they continually evaluate the FDI strategy against the current market orientation of the host country, especially for copper mine projects in LDCs (Gehani, 2013). Evaluating current decision making processes will ensure that they can update the effectiveness of FDI strategies used for copper mine projects in LDCs throughout the life cycle of the mine. Business executives should develop best practices for identifying determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs if they do not exist within the corporation or its subsidiaries. If business leaders

decide to implement processes for making decisions on FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs, they should consider evaluating them against commonly known and effective best practices for identifying determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs. Business executives should work within the international organization for standardization to ensure that wages, workplace standards, and environmental compliance align with business goals and host country laws.

Findings from this study are important to corporate executives to verify the effects of identified forces on the chosen FDI strategy and to monitor its effective implementation. The application of FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs should allow MNC executives to use fiscal strategies achieve and sustain profitability. Senior executives of MNCs pursuing mine investment strategies in LDCs may be interested in the findings of this study. Understanding the result of this study may be particularly beneficial to both the leaders of GoA and Afghan businesses who want to establish public-private partnerships for future FDI copper mine projects. Public-private partnerships will enhance the business relationship between the investor and the host country, thus, facilitating future FDI business ventures. I will disseminate the results of the study through conferences, scholarly journals, and business journals. Furthermore, I intend to circulate the results of this study through training and seminars for MNC executives looking to explore the determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs and FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs.

Recommendations for Further Study

The findings from this study warrant additional exploration of good governance and best practices for the development of FDI strategies in LDCs (Ardiyanto, 2012; Ferreira, 2012; Girod, 2012). Therefore, researchers should conduct further studies to address the limitations outlined in this study. This study was subject to three limitations. First, use of a single-case, the Aynak copper mine project, to explore strategies used by MNC executives to improve the timely delivery of minerals. I listed this limitation as a topic for further study if researchers choose to conduct a multiple-case study using the three mining projects pending approval by GoA officials. Second, the lack of access to GoA officials to obtain their perspectives on the employment of the strategy used by XYZ to deliver minerals from the Aynak copper mine project. The U.S. Government limits access to GoA officials to those with official business in order to avoid adverse effects on current diplomatic and security efforts (U.S. Department of Defense, 2013). The lack of direct access to GoA officials did not hinder the validity of the findings because I was able to achieve data saturation through methodological triangulation. Third, the combined effects of population or sample size, data collection instrument, and transferability of results. The population or sample size must aid in achieving data saturation. The population/sample size did not hinder data saturation, therefore, was not a limitation. The data collection must permit unbiased data collection. I avoided research bias during data collection through member checking, transcript review, and did not use personal opinions. Transferability means that researchers can apply or transfer research results beyond the bounds of a study (Gandy, 2015). I achieved transferability

by using validity tests, thus, future researchers can apply or transfer the results of my research to similar studies beyond the bounds of this study. The combined effects of population and sample size, data collection instrument, and transferability of results is another limitation (Gandy, 2015), however, the combined effects did not limit my ability to gather data, achieve validity, reliability, and transferability of the study findings.

In addition, the findings of this study warrant exploration of the role of good governance in the effectiveness of FDI strategies to generate increased FDI projects in LDCs. The findings of this study indicated that good governance is not only a driving force for attracting FDI projects in LDCs, but it is one of six forces that had the most effect on deciding on a strategy. Also, since this study focused on the Afghanistan, I recommend exploring the need for and effects of good governance relevant to MNC executives decisions to pursue FDI agriculture projects in Afghanistan. A quantitative study examining the social effects of FDI strategies can look at how FDI projects affect poverty and unemployment in LDCs. A look at other FDI projects in LDCs should uncover new business practices for use by MNC executives pursuing business ventures with host nation business owners in LDCs. MNC executives can develop strategies that include public-private partnerships to spur future investment in other industries located in LDCs (Park, 2012; Pellillo, 2012). Last, considering the effects of forces affecting FDI strategies, I further suggest a study to investigate the business practices for strategies that led to failed profitability for copper mine projects located in LDCs.

