

2016

A Multiple Case Study of the Influence of Positive Organizational Behavior on Human Resources

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Michelle Geiman

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Walden University

2016

Abstract

A Multiple Case Study of the Influence of Positive Organizational Behavior
on Human Resources

by

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MBA, Otterbein University, 2004

BSBA, Bowling Green State University, OH, 1998

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Management

Walden University

June 2016

Abstract

Organizations are looking for ways to have higher employee engagement and productive employees. A way that this may be accomplished is through Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) practices. There is a lack of knowledge surrounding the successes and failures of implementing a POB culture by human resource departments (HRDs). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study design was to explore the influence POB practices have on HRDs. Specifically, the research helped to gain an understanding of how a POB strategy operates and affects HRDs. Items examined in the conceptual framework include a foundation in positive psychology theories and human resource (HR) theories. The elements of HRDs that can affect POB are culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures. The outputs of the system include employee morale, company profitability, employee productivity, and employee engagement. The research questions centered on discovering how HRDs achieve a POB culture based on their policies, procedures, funding, structure, and internal and external relationships. The research questions explored how a POB culture has affected the HRDs positively and negatively. Thirty-one participants' from 13 different companies provided the data. The findings cause social change by providing HR professionals insight into POB practices that increase employees' job satisfaction, team productivity, and organizational profitability. The outcomes create social change by allowing individuals to have increased job and life satisfaction.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Drew. Thank you for all the sacrifices that you have made during my dissertation journey. I want to dedicate this dissertation to the two most influential women that were part of my life my mother, Connie Scurman, and my former elementary teacher, Mrs. Elise MacPhee. Without their strong foundation of learning and persistence, I would not be where and who I am today. They instilled in me a passion for learning and achieving the impossible.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Organizations are searching for the most efficient way to ensure employees use their strengths and have the tools they need to be productive. This is because human capital is the greatest cost in organizations (Razi & More, 2012; Wright & McMahan, 2011). Buckingham and Coffman (1999) found that employees who use their strengths on a daily basis are three times more productive than the average employee is at work. The authors' findings demonstrate how strengths are a critical asset for organizations.

Recently, organizations have started to implement an emerging organizational development (OD) theory called Positive Organizational Behavior (POB). POB is a positive psychology theory that explains an organization's ability to improve individual and group levels of efficiency and employee satisfaction (Hystad, Bartone, & Eid, 2014; Jeung, 2011; Ramlall, Al-Kahtani, & Damanhour, 2014). Mills, Fleck, and Kozikowski (2013) discovered a relationship between workplace satisfaction and POB. Youssef and Luthans (2007) examined productivity and performance appraisals and found a positive correlation between workplace satisfaction and POB. In the study, POB accounted for a 4% to 15% variance in productivity. For the organizations that participated in the study, Youssef and Luthans found that over \$50 million of their profit attributed to POB. Youssef and Luthans argued that POB could increase organizations profitability. Finally, POB is a shift from fixing what is wrong with individuals to celebrating and supporting their strengths (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Human resource departments (HRDs) are responsible for implementing change efforts like POB. Shuck and Reio (2011) found that these departments are responsible for translating

upper management's vision into practice. For HRDs, this strategy could potentially mean modifications in recruitment, selection, onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes. POB research does not examine the part of the organization within which HRDs operate (Mills et al., 2013). The lack of exploration of POB into HRDs makes it difficult for HR professionals to understand the benefits to their HRD and organization. Consequently, there needs to be greater comprehension of POB's impact on HRDs.

The present study explores how HRDs change based on the implementation of a POB culture. The potential benefits of implementing a POB culture include increased employee satisfaction, worker engagement, and company profitability (Crabb, 2011; Luthans, 2012; Mills et al., 2013; Tims, Bakker, Derks, & van Rhenen, 2013). The study serves as a roadmap to HR professionals regarding the implementation and maintenance of a POB culture.

In chapter 1, I discuss the background, problem statement, purpose, nature of the study, research questions, the conceptual framework, and definition of terms. In addition, I explore different assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations in the chapter. Finally, a review of the study's significance will conclude the chapter.

Background of Study

This section includes an examination of POB and its relationship to positive psychology. In addition, included is a discussion of the impact of HRDs on organization productivity and employee engagement. Next, there is a discussion of the gaps found within the research of POB and HRDs. Finally, the section concludes with arguments regarding the necessity of the research.

Positive Psychology Theories

The positive psychology movement started in the 1990s as a way to redirect psychological research from dysfunctional human behavior to highly functional human behavior (Jeung, 2011). Seligman argued that psychology had only focused on half of a person by examining an individual in times of crisis (Seligman et al., 2005). Jeung (2011) argued that there needed to be research on what makes people successful and operate at their best.

POB is a positive psychology theory, the proponents of which argue that the greatest room for individual improvement is in developing personal strengths versus overcoming weaknesses (Donaldson, Dollwet, & Rao, 2014). Positive psychology is being used to change the way employee benefits are administered (Bourne, McComb, & Woodard, 2012; Muse & Wadsworth, 2012). POB has also been shown to provide a different focus for performance appraisals with an emphasis on the negative to positive work achievements (Alessandri, Vecchione, Tisak, Deiana, Caria, & Caprara, 2012; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Lin et al., 2011). Positive psychology has also found new ways for job design (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; Lueneburger, 2012; & Tims et al., 2013) and develop leaders within organizations (Maric, Dimovski, Djurica, Cerne, & Djurica, 2013). Youssef and Luthans (2012) stated that POB is the investigation of psychological capacities and the application of an individual's strengths in the workplace.

POB moves the study of positive psychology into the workplace by examining the aspects of a job that create an environment where employees can use their strengths daily. Money, Hillenbrand, and Da Camara (2008) found that organizational commitment and job satisfaction connect to life's purpose, engagement, and pleasure. Money et al. is a two-part study

that adapted Seligman's personal happiness, and his and virtues questionnaires to apply it to employees in the workplace. The authors concluded that positive outcomes brought organizational commitment, success, and job satisfaction. Ramlall et al. (2014) argued that POB promotes the development of individual and leadership resources within an organization.

Jeung (2011) defined five criteria of POB (see Figure 1). These are (a) theory and research-based criterion, (b) state-liked criterion, (c) measurement-based, (d) impact performance criterion, and (e) positivity criterion (Jeung). Although, Youssef and Luthans (2012) stated that there were only four criteria around POB, which included development-based, theory-based, performance-related, and measurable-based. A state-like criterion focuses on evidence-based development.

My investigation focuses on POB and moves away from fixed strengths and talents defined by the Gallup Organization. The study also examines OB's traditional characteristics of virtues and traits. It discusses the performance impact differentiates POB from positive psychology and popular media literature. This study meets the criterion threshold due to its examination on the influence POB has on HRDs functions.

Jeung (2011) argued that the POB criterion helps to measure engagement for a POB. He stated that both the measurement for POB and engagement was at the individual level. Engagement and POB focus on the positive strengths individuals bring to the workplace. Jeung found that engagement is the positive connection between an employee's work productivity and their job satisfaction. Shuck, Ghosh, Zigarmi, and Nimon (2012) stated that the fundamental characteristics of employee engagement are work and the duties related to the work the employee is performing. There is a controversy over employee engagement and if it is a new concept, or

merely a renaming of old theories. In Chapter 2, there is an examination of the controversy around employee engagement.

<p>Research-base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For something to be labeled as a POB concept, it must be researched based on scientific theories and studies.
<p>State-like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-like characteristics are open to improvement and development for individuals versus trait-like that are static and unlikely to change. • This is a feature of POB that distinguishes from positive psychology and Positive Organization Scholarship (POS).
<p>Valid measurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to conduct in-depth scientific research is based on reliable and valid measurements.
<p>Performance impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research looks for connection between employee engagement and performance outcomes. • This is another disguising feature of POB and separates it from positive psychology and POS research.
<p>Positivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the past, the focus of has been on improving employees weaknesses to increase performance, while POB argues that the focus should be on the positive aspects of individual performance.

Figure 1. Definition of Positive Organization Behavior (POB)

Regarding positive psychology's application of employee engagement, Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) argued that there are three approaches. First, employee engagement is a set of motivators such as skill development, performance feedback, recognition, support, and advancement (Bakker & Schaufeli). Buckingham and Clifton (2001) argued that employee

engagement relates positively to business outcomes. Second, employee engagement is a psychological state based on a vested investment in an organization's success (Bakker & Schaufeli). Third, Bakker and Schaufeli said that the term engagement is independent of work, job, positive outcomes, and commitment. The basis of job demands and resources are on negative and positive aspects of well-being (Bakker & Schaufeli). Bakker and Schaufeli referred to the job demands-resources (JD-R) model to highlight engagement in positive psychology.

Steger, Littman-Ovadia, Miller, Menger, and Rothmann (2012) found that work engagement is stronger when people find their work to be meaningful. In addition, Steger et al. stated that the JD-R model highlights the different factors related to job performance and the intrinsic factors that motivate employees. Affective disposition is an individual's predisposition to positive or negative attitude(s) across situations and time. Steger et al. found positive affective disposition is a significant factor in determining meaningful work.

POB relates to the field of organizational behavior since both are trying to examine the various levels within an organization (Youssef & Luthans, 2012). Youssef and Luthans state that these levels are individuals, groups, and organizations. Within these levels, POB examines the individual strengths (i.e.: hope, optimism, self-efficiency, and resilience) and only recently moved into the study of team strengths (Donaldson et al., 2014; Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Supporters of POB state that the greatest room for growth is building upon success and strengths found in these different levels. Other theories such as total quality management (Deming, 1985), high-performance work systems (Wright & McMahan, 2011), and six sigma (Juran, 1993) have looked at these different components with their focus being on fixing or eliminating weaknesses in the system (Youssef & Luthans).

Human Resource Departments

Since HRDs manage the employee and supervisor aspects of an organization, HRDs are different from other departments within an organization (Ulrich, Brockbank, & Ulrich, 2013). HRDs are responsible for the organizational strategy in recruitment and selection, employee relations, performance management, compensation and benefits, and OD (Luthans, 2012). HRDs are responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of policies, procedures, and practices within an organization. HRDs can be a critical function regarding organizational success for increasing employee satisfaction, performance, and engagement (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Ulrich et al., 2013; Wright & McMahan, 2011).

Gaps in Knowledge

While many research studies have focused on positive psychology at the organizational and individual levels, there is a shortage of investigation at the group level (Rynes, Bartunek, Dutton, & Margolis, 2012). There is little understanding of how groups relate to the individual or organizational aspects of a company's culture. Searle and Barbuto (2013) argued that the lack of understanding of cross-level interactions is a flaw in POB research. This lack of knowledge causes a gap in POB's effectiveness concerning how cross-level interactions shape organizational life.

Typically, an aspect of the HRDs such as recruitment and selection, performance management, or training is studied (Cilliers, 2011; Lin, Chen, & Wang, 2011). There remains a void in the understanding of how the operations of HRDs influence a POB culture. While Luthans (2012) argued that HRDs have an impact on employee attitudes, behaviors, and

performance, he neglected to define those functions of the organization that is most affected by POB.

Need for the Study

While researchers have studied various aspects of POB, there is a void on how this strategy influences the functions of HRDs (Mills et al., 2013). This lack of knowledge has led to departments implementing numerous features of POB with a range of results (Mills et al., 2013). The research is unclear on which practices to avoid or adopt. This absence of best practice knowledge leads to ineffective use of human capital within organizations (Mills et al., 2013). This study helped to identify the HRDs' responses to POB culture.

Searle and Barbuto (2013) argued that cross-level analysis is fundamental in discovering interactions that shape organizational life. In this instance, this study will provide understanding regarding the HR processes and social context. The investigation may assist other functional areas in an organization relating to the implementation of this approach in the future. Last, the findings will help to identify policies, procedures, and attitudes that assist in adopting a POB culture inside a HRD.

Problem Statement

HRDs are unique organizational functional areas because they must implement the cultural change in the organization. Although POB increases employee morale, job satisfaction, productivity, and engagement, the role of HRDs in POB implementation has not been examined (Jeung, 2011). Additional issues related to positive psychology research include at least 50% of the participants in published studies were college students, and 78% of the studies were quantitative (Donaldson et al., 2014). The general management problem is a lack of knowledge

on how POB measures, develops, and improves performance in the workplace (Mills et al., 2013; Ramlall et al., 2014). The particular problem is the lack of knowledge regarding the interaction between POB and groups, such as HRDs (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Information relating to the performance of groups matters because it assists departments with implementation of POB organizational principles.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to interview a select sample of professionals who have worked in a HR capacity for at least one year in at least six organizations that practiced positive psychology. The focus was to explore their perceptions of how different HR practices function in a POB culture including recruitment, selection, onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes. The data from the study contributes to new knowledge and insights into how the POB strategy operates and influences HRDs. The findings foster social change in expectations of how employees should be developed, coached, and rewarded.

Yin (2014) stated that a multiple case research approach is appropriate when the researcher's aim is to test and replicate results at various sites to develop the conclusions. There is a significant amount of quantitative work, which explores POB (Combs, Milosevic, Jeung, & Griffith, 2011; Hmieleski, Cole, & Baron, 2011; Kaiser & Overfield, 2011). The study's findings helped in balancing the large amount of quantitative work with qualitative work. The investigation into POB did not rely on positive psychology quantitative surveys, but on face-to-face interviews with HR professionals. Yin (2014) stated that researchers should select research

cases based on criteria such as convenience, access, geographic proximity, and the phenomena studied. Yin found that a good sample size for a multiple case study was six to ten cases.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how are their policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures organized and changed?
2. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how do they develop relationships internal and external to the department?
3. How have Human Resource Departments adjusted internally to adopt a positive organizational behavior culture (i.e., policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures)?
4. How has a positive organizational behavior culture affected the Human Resource Departments positively and negatively?

Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study is a mix of concepts and phenomena. Shkedi (2005) stated the conceptual framework helps to provide a perspective or understanding of the phenomena under study. The framework is a critical component for the development of research questions, selecting a data collection instrument, creating interview questions, and determining the data analysis technique. Positive psychology and organizational behavior concepts, with a focus on HRDs, are relevant to this work. Organizational behavior inputs and output phenomena produce a POB culture.

The contextual lens of this study includes positive psychology theories, particularly the philosophy of POB. Similar positive psychology theories, which examine organizations, leadership, and group dynamics, were of particular interest. These included (1) authentic leadership (AL) (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), (2) positive organizational scholarship (POS) (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), (3) positive leadership (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012), (4) strengths based leadership (SBL) (Rath & Conchie, 2008), and (5) psychological capital (PsyCap) (Luthans, Norman, Avolio, & Avey, 2008). This framework helped to provide a contextual lens for the different organizational behavior variables and relationships related to positive psychology.

Concepts that encompass organizational behavior are also a part of the conceptual framework of this study. Organizational behavior has a number of theories associated with it including: (1) scientific management theory (Taylor, 1914), (2) motivator-hygiene theory (Grigaliunas & Herzberg, 1971), (3) Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), (4) ERG theory (Alderfer, 1969), (5) goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984), (6) systems theory (Senge, 2006), (7) Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970), (8) reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1969), and (9) McGregor's theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 2006). I will examine the specific theories that are most appropriate for this study in the HRDs section.

It is important to understand the phenomena surrounding HRD's operations. HR professionals influence an organization in culture, group dynamics, type of work, policies, and procedures (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Sahoo, Das, & Sundaray, 2011; Ulrich et al., 2013; Wright & McMahan, 2011). Studies have not focused on how POB influences HRDs.

This study's conceptual framework has some POB factors that affect HRDs. There are two major concepts within the framework, which are influencers and outcomes. It is important to examine these different variables and their relationship to positive psychology. Figure 2 highlights the logical connections among the key elements of the conceptual framework.

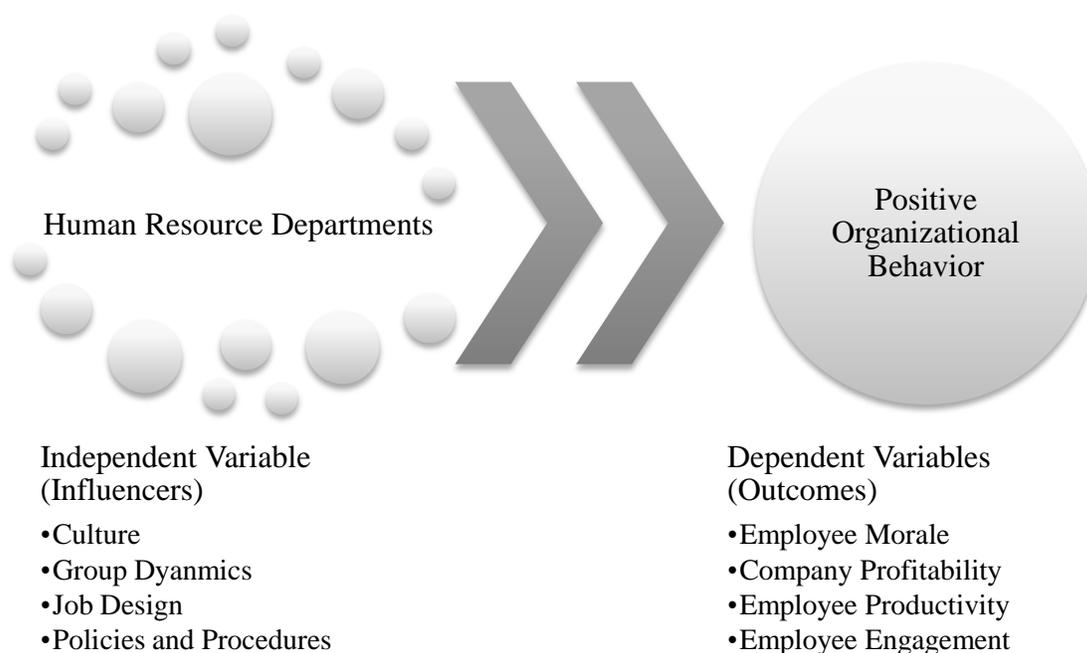


Figure 2. Parts of conceptual framework for POB effects on HRDs.

HRDs manage the human capital functions of an organization. HRD elements that can affect POB are the inputs for culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures. Culture is the values, beliefs, and assumptions that an organization shares (Fischer, 2010).

Group dynamics occur within an assembly of employees that interact and are interdependent within an organization (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). There are many positive behaviors associated with teams including strengths-based performance, collective optimism, resiliency, self-efficacy, and hope (Gordon, 2012; Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

The type and design of an employee's job, also influences group dynamics. Job design is the type of work that a person performs in a particular position (Bakker et al., 2012; Safdar, Waheed, & Rafiq, 2011). While management traditionally designs jobs, positive psychology argues that creating jobs around individual's strengths is more effective (Bakker et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2013).

A few studies have shown the connection between HR policies and procedures and positive psychology. Policies and procedures establish the different rules and expectations within the workplace (Guest & Woodrow, 2012). Different policies around performance appraisals (Alessandri et al., 2012; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Lin et al., 2011) and benefits (Bourne et al., 2012; Muse & Wadsworth, 2012) help create POB.

Concerning output, scholars found that employee morale, company profitability, employee productivity, and employee engagement improved for organizations that implemented a POB culture (Lee & Ok, 2015; Luthans, 2012; Shuck, Zigarmi, & Owen, 2015; Siu, 2013; Tims et al., 2013; Youssef & Luthans, 2012). These are key indicators that a culture change is successful (Awasthi, 2015).

The theories, causes, and outcomes of a POB culture as it relates to HRDs are the foundation of the literature review and the focus of the research. Figure 2 is a visual representation of the framework relationship to the study's approach, key research questions, instrument development, and data analysis. I selected this framework because there is little known about this approach's influence on HRDs. In Chapter 2, I will explore these different components in more detail.

Nature of the Study

I selected a qualitative multiple case study approach for this research. The qualitative approach is the best method for this examination. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that when there is a necessity for a comprehensive research using the qualitative, helps to understand the issues. This was consistent with my goals for this study

Yin (2014) found that a multiple case study approach is around two or more cases with similar issues. This method allows a researcher to select multiple cases from several different sites. Selection completed in this manner displays a range of perspectives on the issue.

There are some advantages and disadvantages to various case studies. Multiple case studies allow for interviewing and documenting real life situations. Unlike single case studies, Yin (2014) found that multiple case studies are more robust in data analysis and as a result are more credible. Baxter and Jack (2008) explained that the case study method allows the exploration of the issue from different angles. The drawback of this case study is that I assume POB characteristics used by select organizations are unique. However, I found that POB characteristics did not mirror standard HR operating procedures.

An organization is in a transitional phase when they have begun to adopt one or more POB approaches, but have not fully implemented the plan. Some examples would be conducting employees' strengths-based tests, coaching for strengths, and execution of strengths-based performance appraisals. Finding suitable case studies happened with a precise definition of research parameters. The focus of my study was on the issue of POB in limited systems of HRDs.

The general population was HR professionals in organizations that have implemented POB. The study used the criterion-sampling technique. Patton (2002) defined this sampling strategy for selecting cases that meet criteria for inclusion. It focuses on select cases and makes the study more efficient by lowering cost. This may be at the expense of reliability of the information.

Patton (2002) stated that sample sizes criteria should include desired knowledge, researcher's time, resource allocation, and a given study's purpose. Establishing a minimum sample size is important. This allows additional samples to be included until reaching saturation of the data and alerts the researcher to problems if not meeting minimum sample size.

I examined multiple organizations, with the minimum number of organizations for saturation predicted at six and the minimum number of individuals interviewed was 20. This allowed the observation and comparison of several organizational practices and compared in depth. Moreover, interviewing various HR professionals at each site provided an understanding of POB's effect on the departments.

The companies were from different segments of the economy in the U.S. As stated by Mills et al., (2013), it is hard to identify organizations that practice POB. For organizational selection, a successful POB organization would include practices that focus on building strengths for individuals, teams, and/or leadership. This assessment was on policies and practices involving: performance, benefits, coaching, training, recruitment, and employee and labor relations. Chapter 3 provides a list of necessary and preferred criteria for organization inclusion within the study.

