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Leadership Skills for Success of Home Health Care Agencies

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
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2016

Abstract

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by

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MBA, University of Maryland, 2010

MS, University of Maryland, 2009

BS, University of Maryland, 2003

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Small business managers often lack the leadership skills necessary to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. The United States Small Business Administration reported that more than 65% of small business owners, including home health care agency managers, fail within the first 5 years of operation. Guided by Burns and Bass's transformational leadership theory, this multiple case study explored leadership skills that managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years. The purposeful sample comprised of 3 managers from 3 different home health care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland, that had demonstrated success in surviving past 5 years. Semistructured interviews, agencies' quality assurance plans and policies were reviewed, and procedural documents related to leadership skills were gathered as data. Yin's 5-step data analysis technique was used to identify key themes. Member checking enhanced the credibility of data interpretation. Themes that emerged from data analysis were business management, knowledge and performance, and transformational leadership. Study findings may contribute to positive social change by providing practical guidance to home health care managers, which may improve their agencies' viability and delivery of patient care. Business implications include the provision of long-term employment to workers and safety assurance to patients' families.

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Dedication

I am grateful to several precious individuals that helped make this doctoral

journey manageable. I devote this doctoral study first to God who gave me the grace and

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The purpose of this study was the following research question: What leadership skills do managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years? Business owners need to know the factors that influence business growth, support survival, and enhance employment to better plan and manage their businesses (Strielkowski, 2013). Training is essential for managers because leadership skills for managers are honed or acquired and leaders are trained to develop them (Northouse, 2015).

Background of the Problem

Business-minded individuals around the world are vital to creating and managing businesses that contribute to the growth of their national economies by creating new jobs, products, and services that improve our quality of life (Omerzel & Kusce, 2013). Small business enterprises contribute greatly to economic growth and individuals' quality of life (Rupasingha & Goetz, 2013). Thirty percent of small business enterprises survive more than 5 years (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). Factors that prevent small business owners from succeeding are numerous. Researchers have found that inadequate capital and inappropriate leadership skills contribute to business failures (Omerzel & Kusce, 2013).

Owners of business start-ups typically have casual attitudes regarding efficiency in the workplace needed to launch their business (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). Other factors contributing to the high failure rate include issues with upper-level leadership, lack of funding, changes in markets, and the phasing out of unwanted items

and services (Franco & Haase, 2013). Since the mid 1990s, many models for business start-ups have developed that include different factors influencing the planning and launching of a business (Omerzel & Kusce, 2013). Business owners need to know the factors that influence business growth, support survival, and enhance employment to better plan and manage their businesses (Strielkowski, 2013).

Problem Statement

Start-up businesses account for 3% of employment in the United States during their first year of operation, yet make up 20% of total hires within the same year (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). Thirty-five percent of small business owners who manage and operate beyond 5 years tend to succeed in the long term, while more than 65% of small business owners fail within the first 5 years (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). The general business problem is some managers in home health care agencies lack leadership skills, which may result in their businesses failing. The specific business problem is that some managers in home health care agencies lack leadership skills needed to sustain their businesses successfully beyond 5 years

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. The specific population for this study was one manager from each of three different home health care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland, who had successfully managed their agencies for more than 5 years. The findings from my research may contribute to social change by identifying

leadership skills needed by home health care agency managers for their businesses. Clients of better managed home health care agencies may receive improved patient care. Improved patient care would positively affect employees' long-term employment, patients' health, and provide safety assurance for patients' families.

Nature of the Study

I selected a qualitative research method for this study because qualitative research is appropriate when little information exists about a subject (Malagon-Maldonado, 2014). Qualitative inquiry builds on the insights from pragmatism that is a reasonable and logical way of doing things or of thinking about problems based on dealing with a specific situation instead of on ideas or theories (Brinkmann, 2012). Gergen, Josselson, and Freeman (2015) showed more than one orientation to knowledge, that is positive knowledge management, and to practices of inquiry. Quantitative researchers require detailed existing data about a subject or event (Vekatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013), and use quantitative studies to address guidelines or evaluation criteria for examining studies, reliability, and validity. The purpose of this study was to identify leadership skills, which required collecting and analyzing multiple qualitative data sources. A quantitative method was not appropriate for addressing the specific business problem in this study because analysis of multiple qualitative data sources was required. The basic rationale for a mixed method is that by combining qualitative and quantitative methods, researchers use qualitative and quantitative data (Lund, 2012). A mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because quantitative data were not required to explore leadership skills needed to sustain new home health care agencies.

Researchers utilizing case studies rely on multiple data sources for evidence to study a phenomenon (Yin, 2014). I used a multiple case study design to collect and analyze multiple data sources that identified the leadership skills home health care agency managers needed to sustain businesses for more than 5 years. The other qualitative designs that I considered for this study were phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. Researchers use phenomenological designs to study how participants experience and perceive phenomena (Zanarini, Frankenburg, Hennen, & Silk, 2014), which was not the focus of this study. Ethnography is the study of an orderly observation and recording of human cultures (Jerolmack & Khan, 2014) and was not the intent of this study. Narrative inquiry is the study of ways humans experiences the world (Rechel, Mladovsky, & Devillé, 2012), which was not the focus of this study.

Research Question

The research question guiding this study was: What leadership skills do managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years?

Interview Questions

The following interview questions support the central research question:

1. What leadership skills have you used to successfully manage your home health care agency during the first five years of operation?

2. What leadership skills are the most helpful to you in successfully managing your home health care agency?

3. What barriers have you encountered in using leadership skills to successfully manage your home health care agency? How did you address those barriers?

4. What leadership skills do you use to solve problems for your home health care agency?

5. What leadership skills have you used to influence others to work toward common goals in your organization?

6. What leadership skills do you use to retain existing patients and attract new patients to your home health care agency?

7. What additional information would you like to share regarding leadership skills that helped you sustain the home health care agency during the first 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was the transformational leadership theory. Burns (1978) introduced the transformational leadership theory and Bass (1985) further refined the concept of leadership theory. These theorists explained how effective leaders use transformational leadership and the concept of leadership theory to sustain their organizations. The basic premise of transformational leadership theory is that leaders use skills to influence others to work toward common goals. Key components characterizing transformational leadership are (a) knowledge, (b) problem-solving skills, (c) solution construction skills, and (d) social judgment (Mumford, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Marks, 2000). In consideration of this study, the transformational leadership framework holds that the managers' use of propositions in transformational leadership theory enable the managers in home health care agencies use their leadership skills to sustain their businesses successfully beyond the first 5 years of operation.

The conceptual framework relating to this qualitative study included common themes from the literature review and transformational leadership theory. Home health care agency managers need transformational leadership theory and skills to successfully sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. A small business leader's transformational leadership skills may influence the success of a business. Vohra, Rathi, and Bhatnagar (2015) identified effective leadership skills as a leader's ability to solve the kinds of complex social problems that arise in organizations.

Operational Definitions

This section contains definitions for key terms used in this study.

Business start-ups: Business start-ups are new firms whose establishments are new to the economy (Haltiwanger, Jarmin, & Miranda, 2013).

Conceptual replication: Conceptual replication is consistent repetition of concepts in a research study (Brandt et al., 2014).

Data saturation: Data saturation is a situation that occurs in the data analysis phase of a case study where no new recurring patterns or themes emerge from the data (Yin, 2014).

Leadership skills: Leadership skills are business skills required of a business owner (Huarng, Mas-Tur, & Yu, 2012).

Object of inquiry: Object of inquiry means that the researcher is first and foremost understood as participant rather than a spectator in social life (Brinkmann, 2012).

Participant perception: Participant perception is when one takes an established awareness in terms of collaborative interactions (Fantasia, De Jaegher, & Fasulo, 2014).

Qualitative inquiry: Qualitative inquiry is showing interest in how people obtain knowledge about their everyday lives (Brinkmann, 2012).

Social entrepreneurship: Social entrepreneurship is a for-profit enterprise that has the dual goals of achieving profitability and attaining beneficial social returns (Zeyen et al., 2013).

Transformational leadership theory: Transformational leadership theory explains how good leaders are able to use their leadership skills to influence their organizations (Burns, 1978).

Triangulation: Triangulation involves using multiple data sources in an investigation to produce understanding (Denzin, 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are crucial to scholars endeavoring to produce solid research worthy of review by peers. The assumptions comprise facts assumed to be correct based on a researcher's belief (Yin, 2014). Brutus, Aguinis, and Wassmer (2013) said that limitations are potential weaknesses during the administration of the study. Delimitations are characteristics that define the scope and boundaries of the study (Yin, 2014).

Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas accepted as true without further investigation or questioning (Jansson, 2013). Qualitative research begins with certain assumptions made or theories adhered to by researchers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). My main assumption for this study was that some home health care agency managers lack the leadership skills to

succeed in the long term. The problem with this assumption was that some small business owners who may lack leadership skills might survive longer than 5 years. I also assumed that home health care agency managers selected for my study would agree to complete the interviews, answer all interview questions completely and honestly, and provide copies of relevant agency documents that I needed to complete my study.

Limitations

Limitations are attributes that influence the interpretation of study results (Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013). This subsection included a summary of the limitations of this study. One of the study limitations was that small business owners differ in leadership styles, thereby influencing their business growth. The small sample size for this study may limit the transferability of the findings to other home health care agencies in the Baltimore area or those in other areas of the United States. Possible bias is a limitation of all research. My research biases could result from my perceptions, and rushed interpretation of results could create the potential for ambiguous or unusable research results. I mitigated my biases and reviewed several documents as well as conducted and repeated interviews with participants when needed to achieve data saturation.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries of a research study, and they define the beginning and endpoints of a case (Yin, 2014). Establishing the limits, boundaries, and locations of the research samples helps to determine the scope of data collection for a study and, in particular, how to distinguish the phenomenon being studied from its context (Yin, 2014).

Delimitations are intentional boundaries used in the research and analysis process (Bartoska & Subrt, 2012).