Reflections

During the research process, my perspective and understanding of doctoral level research expanded immensely. The level of detail and alignment that this research required challenged the limits of my academic acumen. I initially felt overwhelmed by the data that emerged from the literature review, semistructured interviews, and from the review of company records, but quickly regained perspective. All five participants were professional and passionate about the process and decision making required when developing successful FDI strategies for the Afghanistan's Aynak copper mine project and other mining projects in LDCs. The interview process taught me that corporate participants prefer five to seven days to respond to inquiries, and the researcher must remain flexible throughout the entire data collection process.

The findings of this study affected me personally because I am a senior military leader with many experiences with implementing processes and making decisions. The findings of the study were similar to what I have experienced in trying to train mid and lower level military leaders in the art of leadership. Although there were some differences in each participant's perspective, I was able to recognize many similarities and challenges that we all face as senior executives looking to develop and implement strategies. The findings from this study exposed me to additional strategies and best practices that I can utilize in my future leadership roles.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Through my research, I found 13 forces used in determining mine investment strategy for LDCs; six are driving forces, and three are restraining forces while four are

neutral (Blonigen & Piger, 2014; Burnes & Cooke, 2013). Business leaders stated that cost leadership strategies are most appropriate for low market orientation countries, such as LDCs (Stankevičiūtė et al., 2012). The cost leadership FDI strategy is more advantageous for copper mine projects in LDCs, specifically, the Aynak mine project (Gehani, 2013; Shinkle et al., 2013). Therefore, the specific business problem is that some MNC (XYZ) executives often lack strategies to improve the timely delivery of minerals for mining projects in LDCs. The purpose of this qualitative, holistic single-case study was to explore the strategy that MNC executives from XYZ corporation used to improve the timely delivery of minerals associated with the Aynak copper mine project in Afghanistan (an LDC). Further, the objective was also to answer the following overarching research question: What strategy did MNC (XYZ) executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? Despite not having access to GoA officials, I obtained sufficient information to answer the research question. All five participants participated in semistructured interviews and a review of company documents augmented the interview data.

After collecting and analyzing data, two main themes emerged from the data included (a) determinants for mine investment strategies in LDCs and (b) FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs. The findings indicated determinants for copper mine investments strategies in LDCs encompassed an identification and assessment of the effects of driving, restraining and neutral forces. Findings indicated that driving forces were FDI strategy of the host nation, road reconstruction, business environment, and good governance; restraining forces were corruption, regulatory controls, and viable

economic institutions; and neutral forces included social conditions, and security (P2; P3; P4). The findings also indicated that cost leadership, differentiation, and a combination CL/Diff strategy were appropriate for FDI strategies for copper mine projects in LDCs, thus, achieving profitability (P1; P3; P5).

There are several conclusions to this research project. It is important to mention that participants of the study answered semistructured interviews questions for this study. In addition to participants answering all questions asked during the interview, I reviewed company documents, including the Aynak copper mine contract report, XYZ annual financial statement and XYZ posture statement to collect data. I triangulated data collected through semistructured interviews and company data with current literature to support the findings. The initial findings of this study were that the primary determinants mine investment strategies in LDCs were good governance, viable economic institutions, regulatory controls, corruption, security, road reconstruction, social conditions, FDI strategy of the host nation, and the business environment (Blonigen & Piger, 2014; P1-5). Successful projects using a cost leadership strategy for copper mine projects in LDCs with low market orientation are evident in the research findings of the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in Iran and Nigeria (Audu & Okumoko, 2013; Wishnick, 2012). Therefore, a cost leadership strategy was most appropriate FDI strategy for copper mine projects in LDCs, specifically, the Aynak copper mine project (P1). As identified by leaders in Nigeria and the Sistan and Baluchestan provinces in Iran, these factors supported the successful employment of a cost leadership strategy by MNC executives in LDCs for copper mine projects (Audu & Okumoko, 2013; Pahlavani et al., 2012;

Wishnick, 2012). Last, findings from the economic effects assessment supported by the cost leadership strategy, indicated that projected profits for the Aynak copper mine project operated by XYZ corporation is \$52.75 billion over 30 years and can recoup the \$3.5 billion investment in year 6 of mining operations (Dhaka, 2014; Ministry of Mines, 2013; P5).