There were many methods used to identify organizations for potential inclusion in the study. I contacted positive psychology experts to develop a list of POB organizations. Experts were researchers or practitioners that published positive psychology articles, members of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), or faculty at established university positive psychology programs. Participants included (a) reaching out to organizations that have contributed in another POB study or (b) are members in the IPPA (Raquel, Bernardo, Sara, Abraham, & Ana, 2010). Last, I marketed to organizational leadership by social media, such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

Ideally, interviews were in person and organizations were within the Midwest area (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin). While there was not a need for other forms of interviewing techniques, the study did review available aggregate organizational data such as surveys and turnover rates as another evaluation method. Last, Nvivo computer program managed, stored, and analyzed the data collected to identify emerging patterns and themes.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions identify the intended meaning of key terms used in the study.

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is when individuals experience a state of positive fulfillment related to their work causing feelings of emotional motivation and well-being (Crabb, 2011; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012).

Human Resource Department (HRDs): HRDs encompass different functional areas that range from staffing, training, benefits, compensation, organizational development, and employee and labor relations (Bayat, 2011; Luthans, 2012; Ulrich et al., 2013; Wright & McMahan, 2011).

Human Resource Professional: Human Resource (HR) professional is an individual in an organization who is in a functional area within the HRD. Boudreau and Ramstad (2005) found that the focus of HR is to work with business leaders and other constituents in determining the services HR will provide to satisfy the organization's employees.

Organizational Change: When an organization makes an effort to adjust a major way or practice of doing business within their organization, it is an organizational change (Sahoo et al., 2011).

Organizational Culture: An organization's culture is the make-up of a company's norms, values, beliefs, habits, and systems (Awasthi, 2015; Samnani, Boekhorst, & Harrison, 2012).

Positive Organizational Behavior (POB): POB is a theory of positive psychology in the workplace with a focus on individual, team, and leadership development (Hystad et al., 2014; Jeung, 2011; Ramlall et al., 2014).

Positive Psychology: Positive psychology is a focus on individual's strengths and capitalizing on these strengths to improve one's performance and life satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 2006).

Assumptions

Some assumptions in the research were that people would be open and honest during the data collection process. Another assumption was that the participants were interested in the research and would respond honestly during the process. The information the individuals provided contributed to establishing and maintaining a POB culture for the organization. This assumption was appropriate because organizations participating were organizations in the field of POB.

The next assumption was that industry experts would correctly identify participating organizations. The elimination of this assumption was if two or more experts identified an organization. The researcher assumed that the participants in the study were representative of the general population of human resource managers who have experienced POB behavior implementation.

Last, it was thought that the questions asked would not lead individuals or cause false answers to be collected. Individuals gave their perspectives, perceptions, and input. All participants provided accurate accounts of their experiences and descriptions of their organizational cultures.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study is HRDs of companies that have developed, implemented, and maintained a POB culture. These organizations were located in the U.S. The study looked at the influence a POB culture has on the HRDs. I selected thirty individuals across these organizations.

I used criterion sampling. Patton (2002) defined criterion sampling as selecting cases that meet predetermined criteria. The method allowed for the selection of organizations that are premier POB companies. The boundaries of the research surround a minimum of six organizations contributing to the study. Only HR professionals were included and therefore there was no analysis of how other departments view the POB change efforts. There was not an analysis of how leadership views HRs efforts in implementing and maintaining a POB culture.

The inclusion criteria for choosing these companies entailed a number of different variables. First, an industry expert needed to identify the organization as practicing POB.

Second, only HR professionals who have worked in the selected organizations were included. Third, the participants needed to understand POB or positive psychology concepts and be knowledgeable of his or her organization. Fourth, the volunteers required to be willing to be included in the study. Fifth, the individuals exhibited a willingness to share his or her experiences with POB.

This study has limited potential for transferability to other populations. The findings might help other HR professionals trying to implement a POB culture, learn about practical applications of POB concepts. In addition, the research highlighted the potential impact these different applications have had on the organization. Finally, the study can serve as support of why HRDs should implement a POB culture.

Limitations

A barrier to this analysis was identifying organizations that had been successful at adopting a POB culture. There was not a list of organizations practicing POB. The American Psychological Association (APA) does have an award program to recognize organizations that practice positive psychology principles. The award categories range from local awards, national awards, and best practice honors. Since the APA is where the positive psychology movement began, APA award winners had a higher probability of being included in the study.

A variation in results could happen if the organizations selected in different stages of adopting a POB culture. To overcome this, I used discrepant evidence. Maxwell (2013) wrote that discrepant evidence is a technique to assist in identifying and analyzing the difference in the data. Discrepant evidence helps to provide a way to validate the test if themes are consistent throughout the study.

Another barrier was gaining access to the sensitive, confidential material of the companies. I was persistent in the pursuit of acquiring access to different policies, procedures, and other material related to the investigation. I was successful in collecting the information, and this helped to increase the validity of the study.

A possible limitation was the limited scope of the case study design. Yin (2014) argued that case studies had a limited range in application to other organizations. With only thirteen organizations participating, there is a limitation to the transferability of the results to other organizations. The expansion of the sample size from six to thirteen helped with the transferability to other organizations.

Biases

There was potential participants' bias for their organization's unique culture. Individuals may not have shared minor culture design factors that made their POB effective because they did not feel they were significant to the study. This could be due to shared assumptions. Garrick (1999) stated assumptions are perceptions that individuals take for grant regarding life, influence, relationship, beliefs, or practices. Garrick argued that it was important for researchers to surface participant assumptions to ensure a reliable study.

A major bias could have been my personal views. For example, I have over 15 years' experience in human resource management (HRM). I had to be careful not to transpose my personal experiences when analyzing the data. In addition, I had to avoid leading the participants regarding their answers to the questions. Next, I had to elude misinterpreting organizational practices as being conducted how I had done them in the past. To avoid these

issues, bracketing was used. Tufford and Newman (2012) described bracketing as using a multilayer process, which focuses on exploring various perceptions regarding a situation.

Another bias could have been in the interview questions themselves. Patton (2002) advised researchers to be careful when developing questions and to check for personal bias. I do not believe that my views that POB principle changes the way HRDs operate influenced the participant's responses. I took great care to ensure no leading questions were included in the study. To reduce this risk, I used the interview process to manage personal perspectives, used proper coding, and applied data analysis techniques.

Measures to Address Limitations

Janesick (2011) and Patton (2002) argued that it is critical to use informed consent in a study to address any ethical concerns. According to Patton (2002), informed consent includes providing the participant with documentation regarding the purpose of the study, permission to record the interviews, use of the information, and access to raw data. A part of the informed consent was included in the interview protocol to ensure people understood the meaning of the study, data gathering, recordkeeping, and confidentiality.

Monitoring researcher bias is essential for the study's integrity, as well. Yin (2014) stated that the case study approach is highly susceptible to bias because the investigator has to be knowledgeable about the problem before studying it. This could cause the researcher to discredit information that does not support his or her internal views. Yin argued that an ethical researcher would not plagiarize, falsify information, deceive, and avoid responsibility.

A final concern regarding the research is data security. Patton (2002) and Yin (2014) explained that it is important for a researcher to secure their data. This includes the

confidentially of the individuals and organizations where the study occurred. Carbonate and a password protected computer hard drive is the security for the data.

Significance of the Study

This multiple case study helps to gain an understanding of POB in various HRDs for HR professionals and organizational leadership. This research is unique because it addresses POB at the group level versus the individual and organizational levels. HR is involved in the change process, and the findings support other studies regarding the value of a positive psychology type of culture. The investigation helped to fill the gap by providing qualitative research in a group setting around POB and HRDs. The study assists other departments that are implementing this approach. The findings of this study helped HR professionals with identifying best practices for developing and maintaining a POB strategy in HRDs. POB creates positive social change for an organization in employee engagement, profitability, and overall life fulfillment for employees (Avey et al., 2011; Donaldson et al., 2014; Luthans, 2012).

Avey et al. (2011) and Donaldson et al. (2014) found that when organizations adopt a POB strategy, there was increased employee morale, profitability, and employee engagement. This research leads to positive social change by identifying key characteristics for departments to have when implementing this type of culture. This serves as a model to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee well-being.

The study contributed to the knowledge that the HRDs operations have on organizational change. The analysis assisted in highlighting the different areas that HRDs functions influence an organization. The research provided information regarding what needs to change within a HRD to create a POB culture.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to decrease the gap of knowledge surrounding POB and HRDs. POB is part of a family of positive psychology theories that examine the use of strengths in different aspects of work and home. POB is the study of how individuals use their strengths on a daily basis in the workplace. Jeung (2011) argued that POB studies include analysis on five different criteria: research-based, state-like, valid measurement, performance impact, and positivity.

HRDs are responsible for a number of human resource management functions within an organization including recruitment and selection, employee relations, performance management, compensation and benefits, and OD (Luthans, 2012; van Woerkom, & Meyers, 2015). HRDs functions have an influence on different organizational success factors such as employee satisfaction, performance, and engagement (Harmon, Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Luthans, 2012; van Woerkom, & Meyers, 2015; Wright & McMahan, 2011). HRDs are a key influencer in POB implementation success. There is a void in the research surrounding how POB efforts affect HRDs functions.

The nature of the study is a qualitative multiple case study approach consisting of face-to-face interviews. The population for the survey was HR professionals in organizations that have implemented POB. The participants were from different organizations in the U.S. Chapter 1 highlighted assumptions, delimitations, and limitations to the research. A social benefit for the study is greater employee satisfaction and employee engagement with organizations that practice a POB culture.

Chapter 2 analyzes the conceptual framework used in this study. The conceptual framework includes POB, HRD, inputs, and outputs. Inputs into the framework consist of culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures. The framework outputs include employee morale, company profitability, employee productivity, and employee engagement. In Chapter 2, I will analyze the existing literature on HRDs and the application of POB in the workplace. In Chapter 3, I will describe the methodology and the development of the research questions. Also in Chapter 3, I will provide detail regarding the participant selection process for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will explore the theories and concepts relevant to the problem of how organizations apply POB at an HRD level. An analysis and history of theories supporting the current study are contained in this chapter, with a note on absences regarding POB culture implementation in HRDs. This will help the purpose of the qualitative collective case study design by exploring the three major sections within the literature review of POB, HRDs, and organizational behavior (OB). The sections in the literature review include the conceptual framework, positive psychology theories, POB, HRDs, OB theories, inputs, and outputs. After examining gaps in the literature, there is a review of the literature on the research methods. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

POB is part of a larger network of theories stemming from positive psychology. I highlight these different models to show the similarities and dissimilarities between them. The selection of POB was on the unique characteristics that examine all levels of the organization (Jeung, 2011; Searle & Barbuto, 2013). The focus is on the group level because there is limited research that explores this level in an organization.

Within OB, some theories coincide with POB. Therefore, understanding the connection between these theories is critical. The theories under examination are (1) Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), (2) goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984), (3) Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970), and (4) McGregor's theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 2006). OB is comparable to POB because they both explore the different levels in the company, which are individual, group, and organizational (Jeung, 2011).

HRDs are a critical component regarding organizational change. Shuck and Reio (2011) stated that corporate leadership is on the department in transitioning their vision into reality. The study did examine the role the HRD plays in organizational change efforts.

Overarching all of these theories are the inputs and outputs to the corporate culture, which makes it imperative to comprehend the inputs regarding culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures (see Figure 2). In addition, the outputs of the system are vital to a company's success. The inputs and outputs relate to the culture of an organization. Scholars discovered that implementing a POB culture had positive effects on employee morale, company profitability, productivity, and engagement (Crabb, 2011; Luthans, 2012; Tims et al., 2013).

Literature Search Strategy

The purpose of this literature review is to analyze current research on POB, HRD, and OB. I used a number of library databases and search engines to conduct the literature review. Databases included ProQuest, Google Scholar, Academic Search Premier, Business Source Complete, LexisNexis Academic, PsycARTICLES, SocINDEX with full text, eBrary e-book collections, Franklin University Library, Net Library, and PsycBOOKS. The literature review focused on the last five years to ensure the analyses of the most recent articles. Search terms for the study-included variations on the following keywords: *positive psychology, positive organizational behavior, human resource management, human resources, human resources department, organizational culture, job crafting, job design, performance appraisals, policies, procedures, and organizational behavior*. Of the 300 journal articles obtained, I formally review 125 in this chapter. The remaining documents did not align with the research topic. The articles

used consisted of 61 regarding positive psychology, 33 dedicated to HR, 28 related to OB, and three were related to qualitative research.

Also included were various theories in positive psychology, such as POS, AL, PsyCap, PL, and SBL. Classic OB theories examined Maslow's hierarchy of needs, goal-setting theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, and McGregor's theory X and theory Y. The majority of this chapter examines positive psychology theories (POB, AL, POS, PL, SBL, and PsyCap) and HRDs functional areas (leadership development, performance management, coaching, diversity, and compensation and benefits).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is POB as it relates to HRDs. Senge (2006) called this *systems thinking*. Senge (2006) argued that systems' thinking is "a discipline for seeing the 'structure' that underlies complex situations and for discerning high from low leverage change" (p. 69). According to Senge, it is important to review the whole system before making a change.

For HR, the inputs that POB has shown to have the most influence on are culture (values, beliefs, and assumptions), group dynamics (teams and compensation), job design (work, development, and selection), and policies and procedures (performance review systems and benefits) (Avey et al., 2011). These different HR inputs help with the outputs of the organization as defined in POB literature (Avey et al., 2011). These outputs include employee morale, company profitability, productivity, and engagement.

Literature Review

An examination of the literature reveals a comprehensive understanding of positive psychology at the individual, leadership, and organizational levels. The studies in this literature review argue that HR's organizational guidance relate to culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures. These areas influence the outcomes related to morale, company profitability, productivity, and engagement.

Positive Psychology

While positive psychology is a term that has gained popularity in the last twenty years, it is a concept that has been around for decades. The theory has been connected with earlier research by Maslow (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), Cooperrider (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), and McGregor (McGregor, 2006). The person given credit for bringing positive psychology into practice in current psychology is Martin Seligman (Jeung, 2011). Seligman, known as the father of positive psychology, got this credit when he was the president of the APA (Jeung, 2011; Seligman, 2005). During a 1999 speech to the APA, Seligman stated that there is an over-emphasis on dysfunctional human behavior compared to highly functional human behavior (Seligman, 2005).

Since Seligman's speech in 1999, positive psychology has developed into many different principles (see Figure 3). These include AL (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), POS (Cameron et al., 2003), positive leadership (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012), SBL (Rath & Conchie, 2008), and PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2008). While a primary focus of this study is to POB, the other theories from positive psychology overlap and it is important to understand the relationships between the concepts.

Positive Organizational Behavior (POB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the study of positive psychology in the workplace and examines the levels that are practiced within an organization (Jeung, 2011).
Authentic Leadership (AL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an approach to leadership, which allows individuals to use their strengths to inspire others (Conkright, 2011).
Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a top down approach that is focused on the organizational level. (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012).
Positive Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It looks at all leadership principles related to positive psychology (Donaldson et al., 2011).
Strengths Based Leadership (SBL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is the study of positive human resource practices and the analysis of how they influence the company's culture, productivity, and profitability (Awasthi, 2015; Sommer, Howell, & Hadley, 2015).
Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It examines the connection between employee engagement and positive psychology attributes (Luthans, 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2012).

Figure 3. Definitions for different positive psychology principles.

Positive psychology does not replace traditional psychology. Positive psychology focuses on what makes people successful and capitalizes on their success. These successes are individual strengths. Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006) defined strengths as a range of an individual's behaviors that are identifiable, repeated, consistent, desirable, and can be classified in relation to others. Strengths are found in various parts of an individual's life and have no adverse effects on other's strengths. An individual's strength can improve the outcome

for the group, and not just the person. HRDs need to support individuals' natural abilities and strengths so that they can use them on a continuous basis in the workplace.

Positive Organizational Behavior

POB is the study of positive psychology in the workplace and examines the levels of POB within an organization (Jeung, 2011). Researchers try to understand how an organization can develop, measure, and improve employees' strengths. Scholars found that the key identifiers for POB were confidence, emotional intelligence, hope, identity, optimism, resilience, and well-being (Badran & Youssef-Morgan, 2015; Donaldson et al., 2014; Hystad et al., 2014; Ramlall et al., 2014). Luthans (2012) discovered that POB develops when an organization creates the psychological capacity development (PCD) to help employees' growth of strengths on the job. Luthans developed a test to measure this growth. The test uses the PsyCap dimensions of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (Badran & Youssef-Morgan, 2015; Hystad et al., 2014). Luthans (2012) stated the training focuses on helping participants with the goal-setting process, problem identification, and group development.

The PsyCap test has shown that POB can increase morale, job satisfaction, customer satisfaction, productivity, company profits, and engagement by focusing on positive attributes (Crabb, 2011; Donaldson et al., 2014; Jeung, 2011). Employees are less likely to look for other employment if they can use their strengths on a daily basis (van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

A recent study over positive psychology strengthens these positive attributes. Donaldson et al.'s (2014) meta-analysis research examined the scholarly literature on positive psychology published between 1999 and 2013. Donaldson et al. provided clarification of definitions, the summary of research findings, and areas in need of additional studies. Donaldson et al. argued

that positive psychology interventions (i.e., coaching, strengths development, mindfulness, gratitude, and positive affect enhancement) helped to increase engagement, well-being, hope, resilience, goal achievement, and self-assurance with employees. The study did not include any primary research to confirm their findings.

Searle and Barbuto (2013) stated that many studies have focused either on the individual or organizational impact of positive psychology. While Donaldson and Ko (2010) found in earlier research that over 80% of research scrutinizes the individual level, a subsequent study by Donaldson et al. (2014) found that there had been a growth in diverse methods and levels within positive psychology research.

There is a shortage of research on the group dynamics of POB. Searle and Barbuto (2013) found seven layers of positive behavior including individual, dyadic, group, organizational, community, society, and environmental. These levels provide a framework for future research. The inclusion of additional levels allows researchers to pinpoint their analysis (Searle & Barbuto). Searle and Barbuto did not test their different levels with empirical research, and therefore there is a need for further investigation regarding the various levels.

There are an increased number of quantitative versus qualitative studies over POB. Scholars have conducted quantitative studies of POB (Combs et al., 2011; Hmieleski et al., 2011; Kaiser & Overfield, 2011). Scholars who have used a qualitative method (e.g. Donaldson et al., 2014; Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Roche & Hefferon, 2013; Searle & Barbuto, 2013) focused on either the individual or organization level.

Scholars have discussed concerns about POB including: (1) ignoring previous OB concepts and research; (2) construct validity; (3) over dependency on single research strategy;

(4) overlooking flaws in organizational operations and design; (5) POS individual level research; and (6) the seductive nature of emerging research (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, & Calarco, 2011; Dawkins, Martin, Scott, & Sanderson, 2013; Hackman, 2009; Lam, Spreitzer, & Fritz, 2014; Mills et al., 2013). Lam et al. (2014) stated that many positive psychology studies focus on positive influences and proactive behaviors and ignore the impact to the work environment. Mills et al. argued that researchers should not turn a blind eye toward the negative aspects of the work environment. They stated that it was necessary to understand the downside to yield a holistic view of the employee, team, and organizational functions. There is missing research around positive psychology connection to the workplace in motivation, team efficacy, self-actualization, human resource development, and transformational leadership (Dawkins et al., 2013; Hackman, 2009; Lam et al., 2014; Mills et al. 2013). Discussions about these different areas are included in this literature review and focus on how the concepts connect to POB or HRDs.

An issue in the work of POB discipline is the lapses in rigor regarding scholarly research. Lam et al. (2014) argued that researchers might be over simplifying positive affect and proactive behavior in organizations. Furthermore, too much or too little positivity can have adverse effects on the work environment (Lam et al.). Lam et al. based their findings on two field studies and hypothesized that positive affects more an inverted “U” shaped model. Study 1 involved 236 people that received a \$5 gift card for participating. Study 2 had 128 matched responses and consisted of two stages of data collection with individuals. The findings suggested that proactive behaviors are most beneficial when both positive and negative reinforcement is used.

Dawkins et al. (2013) argue that PsyCap may be falling into the trap of a lack of connection to other academic disciplines research. Gatekeepers in the field of positive psychology publish work that either lapses academic rigor or needs correction. Dawkins calls for standards for positive psychology research.

Next, there are a number of concepts within positive psychology such as hope, optimism, resilience, self-efficacy, belongingness, cohesion, well-being, self-identity, and trust. Lam et al. (2014) found that the dimensionality of concepts might be misused. For instance, the opposite of optimism may not be a pessimist. This means measuring on a continuum may be a construct flaw. This argument is similar to motivator-hygiene theory. Grigaliunas and Herzberg (1971) stated that motivation cannot be measured by its opposite meaning. While the dimensionality of concepts needs extensive research, construct validity has been found to characterize the relationship between hope and optimism (Bergheim, Eid, Hystad, Nielsen, Mearns, Larsson, & Luthans, 2013); trust and resilience (Stephens, Carmeli, Spreitzer, & Dutton, 2013); well-being and trust (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012); and well-being, hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (Luthans, Youssef, Sweetman, & Harms, 2012).

Another issue in POB studies is the overabundance of research on the individual level. Searle and Barbuto (2013) argued that there is a need for robust exploration in cross-level analysis over neutral processes and social context. Müceldili, Erdil, Akgün, and Keskin (2015) argued that POB research emphasizes the individual level of research while POS examined more macro or leadership levels of an organization. Tims et al. (2013) stated that there is also a lack of research around groups within POB and the positive psychology field. Research that focuses on the functions of groups, such as HRDs, would help balance POB studies.