I did not use random selection of participants for this qualitative research study because random selection did not provide me with specific participants that had the types of data I needed to answer my research question. For this study, I selected three home health care agencies that had succeeded in business for more than 5 years in the metropolitan area of Baltimore, Maryland. Purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2013). Different purposeful sampling strategies, such as criterion sampling, are commonly used in implementation research. Combining sampling strategies is more appropriate and consistent with research (Palinkas et al., 2013).

Purposive samples have limitations that may affect transferability of research findings. Purposive samples have unknown biases and may not strictly be used to make inferences about wider populations (Barratt, Ferris, & Lenton, 2015). I used purposive sampling that assured the managers of the agencies selected had successfully managed their agencies for more than 5 years. I only researched leadership skills needed by home health care agency managers. I did not research other issues that affect the success or failure of home health care agencies.

Significance of the Study

Owners of business start-ups typically have casual attitudes regarding efficiency in the workplace needed for successfully launching their business (U.S. Small Business

Administration, 2014). Factors that prevent small business owners from succeeding are numerous, but different researchers found a lack of leadership skills as a factor that contributes to business failures (Omerzel & Kusce, 2013). The findings from this study may contribute to an understanding of the leadership skills required by managers in home health care agencies for successfully sustaining their businesses beyond 5 years.

Contribution to Business Practice

Small business enterprises continue to grow at a slow pace while the majority of these businesses fail within the first 5 years of operation (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). Growth is a vital indicator of a successful enterprise (Gupta, Guha, & Krishnaswami, 2013). Improving a manager's knowledge of leadership skills may contribute to effective business practices by helping managers successfully manage and sustain their home health care agencies. The results may also provide strategies for home health care agency managers to adapt to challenges and opportunities that enhance their business success.

Implications for Social Change

The ability of small businesses to continue operating successfully beyond 5 years could have a significant effect on job creation and job retention (Haltiwanger, Jarmin, & Miranda, 2013). Application of leadership skills by home health care agency managers may have positive effects on startup home health care businesses in the Baltimore area and are worthy of exploration. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations from this study may contribute to information on managerial leadership skills that are important to the success of home health care agencies. Home health care agency patients are likely to

receive better care because of improved leadership skills of home health care agency managers, and improved home health care could provide safety assurance to the patients' families.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this review of professional and academic literature is to summarize the literature related to this study. Small businesses play a key role in innovation, employment, and competitive advantage (Arasti, Zandi, & Bahmani, 2014). Successful long-term business growth is usually a top goal for the majority of small business owners (Koudelková, 2014). Growth of small businesses has become a subject of many economic studies (Koudelková, 2014). My conceptual framework was useful in developing an understanding of what home health care agency managers may lack as leadership skills to maintain and operate their businesses beyond 5 years. Literature reviews occupy an important corner of the world of scientific activity, yet most scientists do not receive training in how to write them (Baumeister, 2013). A literature review is a summary of a subject field that supports the identification of specific research questions (Rowley & Slack, 2004). Researchers draw on and evaluate a range of different types of sources including academic and professional journal articles, books, and web-based resources when preparing a literature review (Rowley & Slack, 2004).

In the sections that follow, I present the findings of my literature review on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), home health care agency management, and leadership management. I used the search engine Google Scholar and the databases EBSCO Host, ProQuest Central, and SAGE journals. The keywords and phrases that I

used included terms linked to leadership competence such as *motivation*, *small business*,

leadership skills, *business plans*, and *resource starvations on small business owners*. In

my literature search, I focused primarily on peer-reviewed journal articles and seminal

works published from 2012- 2015; a minimal number of articles published prior to 2012

were integrated in my review. Ninety-seven percent of the sources that I reviewed were

peer reviewed and published within 5 years of my anticipated completion date. I have

included 93 peer-reviewed sources in this literature review. (See Table 1 for an overview

of the sources that I used.)

Table 1

Literature Review Source Count

Literature type	Total no. of sources	No. of sources < 5 years old	% total of sources < 5 years old
Peer-reviewed journals	92	92	97%
Books	1	1	1%
Non peer-reviewed journals	0	0	0
Older articles	2	0	2%
Total	95	93	100%

Business Planning

To be an effective manager requires certain skills. Leadership skills are necessary

for small business owners to plan, organize, control, and direct operations (Zarook,

Rahman, & Khanam 2013). Business plans are not a 100% guarantee or guide to business

growth and success. No planning or improper planning is a recipe for disaster (Chwolka

& Raith, 2012). Formal planning approaches have been criticized by business researchers for failing to depict reality and adapting to environments that are uncertain, especially where information is unavailable to the owner-manager, where the development of a plan may not be effective in refining firm performance (Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013).

Both small and large businesses suffer fatal setbacks. The odds for success are less for small business owners than for owners of large businesses, however. In spite of all of the efforts made, start-up failure rates remain high (Lutsch & Mortensen, 2014). Business researchers argue that strategies that emerge over time and are flexible and unconstrained are more useful to small firms. They also contend that the practice of firm planning is more important than the development of a written document for strategy formation (Blackburn et al., 2013).

Amoako (2013) emphasized the importance of maintaining proper books of accounts and sound accounting practices for SMEs. Amoako reported that the majority of SME owners in Ghana fail to maintain complete accounting records as they think there is no need to keep accounting records and that these records expose their financial position. Training programs must sensitize owners and managers on the need to maintain proper books of accounts (Amoako, 2013).

Motivation

Business researchers have linked performance to growth aspirations and motivations of owner-managers (Blackburn et al., 2013). Small business owners with a stronger desire or passion to succeed tend to thrive than those who do not have a zeal for

the business (Desai, 2015). An example is individuals or people within a group who entered into a particular business due to inheritance or a franchise purchase, or starting because of potential profit (Desai, 2015). Aspiration and motivations are not the same for all business owners in the same or different industries (Jayawarna, Rouse, & Kitching, 2013).

Resource Starvation

Ineffective leadership skills can lead to resource starvation. An ability to measure the financial health of a business can help one assess if the business is likely to succeed or fail (Lerner & Malmendier, 2013). Inadequate financial resources impact the success and growth of any business (De Clercq, Lim, & Oh, 2013). Business owners without sufficient capital to operate their business cannot yield any profit (Atherton, 2012). According to Blackburn et al. (2013), profitability is most strongly associated with smaller, older businesses. This reinforces the notion that owners who develop the most profitable businesses are those who are content to grow their businesses steadily (Blackburn et al., 2013).

Without adequate financing and proper or continuous education and upgrades to enhance business performance, success is impeded (Gummesson, 2014). Small business owners should use resource starvation or insufficient capital to operate a business as indicators for business failure (Naidu & Chand, 2013). A lack of adequate capital negatively impacts the survival of a business (Chang & Chen, 2012). According to Arasti et al. (2014), business growth as well as survival depend both on external and internal factors. Most business challenges may be foreseeable, while some may be completely

unpredictable (Arasti et al., 2014). Skill is an under researched construct and largely

ignored when they are not executed (Chell, 2013).

According to Arasti et al. (2014), leadership researchers have devoted much

attention to factors that affect business performance. Wise (2013) proposed a model in

which increased adoption of financial tools, such as financial statements and financial

ratios, leads to increased frequency of financial statement generation, which in turn

increases the likelihood of loan repayment and decreased the probability of venture

failure. Wise mentioned that the Canadian Youth Business Foundation tested a structural

model using data from 509 young entrepreneurs in Canada who received start up loans

from a microcredit program run by the foundation. Findings showed that entrepreneurs

who produced financial statements more frequently had a higher probability of loan

repayment and a lower probability of closing their venture involuntarily. Wise also found

that increases in financial literacy resulted in more frequent production of financial

statements.

Crowdfunding is popular and recognized way to raise funds. For some

knowledgeable individuals, the financing tactic can be lucrative (Mitra, 2012).

Crowdfunding can be defined as the financing of a project or a venture by a group of

individuals who are referred to as the crowd (Mitra, 2012). Crowdfunding is not only for

kick-starters or people starting businesses that cannot get funding from any other source,

but also for everyone seeking funding to start up their business or expand their business.

The paucity of getting access to capital prompts entrepreneurs to seek alternative

financing venues. Mitra mentioned that this phenomenon has spurred the global growth

of crowdfunding.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people (Northouse, 2015). According to García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, and Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012) mentioned that (a) transformational leadership influences organizational performance positively through organizational learning and innovation; (b) organizational learning influences organizational performance positively, both directly and indirectly through organizational innovation; and (c) organizational innovation influences organizational performance positively. Researchers in an academic context analyzed the relationship between transformational leadership, trust in supervisor and team, job satisfaction, and team performance using multilevel analysis (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013). Braun et al.'s (2013) sample included 360 employees from 39 academic teams. They found that transformational leadership was positively related to followers' job satisfaction at individual as well as team levels of analysis and to achieve team performance objectives. Trust in supervisors and team is linked to transformational leadership (Braun et al., 2013).

Charismatic-transformational leadership is a particularly effective form of leadership because a charismatic leader tends to inspire, motivate, and stretch the capabilities of the average employee (Braun et al., 2013). A clear conceptual definition of charismatic-transformational leadership is lacking, however (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) recommended that the field, which foregoes the label of charismatic-transformational leadership in favor of the study of other labels,

defined distinct aspects of leadership. Tourish (2013) considered leadership as traditionally envisaged and key factor in many of the high-profile corporate failings of recent years. Transformational leadership is an approach that legitimizes concentrating power into the hands of the few who then probably see their mission as being that of transforming other people (Tourish, 2013).

Jogulu and Ferkins (2012) provided new insights on the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership and the influence of cultural forces on leadership. They found that nurses' roles and responsibilities contribute to quality improvement of health care services in Malaysia. Previous research revealed that leaders play an important role in enhancing job satisfaction among Malaysian nurses (Ahmad, Adi, Noor, Rahman, & Yushuang, 2013).