MNC executives must consider what forces are directly correlated with each other when deciding upon a mine investment strategy in LDCs. Specifically for the Aynak copper mine; they are the Aynak mine tender process, good governance, viable economic institutions, social conditions, and social and economic effects (Ministry of Mines, 2014; P3; P4; P5). As noted in the constructs of the force field analysis theory, determining a mine investment strategy requires an identification of forces and their effects along with a corresponding FDI strategy for implementation (Blonigen & Piger, 2014; Card, 2013; Gehani, 2013; P4). While having the best strategy in place is vital for an appropriate mine investment strategy in LDCs, MNC executives must use a process that aids them in understanding and assessing information required to make the best decision (Shera & Meyer, 2013; Swanson & Creed, 2014; P1). Participants 1 and 5 determined that the projected profits, projected annual production output combined with the cost leadership strategy give the Aynak copper mine a high probably of success. In addition, P1 stated that the Aynak copper mine project and the other 19 unbidden copper mine tenders will employ 31,000 each, thus, making 620,000 more jobs available to the 12 million working age Afghan citizens. Jobs creation and effective economic policies supported by GoA leaders will help reduce poverty. Overall, findings from this study indicated that the

process of identifying determinants and assessing FDI strategies for LDCs will create profitability, thus, ensuring the timely delivery of minerals for mine investment projects.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What strategy did you use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project?
2. What were the primary driving and restraining forces that you addressed in your strategy to ensure the success of the Aynak copper mine project?
3. What are the operational milestones listed in your strategy for the Aynak copper mine?
4. What is your current and projected progress timeline relative to your strategy milestones?
5. In what ways did you overcome the lack of Afghan regulatory controls and economic policies to win the bid for the Aynak copper mine project?
6. What measures did you include in your strategy to overcome the factors that posed the most risk to achieving success and the timely delivery of minerals from the Aynak copper mine project?
7. What actions did you take to minimize the effects of any operational delays for Aynak copper mine project?
8. What factors did you address to ensure that the strategy supported a positive return on your investment in the Aynak copper mine project?
9. What lessons may other MNCs apply from the strategy used for the Aynak copper mine project to achieve success in future copper mine projects in Afghanistan?
10. What other information can you share, which was not asked, regarding this topic?

Appendix B: Letter of Invitation

Dear xxxx,

I am in the process of completing my doctoral dissertation from Walden University and I am asking for your help in gathering data. In the conduct of this study, I am not looking for intellectual property and confidential or propriety information. I am looking for best practices on how to develop and implement a strategy for successful foreign direct investments in Afghanistan, specifically the Aynak copper mine project. Your input will provide valuable insight into the answering my research question, What strategy did some MNC executives use to improve the timely delivery of minerals for the Aynak copper mine project? At the 2012 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, members reported that between 2010 and 2012, \$91 billion (68%) of the \$134.1 billion in foreign direct investments was allocated to least developed countries for mining projects. During this timeframe, significant operational delays occurred resulting in financial losses for three out of every four mining investment projects. My research shows that your company, located in Beijing, China, is successful in all of its mining project ventures. You are invited to participate in this study because your organization may serve as a business model for how to achieve successful business ventures in least developed countries.

Participation in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You also have the option not to answer any questions that you feel are too personal. No personally identifying information will be used when you participate in the research.

Participation in this survey means you will be asked to:

- Return the signed consent form within 3 days
- Participate in a 45-minute interview, either by Skype or by teleconference
- Review your interview questions I will send to you prior to the scheduled interview date
- Review the interview transcripts and return to me within 5 days

Your participation will be very helpful and the time you spend will be very much appreciated. Walden University's approval number for this study is **02-23-16-0224663** and it expires on **February 22, 2017.**

Please feel free to contact me at roosevelt.barfield@waldenu.edu if you have any questions. Again, your help and your contribution will be greatly appreciated.

Very Sincerely,

Roosevelt Barfield