POB researchers have an over-reliance on a single methodological strategy. Currently, an abundance of studies relies on easy-to-use off-the-shelf tests, and methods for measurement (Cameron et al., 2011; Dawkins et al., 2013; Hackman, 2009; Lam et al., 2014). This makes method variance an issue in POB studies. Consequently, Cameron et al. called for variation in research methods in positive psychology studies. Since surveys are the most common method for POB research, studies that use other methods, such as interviews, would help eliminate the single methodological issue.

Another shortfall in the research is overuse of strengths where participants focused on maximizing their natural talents and overlooked their weaknesses. Kaiser and Overfield (2011) conducted a study with 110 people from three different for-profit organizations. The purpose was to understand how different leadership styles, such as strategic versus tactical or participative versus directive, were utilized by managers based on their individual strengths. Kaiser and Overfield found the support that managers have a tendency to overdo and over rely on their top five strengths around 51% of the time. There has not been a replication of these results in other studies, and the sample was heavily male dominated with 101 participants. Positive psychology studies need to be aware of these potential pitfalls to ensure their research observes and documents positive and negative consequences to remain balanced.

Other Positive Psychology Theories

There are a number of positive psychology theories besides POB: AL (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), POS (Cameron et al., 2003), PL (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012), SBL (Rath & Conchie, 2008), and PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2008). This section focuses on the theories most often associated with positive psychology.

Authentic Leadership (AL). AL is an approach to leadership, which allows individuals to use their strengths to inspire others (Maric et al., 2013). Hystad et al. (2014) conducted a survey of 220 offshore oil participants over AL and positive safety climate. The authors found that leadership qualities influenced overall workplace safety climate and lowered accident rates. An issue with the research was that 94% of the respondents were male. There is a need for additional research with a more diverse population to see if the findings are consistent across genders and industries. The evolving AL leader-subordinate connection may be similar to the group-organizational relationship found in POB.

Searle and Barbuto (2013) argued that a key difference between AL and other leadership development theories is the emphasis on moral and ethical behavior. While there is an analysis of ethical behavior in business arenas, there is little exploration in POB studies. AL develops leaders that are transformational or charismatic (Donaldson et al., 2011; Gardner, Coglisier, Davis, & Dickens, 2011). Gardner et al. conducted a meta-analysis by reviewing 91 published research studies over AL. The purpose was to help clarify AL's definition. However, there was no primary research done with the study.

Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS). POS research focuses on the leadership and organizational level. Researchers are concerned with understanding the drivers of positive behavior that influence the workplace (Donaldson et al., 2014). Spreitzer and Cameron (2012) are the leading researchers of POS. "P" references the positive focus on organizational performance, "O" regards the investigation of positive processes in organizational contexts, and "S" is rigorous scholarly research related to the phenomena (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012). Key features of POS are appreciation, collaboration, compassion, loyalty, meaningfulness, resilience,

and trustworthiness (Cameron & Plews, 2012; Mills et al., 2013; Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012). These key characteristics relate to POB in the measurement of resilience. A connection between POB and POS is that all levels of an organization are studied. POS is different from POB in a number of ways. POB examines the individual and group levels within an organization while POS is a top-down tactic. The focus of POB is on the positive features of the organization's framework (Jeung, 2011; Searle & Barbuto, 2013). There is more consideration given to performance improvement with POB versus POS. Last, POB has a distinct unit of analysis and measurable performance criteria (Sheldon, Kashdan, & Steger, 2011).

An issue identified by French and Holden (2012) regards POS is its investigation into the individual level. POS purpose is to analyze the scholarship of an organization, not the individual (Donaldson et al., 2014). French and Holden state that there is a benefit in examining the different factions within an organization, which the macro approach overlooks.

Positive Leadership (PL). PL looks at all leadership principles related to positive psychology. PL includes transformational, authentic, spiritual, and servant leadership styles (Donaldson et al., 2011; Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012; Searle & Barbuto, 2013). All of these diverse styles have in common the supervisor being self-aware of how their own behavior may influence others. Unlike POS and POB, PL examines how leadership characteristics influence levels within an organization (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012). PL was a term defined by Donaldson and Ko (2010) in their meta-analysis. Academic research does not use the term PL. There is a connection between PL and SBL, POB, and POS.

Strengths Based Leadership (SBL). SBL is the study of positive human resource practices in how they influence the company's culture, productivity, and profitability (Awasthi,

2015; MacKie, 2014; Sommer, Howell, & Hadley, 2015). SBL is not concerned with the other levels of the organization as found in POS and POB. The emphasis is on developing leaders that use strengths and bring strengths out in their direct reports. A critical error with SBL is the over emphasis on strengths and disregard for weaknesses. As stated by Kaiser and Overfield (2011) there needs to be a balance between developing strengths and weaknesses within the work environment. SBL is limited because it just focuses on the leadership component. As maintained by Donaldson et al. (2014), positive psychology affects all levels of an organization.

Psychological Capital (PsyCap). Two tests have emerged to help assess an individual's strengths, which are StrengthsFinders (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001), and PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2008). The scientifically accepted test is PsyCap (Combs et al., 2011; McKenny, Short, & Payne, 2012). PsyCap inspects four areas, which are hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Avey et al., 2011; Bergheim et al., 2013; Hystad et al., 2014). PsyCap is a standard assessment tool used for POB consisting of a 24-item questionnaire assessing the areas of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Avey et al., 2011; Combs et al., 2011; Luthans, 2012). Three of these four areas are key characteristics of POB, POS, and PL: hope, optimism, and resilience.

PsyCap results have provided a measurement tool for organizations to illustrate how POB increases organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work outcomes (Avey et al., 2011; Combs et al., 2011). Combs and colleagues' study consisted of 13 different colleges and universities resulting in 380 undergraduate college students being included in the investigation. The authors focused on the aspects of ethnic identity, job attributes, collectivism/individualism, and PsyCap. Combs et al. connected PsyCap to ethnic identity, competence, and growth. This

study is important because it highlighted how PsyCap relates to diversity hiring practices. It highlights how PsyCap is an ongoing measurement tool and can measure hiring practices within HRDs. Similarly, Avey et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis of 51 research studies with PsyCap as the measurement tool. The authors discovered that PsyCap measured changes in employee attitude, organizational citizenship, and employee performance measures. Lower PsyCap scores relate to cynicism, unhealthy stress, turnover, anxiety, and deviance. Last, Luthans, et al. (2012) connected a higher PsyCap score to healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) and cholesterol levels. However, there is a need for additional research regarding the validity of the health benefits.

Human Resource Departments

HRDs have a number of parts that work together to manage the human capital functions of the organization. These include attracting, selecting, managing, and retaining employees within the organization. Human capital is unique from other forms of organizational assets because a person has knowledge, skills, or abilities that may not be readily transferable depending on the type of work they perform (Guest & Woodrow, 2012; Wright & McMahan, 2011).

Scholars argued that HRDs are a critical function for organizational success (Dastmalchian, McNeil, Blyton, Bacon, Blunsdon, Kabasakal, & Steinke, 2015; Guest & Woodrow, 2012; Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Van De Voorde, Wright, & McMahan, 2011). Dastmalchian et al. conducted a qualitative study with 50 HR managers from Turkey, Australia, and Canada. The authors found that the HR functions had four organizational climate dimensions, which are control, competition, collaboration, and family-orientation (Dastmalchian

et al.). The findings highlighted how HRDs influence employee's perceptions on policies, procedures, and practices within the organization across departments. The study provides insight into how HRDs are distinct from other departments in an organization. Guest and Woodrow (2012) argued that HR professionals are the authorities regarding organizational success and internal operations.

In many organizations, HRDs are a tactical center rather than a strategic partner with management. Ulrich et al. (2013) argued that some HRDs operate in the transactional versus the strategic arena due to individuals' focusing on day-to-day tasks and not considering strategic issues. Heneman and Milanowski (2011) conducted a case study of a southwestern school district and focused on their HR practices. The authors found that HR systems have a significant influence on the organization's ability to be strategic by concentrating on competencies around employee performance. Sahoo et al. (2011) stated that when HR is strategic, it connects employee needs with business strategies. HR is strategic when there are flexible work designs, employee connectedness, continuous learning, and engagement (Sahoo et al.).

Ulrich et al. (2013) defined strategic HR practices as a business ally, strategic architect, talent management and organizational designer, operational executor, culture and change steward, and credible activist. De Bruyn and Roodt (2009) conducted semi-structured focus groups and document reviews at a U.S. mining company using Ulrich and Brockbank's 14-part strategic HR measurement tool (Ulrich et al., 2013). They discovered that HR establishes credibility when it exhibits business knowledge, customized practices, exceptional stakeholders' service, and professionalism. Ulrich and colleagues research was a multi-round study over 20 years (Ulrich et al., 2013). Research by Heneman et al. (2011) and Sahoo et al. (2011) may be

oversimplifying what makes an HR department strategic when compared to Ulrich and colleagues 14-part strategic HR measurement tool (Ulrich et al., 2013).

Researchers have neglected to examine the influence POB has on HRDs and the application of HR practices within the work environment (Dastmalchian et al., 2015; Tims et al., 2013). The areas studied in the past by positive psychology researchers are in Table 1. These different areas are in the input stage of the conceptual framework.

Table 1.

Main Areas of POB Research with Relevant Authors.

Leadership Development	Performance Management	Compensation & Benefits	Coaching	Diversity
Cilliers, 2011 Hmieleski et al., 2011	Alessandri et al., 2012 Avey et al., 2011	Bourne et al., 2012 Muse & Wadsworth, 2012	Cilliers, 2011 Crabb, 2011	Combs et al., 2011 Martín-Alcázar et al., 2011
Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012 MacKie, 2014 Maric et al., 2013	Bakker et al., 2012 Bergheim et al., (2013) Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011 Cilliers, 2011	Welch et al., 2014	Lunenburg, 2011 MacKie, 2014 Roche & Hefferon, 2013 Welch, Grossaint, Reid, & Walker, 2014	Samnani et al., (2012).
Sharma, Pande, Dwivedi, & Mohapatra, 2011 Welch et al., 2014	Kelloway et al., 2012 Lin et al., 2011 Sharma et al., 2011			

Developing positive leaders has been an area of interest for researchers. Hmieleski et al. (2011) had 181 people complete a survey, which focused on the new venture leadership, AL, and organizational performance. The researchers discovered that teams could increase an organization's AL (Hmieleski et al., 2011). Maric et al. (2013) collected a convenience sample of 2,176 individuals in Slovenia around AL. The authors argued that AL is a new development method for leaders. Although, the research did not discuss the part HR plays in developing leaders.

The research of Cilliers (2011) included ten coaching sessions for eleven leaders over a three-month period. The purpose of the study was to develop a leadership program based on positive psychology principles. The focus was on team coherence, developing self-actualization, employee engagement, resourcefulness, and locus of control. Cilliers used a qualitative approach that included case study analysis. Six dimensions of leadership development included role complexity, role engagement, emotional intelligence, coaching context, self-authorization, and developing others. Cilliers did find that supervisors struggled most with the complex nature of interpersonal leadership in their roles.

Other areas involving HR's functions include performance management, coaching, diversity, and compensation and benefits. Bergheim et al. (2013) reported on two different studies with over 115 people to analyze performance management. The authors found a positive connection between PsyCap and employee performance. Concerning coaching, Roche and Hefferon (2013) research was of 20 individuals from a global travel organization. People in the study took the Realise2 strengths assessment test (Roche & Hefferon). After the test, participants had a structured coaching session based on the results. Roche and Hefferon found that the coaching sessions based on the Realise2 results caused greater understanding and utilization of the individual identified strengths within the workplace. Last, Combs and colleague's (2011) research included a sample of 380 Midwest and Southeastern United States college students. The authors discovered that to attract diverse candidates; companies should pay attention to the part of the work that would appeal to different ethnic groups. These studies examined different pieces of the HR function. None of them attempted to look at all the different areas of HR in one study.

Theories

Several theories support the framework including (1) Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), (2) goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984), (3) Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970), (4) McGregor's theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 2006), and (5) transformational leadership (Bass, 1999). These different models have served as stepping-stones to each other. The different theories discussed in this section highlight previous work conducted to understand the phenomena of positive psychology (Cilliers, 2011; Lunenburg, 2011; Meyers & van Woerkom, 2013; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Sommer et al., 2015; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow developed the hierarchy of needs theory that examines what motivates people (Maslow & Bennis, 1998). Maslow defined five different levels of needs, which are physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow & Bennis, 1998). Physiological needs refer to the body's needs like food and water (Maslow & Lowry, 1999). Safety needs deal with emotional and physical security (Maslow & Lowry, 1999). Social needs refer to relationships with others that bring feelings of affection, acceptance, and friendship (Maslow & Lowry, 1999). Esteem needs are internal to an individual and relate to factors such as accomplishment, self-image, prestige, recognition, and attention (Maslow & Lowry, 1999). His highest level of need is self-actualization. Maslow and Lowry (1999) argued that this is the desired state and where someone is living to their full potential.

The self-actualization state is similar to POB. Both have a focus on individual strengths and an individual being a productive member of society. In addition, both find that people that reach a high level of success have increased job satisfaction and productivity. These individuals

are experts in their fields that have been able to reach a level of performance that many individuals do not accomplish.

Goal-Setting Theory. Locke and Latham (2013) defined goal-setting theory as way individuals can be motivated to be more productive in a task than others can. Their research found two core findings around goal intensity. First, there is a correlation between performance and goal difficulty. As the complexity of goals increase, the more likely an individual will reach his or her maximum performance ability in achieving the goal. Second, goals need to be specific and difficult to lead to higher performance. Locke and Latham stated that ambiguity in goals resulted in subjective interpretation and confusion with employees. Locke and Latham argued that there are different goal moderator variables, which include ability, goal obligation, performance feedback, situational restraints, task intricacy, personality, and goal affect.

Goals can be individual, group, or company focused, which makes goals influence on the organization similar to POB. Nahrgang, DeRue, Hollenbeck, Spitzmuller, Jundt, and Ilgen (2013) stated that goal setting theory has a number of connections to motivation, engagement, and productivity. Nahrgang et al. also found that there are different motivators between individuals and teams. With HRDs, performance management uses goal setting in employees' annual reviews. Goal setting helps set realistic but challenging goals that help employees and departments reach higher levels of performance.

Another important connection between goal-setting theory and POB is in the area of self-efficacy. In goal setting, self-efficacy is concerning a person's belief that he or she can attain a goal (Locke & Latham, 2013). Bandura (1997) stated that self-efficacy encompasses personal experience, performance accomplishments, verbal encouragement, and psychological states.

Personal experience influences self-efficacy levels by individuals' successes and failures.

Bandura (1997) argued that success builds self-efficacy while failure has a diminishing consequence on it. Individuals that use their strengths on a daily basis may be more likely to increase their self-efficacy.

Locke and Latham (2013) argued that self-efficacy is critical in goal setting and that it is important for someone to believe that they can achieve the goal. Bandura (1997) stated that performance accomplishment or social persuasion helps increase individual efficacy. Social persuasion is when individuals believe they can produce great results by trying harder to succeed at a task (Bandura, 1991).

Nahrgang et al. (2013) found 84 person teams of undergraduate students (n=320) at a large Midwestern university participated in a study over individual and team based goals. As found by Locke and Latham (2013), specific goals are more effective for individuals when there is a complex task. A complex task requires an individual to acquire more knowledge to reach the goal. In the study, teams participated in simulation exercises and questions regarding team goals. While Locke and Latham (2013) and Nahrgang et al. (2013) studies analyze teams, they neglected to examine the issue on a department scale like HRDs.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory. Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970) states that individuals will act through self-interest to change their behavior to maximize a desirable outcome for themselves. Individuals accomplish this by weighing their options based upon their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding a particular course of action. The objective is to avoid pain and enhance pleasure. Employees will exhibit behaviors that they feel will be rewarded. If individuals do not receive rewards for their work, then the result is a demotivator to

employees. Vroom (1964) stated that motivation relates to expectancy, valence, and instrumentality by the following equation:

$$\text{Motivation} = \text{Expectancy} \times \text{Instrumentality} \times \text{Reward}$$

Unlike goal setting theory, expectancy theory looks at different aspects of employee motivation including money not being a motivator. Lunenburg (2011) argued that managers needed to be aware of the type of award they use to motivate individuals and ensure they are motivators to individuals. This is similar to POB, which states that employee's work needs to be around their strengths (Mills et al., 2013). Vroom and POB both stress the importance of understanding the needs and desires of each employee when it comes to employee motivation. The motivation for HRDs to institute structures around individuals' strengths is lacking (Mills et al., 2013).

Expectancy theory helps to remind POB practitioners the importance of paying attention to factors that motivate employees. If there is not a connection between effort, performance, and outcome employees are less likely to pursue their strengths versus struggle with fixing their weaknesses. Expectancy theory may help practitioners by reminding them the importance of aligning goals, performance, and rewards.

McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. McGregor's theory X and theory Y examine different assumptions regarding human behavior (McGregor, 2006). Theory X supervisors take more of an autocratic method to management (McGregor, 2006). Theory X assumes that people dislike work and need discipline to work effectively. Theory X assumes that people prefer direction and do not want to take responsibility for their actions.

On the other hand, theory Y managers feel their job is to support their direct reports and encourage them to achieve higher outcomes (McGregor, 2006). Theory Y makes that assumption that it is natural for individuals to put effort into their work (McGregor, 1960). Theory Y managers are concerned with the relationship and do not use threats to get people to work. There is an assumption that individuals will take responsibility for their actions. Last, creativity and imagination help employees solve complex problems (McGregor, 1960).

McGregor's theory Y connects to POB based on their positive assumptions (Sheldon et al., 2011). Theory Y highlights the management style that would be ideal in a POB environment. Hersey and Blanchard (1977) argued that McGregor's two-prong approach for management style is lacking. Hersey and Blanchard stated that supervisors have to be selected based on the job, direct reports abilities, and organizational culture.

Transformational Leadership. A more contemporary leadership theory is transactional versus transformational leadership. Bass (1999) stated that organizations need two types of leaders transformational (i.e., inspire, lead, and mentally stimulating) and transactional (i.e., exchange relationship, self-interests, and directing). Positive psychology variables were connected to transformational leadership components such as employee well-being (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012), employee engagement (Wefald, Reichard, & Serrano, 2011), career satisfaction (Joo & Lim, 2013), and PsyCap (Krishnan, 2012).

In this theory section, the focus has been on the following theories including: (a) Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), (b) goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984), (c) Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970), (d) McGregor's theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 2006), and (e) transformational leadership (Bass, 1999). While these

theories related to OB, they are in positive psychology research. The next section will highlight the different inputs that make up the intersection of HRDs and POB.

Inputs

The organization is a collection of departments that aid in it achieving its goals. The department under analysis here is HRD. HRD inputs described in this section explain how culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures help an organization accomplish its goals. These diverse parts of the HRDs have the majority of positive psychology research associated with them.

Culture. Culture can be defined a number of ways. Rynes et al. (2012) stated that culture is composed of beliefs, values, and assumptions that are pervasive within an organization. Moreover, embedded in this culture are the organization's artifacts, social systems, structures, and behaviors. Scholars argued that an organization's culture fosters creativity, commitment, engagement, loyalty, and profitability (Avey et al., 2011; Samnani et al., 2012; Uddin, Luva, & Hossain, 2012). Uddin et al. found that organizational culture and performance is related to employees' beliefs, norms, and actions. This case study interviewed 34 individuals at a cellular company based in Bangladesh. However, there is a need for additional research if other industries are able to apply the findings.

Avey et al. (2011) discovered that there is a counter relationship between high PsyCap scores and resistant and dysfunctional attitudes in organizational change. This was on a mega-analysis from 51 independent samples with 12,567 participants. Scholars have found that a supervisor's performance ratings influenced an employee's performance in the workplace (Joseph, Jin, Newman, & Boyle, 2015; Ladany, Mori, & Mehr, 2013). Employees that had a

more positive psychological state were more engaged in their work and tended to find more meaning in the work they did.

Schönborn (2010) conducted an online questionnaire of 2,873 participants from 46 German organizations. He found that corporate culture is a mutual history of experiences that have shared assumptions and patterns of acceptable behavior. Concerning positive psychology, organizations assist people in achieving the organization's goals as well as the individual's goals (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). This helps to create a culture where strengths are the focus in performance appraisals and goals setting for employees.

Group Dynamics. The importance of group dynamics in an organization is continuing to increase because of potential improvements in productivity, efficiencies, and flexible work assignments. Searle and Barbuto (2013) described teams as being a collection of individuals that interact and are interdependent. Klotz, Hmieleski, Bradley, and Busenitz (2013) stated that groups that are the most efficient are self-regulated, self-governed, have common goals, and have high levels of communication between individuals. Müceldili et al. (2015) argued that gratitude among team members strengthened learning and team connectedness. An issue with Müceldili et al. arguments is that it was secondary data. POB can be a conceptual link between the theories of organizational development, positive psychology, and POS.

Kirkman and Rosen (2001) argued that certain factors needed to be present for teams to be an asset for an organization. The authors identified four key areas that lead to empowered teams including social structure, HR management systems, external leadership behavior, and production and service responsibilities. A classic example of team failure is the Levi Strauss case (Kirkman & Rosen, 2001). The organization spent over a million dollars in the early 90s

creating work teams. However, instead of the teams increasing morale and productivity it had the opposite effect (Kirkman & Rosen, 2001). This is because Levi Strauss had individual incentive pay that awarded employees for working faster and harder. Levi Strauss ended up scrapping the program because in self-managed teams individuals had to rely on each other while their incentive program awarded individual performance.

A recent study that explores the dilemma organizations face with teams is Barnes, Hollenbeck, Jundt, DeRue, and Harmon (2011). The research focused on the effect individual, group, and mixed incentives have on team performance. Individual incentives can be a deterrent to group performance since people may not be working on a common goal (Kirkman & Rosen, 2001). Barnes et al. argued that group incentives might erode the connection between individual effort and outcome.