Transformational and transactional leadership are the most influential among leadership styles for employees with leaders who use these styles in attaining job satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2013). Ahmad et al. investigated the transformational and transactional leadership styles that contributed to the job satisfaction among professional nurses. Ahmad et al found transformational leaders contribute more to job satisfaction than transactional leaders. Through the ability to create a shared vision, transformational leaders can achieve both team and project management success (Nixon, Harrington, & Parker, 2012). Sharing a vision enhances worker commitment and the performance of both the individual and the project (Nixon, Harrington, & Parker, 2012).

Cavazotte, Moreno, and Hickmann (2012) investigated the effects of intelligence, personality traits, and emotional intelligence on transformational leadership and the

effective performance of leaders in organizational contexts. Cavazotte et al. collected

data from 134 midlevel managers from a large Brazilian company that operated in the

energy sector. Cavazotte's et al. findings suggest that leadership effectiveness, as

measured by the achievement of organizational outcomes, is a direct function of a

leader's transformational behaviors and an indirect function of individual differences

(experience, intelligence, and conscientiousness) that work through transformational

behaviors. Cavazotte et al. observed the negative effect of neuroticism on leadership

effectiveness. Cavazotte et al. also mentioned that emotional intelligence is statistically

related to transformational leadership; however, when ability and personality were

controlled, the effect was not significant.

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills and abilities are learned and developed (Northouse, 2015).

Although personality plays an integral role in leadership, the skills approach reveals that

knowledge and abilities are needed for effective leadership (Northouse, 2015).

Leadership skills can be acquired, and leaders can be trained to develop them (Northouse,

2015). Manager-practitioners know the importance of their work and inspire others to

work successfully. First level managers must show direction of activities to their

subordinates, foster relationships based on mutual trust, and develop their own and their

subordinates' skills in the work group (Petkevičiūtė & Giedraitis, 2013). According to

Petkevičiūtė and Giedraitis (2013), such formation and representation of managers'

leadership competence allows them to integration into professional life.

Leadership skills for managers are honed. Lafond and Wentzel (2014) described

an instructional tool developed to help instructors cover cost accumulation topics in a graduate level introductory to management accounting course. The assignment by Lafond and Wentzel entailed visiting a small business and interviewing the owner to learn about the company's process for determining costs of products and services. Active learning hones leadership and critical thinking skills by requiring students to use interviewing and listening techniques as they discuss cost accumulation processes with small business owners (Lafond & Wentzel, 2014). According to Lafond and Wentzel, student feedback showed that students valued the opportunity to engage in a realistic exercise that allowed them to apply class concepts to help small businesses.

Ahmetović and Delić (2013) discussed the realization of full potential at the workplace. With the ultimate aim of increasing a company's competitiveness, managers require expertise and commitment for employee motivation (Ahmetović & Delić, 2013). Knowledge and skills related to human resources must be adequately exploited, given its importance for modern business organizations (Ahmetović & Delić, 2013). Human resources represents a company with (a) knowledge, (b) skills, (c) creativity, and (d) abilities. Human resources is a major contributor to competitiveness and successful achievement of organizational goals (Ahmetović & Delić, 2013). Ahmetović and Delić stated that human resources were unique to each company. Only companies able to produce, manage, and continuously through use of human resources will ensure survival and success in the global market.

Ahmetović and Delić (2013) observed that most leaders are so preoccupied with current problems that they often do not pay enough attention to important issues. Because

of this, overall operations may not be efficient and plans may not be achieved as planned. Ahmetović and Delić also stated that human resources could be detrimental to both leaders and organizations. The best way to avoid such problems was to delegate effectively responsibilities and tasks. Human resources are not as simple as they first appear. Human resources requires fulfillment of certain conditions of which the first is that the leader has a highly qualified and motivated team.

Hosea (2015) discussed the leadership skills gained from volunteering, as Hosea interview Jimmy Curtis of the coffee company Starbucks Corporation. These skills include (a) developing a personal brand, (b) learning from new environments, and (c) building confidence and passion. According to Hosea (2015), Curtis suggested reflecting oneself by connecting with others, making a difference, and stepping outside the comfort zone. Curtis also believed that volunteering could help develop creative thinking, excellent networking, and leadership qualities (Hosea, 2015). Corporate finance teams need to broaden and upgrade their leadership-related skills in relation to efforts to achieve corporate growth (Tarasovich & Lyons, 2015).

Chowdhury (2013) examined the senior design courses that were a core part of curricula across engineering and technology disciplines. Such courses offer construction management (CMG) students the opportunity to bring together, assimilate, and apply the knowledge they acquired over their entire undergraduate academic program to an applied technical project. According to Chowdhury, senior or capstone design courses engaged students in a real-world project, enhanced leadership development, and prepared them to manage and lead project teams.

The CMG program's multidisciplinary approach at Alabama A&M University combined essential components of construction techniques with concepts of business management to develop technically qualified individuals for responsible management roles in the design, construction, and operation of major construction projects. Chowdhury (2013) analyzed the performance of the students and improvement due to the interaction with the faculty advisors and industrial panel during the two semester's capstone project. Chowdhury mentioned that results of this capstone sequence showed a continuous improvement of student performance.

Hunt and Cangemi (2014) explored and demonstrated the potential applicability of learning chess as a tool. Hunt and Cangemi mentioned that especially at an early age, chess could increase skills essential to more leadership that is successful. From these findings, the authors concluded that chess games, such as the Game of Kings, help students develops the most critical and necessary skills required by leaders across every endeavor. Hunt and Cangemi stated chess appears to be the missing element in education practice that goes beyond lecture and assessment, rote memorization of facts, and into pure mental and psychological development that American school systems are currently struggling to provide students.

Savolainen (2014) discussed and examined e-leadership practices, more specifically, what skills leaders need and what challenges they encounter in the new e-context of business management. A digitalized business world remarkably transforms the context of leading where e-relationships become more and more common in technology-aided management (Savolainen, 2014). Savolainen stated that change challenges daily

leadership work related to social skills and forms of interaction. Savolainen mentioned that trust and trust building were necessary resources, intangible assets, and skills as a foundation for collaborative actions in organizations and their leadership.

Savolainen (2014) studied e-leaders' views of the new e-leadership context focusing especially on trust building in followers and presented new findings from a qualitative study not explicitly reported in the prior empirical studies of e-leaders. Savolainen conducted a case study based on interviews with leaders from five large organizations in Finland. Savolainen's findings showed that the e-leaders' changing work context was not yet well recognized and was poorly understood and supported by supervisors and managers in the organizations involved in the study.

Leadership training should emphasize on personnel management and communication to ensure exposure to financial management and build confidence in decision-making skills (Harris, von Keudell, McMahon, & Bierer, 2014). Harris et al. (2014) sought to identify the leadership skills considered most useful and practical at early, middle, and senior career levels and compared self-assessed competencies among these career stages in order to identify opportunities for, and timing of, the most effective interventions.

Harris et al. (2014) developed a seven-question self-administered questionnaire that assessed the perceived skill sets of the different cohorts. Harris' et al. questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions regarding which skills were most necessary for effective leadership and an additional five questions that assessed the skill sets of decision-making, financial management, communication, people management, and

strategic planning (Harris et al., 2014). The population surveyed by Harris et al. consisted of 314 physician leaders and 42 chief residents. Harris et al. mentioned that each group asked to describe the relative importance of skills of the *ideal* physician leader. All three-physician groups rated financial management skills as least important for effective leadership.

Boerner (2014) discussed and mentioned that effective compliance program has a lot to do with the strengths, communication, and leadership skills of the compliance officer. Boerner reviewed and worked with over 75 compliance programs over the past 15 years and found it safe to say the pace and areas in which compliance programs mature. The compliance culture formed had a lot to do with the strengths and background of the individual compliance officer.

Boerner (2014) liked to learn about the history of the compliance program and the backgrounds of the compliance officers that have held the position in the past and evaluated the strengths and areas for improvement within a compliance program. Boerner mentioned that the compliance officer needed to be able to communicate with all levels of the organization, so the communication and leadership skills need to consider that.

Canwell, Dongrie, Neveras, and Stockton (2014) examined the executives in 2014 global survey and viewed leadership as the highest-priority issue of all those asked about. Yet, despite the acknowledged importance of leadership, most companies believe they are not meeting the challenge. According to Canwell et al. (2014), only 13% of companies in their survey rated themselves *excellent* in providing leadership programs at all levels; new leaders, next-generation leaders, and senior leaders. More than half (51%)

had little confidence in their ability to maintain a clear, consistent succession program. Only 8% believed they had *excellent* programs to build global skills and experiences. Canwell et al. stated that not only are companies not developing sufficient numbers of leaders, but they are also failing to equip the leaders they are building with the critical capabilities and skills needed to succeed.

Canwell et al. (2014) showed that foundational and new leadership skills were in high demand including (a) business acumen, or understanding the core business well; (b) collaboration or having the ability to build cross-functional teams; (c) global cultural agility, or managing diversity and inclusion; (d) creativity, or driving innovation and entrepreneurship; (e) customer-centricity, or enhancing effective customer relationships; (f) influence and inspiration, or setting direction and driving employees to achieve business goals; and (g) building teams and talent. Or developing people and creating effective teams.

Entrepreneur Leadership

Tian and Smith (2014) mentioned that social entrepreneurs seek to improve the world through revenue generating businesses. Tian and Smith stated that social enterprises have much in common with commercial ventures. Striving to fulfill a social mission is associated with goals, missions, and stakeholders that can be inconsistent with seeking profit, creating strategic paradoxes, and fostering distinct challenges for social entrepreneurs. Tian's and Smith's aim was to advance current understandings of entrepreneurial leadership by identifying unique challenges and necessary leadership skills for social entrepreneurs. Tian and Smith examined (a) related skills, (b) acceptance,

(c) differentiation, and (d) integration that could help social entrepreneurial leaders to address successfully these tensions. Tian's and Smith's contributions advanced current understandings of entrepreneurial leadership in the context of social enterprise.