Barnes et al. (2011) included 304 undergraduate participants randomly assigned to 4-person teams. Individuals received a cash incentive of \$10 based on performance. The teams participated in a simulation exercise. The exercises measured participants' accuracy, speed, personal task work, back up behavior, and team performance. Barnes et al. found that individuals focused more on their work task in individual based incentives, but had higher productivity with a mixed incentive model that included individual and group incentives.

POB and group dynamics are not as widely studied as individual and organizational research. POB has an individual concentration that only recently has emphasized the team level (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Positive behavioral concepts in teams include strengths-based performance, collective optimism, resiliency, self-efficacy, and hope (Gordon, 2012; Searle & Barbuto, 2013). In addition, different measures with positive psychology can influence

performance between newly formed teams and established teams. For example, Raquel et al. (2010) found that positive psychology predicts higher team performance when examining optimism within newly formed teams. Teams having long standing membership have higher team performance when resilience and efficacy are high. The findings are on a 154-article meta-analysis. The study did not describe the types or sizes of teams that participated in the analysis. It is hard to apply these findings to other organizations.

Job Design. In most organizations, jobs are around the work that needs to be completed. Traditionally, management has been responsible for designing work (Grant, 2010). Hackman and Oldham (1976) defined this type of job design in their job characteristics model. This model identifies five core job characteristics that are (a) skill variety (i.e., the demands the task has a diverse set of duties), (b) task identity (i.e., the job requirement of doing a particular task from beginning to end), (c) task significance (i.e., the affect the task has on the organization and individual), (d) autonomy (i.e., the job's ability to allow the employee to work independently), and (e) feedback (i.e., information shared on an individual's performance) (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Hackman and Oldham (1976) argued the first three aspects of the model (i.e., skill variety, task identity, and task significance) contribute to an employee having meaningful work.

Bakker et al. (2012) argued that a position should match an individual's strengths. When designing a job, it should be dependent on the strengths that a person possesses. Oldham and Hackman (2010) argued that job characteristics model misunderstood the impact task significance and feedback have on a position. Oldham and Hackman argue that the nature of work has changed from the original study. In the 1970s and 1980s, the main work considered was front-line manufacturing workers, versus the work of skilled professionals and managers as

found in today's workforce (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Oldham and Hackman stated the work on job crafting necessary in closing the gap in the research around job design.

A non-traditional job design method is job crafting. Bakker et al. (2012) stated that job crafting occurs when a person consciously changes their job. The concept of job crafting is aligned with positive psychology. Job crafting is done in many different ways including role innovation, "idiosyncratic deals," task revision, and personal initiative (Bakker et al., 2012). When an individual changes the purpose of their work, it is role innovation. Idiosyncratic deals occur when an individual openly negotiates the tasks of their position. Task revision is not performing part of the job and seeing if anyone notices. Personal initiative happens when a person changes the nature of their work, so it aligns with their strengths.

Job crafting is likely to occur when a person has more control and resources available for the job (Bakker et al., 2012). Lu, Wang, Lu, Du, and Bakker (2014) found that employee engagement and job fit increased when employees were able to change their physical duties and interpersonal relationships. Since job crafting focuses on an individual's strengths, it could be a practice adopted in a POB culture.

Teams use job crafting to increase job performance through higher engagement (Tims et al., 2013). This may be due to team members influencing each other's performance and work ethic. Tims et al. included 525 participants that worked in 54 teams in occupational health services. The authors found that teams' behaviors and feelings change the way individual team members feel about work. Tims et al. discovered at both the team and individual level increasing challenging work and job resources burdens would escalate engagement and job performance.

The results are useful evidence in demonstrating the influence job design may have on the workforce.

Policies and Procedures. The impact of policies and procedures can have varying results on the system they support. Policies and procedures explain the different rules and expectations of the organization. Typical items covered include the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Policies and procedures also discuss legal policies such as sexual harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, workplace violence, corrective action, and retaliation.

A procedure often used by organizations is Performance Review System (PRS). Some positive psychology scholars have studied PRS (Alessandri et al., 2012; Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Lin et al., 2011). PRS is an important tool for managers in monitoring performance within an organization. Alessandri et al. (2012) found in a three-part study with a total population of 966 participants that a person's positive orientation predicted job performance at work. Along with this, Rego et al. (2012) conducted a survey of 201 Portugal commerce employees regarding the connection between supervisor ratings and performance appraisals. Rego et al. discovered AL predict employee creativity, which helps organizations meet challenges with competition, improve the effectiveness of the organization, and the ability to take advantage of business opportunities. Rego et al. used a convenience sample to collect their data and did not explore a variety of industries to see if the findings apply to other organizations.

In addition, some PRSs reward the wrong behavior. There is too much focus on weaknesses and not on strengths when it comes to individual's performance. There is an intolerance of imperfections in the workplace (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011). Bouskila-Yam

and Kluger (2011) conducted a case study and found that a strengths-based performance appraisal system results in employees that are more productive and higher profitability for organizations. The review process was not only on fixing a weakness but also capitalizing on the part of the job an employee did well. However, there is a need for additional research to further Bouskila-Yam and Kluger's research across other organizations.

Muse and Wadsworth (2012) researched which benefits motivate employees. The authors used multiple sources of data including a voluntary employee questionnaire. The healthcare organization had 539 employees and a supervisor survey with 457 participants. Muse and Wadsworth found that non-traditional benefits had a connection with employee organizational support. Traditional health and financial benefits have less influence on an organization POS perception. Non-traditional benefits that cater to what employees find valuable resulted in high morale. This survey was unique because it looked at how different populations valued their employer's provided benefits. Bourne et al. (2012), Guest and Woodrow (2012), and Muse and Wadsworth (2012) conducted studies to determine the relationship between the variety of benefits companies offers and positive psychology (e.g., medical, dental, vision, and work-life balance). Muse et al. found that positive psychology influences benefits when companies offer ones that employees valued.

Bourne et al. (2012) examined how benefits perceptions differ based on the employee's family life. The authors found that when co-workers supported family-friendly benefits, all employees valued them more. The study used questionnaires for two retail companies and two insurance organizations with a total of 437 participants. The majority of the respondents were

female (83%). A limitation of this study is that it only examined childcare benefits for employees

Outputs

The outputs of POB are increases in morale, company profitability, productivity, and engagement. Organizations are constantly looking for ways to manage these areas in the most efficient manner. POB has found that employees that use their strengths on a daily basis are happier and have better morale and engagement (Guest & Woodrow, 2012; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2015).

Employee Morale. Employee morale is measured a number of ways within an organization. HRDs often assess morale in organizational surveys by using an overall employee satisfaction index (Guest & Woodrow, 2012; Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Ok, 2015; Shuck et al., 2012). Scholars have studied morale under the positive psychology concepts of happiness, well-being, and flow at work (Donaldson et al., 2014; Jayawickreme, Forgeard, & Seligman, 2012). There are three ways to measure happiness: the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life (Donaldson et al., 2014).

Luthans (2012) argued that well-being relates to overall PsyCap scores, which included the measurements of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism. Kelloway, Turner, Barling, and Loughlin (2012) research consisted of a two-part study with the first part including 454 nursing home employees, and the second a review of 26 participants' daily diaries. Kelloway et al. found that well-being amplifies when an employee experienced both positive and negative emotions. Most organizations only focus on the negative emotions that employees express about

their work environment. HR professionals need to understand how both positive and negative emotions relate to employees' work performance.

Tzafir, Gur, and Blumen (2015) examined how an employee's intention to leave was in their social environment and HR values. The study included 419 participants in the service sector between the ages of 18 to 70 that worked in a team. The employment social environment influences HR policies and is a key factor in employee morale. While this study analyzed trust, well-being, and leadership, it neglected to consider the impact of justice and job satisfaction. This study lacked investigation of other types of business sectors and only examined the service industry.

Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi (2006) defined flow as the feeling individuals get when they are working at their full capabilities. A balance between challenge and skills creates flow. A study conducted by Zubair and Kamal (2015) involved 277 employees at various banks and software organizations. Zubair and Kamal found flow connected with creativity, AL, PsyCap, and positive psychology. The generalizability of the conclusion for this research to the work environment is questionable because of the limited sectors of software and banking.

Company Profitability. Unlike other positive psychology theories, POB does attempt to measure the profitability of the organization (Jeung, 2011). Scholars argued that POB helps to increase company profitability (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger, 2011; Luthans, 2012). Uddin et al. (2012) used case studies and organizational performance data to show that positive employee performance relates to higher profitability.

Cameron et al. (2011) found in their research that positive psychology practices allowed the organizations studied to be more effective and profitable. This research was on two studies

in health care and financial services industries. Study 1 included 40 business units from a financial services company that incorporated positive practices within their workplace. The initiatives used to create this culture including retreats, positive goal setting, change teams, and redesigning incentive systems around positive practices. Study 2 examined how positive work practices influenced a 29 unit nursing facility. Both studies found that organizational performance influences positive practices.

Company profitability can be influenced by HR practices (Kim, Wright, & Su, 2010; Safdar et al., 2011; Subramony, 2009). Van De Voorde et al., (2010) stated there are four key HR practices that influence organizational profitability, which are means emphasis, goal emphasis, task support, and reward orientation. Goal emphasis means reward orientation help employees focus on the company's objectives. Structuring objectives around business goals allow employees to see how their behavior and productivity help the organization. Task support is the socio-emotional support network of the organization. Organizational outcomes related to task support were turnover, absenteeism, and productivity. They found that the socio-emotional support could reduce profitability due to the time it takes to develop and build relationships with individuals. Subramony (2009) research was a mega-analysis of 65 studies. Subramony argued that strategic human resource practices such as empowerment, motivation, and skill enhancement resulted in higher profitability for organizations. Safdar et al. (2011) study included 568 employees from the Pakistan public sector. The authors argued that job design resulted in stronger profits when HR managers had a greater understanding of employees' jobs.

Employee Productivity. As global competition and market demands continue to intensify, companies persist in exploring ways to strengthen productivity. Productivity in

employees stems from their behavior (Wright & McMahan, 2011). Scholars argued that a POB culture stimulates employees to be more productive (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008; Donaldson et al., 2014; Metz, Brown, Cregan, & Kulik, 2014; Money et al., 2008; Nath, 2011). POB employees can work with their strengths and refine their skills. Metz et al. (2014) discussed how productivity increased when human resource professionals had more resources to handle difficult employees in the work environment. Nath (2011) contended that stronger profitability happened when employees were more engaged in their work.

Uddin et al. (2012) conducted a case study by interviewing 34 individuals that used to work for a telecommunication company in Bangladesh. The participants ranged from frontline employees to senior management. The authors found that productivity relates to organizational culture and employee performance. About HRD's influence on productivity, Bayat (2011) and Safdar et al. (2011) found that an effective performance management system improved motivation and productivity. These studies were on a traditional model of performance management, which focus on improving weaknesses versus developing strengths.

Employee Engagement. Increasing employee engagement has been studied by a number of experts such as Crabb (2011); Jeung, (2011); Kim et al., (2012); Shuck et al. (2012); and Shuck and Reio (2011). As defined by Jeung, employee engagement is the connection between job satisfaction and individual work productivity. There is a great deal of controversy over the definition of engagement between the disciplines of positive psychology, human resources, OD, and practitioners (Kim et al., 2012, Shuck et al., 2012). Kim et al. research were a literature review with 134 initial articles found by searching for terms such as job engagement, work engagement, employee engagement, role, performance, and personal. After the initial

review, they conducted a staged review and selected 20 articles to be included in their analysis. Significant findings of a connection between performance and engagement appear in 11 of the research studies.

Kim et al. (2012) found that positive psychology views engagement as a way to improve employee's performance at work, while traditional OD sees engagement as a way to solve problems by using a deficit-based method. A deficit-based method is concerned with the problems of the organization. Tims et al. (2013) defined engagement in the workplace as a positive relationship between well-being, job fulfillment, and affective-motivational state. Kim et al. argued that practitioners often use engagement concepts for usability and as an outcome measure. Shuck (2011) indicated that these outcomes are on individual perceptions and not on observation of individual performance. Newman, Joseph, Sparkman, and Carpenter (2011) found that employee engagement is a "jangle fallacy" and that engagement is job-related attitudes. A jangle fallacy is using the different measurements of achievement and intelligence for the same paradigm of employee engagement.

The definition of engagement is associated with flow (Nath, 2011). Through a thematic analysis of peak performance factors, Crabb (2011) argued that coaching might enhance employee engagement. Focusing on strengths, managing emotions, and aligning purpose accomplishes employee engagement.

Shuck et al. (2012) contended that engagement is different from related terms (e.g., job satisfaction and commitment) because it is more than what employees do. It is how a person experiences and interprets the world around them that makes it unique. The quantitative and qualitative analysis did not confirm these claims.

Jeung (2011) maintained five criteria influence engagement including “theory and research-based, valid measurement, positivity, state-like, and performance impact” (see Figure 1). These criteria help to create a POB culture based on engagement. Mills et al., (2013) reasoned that job enlargement could cause higher engagement. This is because job enlargement expands decision-making capabilities, skill variety, and creates a supportive work environment.

A positive correlation exists between engagement, work productivity and job satisfaction (Jeung, 2011). Experts (e.g., Crabb, 2011; Jeung, 2011; Kim et al., 2012; Mills et al., 2013) stated that engagement leads to lower absenteeism and growth in morale. Sheldon et al. (2011) argued that higher engagement causes increased work quality and business performance. Lu and colleague’s (2014) research consisted of a two-wave longitudinal study of 246 participants at a Chinese high technology organization. The authors discovered that employees generate their great place to work by being engaged in their work. Gordon, Demerouti, Bipp, and Le Blanc (2013) had 49 nurses in the Netherlands participate from 10 different care facilities. A baseline questionnaire and a five days’ worth of daily diaries were completed. Gordon et al. found a positive correlation between work engagement, decision-making, and performance.

Team-based work escalates engagement by allowing enhanced innovation and creativity (Mills et al., 2013). Teamwork that allows employees to use their strengths on a daily basis is the most effective. Lueneburger (2012) research included 89 high potentials employees at an organization. Lueneburger contended that engagement increased when top management is committed to amplifying the strengths of their leaders. Amplifying strengths occur when individuals devoted the majority of their time to doing work they enjoy.

There may be a downside to employee engagement. Halbesleben (2011) argued that employees that engage at work might let their home life suffer. The focus on work causes negative consequences and job burnout. Halbesleben (2011) stated that while job crafting may create higher employee engagement; it might also have the effect of causing employees to sidestep their work responsibilities.

Methodology

The literature review highlighted the various methodology used in POB studies. This section includes an analysis of advantages and disadvantages of the various methodology including qualitative methods. This includes how the case study method was the best approach based on the methods available.

The case study method allows the researcher to use predetermined selection criteria. This permits for a narrowing of the research parameters, which helps to reduce irrelevant data and time spent conducting research. According to Yin (2014), the case study method is when the main research questions are trying to determine “how” or “why,” there is little control over the event(s), and the focus of the study is to understand existing phenomena.

The grounded theory, narrative research, ethnography, or phenomenology designs would not be appropriate for this study. Grounded theory tries to cultivate a theory based on the data collected (Trochim, 2006). Since scholars have already defined POB, this approach is unnecessary. The research questions focus on how POB has influenced HRDs (Mills et al., 2013; Ramlall et al., 2014).

Narrative research is the exploration of the oral or written accounts of historical culture or social patterns, family stories, personal experiences, art, or nonfiction literature (Patton, 2002).

The exploration of these life stories explain the human experience and social phenomena. One or two individuals provide life stories. Since one of the outcomes here is to understand how the whole HRD changes, this method was ruled out as being too narrow due to the limited number of subjects used.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argued that ethnography looks to understand the meaning of factors such as language, behavior, values, and interpersonal exchanges of a selected group of individuals. The focus is on finding cultural biases in this approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The studies happen over an extended period. Since most culture change takes years to accomplish, the time investment was determined to be too long for this dissertation. A number of culture change initiatives are unsuccessful. The best strategy is to select organizations that have been successful in implementing a variety of positive psychology changes. In ethnography, the researcher needs immersion in the culture of multiple organizations, which is unrealistic based on the time commitment needed.

The phenomenology method examines the phenomenon of the lived experience to determine the meaning, structure, and essence of the shared experience members of a group have in common (Patton, 2002). This is not an effective tactic because the researcher is not gathering data based on perceptions and lived experiences. The purpose is to focus on the phenomenon itself and not that of the participants.

A number of key concepts are part of this study. Bakker et al. (2012) have tended to study an organization's individual levels using field surveys. Patton (2002) criticized this approach based on its lack of follow-up with contributors. The use of questionnaires places an

overreliance on self-report accuracy. Yin (2014) stated that interviews are one of the most important sources of case study evidence.

Other levels studied were on leadership in the organization (Bakker et al., 2012; Cilliers, 2011). Bakker et al. analysis included 190 employees from various organizations and used structural equation modeling for analyses. The authors were unable to establish causation with the study due to the use of cross-sectional data. Research on teams is not widespread and tends to be either POB- or POS-driven (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Group cohesion has an influence on job and life satisfaction (Riasudeen & Srinivasan, 2011).

Finally, there is a higher frequency of quantitative than qualitative research regarding positive psychology (Combs et al., 2011; Hmieleski et al., 2011; Kaiser & Overfield, 2011). Patton (2002) stated that using the quantitative method does not allow for in-depth analysis of an issue like qualitative research. Quantitative methods have aspects of the study defined in detail, and the researcher is aware of what he or she is looking for during the study. Yin (2014) recommended using the qualitative method when research questions are discovering “how” and “why” something occurred. Qualitative methods allow the findings to emerge through the study and the aim is a complete description of the phenomenon.

Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2 discussed the different parts of the conceptual framework. The framework consisted of analyzing the literature around HRDs, POB, inputs, and outputs (see Figure 4). The inputs included culture, group dynamics, job design, and policies and procedures. The outputs were employee morale, company profitability, employee productivity, and employee engagement.

While POB is the primary theory of the study, it is associated with a number of theories in the positive psychology discipline. The foundational theory of POB is positive psychology (Seligman, 2005). Other positive psychology theories discussed included AL (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987), POS (Cameron et al., 2003), PL (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2012), SBL (Rath & Conchie, 2008), and PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2008). Through this analysis, POB researchers traditionally have concentrated on examining the individuals within the workplace.

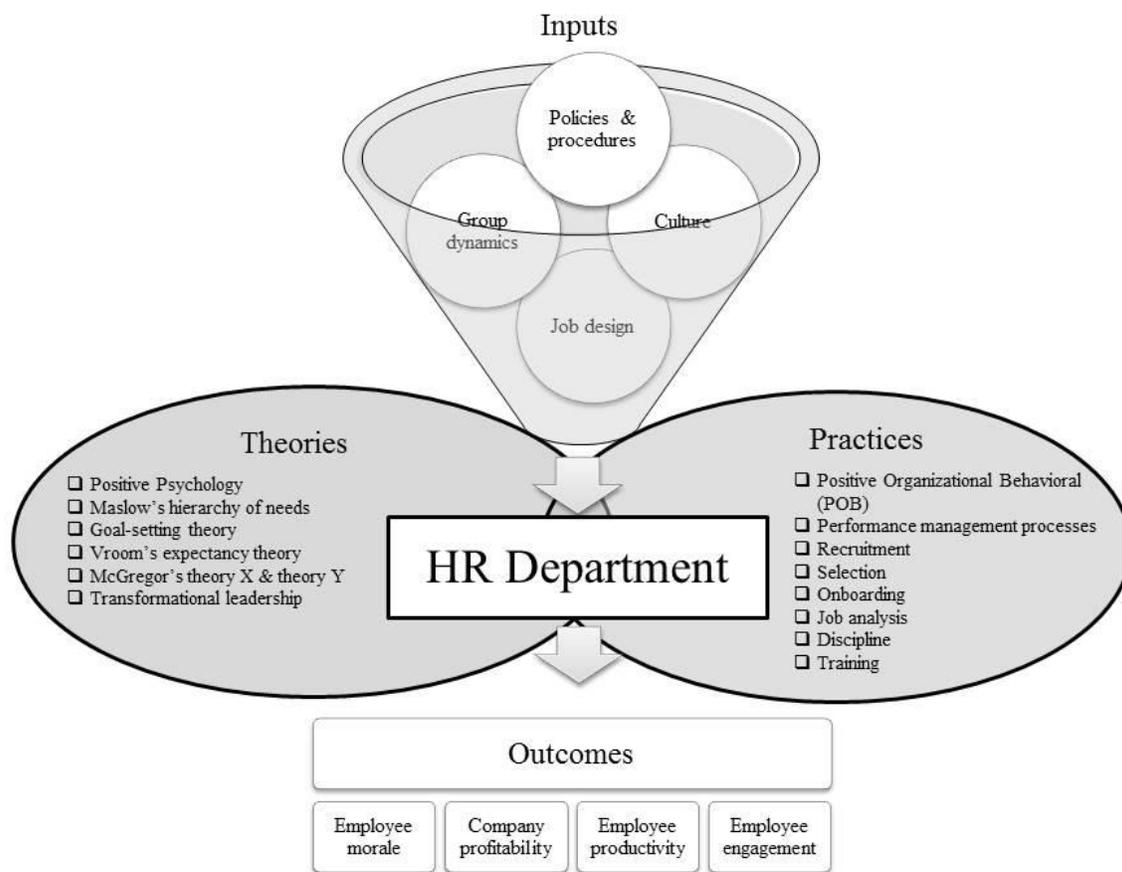


Figure 4. Literature review of conceptual framework for POB influence on HRDs.

The literature review described the influence POB has had on HRDs and organizations. This chapter examined the gaps in POB effects on HRDs and explored organization behavior

theories for similarities around positive psychology concepts. Included in this analysis were (1) Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow & Bennis, 1998), (2) goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1984), (3) Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom & Deci, 1970), (4) McGregor's theory X and theory Y (McGregor, 2006), and (5) transformational leadership (Bass, 1999).