Phelps (2014) examined how advanced information and communication technologies impact the ways groups and individuals collaborate, communicate, and engage. Such changes also influence the leadership process. Phelps mentioned by reviewing the literature on leadership and technology-centered fields and provided recommendations and implications for leading in online environments. Phelps suggested that developing skills and competencies could help harness the potential of technology within virtual settings. Phelps stated that essential leadership skills are (a) technical skills, (b) communication skills, (c) organizational skills, (d) team building skills, and (e) flexibility and adaptability. According to Phelps, as technology are becoming ubiquitous as to be invisible, leadership, educators, and practitioners help explicate the nuances of effective leadership practice in both traditional and virtual settings.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is essential to every organization. Swift (2012) noted that complex knowledge is often a valuable unique company asset that is difficult to copy. Butrous et al. (2012) conducted a study to investigate medical management and leadership areas by surveying 240 students from one UK medical school. Medical management, leadership knowledge, and skills were lacking in undergraduates; however, many desired to learn and develop those areas (Butrous et al., 2012). Butrous et al. mentioned that a responsibility of teaching faculty is to ensure knowledge

management embedded in clinical placements of the students. Cao, Thompson, and Triche (2013) indicated in the ever-changing and competitive market place, organizations must improve their competitive advantage. Cao et al. (2013) mentioned one method to accomplish this to form collaborative networks.

Cao et al. (2013) found that fit or alignment between business process (task), knowledge management (KM) systems (technology), and the impact on KM systems utilization based on multiple case studies. Cao's et al. article contributed to collaborative network/KM literature. First, it extends the task–technology fit theory to an important context of collaborative network/KM. Second, it replaces task with business process, which has the potential to help explain KM systems' success on business performance. Third, Cao et al. explored the positive impact of task–technology fit on KM system utilization and business performance. Fourth and finally, Cao et al. provided insight into the future development of KM systems with how to better align them with managerial purposes.

Knowledge management relates to leadership skills. Mciver, Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, and Ramachandran (2013) introduced a knowledge-in-practice framework for understanding the nature of work and used the framework to peer into the black box of knowledge management (KM), and to explore the relationship between KM activities and performance. Mciver et al. (2013) mentioned that the knowledge-in-practice framework described knowledge characteristics of work practices along two dimensions, which were tacitness and learnability. Mciver et al. proposed that adopting KM activities that matched the tacitness and learnability of organizational work settings

would have a positive effect on desirable performance targets for each work environment. Mciver's et al. framework offered a new lens for defining work and work settings. Mciver et al. identified patterns of KM activity that believed to be maximally effective within each work setting and offered an enhanced contingency-based explanation of the association among work settings, KM initiatives, and performance. According to Mciver et al., these ideas challenged the belief that KM activities always contribute to better performance and that the greater the investment in KM the better.

Knowledge management (KM) initiatives create business value and are a major focus for many organizations (Mousavizadeh, Harden, Ryan, & Windsor, 2015). According to Mousavizadeh et al. (2015), while academics often couch KM success in terms of process outcomes, some argued that the organizational outcomes perspective of KM success held by many practitioners was clearer. Mousavizadeh et al. mentioned that KM success tied to its impact on organizational performance. Mousavizadeh et al. proposed an integrated model that incorporated both perspectives, in which the business value of KM was the dependent variable and effective KM process implementation, is an important antecedent. Mousavizadeh et al. also hypothesized that two contextual factors, top management support, and organizational culture, positively related to business value. Data collected by Mousavizadeh et al. from a U.S. national survey of 268 information technology (IT) executives supported the significance of these relationships.

Dutz (2015) mentioned that increased flow and management of knowledge permitted by knowledge-based capital (KBC), supported by appropriate policies, could be an important factor in reducing the decision risk facing enterprises due to uncertainty and

imperfect information, helping improve the resilience of development outcomes.

Enterprises conceptualized as information platforms that managed risk through

investments in KBC that gave abilities to make better decisions in response to shocks

(Dutz, 2015). Investments in KBC allowed enterprises to convert better voluntary, but

risky reallocation and innovation decisions into productivity and wealth-enhancing

opportunities (Dutz, 2015). Investment in KBC can help the enterprise sector as a whole

and most people to self-protect and realize better jobs, earnings, and consumption

outcomes by adapting to shocks (Dutz, 2015). According to Dutz, insufficient enterprise

risk-taking is costly and governments should create favorable business environments that

stimulate entrepreneurial risk-taking. Policies allowing people to better confront and

manage their risks include (a) spurring entrepreneurial experimentation, (b) supporting

skills upgrading, and (c) promoting mechanisms for joint learning through global

collaboration (Dutz, 2015).

Growth Determinants of SMEs

According to De Carvalho, Nunes, and Serrasqueiro (2013), the purpose of the

study was to examine critically the growth determinants of fitness SMEs in Portugal

using the two-step estimation method. De Carvalho's et al. (2013) reason for the study

based on their beliefs that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) grow more

quickly than larger ones, which implies a negative relationship between size and growth.

De Carvalho et al. used a sample of 182 small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of

the fitness industry for the period 2004 to 2009. The fact that growth was persistent over

time, smaller and younger Portuguese fitness SMEs grew faster than larger and older

ones, which suggested these firms needed to reach a minimum scale of efficiency that allowed them to survive in their operating markets (De Carvalho et al., 2013).

Shin and Park (2013) investigated the impacts of market scope and industry-specific competitiveness characteristics on the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the nuclear equipment industry. According to Shin and Park, the nuclear equipment industry is characterized as a large complex systems procured by the government to influence the overall market size and business opportunities. In order to grow beyond a highly regulated market, small business owners could pursue their growth opportunities through overseas market expansion, business diversification, and enhanced competitiveness in the market (Shin & Park, 2013). Shin and Park results showed that growth strategies have different impacts on the performance of SMEs.

Palacín-Sánchez, Ramírez-Herrera, and di Pietro (2013) examined whether the capital structure of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and its firm-factor determinants was different across regions belonging to a single country. Palacín-Sánchez et al. (2013) mentioned SMEs are relatively innovative in capital structure research, since the majority of the studies carried out in a single country have neglected to take into account the region in which firms operate to explain leverage. Palacín-Sánchez et al. studied whether the capital structure and its firm-factor determinants-size, asset structure, profit, growth, and age differ depending on the region in which the SMEs are located. Empirical analysis, panel data methods were applied to a sample of firms from all regions of Spain for the period 2004-2007 (Palacín-Sánchez et al., 2013). The researchers' results suggested that regional differences in the SMEs' capital structure

and confirmed that the impact of firm-factor determinants on leverage differed across regions in terms of signs, magnitudes, and significance levels.

Watson (2006) stated previous research suggested lack of external funding opportunities might inhibit the growth of many small and medium enterprises (SMEs), particularly female-controlled SMEs. According to Watson, the existing empirical research on the issue of funding and firm growth is extremely limited. The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the relationship between SME growth and external funding (Watson, 2006). Watson (2006) study was based on a large (2,367 SMEs) highly representative longitudinal (four-year) database provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Female-controlled SMEs have relatively lower levels of external funding than their male counterparts, with the difference being greater in older compared to younger firms (Watson, 2006). The analysis of Watson (2006) suggested that pecking order theory, rather than bank discrimination, might be the primary cause of this difference. Watson mentioned that profitability is the most significant determinant of firm growth.

Heimonen (2012) aimed at identifying factors that affected the innovativeness of growing small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) and focused on the use of intellectual property rights (IPRs) as a proxy for innovations. Heimonen mentioned IPRs to be used included patents, trademarks, utility models and registered designs. A theoretical model was developed and tested on longitudinal sample data representing 348 continuously growing SMEs located in two diverse regions in Finland. Heimonen stated firms in the sample represented various industries, and used logistic regression analysis to analyze the

data. Innovative firms in this class were less likely successful in the short-term than their

non-innovative counterparts. Heimonen pointed out that results obtained seem to be

consistent with the expected preconception that growing IPR-intensive firms may be

subject to greater financial pressures than those that do not produce IPRs. Public research

and development (R&D) funding seems to increase the likelihood of innovation

(Heimonen, 2012).

Resource Allocation

Dunkelberg, Moore, Scott, and Stull (2013) focused on how entrepreneurial goals

affect the resource allocation of new firm owners. Dunkelberg et al. (2013) connected

research in psychology and management and examined the core motivations of

entrepreneurs with research in economics that models the behavior of owner-managers as

utility maximizing rather than profit maximizing. Dunkelberg et al. measured new

owners with nonmonetary goals allocated their resources differently than do owners with

monetary goals. Dunkelberg et al. data came from a national survey of new U.S. business

owners. Dunkelberg's et al. findings revealed owner goals had both a statistically and

substantively significant effect on resource allocation for new firms. Dunkelberg et al.

also mentioned that owners with nonmonetary goals put in more of their own and family

hours rather than hiring outside employees.

Fletschner and Kenney (2014) reviewed rural women's access to financial

services, a key factor underlying many successful rural development strategies.

Designing appropriate financial products for women to be able to save, borrow, and

insure is essential to strengthen women's role as producers and widen the economic

opportunities available to them (Fletschner & Kenney, 2014). Context-specific legal rights, social norms, family responsibilities, and women's access to and control over other resources play an important role in shaping rural women's needs for capital and their ability to obtain it (Fletschner & Kenney, 2014). Fletschner and Kenney argued that interventions that improved rural women's direct access to financial services not mediated through their husbands could be beneficial on two fronts.

Fletschner and Kenney (2014) stated that addressing the constraints that women face would enhance their productive capacity. Second, by improving women's relative power in their households, these interventions could lead to both a more efficient allocation of resources and to improved health, nutrition, and education in their families, all of which could result in improved long-term production capabilities (Fletschner & Kenney, 2014).

Greene, Brush, and Brown (2015) explored the importance of resources to firms. Yet, the authors' research focused on acquisition of financial resources, with less attention given to other types. Prescriptions emphasized resource allocation or fit to opportunities, often treating resources taken together without considering unique distinctions in resource types or usage (Greene et al., 2015). The five distinct types of resources applicable to small firms include (a) human, (b) social, (c) organizational, (d) physical, and (e) financial. Greene et al. conducted an exploratory study of 76 firms examined the relative importance of these resource types and analyzed relationships between resources and characteristics of the owner/founder and organization. Findings by Greene et al. showed an overall higher rating for physical and organizational resources

than for financial resources. Greene et al., results further indicated few differences in resources depending on owner/founder characteristics or industrial sector.

Branding Businesses

The value of the brand as a driver for the development of business-to-business relationships is important. B2B companies such as Dell built brands in a functional and emotional way that connects with buyers, which has led to a supplier–buyer relationship. Customer loyalty is important in business to business because in organizational buyer-seller relationship, loyal buyers are likely to focus on long-term benefits than disloyal buyers (Hsu & Wang, 2012). Blome, Schoenherr, and Rexhausen (2013) stated that customer relationship management (CRM) is an information system that tracks customer interactions with the firm and allows employees to pull up information about the customers, such as past sales, service records, outstanding records and unresolved problem calls. A company that offers a product that customers do not buy will cease to offer the product and may go out of business. Organizations need to monitor and identify their loyal customers and make sure customer satisfaction is high at all times.

Organizations must keep their clients happy if they are to remain in business. Huotari, Ulkuniemi, Saraniemi, and Mäläskä (2015) indicated that B2B firm leaders engaging in social media as part of their marketing efforts should carefully consider the roles and activities of users directed by internal and external users. B2B companies can influence content creation in social media directly by adding new content and participating in discussions (Huotari et al., 2015). Brands are simply products with brand names or logos. A successful brand combines an effective product, distinctive identity,

and benefits as perceived by customers (Maarit Jalkala & Keränen, 2014).

Schaltegger, Gibassier, and Zvezdov (2013) stated that industrial purchasing is a growing discipline with a broad scope of research issues. Leek and Christodoulides (2012) stated that business-to-business (B2B) companies with a balanced corporate brand strategy generally yield a return to their shareholders that is 5%-7% higher. Business-to business (B2B) promotions are price cuts that drain profits and erode brand equity for the sake of short term volume gains (Chaharsoughi & Yasory, 2012). Helm and Özergin (2015) mentioned that the literature on ingredient branding directed at tangible products, but does not account for the role of services as ingredients. Service is unfolding as the dominant route to achieving competitive advantage and the purpose of Helm and Özergin's investigated how ingredient service brands impact customer preferences on B2B markets. Helm and Özergin specifically assessed how ingredients might affect an industrial buyers' quality perceptions of the product.

Mulylle, Dawar, and Rangarajan (2012) examined the fundamentals and principles of brand architecture as it relates specific B2B firms and tested the findings to a broader wide sample of brand architectures. Mulylle et al. (2012) built on the theory that B2B brand architecture is an organizational structure function and the extent to which the B2B firm's market offers standardized versus customized. This framework and the starting point of risk alleviation through the sales process together capture the principal elements of B2B brand architecture design. Mulylle et al. stated to keep three things in mind when developing a better branding for B2B.

The first principle element is understanding that brands are long-term assets that

would take effect over time. According to Mulylle et al. (2012), no brand stands alone. While strengthening the individual positioning of each brand, understanding branding is equally important to create a relationship between the brands in a portfolio. Lastly, Mulylle et al. showed that a collection of well-positioned brands gives a strong competitive advantage in the market. Careful thought to customize price reflect value seen. Shobeiri (2015) revealed that challenges of ambiguity, authenticity, and novelty could lead to difficulties in the formation of perceived quality, brand image, and brand loyalty respectively.

LaPlaca (2013) mentioned discipline of business-to-business marketing has a long history and researchers have sought to understand and explain how business-to-business markets operate. LaPlaca stated the number of B2B researchers has grown far faster than the publication outlets have grown, and researchers are encountering increasing difficulty having papers accepted to these journals. LaPlaca showed that during the past 5 years researchers in Industrial Marketing Management had published 42 research articles on B2B branding and focused on the value of brands in B2B markets. The field of B2B marketing is rapidly growing as a research focus and academic researchers have many opportunities to conduct research with a high likelihood of publication if they focus on research topics of importance and interest and they follow accepted research methodologies.

Ryan and Silvanto (2013) explored the contribution of branding to building and maintaining B2B customer loyalty. Ryan and Silvanto used a case study methodology to examine how an established *brick and mortar* company, Sigma-Aldrich Corporation, was

able to withstand and, in the end, overcome the challenge posed by Chemdex, a well-funded start-up company with a cost-efficient and innovative business model, by leveraging its corporate brand equity. Ryan and Silvanto stated failure of Chemdex could attribute to a failure to grasp and replicate the tangible and intangible assets that underpin B2B corporate brands. Ryan and Silvanto suggested strong corporate brand equity is important for maintaining customer loyalty and is the result of long-term relationships that place a premium on innovation, quality, technical support, and customer service.

Business Innovation

Innovation requires a team to develop new ideas and determine if they are plausible. De Sousa, Pellissier, and Monteiro (2012) noted that creativity relates to the sciences and innovation is business management driven. De Sousa et al. (2012) described creativity as the process of one person conveying their thoughts to another person. De Sousa et al. described the relationship that creativity and innovation have, where innovation is an organizational function and creativity is an individual effort. A company uses creativity to gain the best ideas from an individual, and they use innovation to put the idea into action. Immelt, Govindarjan, and Trimble (2013) mentioned that innovation endeavors are by nature uncertain and more important to learn quickly by efficiently testing assumptions than to hit the numbers. Acharya and Taylor (2012) introduced the concept of innovative deviance and aligned it with the theory of positive deviance. Acharya and Taylor evaluated the reasons why employees positively deviated from organization policy standards in order to be innovative.

Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer (2014) mentioned in their article that an

organization might be internally creative, through the implementation of cost-saving technologies or new accounting procedures or the development of new technology research and technology (R&T). Csikszentmihalyi's and Sawyer's methodology was a systems approach whereby creativity was defined with a respect to system that includes individual, social, and cultural process that influences creative process. Csikszentmihalyi and Sawyer stated the biggest impact on profitability and market share most often derived from external creativity, novel responses to new legislation or radical market shifts. Creativity at the internal level is no guarantee of business success at the external level, but a prerequisite. Business product and service industries are all areas in which innovation management is impacted.

Acharya and Taylor (2012) posited that they developed a relationship between positive deviance and innovation. Social control is a process by which individuals socialize and orient towards norms (Aronfreed, 2013). Within firms, this process helps to organize work and keep employees and managers focused on goals (Acharya &Taylor, 2012). Often organizational goals and the tactics used by individuals and groups to achieve these goals do not align. Deviant behavior can have both negative and positive impacts on a firm (Acharya &Taylor, 2012). Acharya and Taylor believed that positive deviant behavior could lead to creativity and innovation as well as produce positive outcomes. The implications for the research by Acharya and Taylor (2012) were twofold as it provided a theoretical link between innovation and deviant behavior, and further supported that when creative behavior was successfully applied or implemented within an organization the creativity is transformed into innovation.

Im, Montoya, and Workman (2012) stated research focus on how team dynamics affect the creativity-innovation process. In larger organizations, the line between creativity and innovation blurs and they become synonymous (Im et al., 2012). The positive impact to innovation management will increase profit for companies, but also negatively affect labor. An example is recent technology of retail stores using robots for stocking and self-serve checkouts. Those results in quick service and reduced operational cost however for the employees or workers in that field could be out of jobs that will impact the economy in the long term.

Human Capital Theory

Human capital, which encompasses individual characteristics that are usually acquired via education, training, and work experiences, is important to health care organizational leaders (Dotson & Nuru-Jeter, 2012). Lack of training for employees may result in failure of new organizations seeking to grow within the market. Rauch and Rijsdijk (2013) reported results of a longitudinal study performed over a 12-year period to understand the role of human capital in growth or failure of an organization. In the context of the health care industry, human capital is an investment in patient care, which is paramount within the industry. Yepes-Baldó, Romeo, and Berger (2013) distributed a survey to 902 nurses to collect data on their perceptions as indicators of human capital quality in health care. To ensure validity and reliability, a panel of 10 experts in human resources assessment in health care organizations analyzed the survey content. The experts agreed the survey content was appropriate and added 13 criteria related to commitment and identification. The findings of Yepes-Baldó et al. revealed low responses in job development,

opportunity, and motivation that indicated the health care sector would benefit from improving the quality of human capital for their staff.

Senior leaders should evaluate leadership skills programs to improve worker satisfaction and ultimately patient care.

Health care is an industry that continually evolves and, as such, the need for strong leadership is critical. These constant shifts present unique challenges to executive leaders in part due to the complexity of these systems, and yet understanding of leadership skills is quite limited. In today's social environment, health care companies should embrace the business case for leadership skills and work toward social change that empowers leaders. McDonagh and Paris (2012) stated that although women have a significant impact on health care, the upper level positions eluded them. The change had to start at the senior leadership level. Offering benefits such as flexible work schedules, leadership training, mentoring programs, and development of female networks may spark a change in the leadership.

Organizational Culture

Mercadal (2014) showed that organizational culture referred to the formal environment and norms that characterize a specific organization, as well as its informal behavioral and the social phenomena that occurred among individuals in an organization. Communicating and promoting the organizational values to employees increased their acknowledgement and acceptance of its influence on workers ethical decision-making (Northouse, 2015). When catastrophes require quick action from those present, good organizational culture has a huge impact on workers' behaviors, attitudes, and

communities in which companies operate (Northouse, 2015).

Strategic Planning

Traditional strategic planning is a management tool or model developed by a company and the organization's way of making decisions to arrive at a desired strategy. Strategic planning involves the vision and mission of an organization (Dragoni et al., 2014). According to Dragoni et al., strategic planning reveals where an organization is, where it intends to be, and how it intends to arrive at its desired plan. Strategic planning is the guide or the blueprint an organization intends to follow. The focus of traditional strategic planning is on results or outcomes, rather than products or outputs (Dragoni et al., 2014).