For positive psychology to be successful, cultures need to help create opportunities for individuals to use their strengths on a daily basis. Second, Searle and Barbuto (2013), and Tims et al. (2013) argued that research around groups within positive psychology is lacking. Consequently, this study will help close the gap between group researches. Third, the job design theories reviewed included job characteristics model and job crafting. Job crafting is a more conducive job design for POB.

Another input is policies and procedures that human resource manages. The procedure studied the most in positive psychology literature is Performance Review Systems (PRS). However, the unknown is how POB influences other policies and procedures within HRDs.

The last part of the conceptual framework is the outputs of the system. These include morale, company profitability, productivity, and engagement. POB is one of the few positive psychology theories that attempts to quantify organizational profitability (Jeung, 2011). Few studies have sought to calculate POB profits or direct increases in productivity.

The next chapter will review the methods used to help understand how POB affects HRDs. Chapter 3 will discuss the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness. The study helps to fill the gap in the literature regarding the influence different POB's components have on HRDs.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore participants' perceptions of how different HR practices function in a POB environment. I interviewed a purposive sample of professionals who had worked in HR for at least one year in thirteen U.S. organizations that practiced positive psychology. The focus was to explore their perceptions of how different HR practices function in a POB culture including recruitment, selection, onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes. The data from the study contributes to new knowledge and insights into how the POB strategy operates and influences HRDs. The findings foster social change by helping HRDs understand how employees should be developed, coached, and rewarded.

In the next section, I will examine the research methods. Also included in this section are a description of the research design and rationale, and an exploration of the role of the researcher, and the methodology used. The methodology section will examine the sample population, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis plan. There will also be a review of the protections for human participants and the distribution of findings.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions guide the study:

1. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how are their policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures organized and changed?

2. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how do they develop relationships internal and external to the department?
3. How have Human Resource Departments adjusted internally to adopt a positive organizational behavior culture (i.e., policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures)?
4. How has a positive organizational behavior culture affected the Human Resource Departments positively and negatively?

I focused my analysis on HRDs, POB, and qualitative characteristics. The nature of the study was the qualitative case method. Qualitative research is consistent with determining how POB has influenced HRDs and what these different groups have in common. Patton (2002) found that the qualitative method allows the researcher to comprehend the issue in depth and detail. Guest and Woodrow (2012) argued that the approach assists researchers in understanding the “whys” and “how’s” of people’s behavior.

The quantitative process does not allow a researcher to explore new discoveries found within the research process (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). The parameters of the study must remain grounded in the original hypothesis or hypotheses (Simon, 2003). The modification of the hypothesis or hypotheses to address newly discovered phenomena is not permissible in quantitative studies. Patton (2002) argued that “qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documentation” (p. 4).

For this study, a methodology needs to allow for the discovery of commonality between diverse groups. Baxter and Jack (2008) stated the qualitative methodology allows researchers to

investigate multifaceted phenomena within its natural environments using a variety of tools. Patton (2002) and Yin (2014) found that qualitative studies have a smaller sample size because of the depth of their analysis. Qualitative studies also use interview questions as the method of evaluation. However, there has to be flexibility in the questions. This requires the questions to be open-ended. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stated that the qualitative method assists in transporting the researcher into the real world experiences, which causes the results of a study to be grounded in the empirical perspective.

Research Design

Yin (2014) stated that a multiple case study is a set of studies in different locations, focused on the same topic. This approach allows the replication and testing of the case study numerous times to establish the study's findings. It helps to display a range of perspectives on the issue and allows the researcher to understand the issue at a greater depth. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) found that the method allows the researcher to explore the issue on a limited scope.

While case studies allow close analysis of real-life situations, one of the drawbacks of this approach is the identification of cases. According to Yin (2014), researchers have to define their parameters carefully to ensure the inclusion criteria are not biased or flawed. The focus of this study was POB in the limited systems of HRDs. The qualitative approach seemed most fitting for the in-depth analysis conducted.

Role of the Researcher

The primary instrument for gathering data was interviews. I was directly involved in the data collection process by conducting on-site, face-to-face, and telephone interviews. Patton

(2002) and Yin (2014) stated that the interview process is the most common data collection method for qualitative research.

Like the participants, I am a human resource professional who has worked in a number of different settings including finance, manufacturing, retail, and higher education. However, I did not have any professional or personal ties to the organizations selected. I have a strong personal bias toward positive psychology in the workplace. I have participated in appreciative inquiry training and conducted a number of sessions around Gallup's Strengthfinder's test (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001). Yin (2014) stated that a study's will be invalid if the researcher does not recognize his or her preconceived notions and try to compensate for them. The literature review highlights the pros and cons to positive psychology to examine both sides. My biases did not jeopardize the study's credibility.

I performed the roles of data-collector, data-interpreter, and data-analyst. By not using participants' real names or organizational names, the identities of people were confidential. There were no incentives used to increase participation.

The goal of this study was to contribute to the field of positive psychology and HR by exploring POB and HRDs. The study discovered the different practices of POB within the HR community. The use of bracketing reduced researcher bias. Tufford and Newman (2012) stated that to accomplish bracketing is by using a multilayer process, which focuses on exploring various perceptions regarding a situation. According to Heffernan (2014), bracketing can assist in maintaining rigor and discipline precision. It also helps the researcher focus on what evidence supports or disproves validity and credibility of the data.

It is important for the outcome to gain a detailed understanding of the processes that are in place. Therefore, protocols for coding and data analysis helped to avoid bias. The purpose was to discover what HR practitioners have done, not train participants in a new methodology or practice.

Methodology

The qualitative methodology allows for the discovery of commonality between diverse HRDs by gathering perceptions of POB in various organizations. Specifically, this research examined how a range of POB practices influenced HRDs and what the participating organizations have in common. The focus of this study was on the experiences of people that worked for organizations that have implemented POB.

Participant Selection Logic

The population of the study was HR professionals in organizations that implemented positive psychology. Preference was given to organizations in the Midwestern United States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin), but participants outside this area were not excluded from initial screening. The ideal minimum population was at least six organizations and twenty HR professionals. The research design did allow for various programs and processes within HR to be explored. Interviewing more than one person at an organization helped to understand various perceptions. A few organizations' HRDs were selected to highlight how they deal with the demands placed on them regarding implementing and maintaining a positive organization culture. It is important not to generalize the findings.

Interviewing permits for an in-depth inquiry of the organization. Patton (2002) argued that there is not a set sample size in qualitative research. Yin (2014) stated that a good sample size for a multiple case study is six to 10 cases. Patton (2002) counseled researchers to scrutinize the information desired, reliability of sources, the purpose, time commitment, and cost when shaping the sample size.

Patton (2002) defined criterion sampling as selecting cases that meet predetermined criteria. It is an efficient method of sampling for case studies because the selection of participants is on specific criteria for inclusion. The method is ideal for finding a representative population for a niche segment. Patton (2002) found that this approach narrows in on cases that exhibit certain predetermined elements. This allowed for a more focused research approach and reduction of time spent reviewing unrelated cases. This may be at the expense of reliability and information.

In my study, interviewing multiple participants eliminated the chance of missing critical components of the POB culture. The focus was to gain depth on the subject and not generalize. However, it was imperative to select a sample size that was representative of the population. It was important to identify a minimum size to ensure saturation. In addition, having a minimum size provided me the ability to add additional samples. Finally, criterion sampling allows for the selection of organizations that are POB companies. It permits the focus to be on HR professionals.

Instrumentation

The interview protocol began with the initial contact of potential participants by telephone to review the inclusion criteria. After verbally agreeing to be included, I emailed the

informed consent form to the participant. The individual then reviewed the consent form; data use agreement; and replied electronically to my email that they consented to participate. Next, I scheduled an interview time over either telephone or email. Preferably, the interview happened face-to-face and followed the interview protocol guide.

The questions and protocols were sent to the participants prior to their participation in the interview (see Appendix A). The conceptual framework created the interview questions. At the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the informed consent form and interview protocol. Removing individuals from the pool happened if they did not agree with the informed consent and/or the interview protocol. I asked follow-up questions to obtain additional depth, and clarity of answers.

Another method for collecting data was to review the available organizational aggregate data related to the creation and/or maintenance of a positive work culture such as (Yin, 2014):

- Policies, procedures, letters, memoranda, and e-mails
- Proposals, progress reports, and other internal records
- Mass media or community newspaper articles
- Employee records, such as those showing the number of employees serving each year from 2009 to 2013
- Financial records, such as budget or annual reports from 2009 to 2013
- Survey data produced by others

Before the interview process, participants submitted this data. As has been explained by Baxter and Jack (2008), multiple methods of data collection allow exploration of the issue from different angles.

Procedures for Recruitment

The scope of the study was companies that have developed, implemented, and maintained a POB culture. As highlighted in Chapter 1, the research focused on a minimum of six organizations. Qualitative research requires using a minimum number of individuals in the sample with more added until the data reaches exhaustion of new themes (Yin, 2014). The only participants were HR professionals and; therefore, it was difficult to comprehend how other departments view the POB change efforts. The practice of positive psychology varies, and organizations had implemented positive psychology practices in one or more of the following areas: individual strengths, culture change, performance appraisals, benefits, coaching, employee development, recruitment, and employee and labor relations. This study did not collect information from upper management outside of the HRD.

Mills et al., (2013) found it is challenging to identify organizations that practice POB. It requires dramatic changes in how companies operate. A basic and preferred list of criteria classified organizations based on their different levels of POB adoption. There is a broad definition of these practices due to the variety of positive psychology theories. A range of practices was included from earlier adopters to more established POB cultures. Another strategy to increase the number of participants was to talk to positive psychology coaches concerning different interventions they have implemented with their clients.

The basic inclusion criteria for choosing companies entailed a number of different variables. First, an industry expert or the organization self-disclosed that they practiced POB. Second, only HR professionals who have worked in the selected organizations were included. Third, the participants needed to understand POB or positive psychology concepts and be

knowledgeable of his or her organization. The exclusion of HR professional happened if they had less than one year of service. Fourth, organizations must have an HRD with at least one or more full-time HR practitioner.

Based on predetermined criteria, I placed organizations in high and low POB categories. High POB organizations were engage in more than three of the following practices, while low POB organizations were engage in three or less:

- Individual, group, and/or management strengths assessment,
- Individual strength coaching,
- Individual, group, management, and/or leadership strengths development training,
- Job crafting or similar strengths focus job design,
- Organizational statement and/or policies around developing positive work culture,
- Gallup or PsyCap employee survey, and
- Strengths-based performance reviews,

The preferred inclusion criteria encompassed organizations that are within a three-hour drive of Columbus, Ohio. Another preferred inclusion criterion was if the APA has recognized the organization for their HR practices. It is the best list of organizations that practice positive psychology principles.

Data Collection

I used the data collection instrument (see Appendix A) based on the conceptual framework to collect information and data. The data collection process did include letters of consent and invitations to participate. Email was the primary way individuals were invitations to participate. Potential participants did need to reply by a predetermined date. Selected

individuals did receive the consent form by email. People did return the form either by email or on the day of the interview. Email or telephone communication did coordinate the scheduling of interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and used open-ended questions. Most interviews only occurred once during the study and were approximately one hour each.

Carbonite stored the digitally recorded interviews and audio files. Carbonite is an automatic online backup system, which is password protected. Next, digitally recorded audio files did allow review of the interview later for transcription. Physical notes taken during the interview process helped with preliminary coding. Last, coding did begin directly after the transcription of the interviews.

The interview did include a question asking if individuals would like to provide any additional information. Individuals also received instructions that included (1) there was not a need for further participation, (2) all personal information was confidential, and (3) they would receive a transcript via email of the interview. This did help to ensure the accuracy of the interview because participants were able to correct information that was inaccurate.

As described earlier in Chapter 3, the study did review available aggregate organizational data such as policies, procedures, reports, employee and mass media communication, financial records, and survey data produced by others. This was because multiple data sources allow researchers to triangulate their coding. Yin (2014) explained that the most important use of documents is to augment and corroborate findings from other sources. Email requests for these items happened before the interviews. To provide protection to the individuals within the organization, the information was encoded. The code was the same for the different items as the interview questions (Appendix B). Carbonate and a password protected computer hard drive is

the security for the data. The researcher will retain data for five years to allow for potential future questions.

I used multiple strategies for analyzing the data, which included transcription, member checking, and then coding. Immediately after the interviews, transcripts were completed. The collection of data did continue until the data surrounding the research questions were saturated. Marshall (1996) argued that saturation occurs when it becomes apparent to the researcher that new categories, themes, ideas, or clarifications stop emerging from the data. This happened at thirty participants for the study.

Since this was a qualitative analysis study, discrepant cases could have occurred. The study was over how different HRDs are implementing POB. Some companies use more positive psychology principles than others. The size of the organization may cause issues if there are too few HR professionals engaging in the culture change. Discrepant cases are included as an outcome and used as a key discussion point regarding as guidance for HR professionals in implementing POB. The use of discrepant cases also helped in the coding and ensuring that critical parts of the analysis were not missing.

The inputs and outputs of the conceptual frameworks created the pre-coding (see Appendix B). The research questions and positive psychology terminology also assisted in the pre-codes development. Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that researchers need to establish codes before beginning any study. Pre-coding helps to organize and categorize the data during the collection process. It also helps to speed up the coding process. During the analysis process, the pre-coding changed due to the direction of the research study. The combination of similar codes happened during the analysis process (see Appendix B).

Coding the data happened by pattern coding. Pattern coding tries to establish patterns within the data analyzed (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Nvivo is a software program used to organize, analyze information, and develop scalable research. The use of the qualitative software program Nvivo aided data analysis. The program did manage, organize, and analyze the data collected to identify emerging patterns and themes. It allows the analysis and storage of different document formats including PDFs, audio data, photographs, websites, and numerous word processing type files. Nvivo can help decipher interviews, focus groups, videos, and surveys. The identification of themes happened by categorization, arrangement, and ease of management of mass amounts of information. Nvivo was also useful in the creation of models, ideas, and concepts.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trust deals with the internal and external validity of the study. It also helps to determine if the findings are reliable and the researcher's objectivity. There are four main areas of concern: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility

Credibility is important to establish internal validity. Credibility happens by triangulation, prolonged contact, saturation, peer review, member checks, and reflexivity. Coast and Horrocks (2010) found that the credibility is established when the researcher attempts to confirm findings. It means that participants can provide truthful, unbiased descriptions of their experiences. Two methods establish this, which were member checking and triangulation. Patton (2002) argued that rigorous methods for doing research help to ensure the outcomes are systematic and credible.

Member checking is when the researcher shares their interpretation of the data with contributors. Then participants have the opportunity to clarify and discuss the results and contribute additional perspectives on the study (Baxter & Jack, 2008). At the end of the interview, individuals were able to ask questions or elaborate on their responses. The documentation provided supported the sessions. Individuals were able to review their transcripts after the interview and provide clarification on their responses. People did receive these transcriptions via email. Participants did also have the findings presented to them, and they were able to comment on data analysis and conclusions. If there was disagreement with any of the individuals regarding the outcomes, they were able to provide the feedback in writing. There was no disagreement with the results.

The other way credibility is established is by triangulation. Patton (2002) discussed that no single method is adequate to research a problem. Patton recommended that researchers use three different sources or methods of data collection in a study. Using various sources, helps to corroborate evidence and strengthen the themes found within the analysis stage. This accomplishment was by the interviews, financial reports, and document checks that were completed. I used a journal during the data collection phase to record thoughts, reactions, and concerns.

Transferability

The transferability of the study refers to external validity. Yin (2014) defined external validity as “the extent to which the findings from a case study can be analytically generalized to other situations that were not part of the original study” (p. 238). Ways that the transferability is established is by a variation in participant selection. While the study did look at multiple cases,

it did have limited transferability to other segments. The findings are helpful to other HR professionals in adjusting organizations to a POB culture.

Dependability

Next, dependability refers to how repeatable or reliable the information is to the study. By using detailed field notes and tape recordings for transcription, it established triangulation. Another method for ensuring the study's validity was careful record keeping.

Trustworthiness

The last issue regarding trustworthiness refers to the conformability. In a case study, Baxter and Jack (2008) found that there were a number of critical elements to establish trustworthiness. These included clearly written research questions, appropriate case study design, purposeful sampling, systematic data management method, and sound data analysis. For a study to be trustworthy, it needs to be reflective and presents both sides of an issue. The document review did confirm the results and ensured that it was objective in nature.

Ethical Procedures

Janesick (2011) and Patton (2002) argued that it is critical to use informed consent in a study to address any ethical concerns. The Institutional Review Board did need to grant permission to perform the study. It did ensure that all procedures are ethical. Moreover, gaining access to the population (i.e., organizations that practice positive psychology) and the participants (HR professionals) was possible due to public access.

Contributors received clear documentation regarding parts of the research. The individuals did sign consent forms to participate in the interview. The consent form did include the purpose of the study, permission to record the interviews, use the information, and access to

raw data. The form did highlight that there were no ramifications for withdrawing. The form also emphasized that participation was strictly voluntary. The IRB approved the study with the IRB approval number 03-17-15-0253734.

Participants did sign a Data Use Agreement, which allows organizations to provide records to the researcher. Since this data may include personal identifiers, everyone who had access to the data (excluding faculty committee members) did need to submit a signed certificate of confidentiality. During the study, an interview protocol was used to help address a number of the identify concerns.

The use of pseudonyms in the report assisted in keeping participants' information confidential. Transcripts of the interviews are stored in a manner that the people's identity is not apparent from the information. All audio recordings are under lock and key for additional security. Coercion and threats did not happen to any individual.

Bracketing helps to reduce researcher bias. Since I have a background in HR, I tried not to introduce bias into the investigation. Yin (2014) found that way to avoid bias in a case study included high ethical standards, truthful representation of the data, avoiding deception, and appropriate citation of other's work.

A final concern regarding the research was data security. Patton (2002) argued that researchers should secure their data, which includes paper and electronic security measures. This did help to protect the confidentiality of the participants and organizations studied.

Summary

In this chapter, I explored the research method for the study. It included a description of the research design and the reasons behind why the selection of this design. There was a

description of the role the researcher played, and any ethical concerns with it. Next, the methodology was discussed, which included the identification of the population, participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures, recruitment, data collection method and analysis of the data. It was revealed that data collection happened by interviews and document review. Last, I analyzed issues concerning trustworthiness of the data and ethical dilemmas.

In Chapter 4, I will analyze the results of the study. It will include a review of the data collection method, the coding of results, and a discussion over the impact the study has on the field of positive psychology.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to discover how different HR practices function in a POB environment. I used data from interviews, publically available documents, and internal organizational documents to answer my research questions. The primary research question sought to understand the relationship between POB and HR professionals.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore participants' perceptions of how different HR practices function in a POB environment with a focus on recruitment, selection, onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes. I interviewed a select sample of professionals at a number of organizations who have worked in HR for at least one year. The minimum number of organizations was six, but thirteen participated. The goal of the study was to learn the application of positive psychology practices and principles in the workplace.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how are their policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures organized and changed?
2. For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how do they develop relationships internal and external to the department?

3. How have Human Resource Departments adjusted internally to adopt a positive organizational behavior culture (i.e., policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures)?
4. How has a positive organizational behavior culture affected the Human Resource Departments positively and negatively?

In this chapter, I will explore my study including setting, demographics, data collection, and data analysis. In addition, I will discuss evidence of trustworthiness as related to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Last, I will examine the results related to each research question.

Setting

The setting varied based on the participating organization. Thirteen companies participated, with six companies conducting on-site interviews. The remaining organizations had their interviews completed over the phone. The protocol was the same for each organization. The interviews happened over a short period. This resulted in none of the organizations experiencing a change in strategic direction, financial cuts, personnel changes, or organizational developments that might have influenced the results.

Table 2 illustrates an overview of demographics regarding participants. The study had 13 organizations and 31 participants. While the focus was on HRDs, not all participants were in organizationally defined HRDs. Most of the participants (84%, $n=26$) worked in an organization that had an HRD. Out of the remaining, marketing and communications had 6% ($n=2$), finance had 3% ($n=1$), research and development had 3% ($n=1$), and executive office had 3% ($n=1$). The sample size of 13 organizations established saturation, aligned with the study's objectives and

goals, and sufficiently answered the research questions. The organizations labels are Company 1 through 13. The average number of respondents from each organization was 2.38, with a range of 1 to 4 (see Table 2). Just over 60% (61%, $n=19$) of participants were female, and 39% ($n=12$) were male.

Table 2

Demographic Overview (N=31)

Row Labels	Company 1	Company 2	Company 3	Company 4	Company 5	Company 6	Company 7	Company 8	Company 9	Company 10	Company 11	Company 12	Company 13	Grand Total
Female	4	1	1	3	1		2	2		2	1		2	19
Male		2	1	1		2			1		1	3	1	12
Executive		1												1
Finance													1	1
Human Resources	4	1	2	4	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	26
Marketing and Communications		1								1				2
R&D Department													1	1
Total Participants	4	3	2	4	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	31

Data Collection

There were a number of steps in the data collection process, which included identifying potential participants, recruiting participants, and the selection of final participants. There were also three different sources of data including individual interviews, Avention one-source reporting, and organization documents. Avention is an online research library database that provides reports regarding company's financial information; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, executives' biographies, and news articles regarding the company.

Inclusion Criteria

Since the research questions examined multiple organizations, the minimum number of organizations needed was six with at least 20 participants. Marshall (1996) found that when the researcher stops finding new categories, themes, and ideas saturation has occurred. To ensure

saturation, thirteen organizations participated in the study. The basic inclusion criteria for choosing companies encompassed a number of variables.

First, industry experts identified the organizations by self-disclosed as practicing POB. Second, the organization had to understand POB or positive psychology concepts such as AL, POS, PsyCap, and SBL. Third, the organization must have a department with at least one or more full-time HR practitioners. One inclusion criterion changed slightly because some organizations have a large variety of names for their HR function. Some of the smaller organizations had broad job descriptions that crossed over to other disciplines such as finance, research and development, marketing, communications and the executive leadership team.