Organizational delayering, destaffing, restructuring, and reengineering have produced employees who are more exhausted than empowered, and more cynical than self-renewing (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2013). Bartlett and Ghoshal (2013) found that more than 20 companies in the process of trying to transform themselves concluded that although structure is undoubtedly an impediment to the process, an even bigger barrier is managers' outdated understanding of strategy. Strategic thinking is an individual's ability to think and create innovative ideas. For example, leaders may learn new ways of thinking about business problems, opportunities, constraints, and different cultural perspectives when they actively work with team members who are from varied cultural backgrounds (Dragoni et al., 2014). These interactions offer a means for leaders to expand their business and cultural perspectives. The experiences provide developing leaders the necessary exposure to foreign environments and enhance

leaders' strategic thinking competency (Dragoni et al., 2014).

A good business strategy should be a mixture of rational thinking and creativity, of analysis and experimentation, of planning and learning. Strategic thinking is creative, intuitive, and supported by analysis. For positive outcome, strategic thinking should be a creative thinking process based on real facts and analysis that combines-the rational with the emotional (Markides, 2012).

Training and Development

A work environment that promotes individual learning is a favorable atmosphere for job-related learning. Job-related learning (organizational learning) involves using tasks in the work environment to teach necessary skills through experimenting, discussion, and sharing of ideas (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013). Training and development are required for organizational success. Intentional leadership behavior includes the provision of a favorable environment for ongoing training and growth opportunities to support employee performance (Loon, Lim, Teck, & Cai, 2012). The use of transformational leadership principles assisted leaders in identifying employee growth needs to enhance the learning process (Loon et al., 2012).

The active involvement of the leader was an integral part of the process. Review of existing literature revealed a connection between transformational leadership and employee learning. Twenty studies yielding 280 effect sizes and involving 5,175 participants examined by Schlaerth, Ensari, and Christian. Study results supported the hypothesis that emotional intelligence (EI) was positively associated with constructive conflict management, and this relationship was stronger for subordinates than leaders

(Schlaerth, Ensari, & Christian, 2013).

Contrary to Schlaerth's et al. (2013) predictions, age was not a significant moderator. The trend of leader involvement continued, as the leader must be able to recognize and encourage opportunities for employee development (Loon et al., 2012). Research by Loon et al. (2013) supported Schlaerth's et al. (2013) study by highlighting the 18 importance of principles of leader participation in facilitating employee training.

Gabrielsson and Politis (2012) addressed entrepreneurial learning that occurred outside of the formal classroom and focused on the significance of work experience in the process of entrepreneurial development. Gabrielsson and Politis examined the relationship between entrepreneurial work experience and the ability to develop new business ideas. A review of data from 291 entrepreneurs indicated that functional work experience and employing a learning mindset were significant factors in developing new ideas, as well as benefitting from human capital (i.e., employees) (Gabrielsson & Politis, 2012). In contrast, Gerba (2012) asserted nontraditional or informal instances of entrepreneurial exposure did not affect entrepreneurial activity.

Sustainable Practices

The connection between the presence of successful small businesses and subsequent economic stability, review of per capita gross state product, per capita personal income, and employment increase illustrated a significant association between entrepreneurial activity and economic growth (Hafer, 2013). The analysis of sustainability in the business environment extends the focus of management practices and innovation beyond internal benefit and gives attention to environmental and social

concern. Survey data from 314 senior executives of medium and large-sized

organizations indicated a positive relationship between sustainable practices and

performance outcomes including employee value, customer value, and financial stability

(Gadenne, Mia, Sands, Winata, & Hooi, 2012).

Company CEOs and leadership must share a desire to incorporate sustainable

practices to support successful implementation. Interviews with 766 CEOs illustrated that

participants viewed sustainability as an important facet of business practices (Lacy,

Haines, & Hayward, 2012). Likewise, Lacy et al. (2012) viewed sustainability education

as a critical component in the development of strong businesses. Additional review of

small business literature centered on success-related practices in business operations and

debate over the ability to identify business success factors. Determination of a guide for

success allows accurate measurement of performance (Simpson, Padmore, & Newman,

2012). Identification of individual firm characteristics from in-depth interviews with

owners/managers revealed no universal set of factors related to business success

(Simpson et al., 2012).

Management

Effective implementation of management involved the determination of

management activities through a mediating role of manager commitment to strategy

implementation and organizational learning (Kohtamäki, Kraus, Mäkelä, & Rönkkö,

2012). The positive relationship is between personnel commitment to strategic planning

and implementation, and company performance (Kohtamäki et al., 2012). Related

research on effective management suggested the 28 transformational leadership

principles enhanced the speed of the business decision-making process and positively

impacted company performance (Gu, Weng, & Xie, 2012). Turner, Ledwith, and Kelly

(2012) suggested the use of simplified project management processes including (a)

requirement definitions, (b) guidelines for managing the work, (c) duration of the project,

and (d) resources needed for a given project, as small businesses tended to entrust

projects to ill-equipped employees. The discussion of effective business practices is

relevant to this study to address the role of owners and managers in the implementation

process.

Time Management

Specific planning activities including prioritizing, creating task lists, and

delegating tasks to facilitate proper time management, suggest a positive relationship to

business performance (Adebisi, 2013). Effective time management could create a

competitive edge, and proper time management training for employees could reduce

stress and encourage positive performance (Adebisi, 2013). Proper time management

could also lead to the discovery of efficient ways to handle company issues.

<center>**Transition**</center>

The information presented in the literature review on success of leadership skills

used to sustain new businesses could prove useful to managers in home health care

agencies. The central research question for this study was what leadership skills do

managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5

years? I addressed this question through collection and analyzed data from interviews and

relevant company documents. The findings of this study may present Baltimore home

health care agency managers with a guide to improve leadership skills within their organizations. Exploring leadership theories as described in the conceptual framework enriched the depth of the study, and provided a framework for future researchers.

Section 1 contains a discussion of the background, the problem and purpose statement, and the research method. Section 2 of this study included the methodology selected for examining this research question. The section began with a review of the purpose of the research and the role of the researcher, and then continued with a discussion of the strategy for gaining access to the participants and the measures that ensured the ethical protection of the participants. A description of the research method and design, as well as the rationale for the research method and design selected, were also included in Section 2. Section 2 includes descriptions of the population and sampling method to include explanations of characteristics relevant to the current research study. The final discussion included data collection and analysis, and study reliability and validity.

In Section 3 I present the results of the research study and a discussion of the possible applications of the results to professional practice as well as the implications for social change. This final section includes reflections on the study, recommendations for further research, and a summary and conclusions.

Section 2: The Project

The target population for this doctoral study consisted of home health care agencies located in Baltimore, Maryland, and its surrounding areas. Three managers in home health care agencies participated in face-to-face, semistructured interviews. Information in this section includes additional details concerning participant recruitment, research method and design, data collection, and ethical protections for participants, data analysis, and study validity and reliability measures.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. The specific population for this study was one manager from each of three different home health care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland, who had successfully managed their agencies for more than 5 years. The findings from this research may contribute to social change by identifying leadership skills needed by home health care agency managers for their businesses. Clients of better managed home health care agencies may receive improved patient care. Improved patient care would positively affect employees' long-term employment, patients' health, and provide safety assurance for patients' families.

Role of the Researcher

As Codie (2012) noted, the researcher in a qualitative study acts as an instrument in interacting and collaborating with participants to collect data. A qualitative researcher does this by collecting and analyzing data obtained from interviews, observations,

document review, and fieldwork (Yin, 2014). I served as the primary instrument for data collection for this study. According to Wahyuni (2012), qualitative researchers have a duty to ensure credibility and transparency in the data collection process. I did not disguise my background as related to the data collection from the participants.

I am a financial analyst; I do not work in a health care agency. I have worked on small projects in home health care agencies that provided me with some knowledge about the industry, but I had no connections with the potential participants or their agencies that I selected for this study. Research involves (a) collecting data, (b) analyzing the data, (c) developing themes, and (d) writing the results of the findings (Kapoulas & Mitic, 2012; Kyvik, 2013). Researchers gain insights into the experiences and behaviors of the participants in the research (Rowley, 2012). The purpose of the study sought participants' consent that gathered reliable data in this study. My role included collecting data in a trustworthy manner as described by the American Psychological Association (2012) and the Belmont Report (Belmont Report, 1979). The Belmont Report, created by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects and Biomedical and Behavioral Research, provides guidelines for ethical practices in research involving human subjects (Belmont Report, 1979). Key tenets include (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice.

According to the principles of the Belmont Report (Belmont Report, 1979), a researcher must ensure compliance with the principle of voluntary participation. I recruited voluntary participants only. To avoid any misinterpretation of undue pressure or intimidation on any participant, I conducted my study with home health care agencies

with which I had no personal or professional relationship. I adhered to ethical principles

and guidelines specified in the Belmont Report, and employ techniques to mitigate bias

that may influence the results of the study as suggested by Yin (2014). In preparing for

this research study, I completed the web-based training offered by the National Institutes

of Health on protecting human research participants offered by the National Institutes of

Health and I received the certificate of completion on January 18, 2015. I also

commenced the recruitment of potential participants only after receiving approval from

Walden University's Institutional Review Board IRB (approval number 07-18-16-

0496538).

I respected the independence of participants and sought to protect them from any

dangers and risks related to the research process, as advised by the Belmont Report

(1979). I also sought to minimize any burdens for participants. I asked the same questions

of all participants and conducted the interviews at private, secured locations that were

preferred and convenient to each participant. I assigned an alphanumerical code to

participants to protect their identity and maintain the confidentiality of all information

they provided. I have stored all data in a locked safe that only I can access for at least five

years.

To mitigate my bias as a researcher, I identified and reflected on my assumptions

and preconceptions using a bracketing technique as recommended by Braun and Clarke

(2013). Use of a bracketing technique requires that a researcher keep a reflexive journal

during the execution of the study (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Journaling is a tool for

mitigating interviewer bias (Tufford & Newman, 2012). I recorded personal reflections in

a journal and compared these with data to mitigated bias. The use of a reflexive journal is a valuable tool through which a researcher can acknowledge any prejudgments or biases that may affect the interpretation of data collected (Petty, Thomason, & Stew, 2012). This technique also allows readers to consider the results of a study within its context (Petty et al., 2012).

I used semistructured interviews to gain an understanding of the strategies used by small business owners to sustain their businesses. Doody and Noonan (2013) identified three interview formats for research. These formats are (a) structured, (b) unstructured, and (c) semistructured. Structured interviews are similar to questionnaires except that the interviewer asks the questions rather than allowing participants to complete and return questionnaires (Rowley, 2012). Unstructured interviews are a ubiquitous tool for making screening decisions despite a vast literature suggesting that they have little validity (Dana, Dawes, & Peterson, 2013). The role of the researcher in unstructured interviews is to listen (Dana et al., 2013). Conversely, semistructured interviews allow for varying numbers of questions and varying degrees of revision to questions to accommodate the participant (Rowley, 2012).

During these semistructured interviews, I posed open-ended questions to manager participants. I asked each participant follow-up questions as needed to clarify their responses and to provide more in-depth responses. Barker, Cox, and Sveinsdottir (2012) argue that the focus of a multiple case study should be to obtain in-depth information regarding participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation.

To mitigate bias, and as recommended by Silverman (2013), I used an interview

protocol (see Appendix C) that enabled me present the same information and asked the same interview questions to all study participants. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommended the use of interview protocol in multiple case studies. Using an interview protocol ensured an identical scripted interview process and questions to enhance reliability as suggested by Jacob and Furgerson (2012). I developed an interview protocol as recommended by Yin (2014), which was an important tool that kept the researcher focused on the research topic during the interviews. An interview protocol is a preparation tool to anticipate possible problems during the reporting of the findings (Yin, 2014).

Leadership in home health care agencies is outside my primary areas of expertise, which are in finance and budgeting planning. I was, however, interested in leadership skills managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their businesses. For successful data collection, note taking was most important. Writing and recording helped identity secret thoughts, views, and feelings that may lead to bias in a study. Qualitative researchers authentically capture and to relay the genuine experiences of people through writing a text of social accounts (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). I maintained field notes that captured my reflections and views to mitigate personal biases from becoming part of the research. Yin (2014) suggested field notes to capture thoughts or comments during data collection. I used open-ended interview questions to collect information that answered the research question for this study.

Participants

Participants in this study were managers of three home health care agencies that

have succeeded in business for more than 5 years in the metropolitan area of Baltimore, Maryland. Yin (2014) assumed that a researcher could compare two or three cases in a phenomenon to study for common experiences among the cases. I interviewed participants and analyzed company documents on transformational leadership skills that enhance business performance for sustainability beyond 5 years until the data reached saturation as suggested by Prendergast and Wai (2013). In qualitative multiple case study research, a researcher must ensure that each participant has the experience of the phenomenon (Ferrazzi & Krupa, 2015; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014).

I used purposive sampling that assured the managers of the home health care agencies selected (a) had successfully managed their agencies for more than 5 years, (b) manage more than 5 employees, (c) are at least 18 years of age, and (d) work for a home health care agency licensed by the state of Maryland. I contacted (a) the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, (b) Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce, (c) Maryland Health care Commission, and (d) Maryland National Capital Home Care Association to obtain a copy of their home health care agency lists for providers within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore that are licensed and active home health care agencies. From this list, I selected several home health care agencies and contact the State of Maryland licensing agency for licensing information regarding the first year that agencies received licensing and the years of license renewal. This helped me determine how long each agency has been in business. I identified 10 home health care agencies and contacted for this study. Of the 10 businesses, three managers in home health care agencies agreed and participated in this study.

After successful selection of study participants, I made phone calls and emailed participants for the study. According to Yin (2014), a working relationship between the participants and the researcher must exist to address the case study protocol. I made sure that I accommodated participants' schedules as recommended by Rowley (2012) and Yin (2014). McNamara et al. (2015) claimed a good working relationship between the participants and the researcher might improve by following principles or stages of motivational interviewing, which include (a) choosing a setting that has little distraction, (b) explaining the reason for the interview, (c) addressing confidentiality, and (d) explaining the format of the interview. I established a working relationship with potential participants and made initial contacts by sending each participant a recruitment letter. The letter included (a) an informal introduction, (b) an overview of the study and participant selection criteria, and (c) instructions for expressing interest in participation. After I sent the recruitment letter, I followed up with a phone call to each potential participant to ask for their participation and answer any questions or concerns they may have.

I made a phone and email contact with individuals who express an interest in participation. Through the phone and email conversation, managers of home health care agencies reviewed an overview of the study, information about the informed consent form and the value of participation, and a notice of any risk involved with participation. Building trust and establishing a good relationship are imperative because the participant needs to be at ease responding to questions truthfully (Doody & Noonan, 2013). McNamara et al. (2015) suggested a researcher should indicate how long the interview

would take; the consent form, according to Laerkner, Egerod, and Hansen (2015), should include information about the participants' options. Through the phone and email, I informed participants the interviews required approximately 60 minutes to complete.

Research Method and Design

The qualitative exploratory multiple case study design was appropriate for this study. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. The following was a discussion of the research method and design for this study.

Research Method

The three research methods are (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) mixed methods. Quantitative research includes the analysis of identified variables to determine a relationship, significance, or correlation (Stake, 2013). Researchers use a quantitative method to explore empirical data and present statistical information to the reader to substantiate findings (Yin, 2014). A quantitative method relies on statistical data and may not provide information on the lived experiences of research participants (Hoare & Hoe, 2013; Upjohn, Attwood, Lerotholi, Pfeiffer, & Verheyen, 2013; Yin, 2014). The quantitative method has historical dominance in leadership research, and qualitative research has gained popularity in addressing more in-depth leadership topics (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A quantitative study does not align with the purpose of this study as I collected data through semistructured interviews guided by open-ended questions that addressed my research question.

Mixed methods research is increasingly popular in leadership studies. A key factor supporting this trend is the tendency for researchers to utilize a holistic view to examine leadership (Bryman & Bell, 2015). A mixed method study, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, may offer more substantive data and enhance the validity of study findings (Goldman et al., 2015; Lunde, Heggen, & Strand, 2013; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Researchers give the same value to both qualitative and quantitative methods when they use a mixed method (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The statistical component of a quantitative approach may diminish the depth of explanation and understanding of the phenomenon of this study. A mixed method does not align with the purpose of this study because quantitative data are not needed to address the research question.

Researchers use qualitative methods to explore a phenomenon and do not include known variables in the study (Yin, 2014). The purpose of this doctoral study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. According to Moustakas (1994), a review of the data obtained during face-to-face interviews produced common themes. Hytti and Nieminen (2013) stated that drama exercises by providing enacted experience could contribute to (a) creating, (b) reinforcing, or (c) complementing different forms of entrepreneurial experience. Hytti's and Nieminen's results were encouraging for those who advocated using drama in training programs for entrepreneurs. Hytti and Nieminen mentioned drama sessions provide powerful experiences that might otherwise be out of reach of the participant as well as argued that drama can be an effective tool in

entrepreneurship training offered to train entrepreneurs.

A qualitative method was suitable for exploring leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. For the purpose of this study, I selected a qualitative method instead of a quantitative or mixed method. Qualitative researchers aim to understand peoples' thoughts and actions (Myers, 2013). Qualitative researchers seek the deep motivation of a respondent's mind-set (Barnham, 2015), and focus on details, whereas quantitative researchers focus on data volume (Anyan, 2013). Qualitative research was most effective for (a) understanding people's motivations, (b) reasons, and (c) the context of beliefs and actions in an exhaustive manner (Myers, 2013). Potter (2013) asserted the qualitative approach examines how people make sense of the world. For these reasons, a qualitative method enhanced my understanding of the research topic than a quantitative or mixed method. Using qualitative research, I explored the participants' leadership skills used for sustaining new businesses for more than 5 years. Moreover, I explored unexpected information from the participants' responses. I used a qualitative method because a qualitative method allowed participants a broad platform to share experiences on the research topic.

Research Design

The research design for a study depends on understanding and analysis of data collection and the ability to explore personal perceptions (Yin, 2014). A multiple case study was the qualitative research design I used for this doctoral study. A multiple case study design allows the researcher to examine the difference in cases and understand

observable fact (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). A multiple case study was most appropriate that provided a complete understanding of the business practice under exploration in this study. Qualitative research designs considered for this study included (a) narrative inquiry, (b) phenomenology, and (c) case study (Yin, 2014). Narrative inquiry is based on information gathered in the field such as stories, autobiography, journals, letters, conversations, personal items, and memories to comprehend the way people develop meaning in their lives (Gockel, 2013). The narrative approach usually relates to lived experiences of an individual while an ethnographic study is a rational approach to identifying and understanding the behavior within a particular context (Robinson, 2013). A narrative inquiry design did not support the purpose of my study because this study did not focus on the behavior of a social group or collect stories from individuals. A narrative inquiry design focuses on the behavior of a social group and collect stories from individuals (Petty et al., 2012; Robinson, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Researchers use a phenomenological design to clarify the meaning and individual lived experiences to increase knowledge of the phenomenon (Finlay, 2012; Kenny & Fourie 2014; O'Reilly, Paper, & Marx, 2012). Phenomenological design did not support the purpose of this study because phenomenological study use lived experiences using interviews as a single source of evidence. A case study is sufficiently flexible to enable a researcher to adapt to available data sources and procedures (Zivkovic, 2012). Yin (2014) mentioned that researchers using a case study design seek to describe how and why a series of participants' experiences happened. Wahyuni (2012) argued that case study

researchers should use a multiple case study design involving multiple sites and methods to analyze collected data. A case study design was the most appropriate qualitative design for addressing the specific business problem in this study. The use of multiple sources of evidence including interviews and document review is important to corroborate findings and ensure data are complete (Petty et al., 2012; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). A case study design includes a review of one or multiple cases (i.e., organization or group) (Yin, 2014). Additionally, a case study design includes data collection from multiple sources (i.e., interviews, observation, and historical documentation) (Yin, 2014). Data collection for this study included interviews of participants and reviews of relevant organization documents. A case study design was appropriate this study.