The preferred inclusion criteria encompassed organizations that were within a three-hour drive of Columbus, Ohio. Another preferred inclusion criterion was recognition of the organization for positive psychology practices by the APA. The APA awards helped to provide a list of organizations that practice positive psychology principles.

Identifying Potential Participants

Below are the methods used to identify organizations for potential inclusion in the investigation. First, a list of possible POB organizations was developed by contacting 35 positive psychology experts. Experts are researchers or practitioners who were: (a) published authors, (b) members of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA), or (c) faculty at universities that had a positive psychology program. This approach produced no viable U.S. based organizations. A number of the experts suggested contacting different positive psychology organizations (i.e., IPPA, SHRM, and APA) and doing keyword searches on social media platforms.

Second, I found participants by identifying organizations that had played a part in another POB study or were a member of the IPPA. I discovered three organizations using this method of contacting members of positive psychology groups or Fortune magazine award winners of Best Places to Work, and the American Psychology Association Awards (APAA) for positive psychology practices. There were thirty social media posts on sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

The most successful method for finding participants was to use social media keyword searches using these terms: positive psychology, positive work practices, POB, POS, Strengthfinders, Gallup, and positive work environments. The use of social media post on positive psychology and HR special interest discussion boards helped to solicit participants. From these different connections, there were 145 potential organizations identified. In total 36 organizations responded to the request, and 13 were selected.

Next, there were a number of iterations regarding the participation request document. Initially, when soliciting individuals, I used technical terms such as positive psychology, POB, and POS. When communicating with potential participants, I found that practitioners spoke about these concepts in terms that were more generic. I started requesting participation by using the most generic terms such as positive work culture or positive workplaces.

Recruiting Participants

Once organizations expressed an interest, authorized representatives were determined. This person needed to have the ability to approve the contact of internal participants and to release requested organizational documents. Out of the organizations making it to the final

selection, only three excluded themselves. If organizations agreed to participate, the representative signed a letter of cooperation.

Then organizations were placed in high ($n=8$) and low ($n=5$) practicing POB categories based on predetermined criteria. These criteria put high POB organizations as engaged in three or more of the following practices while low POB organizations were engaged in three or less of the following areas:

- Individual, group, and/or management strengths assessment,
- Individual strength coaching,
- Individual, group, management, and/or leadership strengths development training,
- Job crafting or similar strengths focus job design,
- An organizational statement and/or policies around developing positive work culture,
- Gallup or PsyCap employee survey, and
- Strengths-based performance reviews.

Participants

Thirty-one participants from thirteen companies took part in interviews. The sessions took place over the phone (55%), on-site face-to-face (39%), off-site face-to-face (6%). There were nine questions, as highlighted in the protocol (Appendix A). Thirty of the thirty-one participants only had one interview time, for approximately 34 minutes each. The completion of one meeting happened over the phone due to time constraints on the participant's part. The range of time it took to complete each session was between 18 minutes and 53 minutes.

Multiple emails were exchanged with some of the people before the interviews to establish a mutually agreed upon date and time. It took three months to complete the meetings

for all the participants. The interviews conducted on-site and face-to-face happened at corporate offices and mainly took place in conference rooms. Two face-to-face interviews were off-site. The remaining interviews took place over the phone. Carbonite stored the digitally recorded sessions and audio files. Carbonite is an automatic online backup system that is password protected. Next, digitally recorded audio files allowed the creation of transcripts. Physical notes taken during the process helped with coding. After the interviewees had approved the transcriptions, I completed the coding of data. I scanned the notes taken during the interviews and then encrypted and shredded them.

Documents took about a month to acquire (see Table 3). When collecting organizational consent, organizations provided policies, procedures, letters, memoranda, emails, proposals, progress reports, internal records, employee records, survey records, and financial records at the end of the interview. To minimize the number of documents requested, Avention one-source database collected standardized financial and publically available data on the participating organizations.

All but one company had an Avention report. This allowed for consistency in the reporting and stronger analysis regarding financial performance due to standardization. It also reduced the burden expressed by some of the participants for providing the information.

Due to Avention reports, the organizations only had to provide a few documents. The only items requested were those explicitly discussed in the interviews. They highlighted procedures, processes, policies, and operations.

Journaling throughout data collection was a way to develop ideas and capture initial impressions. When participants completed their interviews, the audio files received a code.

Carbonite stored the digitally recorded interviews and audio files. I transcribed the files and validated the recordings by listening to the file and reading along with the corresponding transcript. This was completed for all recordings, and member-checking was used as a final validation process. Participants also had the transcripts presented to them, and make any necessary changes or elaborate on any of their answers.

Table 3

Source Overview

Company	Interview	Avention One- Stop Report	Other Documents
Company 1	4	1	2
Company 2	3	1	1
Company 3	2	1	1
Company 4	4	1	0
Company 5	1	1	0
Company 6	2	2	0
Company 7	2	0	6
Company 8	2	1	0
Company 9	1	1	0
Company 10	2	1	0
Company 11	2	1	0
Company 12	3	1	0
Company 13	3	1	1
Total	31	13	11

Variations in Data Collection

The only variation in the data collection plan was that for one participant the interview failed to record due to an equipment malfunction during the face-to-face meeting. The handwritten notes created the transcript the same day the meeting took place. The day after the session, the participant received the transcript, and only made one change.

Unusual circumstances. There were a few unusual circumstances encountered in the data collection process. First, during the interview process, two of the participants at different companies had previously worked with me. In one case, the individual and I worked in different divisions of an HR department in the same company. In this case, the participant and I had little if no interaction when we worked for the same company. The second person and I used to work together at the same company but in different departments. While I worked in HR, the other individual worked in a Customer Service department. In both cases, it had been over ten years since I had seen either individual.

During one interview, a session was set up with someone who had been with the organization less than one year. While I decided to continue the interview, this data is not included in the analysis. This was not a concern because I interviewed three other people from the organization.

In three of the interviews, participants expressed that they were either leaving the organization due to finding another job or retiring in a few months. Leaving was not a concern because the interview was retrospective. In addition, they were able to express the future direction of the organization even if they were not going to be part of implementing those initiatives.

Data Analysis

Coding the data happened by pattern coding. According to Yin (2014), having predictive and empirical codes closely connected strengthens a case study's internal validity. Nvivo 11 aided data analysis. Nvivo 11 is a software program that helps to organize, analyze information, and develop scalable research. Similar to other softwares, Nvivo 11 managed, organized, and

analyzed data collected to identify emerging patterns and themes (Merriam, 2014). The program allowed the analysis and storage of various documents and formats including PDFs, audio data, and word processing type files.

The study used interview protocols and pre-coded categories for data analysis (Appendix B). Based on the conceptual framework, I developed research questions, problem statement, and interview questions. After completing the initial coding process, the data was reviewed a second time for additional codes. There were a number of new codes discovered during the analysis (see Figure 5).

Coding culminated in a Microsoft Excel matrix that summarized codes. The categorizations of the collective themes aided in identifying the participants' opinions on the topic. The data analysis strategy was suitable in answering the research questions. Finally, the strategy identified the various dynamics influencing HR departments.

The five key areas of the conceptual framework confirmed during coding: input, theories, HR department, practices, and outcomes. (see Figure 5). The significant changes were in the subcategories under these five areas. With input, communication was more important than job design. Job design moved into the practices area along with recruitment and selection, training, and discipline (i.e., correcting poor performance). New categories and practices ranged from leadership development, compensation and benefits, performance management, and a toolkit of activities. Based on these new discoveries, the conceptual framework changed to include these new themes (see Figure 5).

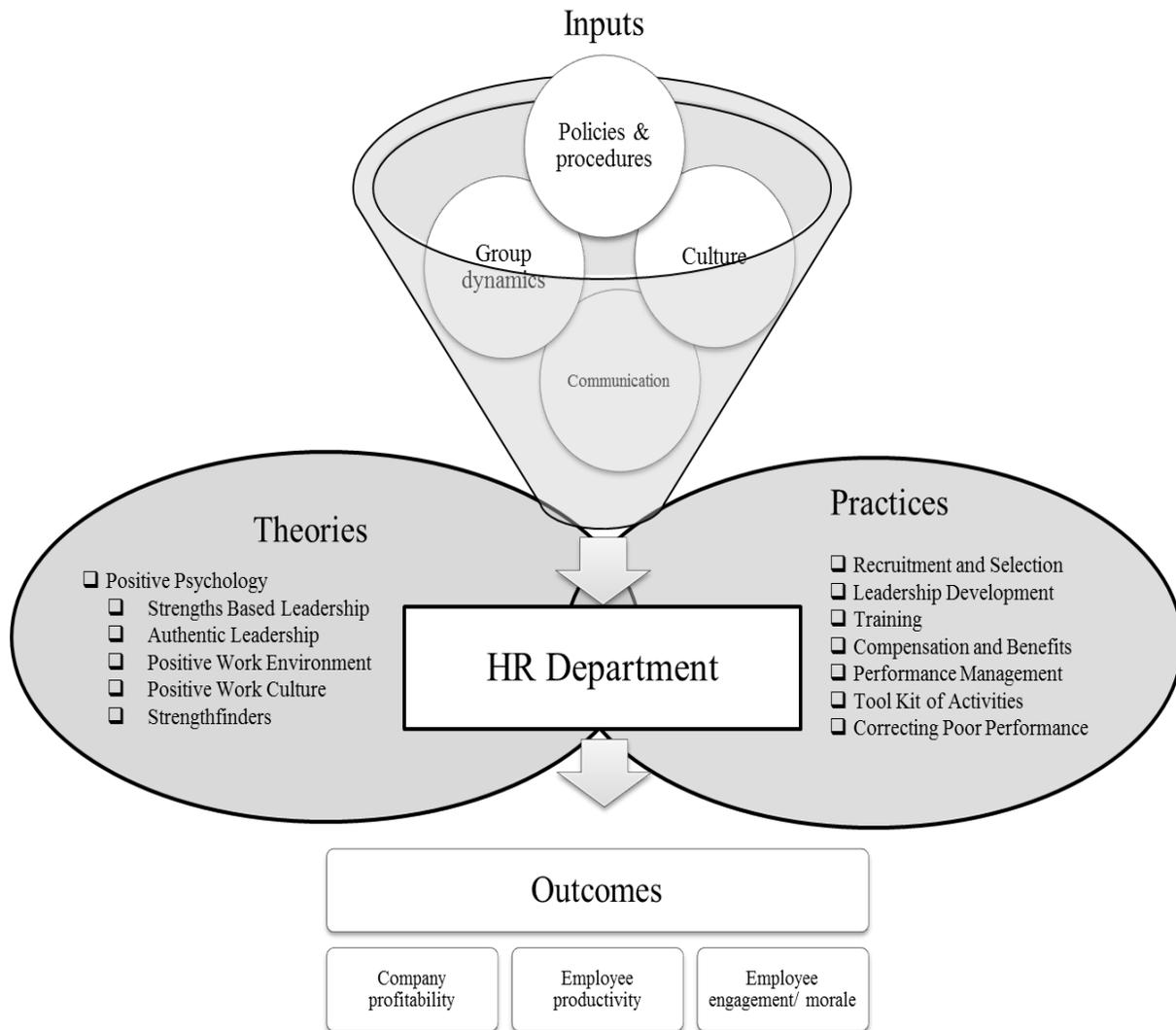


Figure 5. Revised conceptual framework based on theme analysis.

In the theories category, the only theory consistently discussed by participants was positive psychology. This means the other theories highlighted in Chapter 2 were not relevant or known to participants. Some positive psychology theories mentioned by participants included SBL, AL, and StrengthFinders/Gallup.

No major changes happened in the HRD definition. Only a slight change happened in outcomes, which was the combination of employee engagement and morale. Participants spoke about these concepts in conjunction with one another and not as separate measurement points.

Inputs

The major category added to inputs was communications. Twenty-two participants and six documents analyzed how communication influences the organization and its relationship with their employees. An organizational overview document from Company 2 stated, “We commit to listening and providing clearly stated expectations and appropriate and timely feedback, sharing information and ideas in a helpful spirit. Communication is critical, and we must always communicate what is appropriate, so associates are ‘in the know.’” Participant 23 agreed with the statement by declaring, “It all starts with communication, and I think communication starts up front.”

Within input group dynamics, policies procedures and culture were the major themes in the data analysis. Twenty-nine participants and five documents analyzed culture. For instance, company 13’s principle practices stated, “We assume that all employees come to work to do a good job, and that no one person is successful without the support of the team, and the organizational systems created to produce the organization’s outcomes.” The learning of the values happens in training that the organizations provided. For example, participant 17 said, “We’ve really tried to create cross-functional opportunities, and like I said enhance our participant practices and focus on true alignment over working partnerships both in the organization and outside the organization.”

Regarding policies and procedures, many of the contributors stated they did not have long, drawn out policy manuals. Instead, they had guidelines and core principles around things such as discrimination, violence in the workplace, workplace harassment, and retaliation. Participant 12 stated that at her organization they did not believe in rigid, stringent policies. She explained, “We don’t call them policies, we call them guidelines.” Some people even referred to policies as a “dirty word.” They looked at policies as constraining parts of the business and wanted the fluid application of principles based on the facts of the situation. Participant 21 stated, “Policies and procedures get in the way because they are trying to look at enforcement and compliance.” One company described how they were transitioning from a legalistic compliance wording to more reader-friendly language. Participant 27 indicated, “Many of our policies right now, if you were to pull up on our company website, are written by somebody you think was an attorney. Very, very descriptive.” Later in the interview, the person described how they were moving to care and compassion within their established policies and away from enforcement.

The culture category had a further refinement in that community involvement seemed to be a theme important to participants 10, 22, and 26. Company 13 document stated:

Community is created and sustained by our principles (our beliefs about people and work and the values that guide our work and behavior with each other) and our practices (the specific actions we take and the outcomes of those actions).

Theories

When exploring the theories described by participants and the documents they provided, very few referred to the foundational principles highlighted in Chapter 2. Frequently referenced

was positive psychology. Besides, most individuals talked in generic terms around positive psychology in the concepts established by the founding fathers of positive psychology. They did not refer to the scientific analysis and used more terms that are informal in the discussion.

Thirteen of the 31 transcripts referred to SBL. Most of the references were about strength-based participatory practices, strength-based assessments, StrengthFinders, and strength-based vendors partnerships that they had established.

HR Department

The definition for HR Department expanded to include recruitment and employee relations. Recruitment and selection appeared to be an important theme that emerged. Fifty percent of the respondents stressed the importance of having a sound hiring process to ensure a positive work environment. Participant 19 stated, “We find out where people’s natural talents are and align the work to those talents that they really enjoy doing.”

The other major change in the definition was the inclusion of employee relations. Two common topics related to employee relations were turnover and reduction in force. Participant 21 explained, “One of the goals last year that we’re trying to move and make a reality now is reducing turnover. If we can improve our retention, we will change our business.”

Participant 31 shared an example about how they approached a reduction in force. She stated that they had to close a facility. They made sure they informed the employees of the possibility as soon as upper management knew it could be a possibility. The organizational leadership tried to stay in close communication with the workforce. When they did have to close the facility, they had a big luncheon for the employees. During the luncheon, upper management

thanked the employees for their service; provided awards, gifts, financial assistance; and shared photos.

Practices

The practices definition in the conceptual framework had some shifting components in leadership development, compensation and benefits, performance management, and application tools (see Figure 5). Leadership development was a theme in 34 of the interviews and/or documents used in the analysis. Participant 11 said that they had established leadership academies in their organization for entry-level and mid-level management. She said that they were developing a third leadership academy for senior level managers.

Thirty-three of the sources used emphasized compensation and benefits. Compensation was a way to align performance with company objectives. An overview document provided by Company 13 stated, “Our compensation program is designed to put these interests into practice and reflect the mission and values of the organization.” Participant 2 described a program at her company that paid people based on their participation in certain activities.

You’re paid to participate in a [company] wide committee, you get paid to work or attend a companywide meeting, you get paid to attend your [group meeting], or your businesses huddles. So with that we’re reinforcing, we want participation. We want it enough that we’re going to pay you for it.

Participant 17 described another illustration of how organizations aligned company objectives around compensation; “Last September we implemented a living wage, because some of our employees were our clients.” The organization is a non-profit serving people around the U.S. poverty line and some of their employees qualified for the benefits they provided.

Participant 28 discussed wages as well concerning market pricing their salary levels. “Our hourly non-exempt compensation is really done through local wage surveys; executive management level salary grades are set through more national sources and through our corporate office.”

Besides compensation, individuals spoke about adjusting benefits based on employee feedback. Participant 22 discussed how his organization changed the 401(k) benefit based on employee feedback. “For a couple of years, we have had some feedback around our 401(k) because we didn’t have a match. We recently implemented a match and it’s just been really, really positive for our staff.”

Participant 5 provided their vacation policy over unlimited vacation time. “People work when they need to get work done; if somebody’s on a vacation and something comes up, they drop what they’re doing. They work when they need to, why do we need to track this?”

Highlighted in 26 of the different interviews and documents was performance management. Two of the companies provided their performance review guide. Both documents explained the need for immediate and constant feedback. Company 1 document stated:

Cultivating excellent performance begins with a strong performance management system where managers, managing partners, and other leaders understand that setting clear expectations, regularly coaching staff, and providing clear, regular, and balanced feedback is a critical and central part of their leadership role.

Participant 12 argued:

Making sure a performance conversation is not an annual event on paper. We’re recommending at least quarterly, sitting down with your employees, but you need to get

out there and talk with them on a monthly basis. There should not be an employee that does not know exactly where they stand.

A number of established activities participants were using to create a POB environment included: appreciative inquiry, crucial conversations, succession planning, the art of hosting, the Dominance Influence Steadiness Conscientiousness Assessment (DISC), the Myers-Briggs Inventory, 360-degree feedback, and using a consulting firm specializing in positive psychology practices. Participants 9, 12, 14, 16, and 23 mentioned succession planning. Participant 14 stated, "That succession plans are actionable, realistic, timely, and specific." Participant 16 said, "we want people to feel like 'Yeah, we do care about you, and we are willing to not only spend money, sending you to a class; but more importantly assessing you, as an individual. What are your aspirations?'"

Another tool is crucial conversations, which participants 8, 9, 11, 24, and 25 mentioned. Patterson (2002) wrote *Crucial Conversations* that explained seven steps to deal with difficult discussions. According to Participant 25, they use crucial conversations as a tool to "help people deal with tough issues and difficult conversations, provide feedback, set expectations, and that sort of thing."

Outcomes

Three outcomes areas affecting the conceptual framework were company profitability, employee productivity, and employee engagement and morale. Originally, employee engagement and morale were two different concepts, but participants discussed the concepts in conjunction with one another. Employee productivity definition was expanded to include goal setting, which was the measurement tool of choice for 15 of the participants and two documents

analyzed. Nineteen source materials highlighted employee productivity, and another 18 mentioned goal setting. Participant 12 explained that “The strategic goals cascade down the organization; they start [on their product mix], and then they are migrated companywide; now they actually go into success factors.”

Employee engagement had two more codes, emotional re-hiring, and employee survey. Emotional rehiring is the process of re-engaging employees by telling them why you hired them and how they have proven their worth. Participant 6 explained emotional rehiring as reminding employees why they were hired in the first place, when they do a great job on a work assignment.

Emotional rehiring is when I sit down with you ... [and state] you know what your attention to detail make such a great difference to this company, and it helps us to move our mission and serve our clients, and I just want you to know that you're making a real contribution here, and I'm glad you're here. I just emotionally rehired you.

Surveys used by participants measured employee engagement. Twenty-eight of the source documents used examined employee engagement with an additional five of the sources specifically highlighting morale. Participant 11 stated, “We want to make sure that when they're coming, and they are truly engaged in that they like doing what they're doing.” Participant 13 explained engagement by stating, “When people wake up excited to get to work, engaged in what they're doing, and feel like they have a direct impact on driving the business results.”

Finally, participant 9 argued:

It starts with hiring the right people, making sure that you get people that understand the direction of the organization that have similar philosophies on how they want to be

treated and how they're going to manage, work together, and be respectful to others and respectful to the direction of the company.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

There were four-ways used to evaluate evidence of trustworthiness, which were credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. There was little risk of violating anyone's privacy. Finally, not identify individuals by name in the study helped to minimize economic loss.

Credibility

The credibility methods chosen were member checking and triangulation. Merriam (2014) stated there are four ways to establish triangulation: multiple data sources, methods, investigators, and theories. Using different sources helped to corroborate evidence and strengthen the themes found in the analysis stage. According to Yin (2014), construct validity is strengthened by the convergence of evidence. The findings included the interviews, financial reports, and documents. I used a journal during the data collection phase to record thoughts, reactions, and concerns.

Member checking allows contributors to elaborate on their answers given during the interviews. Kuckartz (2014) stated that member-checking creates a communicative validation. Some of the participants had the preliminary analysis presented to them, and they could comment on the data analysis and conclusions. Merriam (2014) stated that sharing the outcomes with people is a way to establish and validate the findings. If there was a disagreement with any of the individuals regarding the conclusions, they provided the feedback in writing. The participants selected for member checking had no conflicts with the findings.

Transferability

The sample of HR Professionals provided consistent responses regarding the organizational culture and HR practices when comparing the interview and document transcripts. According to Merriam (2014), transferability is the point to which the findings can be prevalent across populations of settings, people, outcomes, and times. The results are applicable to other HR environments, based on a wide range of industries represented. Merriam (2014) found that variation in the sample, including site and participants interviewed, helped to enhance the ability of a study to be transferred to other situations. Nevertheless, the findings might not be transferrable to all departments within an organization or be applied to all industries. Since all chosen participants were willing to contribute, I did not have to amend the transferability strategy adopted.

Dependability

Dependability denotes how reliable the information is to the study. Triangulation established dependability in the results. According to Merriam (2014), using a variety of data collection methods helps the results be more reliable and consistent. This is because the replication of the results is more likely.

Another method for ensuring validity is careful record keeping by using Nvivo and journaling. Transcription included the recorded interviews and detailed field. Merriam (2014) argued that using a journal and data management systems helps to create an audit trail that allows the researcher to record during the study why certain actions happened.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research refers to objectivity. The achievement of this accomplishment was by maintaining a reflexive journal. Farquhar (2012) found that using reflexive journals help to show how the data were processed, produced, and supported the research. The journal highlighted methodology decisions, procedures, rationale, and personal perspectives. Farquhar (2012) stated that to confirm findings researchers should make direct reference to the research instrument and coding. This allows the researcher to show that there was no fabrication of results, and biases and prejudices were minimized (Perri & Bellamy, 2012). Through this investigation, there are direct references to the tools and coding used. A concerted effort ensured that the findings were on participants' views rather than on the researcher's biases.

Results

The analysis of each question happened separately. Table 4 highlights the research questions and the corresponding interview questions selected as data points for the analysis. Telephone and on-site interviews collected the data for question 1, 2, 3 and 4 (see Table 4). Finally, I analyzed documents that were publically available and provided by company contacts as a group for themes.

Research question 1 had seven of the nine interview questions as data points. Research question 2 had six of the nine questions as data points. Research question 3 used all of the interview questions in its analysis. Research question 4 had six of the nine questions as data points. There were total 24 documents used as data points for the research questions.

Table 4.

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions.

Research Question	Datapoints Yielded
RQ 1: For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how are their policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures organized and changed?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please describe your job duties and how they fit into the HR structure? 3. Describe your knowledge or experience with creating a positive work environment? 4. How have you implemented positive work environment in your HRD? 5. What different policies, procedures, or processes have you put in place to support this type of culture in the HRD? 6. How have others responded to the culture change? 7. What changes have happened within HR based on this culture change? 9. Do you have any further questions or would you like to clarify/add to any of your answers?
RQ 2: For Human Resource Departments that have achieved a positive organizational behavior culture, how do they develop relationships internal and external to the department?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Describe your knowledge or experience with creating a positive work environment? 4. How have you implemented positive work environment in your HRD? 5. What different policies, procedures, or processes have you put in place to support this type of culture in the HRD? 6. How have others responded to the culture change? 7. What changes have happened within HR based on this culture change? 9. Do you have any further questions or would you like to clarify/add to any of your answers?
RQ 3: How have Human Resource Departments adjusted internally to adopt a positive organizational behavior culture (i.e., policies, procedures, processes, funding, and reporting structures)?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please describe your job duties and how they fit into the HR structure? 2. How do you define a positive work environment? 3. Describe your knowledge or experience with creating a positive work environment? 4. How have you implemented positive work environment in your HRD? 5. What different policies, procedures, or processes have you put in place to support this type of culture in the HRD? 6. How have others responded to the culture change? 7. What changes have happened within HR based on this culture change? 8. How else do you plan to implement/reinforce positive work practices in the HRD? 9. Do you have any further questions or would you like to clarify/add to any of your answers?
RQ 4: How has a positive organizational behavior culture affected the Human Resource Departments positively and negatively?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Describe your knowledge or experience with creating a positive work environment? 4. How have you implemented positive work environment in your HRD? 6. How have others responded to the culture change? 7. What changes have happened within HR based on this culture change? 8. How else do you plan to implement/reinforce positive work practices in the HRD? 9. Do you have any further questions or would you like to clarify/add to any of your answers?

Research Question Similarities

All but two areas were key themes within the research questions and documents (see Figure 6). The top two areas for the questions were group dynamics and culture. Other similarly themed areas included compensation and benefits, performance management, group dynamics, culture, leadership development, positive psychology, employee engagement, communication, policies and procedures, and training (see Table 4).

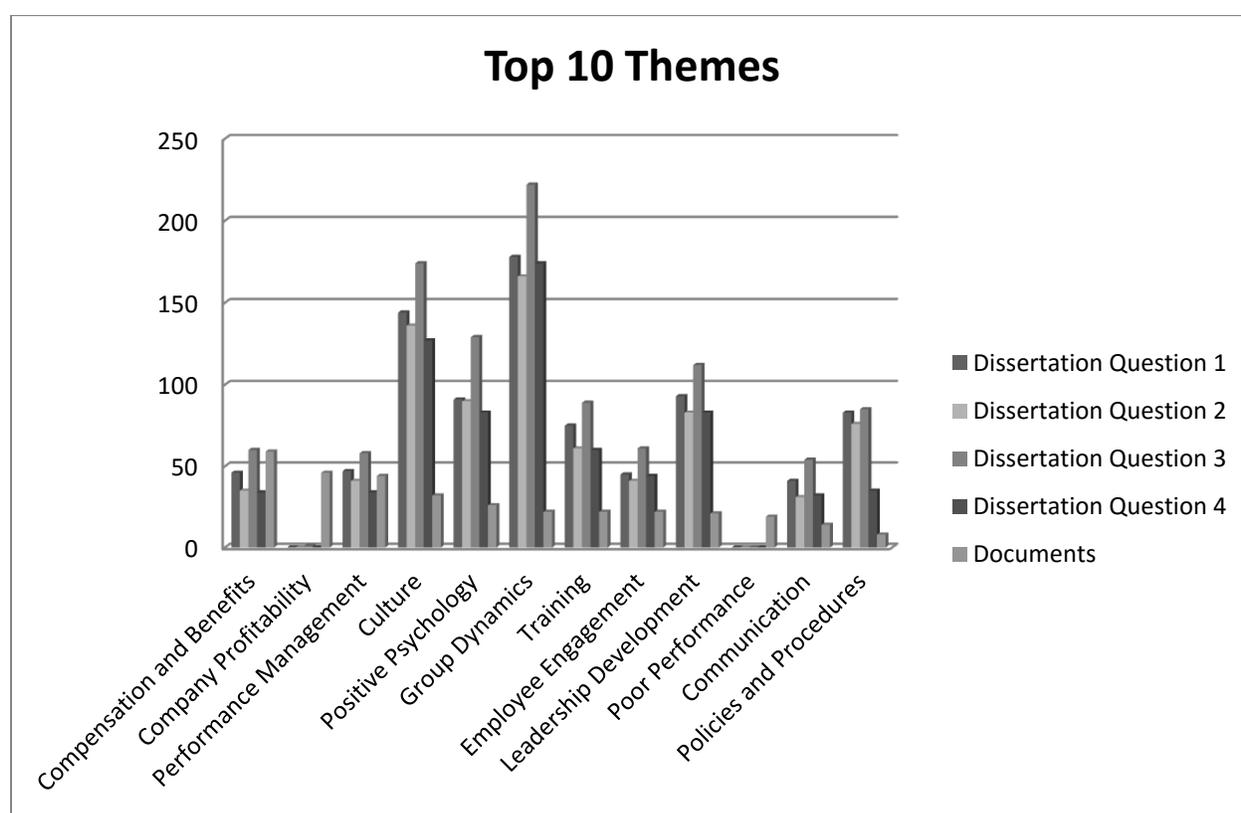


Figure 6. Top 10 themes by dissertation question and documents.

The top category for all questions was group dynamics. The question that had the highest number of references to group dynamics was number three. Question 3 examined how HR

Departments have adjusted to adopt a POB. Participant 17 explained how they have worked to improve teamwork.

We did a lot of groundwork and coaching, and mentoring of leadership team members to help them understand where their roles are, how we develop people, how building relationships in the team is as important as goal achievement and development.

Participant 14 described different training, “We do a lot of team sessions. It might be team maps, and everyone sees what their profiles are and what their teammates are.”

The second highest scoring area for all questions was culture. There were 220 references in interviews and documents. Participant 14 described their culture as performance oriented: “People are recognized, they are very self-aware, they are in the areas that they naturally are good at. It takes all of that, working in tandem, to create an engaging environment, let alone have an environment that will unleash innovation.”

All of the questions found the following areas were important: leadership development, positive psychology, training, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee engagement. Questions 1 and 2 found that leadership development, positive psychology, policies and procedures, and training were significant to a POB environment. Question 3 found that positive psychology to be more important, followed by leadership development, training, and policies and procedures. Finally, question 4 found that positive psychology, leadership development, and training were necessary.

Research Question Differences

There were major differences in the results between the questions and the documents analyzed. Six of the ten themes found when analyzing the documents were the same as the

questions. Two areas more frequently found in the documentation, company profitability, and poor performance. Seventeen of the sources analyzed highlighted company profitability. The Avention one-source reporting reviewed the financial outcomes for the participating organizations. There was only one individual, participant 2, which spoke about profitability.

Poor performance was the other area not found in the interviews. The poor performance field was strong in this case because two of the organizations provided their performance standards and review process. This resulted in many codes on poor performance ($n=19$). Company 13 stated, “Poor performance is more likely due to a breakdown in processes or systems rather than lack of effort.” Company 1 explained that “Provide frequent informal feedback – both positive & constructive.”

The documents provided two additional themes to the analysis, communication and policies and procedures. Communication was a stronger theme in the documents because it helps to disseminate the organization culture in writing. Finally, some companies provided their policies and procedures to support their interview discussions.

Summary

Chapter 4 described the themes from the data and analyzed the influence of POB on HRDs. It comprised of analyzing the demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results. I also provided a narrative of common themes revealed during the data analysis process.

The participants were within a 3-hour drive of central Ohio. The collection of data was by interviewing people and analyzing organizational specific documentation. The themes that emerged helped to determine how HR Departments create and develop a POB culture, and how

POB affects them internally. The conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2 assisted in precoding the data. The themes that appeared from the data updated the conceptual framework. Examples of the topics that arose included compensation and benefits, company profitability, performance management, culture, positive psychology, group dynamics, training, employee engagement, leadership development, poor performance, and policies and procedures. Themes across research questions remained consistent. The only exception was with the analysis of the company documents two additional themes were added.

Chapter 5 contains conclusions about this study and its participating organizations, HR Departments, and POB organizations. Chapter 5 analyzes how the findings have an impact on social change. Finally, it will provide recommendations for future research on HR Departments and POB.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative, multi-case study was to evaluate how HR professionals were implementing a positive work culture. It consisted of face-to-face interviews with 31 HR professionals from 13 different U.S. based organizations. The investigation explored how HR professionals of diverse HRDs build POB related to recruitment, selection, onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes.

HR professionals are responsible for increasing employee satisfaction, performance, and engagement to make organizations more successful (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Wright & McMahan, 2011). Leaders of HRDs will find the results of this study useful in helping to cultivate strategic plans for developing a POB culture. This information will also be helpful in streamlining culture change efforts in organizations whose upper management practice POB. The findings assist leaders looking to establish POB practices in his or her organization.

Knowing how POB influences HRDs helps HR professionals gain a deeper understanding of what policies, processes, and procedures need to be in place to be successful at developing a POB culture. Key themes included information about:

- Group dynamics,
- Culture,
- Compensation and benefits,
- Performance management,
- Leadership development,
- Positive psychology,
- Employee engagement,

- Communication,
- Policies and procedures,
- Training,
- Profitability, and
- Poor performance.

This chapter consists of a discussion of the findings presented in Chapter 4. It also includes social change implications and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of the Findings

This study is unique because it explores the processes in place around POB and HRDs. It also helps to close the gap in research on POB and HRDs. This research involves examining current HRDs practices in relation to POB. It also discovers what methods and philosophies strengthen an organization's positive culture. The findings serve as a roadmap to HR regarding the planning and maintenance of a POB culture.

General Findings

I preassigned the organizations either as low (Companies 3, 6, 8, 10, and 13) or high (Companies 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, and 12) in POB practices. The organizations varied from initial identification to actual outcomes (see Figure 7). The groups that identified as preferred, or having high POB practices before the study, were not as strong in the POB practices when examining data. The issue with precoding could have been due to the lack of knowledge regarding the practices at each organization. This result should not be surprising, as it was a pre- and post-measurement variable. With the knowledge gained from this investigation, the

conceptual framework themes could quickly result in a preferred list of POB practices found to help implement a POB culture within HRDs.

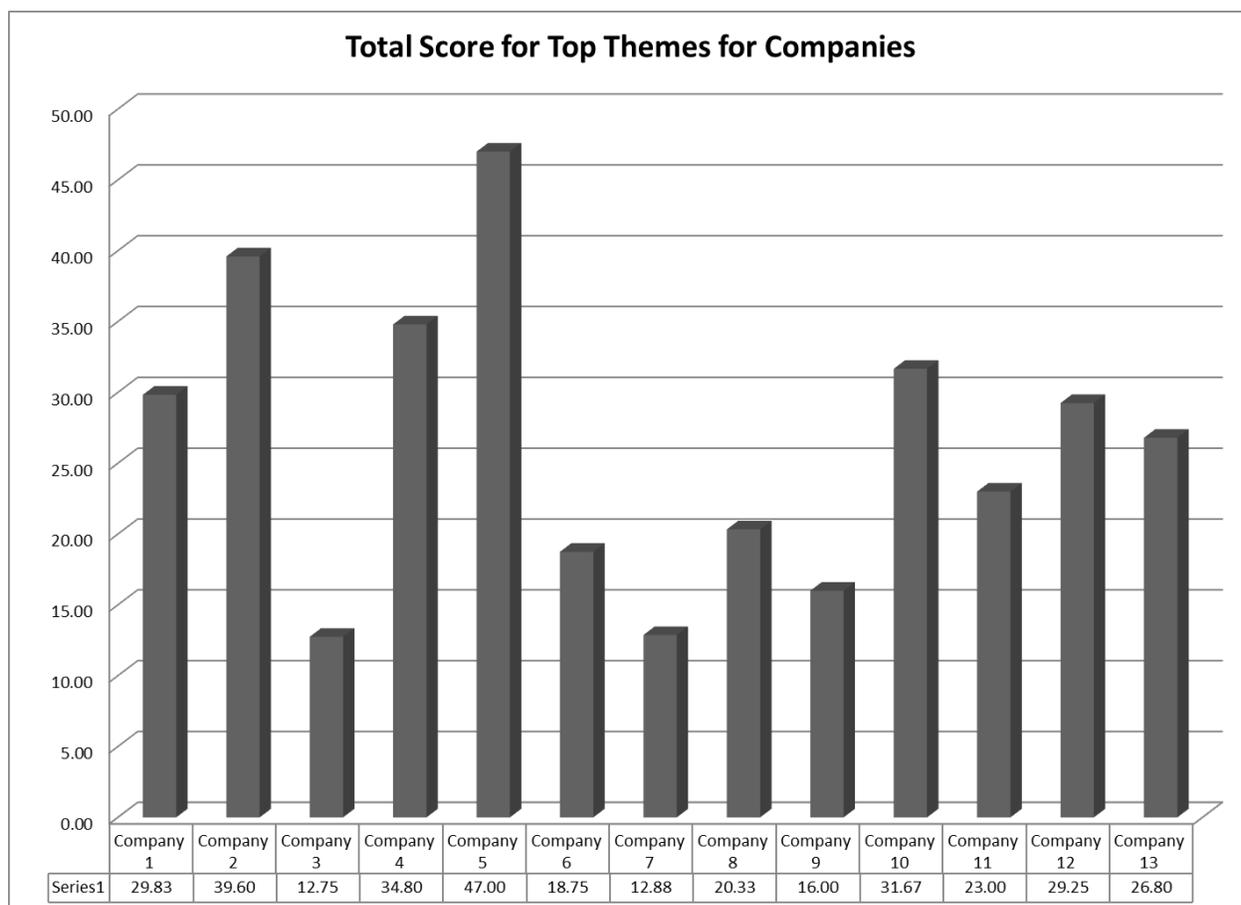


Figure 7. Top themes by average score for companies.

One of the barriers for practitioners in using scientific terminology is the complexity of some of the models used. A simplistic model seems to help in translating models into common language. The most popular terms used by participants were *positive work environment* and *positive work culture*. Trépanier, Forest, Fernet, and Austin (2015) defined a positive work environment as one that creates well-being by allowing employee engagement and by satisfying employees' psychological needs. Lee and Ok (2015) noted that a positive work environment

helps to create employee engagement due to increased employee self-worth and job skills.

Rampl (2014) defined a positive work culture as any employer wishing to become an employer of choice, where employees apply and work for the organization based on brand recognition.

Many participants used positive work environment and positive work culture interchangeably.

Figure 8 shows a word cloud for Question 2, to which individuals responded by defining a positive work environment. This Figure reveals the top 50 words used to describe a positive work environment. Most people identified a positive work environment as a place where (a) people enjoy coming to work, (b) their jobs are engaging, (c) supervisors encourage teamwork, (d) managers define expectations, (e) communication is clear, (f) leadership is effective, (g) management cares about employees, and (h) the impact on business outcomes is positive. A positive work environment includes (a) teamwork, open communication, effective leadership, clear goals, caring, and (b) had a positive impact on business outcomes. Participant 13 stated a positive work environment is a place “where people wake up excited to get to work, engaged in what they’re doing, and feel like they have a direct impact on driving the business results.” Participant 19 responded, “I get to do my role. I don’t have to do my job.”

Conceptual Framework Interpretation

The interpretation of the findings was most effective when using the conceptual framework to answer the central research questions (see Figure 6). This section examines the different parts of the framework, including the major and minor sections. The major sections include (a) input, theories, HR departments, and outcomes; (b) while the minor sections are group dynamics, culture, policies and procedures, communication, performance management and

corrective action, training and leadership development, compensation and benefits, and toolkit of practices.



Figure 8. Positive work environment word cloud.

Input. Chapter 2 stated that the design of the conceptual framework was to outline the key components of previous investigations, which included the inputs of theories, HRDs, practices, and outcomes. The findings in Chapter 4 confirmed that the five major themes were consistent with previous research and that the conceptual framework helps to create a POB culture for HRDs (see Table 5).

Group dynamics. Twenty-nine out of 30 (97%) participants identified group dynamics as a critical component for making positive behavior changes among employees. This conclusion confirmed the importance of the outcomes on group dynamics. Although many participants pondered the unique aspects of POB, they also highlighted how it influenced different groups in their organizations. Participants and the documentation provided showed how organizational supervisors tried to educate the employees about the company's culture and practices.

Table 5

Breakdown by Company Regarding Top Ten Theme Findings

Category	Company													Sum
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Company Profitability	3.33	0.20	0.00	0.80	4.50	0.50	0.00	0.33	0.00	2.67	0.00	0.50	0.00	12.83
Employee Engagement	1.17	2.60	0.75	2.80	3.50	0.75	0.38	1.67	0.00	3.33	0.00	3.00	1.20	21.14
Compensation and Benefits	2.83	2.40	2.25	3.80	3.50	1.25	0.50	0.00	1.00	3.33	1.67	1.25	4.80	28.58
Leadership Development	1.50	3.40	0.25	3.80	9.50	1.50	1.00	4.67	1.00	3.67	2.00	4.25	0.80	37.33
Training	3.83	1.40	3.50	2.00	4.50	2.75	1.25	0.00	0.50	0.00	4.33	0.75	2.00	26.82
Performance Management	4.17	2.20	1.50	1.20	2.00	2.00	0.50	0.33	1.50	2.67	2.33	1.25	2.80	24.45
Poor Performance	2.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.40	3.23
Culture	2.00	10.20	0.75	6.40	6.50	1.50	2.13	1.33	4.50	6.33	0.67	2.50	5.60	50.41
Group Dynamics	2.67	5.80	1.00	7.40	6.50	4.50	4.75	4.33	0.50	1.33	4.67	9.75	4.00	57.20
Policies and Procedures	1.67	3.80	0.25	3.20	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.33	2.50	0.33	1.33	3.00	1.00	21.92
Communication	0.83	0.80	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.25	0.50	0.00	1.00	4.00	1.00	1.25	2.40	17.03
Positive Psychology	3.00	6.80	1.50	1.40	4.50	1.25	0.88	6.33	3.50	4.00	5.00	1.75	1.80	41.71
Top 10 Themes	29.83	39.60	12.75	34.80	47.00	18.75	12.88	20.33	16.00	31.67	23.00	29.25	26.80	342.66
Average Total Score	43.00	56.80	18.75	52.40	66.50	31.25	17.50	36.67	24.50	40.67	37.67	39.75	37.00	

The results also indicated how HR professionals function as a group to implement a company's culture. The findings help to illustrate how the effects of POB shape the culture across the organization. Similar to Klotz et al.'s (2013) discovery, the conclusions here indicated that groups that are effective are self-regulated, self-governed, have common goals, and have high levels of communication between individuals.

Culture. The culture was an influential factor in creating a positive work environment for 28 out of 30 (93%) participants. This supported the findings by Schönborn (2010) and Van De

Voorde et al. (2010) that indicated that the type of culture within an organization has an impact on commitment, engagement, loyalty, and profitability. HR professionals communicated the culture to employees in many ways, including:

- Value cards,
- Word of mouth,
- Newsletters,
- New-hire orientation,
- Training,
- One-on-one meetings, and
- Leadership actions.

Policies and procedures. Policies and procedures were also strong influences for 24 out of 30 (80%) participants. Tzafrir et al. (2015) found that when company leaders can understand employees' reactions to organizational values, they could help to develop policies that lead to economic goals. Although the study contributed to identifying the policies, processes, and attitudes needed to adopt a POB culture, some individuals also had a strong aversion to strict punitive policies. People referred to policies as guidelines because they were the guiding principles of action. This practice resulted in greater flexibility in administration and a focus on the majority of employees versus problem employees. Some examples of alternative policies included self-directed orientation, compassionate leave, and no-limit vacation time. As described by Participant 21, "Policies and procedures get in the way because they are trying to look at enforcement and compliance, and they end up just being angry, and it's not healthy for [our organization]."

Communication. Communication was a theme for 22 out of 30 (73%) participants. Communication about how to meet goals and how people work together and train needs to be effective and efficient to achieve a POB culture. These outcomes supported Hwang and Lee (2015), who found that job satisfaction and organization commitment are statistically significant to organizational communication.

Theories. The results indicated how different HR professionals referred to and used POB. The definition of positive psychology in Chapter 2 included research terms such as AL, POS, PL, SBL, and PsyCap. However, contributors defined the concept of positive psychology using the terms: SBL, AL, positive work environment, positive work culture, and StrengthFinders. These concepts are broader and found more in popular media than in scientific journals. Consequently, people described the concepts more in terms of passion and positive employee work culture than in academic terminology.

HR departments. The HR departments achieved an understanding of the practices adopted to construct a positive work environment including (a) clarity around recruitment and selection, leadership development, training, compensation and benefits, performance management, corrective action, and (b) activities to create a positive environment. Established activities and practices included the use of appreciative inquiry, crucial conversations, StrengthFinders, and positive psychology consulting firms.

Recruitment and selection. Recruitment and selection emerged as a key area for the successful implementation of a POB culture for HRDs. Some organizations had robust recruitment systems. Selecting the right people for the culture was probably the most critical part of their recruitment process. Participants cited using various measurement tools and outside

consulting firms to assist in selecting new employees. Wang and Lian (2015) found that employers should pay attention to candidates' PsyCap scores, as they are a predictor of work behavior.

Performance management and corrective action. Alessandri et al. (2012), Bouskila-Yam & Kluger (2011), and Lin et al. (2011) argued that performance review systems are a critical aspect of the application of positive psychology. The importance of the PRS was a strong theme in the study. As noted by Bouskila-Yam and Kluger (2011), there is an intolerance of imperfections when it comes to performance in the workplace. Alessandri et al. (2012) found a similar theme in their research in which feedback had a greater focus on the negative aspect of performance. Although many researchers have noted that individuals should stop performing work they are not effective at, participants interviewed still use traditional performance management systems to address poor performance. Negative feedback was a theme related to performance management in some organizations. Alessandri et al. (2012) found that a performance review system based on individuals' strengths was possible and effective. The organizations that participated in this study provided positive feedback in coaching conversations.

Training and leadership development. Training and development are also crucial in a POB culture. The definition of training in Chapter 2 was a leadership development approach, but through the analysis, it became apparent that training was essential at all levels in an organization. Organizational management had established training programs for employees, front-line supervisors, and upper management. Organizations with training and development departments had a strong focus on training individuals to achieve higher potential in their

positions. The emphasis on training individuals on policies and procedures is important with the adoption of a positive culture. Furthermore, helping new employees understand the culture with training courses assisted with quickening the adoption rate of the POB culture. Developing people and improving their natural strengths was a common theme among the participants.

Compensation and benefits. The different organizations had a wide variety of compensation and benefits packages. Compensation by a few organizations centered on group-based awards. Some of the organizations had unique benefits around time off, on-site medical centers, pharmacies, post offices, hair salons, and employer-funded vacation trips. They argued that these factors helped to increase employee morale and engagement.

Toolkit of practices. The study also helped to generate greater understanding regarding the functions of HRDs in creating a POB culture, as highlighted in the discovery of the different tools used by organizations to build such a culture. The tools included using crucial conversations, succession planning, the art of hosting, empathy interviews, 360-degree feedback, Myers-Briggs, StrengthFinders, training, highly developed selection and recruitment processes, and communication strategies (see Figure 9).

Outcomes. The outcome theme had a slight change in going from four categories to three categories. Company profitability and employee productivity stayed the same, but contributors talked about employee engagement and morale together. Participants saw these areas as one measure versus separate measurements as initially discussed in Chapter 2. Due to the level of crossover, the study combined employee engagement and employee morale.

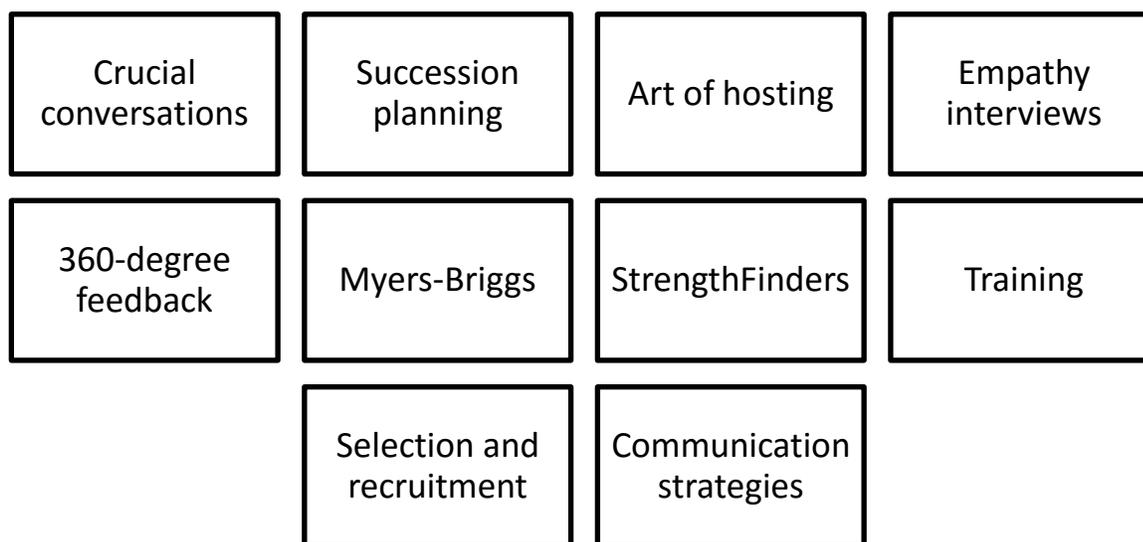


Figure 9. Toolkit of practices.

Limitations of the Study

The study alleviated some of the limitations stated in Chapter 1, which were a lack of group research, qualitative analysis, and HRDs adoption of POB. Transferability was a limitation to the findings because of the research method and design of the study, the sample size used, and the particular focus on HRDs (Yin, 2014). The population and sample size might not be sufficient for other researchers to relate the outcomes to other environments. Moreover, transferring the study to other groups in an organization might be challenging due to the unique nature of HRDs (Guest & Woodrow, 2012; Wright & McMahan, 2011).

Another limitation was the stages of the organizations in adopting and implementing a POB culture. Other research studies conducted in controlled settings (Combs et al., 2011; Nahrgang et al., 2013) make the correlation of results to different variables easier. Researchers can observe changing cultures from pre- and post-intervention and compare the effects.

A further limitation was the lack of discussion by participants regarding failures related to POB culture. This issue was found in other research studies discussed in Chapter's 2 literature review (Cameron et al., 2011; Dawkins et al., 2013; Hackman, 2009; Lam et al., 2014). This makes it difficult to know what to avoid when implementing a POB culture. Therefore, further exploration is necessary to determine what to avoid in implementing a POB culture.

A limitation in the study is the focus on HRDs. This study highlights how HRDs implement POB and tools that HR professional's use. HRDs are often the change agents for culture initiatives, but the driving force for change are external factors and senior executives. Cameron and Plews (2012), Mills et al. (2013), and Spreitzer and Cameron (2012) argued that without senior leadership support, culture change is not possible. Consequently, HR professionals function more as the facilitators of change versus the driving force for change.

A final bias could be from participants due to their egocentric views or previous working relationship with the researcher. Regarding egocentric views, people may not consider how others within the organization might be affecting the culture on a broad spectrum. Two of the interviewees had worked in the same organization as me, although there had not been any contact between these participants and me for over 10 years.

Recommendations

This section includes some recommendations for future research on recruitment and selection, performance management, diversification of departments, and methodology. Additional research is necessary with post-hire strength building in employee capacities. The participants interviewed found that recruitment and selection was a key way to ensure they had new hires whose strengths matched the job openings. They did not provide as much time and

effort in ensuring current employees were in the right positions. This creates a problem for those employees who may be weak in an area of their job. HR Professionals had a greater focus on performance management and the corrective action process than whether an employee had a deficiency in a critical area of his or her job. Therefore, additional inquiry is necessary regarding how to help organizations understand and manage workers' strengths after hiring.

As discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, performance management is an important aspect of POB. Specifically, how organizational leaders manage poor performance is still in need of exploration. The documents analyzed in Chapter 4 highlighted the traditional performance management model as described by Alessandri et al. (2012), Bouskila-Yam and Kluger (2011), Cilliers (2011), and Lin et al. (2011). The corrective action process is a step process that includes coaching in earlier stages and more severe discipline continuing up to termination as the final phase. Organizational leaders only focus on the negative performance that employees display in their work instead of on their strengths (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012). Therefore, additional research is necessary in POB to address poor performance in organizations. Perhaps the step between verbal coaching and the first level of corrective action should be job crafting. Job crafting is a solution that is similar to an accommodation under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

As interviews included only HR professionals, it is hard to understand how other departments view POB change efforts implemented by HR professionals. There was a shortcoming in how managers in other departments felt about these changes. A need exists for further research on the constructs of POB in the field of HR. Further inquiry should analyze the

impact HRDs have on the rest of an organization's personnel. Future investigations can include departments and employees not encompassed here.

Next, Cameron and Pews (2012), Mills et al. (2013), and Spreitzer and Cameron (2012) argued that senior leadership is the driving force for culture change. If HRDs are the facilitators of change efforts, research is necessary in how HRDs encourage leadership to adopt a POB culture. This would include understanding leaders' decision-making process and factors consider important for the business (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Martín-Alcázar et al., 2011; Sahoo et al., 2011).

This study reviews positive psychology concepts as they relate to HRDs, such as training and development, compensation and benefits, group dynamics, performance management, and recruitment and selection. There is a need for further work in these areas to understand the correlation between the variables. A recommendation is to analyze different HR functions to know their interaction within POB. This will assist in defining what is necessary to be successful in implementing POB for HRDs.

Additional investigation is necessary in organizations that have achieved, or are trying to apply, POB or positive psychology principles, regardless of functional area. Different functions in an organization may lead to various ways to the approach, adopt, and address POB. This helps understand what an organization is using to adopt POB practices. Researchers could conduct further investigations that involve analyzing all departments within an organization to understand how a POB culture affects all of them.

Another recommendation is to use a different methodology to understand the impact POB has on HRDs. A quantitative approach similar to that used in previous studies by Combs et al.

(2011), Hmieleski et al. (2011), Joo and Lim (2013), and Kaiser and Overfield (2011) might be helpful in recognizing the most effective ways to establish positive behavior changes within the organization. A more comprehensive understanding of the productive POB change efforts in HRDs might be essential in gaining support from management.

Researchers need to address many key recommendations in future studies. I looked at successful organizations with POB practices, but I did not analyze companies that had failed at implementing this type of culture. Another area for additional research is strength building and job realignment with current employees. Organizational leaders had some ways to screen and recruit individuals with strengths related to job openings, but very few addressed whether current employees are performing ineffectively in their current role. The most common method of addressing poor performance is corrective action. As I only interviewed HR professionals, I recommend interviewing employees in other departments to validate the findings.

Implications

This study resulted in many new implications to POB. In this section, I will examine different outcomes that emerged from the data. This includes a discussion on positive social change, methodological implications, and recommendations for practice.

Positive Social Change

This study may lead to positive social change by providing qualitative research on POB and HRDs. The findings may assist individuals in HRDs environments in determining what aspects of POB practitioners are using. Some of the key themes identified for creating and sustaining a POB culture included recruitment and selection, training, employee development, and communication. These themes enhanced organizations' abilities to implement positive

psychology practices. I established a toolkit of different methods that included: (a) appreciative inquiry, (b) crucial conversations, (c) the art of hosting, (d) DISC, (e) Myers-Briggs Inventory, (f) 360-degree feedback, and (g) use of a consulting firm specializing in positive psychology practices (see Figure 9).

Another implication for social change that HR professionals should understand is the importance of recruitment and selection within the work environment. Organizations need robust hiring systems to sustain a POB culture. Such systems include understanding not only the job, but also the strengths the person hired for the position needs to have to be successful.

The study also may influence social change through an explanation of expectations regarding how organizational leaders can develop, coach, and reward employees. Training individuals on organizational culture as a way to continuously develop employees was confirmed by the results (also see Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012; Treven, Treven, & Zizek, 2015; Ulrich et al., 2013). In addition, addressing issues early on and having a well-defined corrective action process help to support this type of culture.

A minimal amount of past research exists on the impact POB culture has on HRDs. The conclusions contribute to establishing an understanding of the relationship between POB and HRDs. The conceptual framework (see Figure 6) helped to explain the relationship between POB and HRDs. The conclusion drawn from a review of existing research was that many HRD leaders could use this study's outcomes to help create a POB culture.

HR professionals can further influence social change by continuing to implement POB practices and cultivate employee and leadership skills in the principles of positive psychology. Finally, leaders in human resources and other professions could benefit from the findings. They

would gain an understanding of how HRDs can use POB practices in recruitment and selection, training and development, and group dynamics.

Methodological Implications

This study's strength was the methodology used. A majority of the investigations conducted before used surveys. This investigation was a qualitative analysis of POB, which made it unique and helped to further the research by using a different methodology. I analyzed all three levels of an organization, whereas a majority of other researchers looked only at individuals. It may help to alleviate the problem of the single methodology issue found in the POB research and the overuse of participant surveys (Donaldson et al., 2014).

This methodology was suitable because using open-ended questions allow for the exploration of the issues. Yin (2014) noted that qualitative methods could include additional design flexibility, unbounded questions, and open answers by contributors, unlike quantitative methods. In addition, he found that multiple case studies help to validate a single topic because they serve as various experiments on the same concept. Finally, researchers can find cases from several different sources and look for themes.

Pre-coding was useful in analyzing the results. I refined the conceptual framework in several places, but the overall framework stayed the same. The pre-coding helped to ensure that pattern coding was effective.

Theoretical Implications

Research with HR professionals and HRDs regarding positive psychology is lacking. A comprehensive understanding of how POB affects HRDs might be beneficial for cultural organizational design. The data provided a conclusion about the relationship that exists between

the variables HRDs and POB. The findings add to the existing behavioral science literature on the relationship between the current study's variables and HR professionals.

Recommendations for Practice

There were a number of recommendations discovered on culture, communication, surveys, toolkits of activities, recruitment and selection, and the conceptual framework. First, after exploration of the literature, a recommendation emerged for leaders of HRDs trying to implement a POB culture: the culture of the organization must be inclined to adopt a positive work environment. Individually, senior leaders must believe it is important to make changes to the recruitment and selection process, compensation and benefits, group dynamics, training and development, and performance management systems.

Second, as demonstrated in this study, communication regarding the culture and the change efforts made is essential to the success of creating a POB culture. Organizational leaders must be able to explain why they are making the change and the need for reform. If individuals do not understand the need for change, then they are more likely to resist change. Communication is the key to ensuring a smooth transition to a POB environment.

Third, using employee surveys in a few organizations helped upper management make changes to the processes they had established. These surveys were critical tools that need a review and an action plan to ensure candid feedback from participants. If management does not do anything with the results, participation will decrease, and employee feedback will be less honest.

Fourth, the toolkit of activities found in this investigation provides a roadmap of different initiatives accepted by the business community for creating a POB culture (see Figure 9). These

tools were valuable building blocks to the participating organizations. HRD leaders implementing a POB culture can use these tools to assist them.

Fifth, recruitment and selection programs are an effective way to reinforce the culture initiative associated with POB change. They allow for hiring candidates based on the strengths of the individual related to the position. HRD leaders should scrutinize each job and its attributes for success. This examination may lead to a redesign of the hiring process. This includes the ability to hire personnel with the appropriate strengths related to the PsyCap criteria of hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism to implement a POB culture (Wang & Lian, 2015).

Sixth, scholars involved in Positive Organization Behavior, positive psychology, POS, organizational culture, and HRDs research might have an interest in this investigation. The study also identified variables for future inquiry, including inputs, positive psychology, HRDs, outcomes, and practices to help identify organization adoption rates of a POB culture.

Finally, leaders change efforts and positive psychology initiatives might find practical applications such as the factors highlighted in Figure 9. Upper management in several industries may be able to integrate the discoveries here into their organizational cultural design. The findings may help to ensure the proper and efficient development of practices leading to positive behavior changes among employees and improving a positive social change in the HRDs and beyond.

Conclusion

While many human resource professionals understand positive psychology principles, very few have been successful at adopting POB practices in their organizations. This study explored how leaders of HR departments create POB related to recruitment, selection,

onboarding, job analysis, discipline, training, and performance management processes. The strongest themes were group dynamics and culture, although other important dimensions included compensation and benefits, performance management, leadership development, positive psychology, employee engagement, communication, policies and procedures, and training. Based on these findings, I constructed a conceptual framework to highlight the inputs, outcomes, theories, and practices HRD leaders use to generate a POB culture (see Figure 6).

As discussed, positive social change may occur in many areas. First, I provided qualitative research on POB and HRDs. Second, the research may help HRD leaders recognize what aspects of the culture need to change to implement POB. Third, utilizing the tools discuss in Figure 9 will assist organizations to adopt a POB culture. Finally, professionals were not responsive to academic terms, but preferred to use the terms positive work environment and positive work culture to describe their efforts highlighting the gap between the academic and workplace application.

To conclude, organizational leaders are looking for ways to make their employees effective citizens. Employees engaged in their work produce results, stay longer, and are more efficient at their jobs (Heneman & Milanowski, 2011; Luthans, 2012; Tims et al., 2013; Wright & McMahan, 2011). The results of this study indicated which POB factors HRD leaders need to put in place to help create this type of environment for their employees.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Date:

Location:

Interviewee:

The purpose of the qualitative, multiple case study is to explore Positive Organizational Behavior's (POB) influence on Human Resource Departments (HRDs). The study will include Human Resource (HR) professionals that have experience with positive work cultures within their current organization. The interview should take approximately one-hour to complete and in-depth responses are highly encouraged. When we get close to the end time of the appointment, I will let you know. We will not go beyond that time unless you agree to do so.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, you can do so without penalty or loss of benefit to yourself. If there are any questions that you cannot answer, or do not feel comfortable answering, we can skip over those questions. In addition, I will be taking notes during our conversation and audio recording it for a transcript. I will also provide you a copy of the transcripts for you to review and provide feedback on.

There are no foreseeable risks to you from participating in this study. However, it is advisable that you get permission from top management to participate in the study due to some of the confidential secondary data requested. Michelle M. Geiman, the interviewer, will not include your responses in the research study and will keep your identity confidential.

Last, do you have any questions before we get started?

Questions to ask participants during the interview:

1. Please describe your job duties and how they fit into the HR structure?
2. How do you define a positive work environment?
3. Describe your knowledge or experience with creating a positive work environment?
4. How have you implemented positive work environment in your HRD?
5. What different policies, procedures, or processes have you put in place to support this type of culture in the HRD?
6. How have others responded to the culture change?
7. What changes have happened within HR based on this culture change?
8. How else do you plan to implement/reinforce positive work practices in the HRD?
9. Do you have any further questions or would you like to clarify/add to any of your answers?

Appendix B: Pre-Coding Categories based on Conceptual Framework

Category	Definition
Independent	
Culture	Samnani et al., (2012) stated that culture is composed of values, beliefs, and assumptions that are pervasive within an organization.
Group Dynamics	Searle and Barbuto (2013) described teams as being a collection of individuals that interact and are interdependent.
Job Design	Job design covers nearly all significant factors including task structure, authority, work layout, equipment used, task integration, feedback, and resource inputs (Cullinane, Bosak, Flood, & Demerouti, 2012).
Policies and Procedures	Policies and procedures are established to explain the different rules and expectations of the organization (Guest & Woodrow, 2012).
Dependent	
Employee Morale	Employee morale is the emotional force that influences how employees behave and what they accomplish while at work (Kim et al., 2012; Lee & Ok, 2015; Shuck et al., 2012).
Company Profitability	Profitability relates to the efficiency the organization is at generating earnings (Sharma et al., 2011).
Employee Productivity	Employee productivity is the amount of output of goods and services produced by individuals (Bayat, 2011)
Employee Engagement	Employee Engagement is when employees hold a positive attitude toward the organization (Crabb, 2011; Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2012)
Positive Psychology	
Positive Organizational Behavior (POB)	It is the study of positive psychology in the workplace and examines the levels that are practiced within an organization (Hystad et al., 2014; Jeung, 2011; Ramlall et al., 2014).
Authentic Leadership (AL)	It is an approach to leadership, which allows individuals to use their strengths to inspire others (Conkright, 2011).
Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS)	It is a top down approach that is focused on the organizational level. (Spreitzer & Cameron, 2012).
Positive Leadership	It looks at all leadership principles related to positive psychology (Donaldson, Csikszentmihalyi, & Nakamura, 2011).
Strengths Based Leadership (SBL)	It is the study of positive human resource practices and the analysis of how they influence the company's culture, productivity, and profitability (Awasthi, 2015; MacKie, 2014; Sommer et al., 2015).
Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	It examines the connection between employee engagement and positive psychology attributes (Luthans, 2012; Youssef & Luthans, 2012).
Human Resource Departments (HRDs)	
Leadership Development	Leadership development is a program or activity, which makes individuals better leaders (Sharma et al., 2011).
Performance Management	Performance Management is a process in which an organization tries to align individual performance goals to institutional goals, provide feedback to employees regarding job performance, identify areas for job improvement, and link performance to rewards (Bouskila-Yam & Kluger (2011)).
Coaching	Coaching focuses on enhancing an employee skill(s), happiness, or well-being to achieve optimal performance results (Crabb, 2011).
Diversity	Diversity includes demographic and psychological characteristics such as age, gender, nationality, educational level, training, tenure, and functional (Martín-Alcázar et al., 2011).
Compensation and Benefits	Compensation is in reference to direct compensation in proportion to performance often given in cash or stock. While benefits, are indirect compensation that is not related to performance (Bourne et al., 2012; Muse & Wadsworth, 2012).