The purpose of this study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their businesses successfully beyond 5 years. I sought to understand participants experiences and how the participants sustain their businesses by asking in-depth, probing questions. This multiple case study design included a review of leadership skills, procedures, company reports, curriculum vitae of managers, and interviews with managers. According to Yin (2014) a researchers design facilitates the collection of the required data to answer the research question and support the study findings.

Researchers use different sample sizes to achieve data saturation, and member checking helps achieve data saturation (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Member checking requires the researcher to provide each participant with a summary of their interview, ask them to verify, and to confirm the information provided is accurate

and complete (Yin, 2014). Data saturation is the continual collection of data until the data collected becomes repetitious and no new information emerges (Walker, 2012). Data saturation may occur when analyzing data collected from the interviews, which is the primary strategy for data collection (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I used document review because it increases the chances of achieving data saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The primary source of data for case studies is interviews; however, researchers are encouraged to use different sources of data such as (a) observations, (b) document reviews, (c) archival records, and (d) physical artifacts enhance the validity of the research (Yin, 2014). Second data sources, such as document review, enhance the chances of achieving data saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). To ensure data saturation, I asked participants in this study to expand on answers and asked probing follow-up questions to clarify meanings. Qualitative researchers frequently rely on member checking to ensure credibility by giving participants opportunities to correct errors, challenge interpretations, and assess results (Reilly, 2013).

Dworkin (2012) asserted that data saturation relies on many factors that are not under the researcher's influence. Whether the population is homogenous or heterogeneous, the competence level of the researcher is to determine data saturation. In qualitative research, the adequacy of sample size depends on the view of saturation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2014). The participants in this study included the managers within home health care agencies with the most knowledge to address the research question.

Researchers use several strategies to achieve data saturation, and one strategy is to conduct additional interviews with more participants until no new data emerge. Yin (2014) mentioned that two to three participants are an adequate sample size and the researcher should continue interviewing if data saturation not reached with the initial study sample. A different strategy consists of using the member checking technique, which does not require additional participants (Richardson et al., 2013). Member checking requires the researcher to provide each participant with a summary of their interview and ask the participant if the synthesis is accurate or if additional information should be included (Richardson et al., 2013). According to Morse, Lowery, and Steury (2014), the researcher analyzes any new information collected during this process, synthesizes the data, and presents the summary to the participants again for verification (Richardson et al., 2013). This strategy results in an iterative process of data collection and member checking until no new data exist to collect (Richardson et al., 2013).

Population and Sampling

A critical stage in planning a research study is determining the right population, sample size, and sample selection method to enhance the thoroughness of the study (Robinson, 2014). According to Elo et al. (2014), researchers do not have a commonly accepted sample size for qualitative studies because the ideal sample is contingent on the purpose of the study, research questions, and richness of the data. The basis of the sample of participants is to explore diversity of leadership skills rather than statistical significance (Elsawah, Guillaume, Filatova, Rook, & Jakeman, 2015).

Yin (2014) argued the size of the sample on multiple case studies should be large enough for the researcher to obtain redundancy of responses or data saturation. Yin suggested a sample size of three cases when conducting multiple case studies, and three cases or more are sufficient to predict an accurate replication of real-life experiences within the context of the phenomenon. Researchers conducting multiple case studies with a sample of three may obtain rich data using interviews and other sources of data to explore the phenomenon under investigation (Robinson, 2014; Rowley, 2012; Yin, 2014). For this case study, a sample size of three participants was sufficient to achieve data saturation. I conducted follow-up member checking with study participants that ensured that I correctly interpreted their responses. In justifying the sample size I selected for this study, I relied on the guidance of Rubin and Rubin (2012). Rubin and Rubin claimed that in conducting a qualitative study a small sample size should not detract from the legitimacy of the study. Sample members that I selected for this study had experience with leadership that answered the research question under exploration. Sample members were managers of home health care agencies. The specific population for this study was managers of home health care agencies within 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland. The sample consisted of home health care managers with leadership skills that helped sustain their businesses successfully beyond 5 years. Elsawah et al. (2015) asserted data collection should conclude when the researcher finds no new information. According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), Stake (2013), and Yin (2014), the use of a multiple case study typically leads to more robust outcomes than a single case study.

Broadly, sampling methods are classified as probability and non-probability samples (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013). Probability samples are the gold standard in sampling methodology and for ensuring generalisibility of the study results to the target population (Acharya et al., 2013). According to Acharya et al. probability or random sampling means, each individual in the population has an equal chance selection in the study. Random sampling of cases is usually infeasible for psychotherapy research so opportunistic and purposive sampling is used instead (Krause, 2015) and such sampling does not justify generalizations from sample to population-distribution statistics. Random sampling was not suitable because of specific group of participants required for the study.

Krause (2015) mentioned a purposive sampling allows the generalization the sample occur at least frequently in the population sampled from, which is enough for suggesting and testing some psychotherapy theories and informing some psychotherapy practice. Scholars used purposive sampling instead of probability-based sampling in qualitative studies (Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, & Reid, 2014). Purposive sample works well with exploratory studies seeking in-depth information (Daniel, 2012) and purposive sample involves small sections of the population in the study. Purposive sampling is appropriate to support a qualitative research design and semistructured interviews (Yin, 2014). The purposive sampling strategy consisted of screening and selecting the participants involved in management in the home health care agency. I used a purposeful sampling technique to select participants for this study. In qualitative studies, participants must have lived the phenomenon under investigation to provide information on the topic

(Patton, 2002; Roy et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). According to Marshall and Rossman (2014),

Palinkas et al. (2015), and Yin (2014), purposive sampling strategy supported a

researcher's ability to choose the suitable participant proficiency to contribute to the

study. Purposive sampling in this study consisted of managers in home health care

agencies with the necessary experience and expertise in their chosen field.

   Patton (2002) noted that purposeful sampling is a means to select information-

rich cases to understand the phenomenon. According to Elo et al. (2014), qualitative

studies do not have a commonly accepted sample size because the ideal sample is

contingent on the purpose of the study, research questions, and richness of the data. Van

Der Velden and El Emam (2013) used purposeful sampling consisting of semistructured

interviews of 20 hospital patients between the ages of 12 and 18 years old to explore how

teenage patients maintain their confidentiality when using social media sites. Garg and

Brewer (2011) used purposeful sampling to explore the perceptions of 127 people

regarding the security, safety, and confidentiality of an adult monitoring system for

patients plagued with ill health who resided in India. I used purposeful sampling when I

recruited participants by following up on a list of contacts that I obtained from the

Baltimore Chamber of Commerce, Maryland Health Commission website. The contact

list provided me the opportunity to gain access to managers in home health care agencies.

I established a working relationship with interviewees and remained open to the

participants, which enabled me to conduct the research with knowledgeable managers of

home health care agencies. Mukeredzi (2012) proposed that during data collection, a

researcher should remain responsive, flexible, and empathetic to help interviewees overcome discomfort.

Francis et al. (2010) explained in their 10+3 rule for saturation measurement that interview must continue until the interviews fail to reveal new information. Marshall and Rossman (2014), Stake (2013), and Yin (2014) recommended the researcher continue interviewing until data reach saturation for participants selected for the study. To ensure data saturation, I continued interviewing participants and reviewed relevant organization documents until data reach saturation. Elsawah et al. (2015) asserted that data collection should conclude when the researcher finds no new concepts. The achievement of data saturation requires the continual collection of data until repetition in the data collected, and no new information emerges (Stake, 2013; Walker, 2012; Yin, 2014). If I were unable to achieve data saturation with the interview data and document review, I would have recruited additional participants and continued interviewing and reviewing relevant documents until I achieved data saturation.

I selected participants that met the following requirements: (a) the participant supervised more than 5 employees; (b) each participant had successfully managed their home health care agency for more than 5 years; (c) participants were at least 18 years of age; and (d) each participant managed a health care agency licensed by the State of Maryland. These selection criteria resulted in a study population that was somewhat homogeneous, as they provided geographical (from Baltimore, Maryland) and physical (managers of home health care agencies) homogeneity. The level of homogeneity of a study population allows for augmented depth of study and enables the researcher to use a

smaller sample when compared to a heterogeneous population (Robinson, 2014; Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). A homogenous sample increases the likelihood of obtaining meaningful data to address the research question (Robinson, 2014; Roy et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). According to Bell (2013), Stake (2013), and Yin (2014) an appropriate environment for conducting interviews is a place in which the participants are not restricted or uncomfortable. I conducted interviews in a setting that was convenient and comfortable for the participants. I worked with participants and selected an interview setting that was quiet, convenient, and free from interruptions. I did not conduct interviews at my place of work or the place of work of study participants.

Ethical Research

The Walden University IRB requires researchers to follow certain ethical standards. I used Walden University ethical guidelines and the Belmont Report protocol (Belmont Report, 1979) that ensured adherence to ethical principles and standards in the process of this research study. I followed the three basic ethics of research involving human subjects, which are the principles of (a) respect of persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) justice (Belmont Report, 1979).

Ethics are a matter of understanding conflicts from moral imperatives and the method of embracing conflicts (Avasthi, Ghosh, Sarkar, & Grover, 2013). Ethical concerns may arise on occasion during a research process (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Mitigating risks include open and trustworthy communication with participants (Carullo et al., 2013). Different modes of ethical breaches are possible, which range from divulging a participant's identity directly or through inference (Marshall & Rossman,

2014). The principles for ethical research include, but are not limited to (a) focus on the

participants, (b) stakeholders, and (c) peers (Anderson et al., 2012). Anderson et al.

mentioned that ethics is responsive to the situation and flexible throughout the research

process.

The research ethics require that researchers seek the consent of participants prior

to an interview (Flick, 2014). Informed consent confers the interviewees' rights to

protection throughout the research exercise (Flick, 2014). One principle of ethical

research is ensuring that all steps in the research comply with participant's organization

policies and are in place before participant interaction. To protect the confidentiality of

the participants, researchers must decrease the likelihood that readers could determine the

identity of a participant by redacting all information associated with the participant's

distinctiveness prior to distributing study information (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). I

protected the privacy and confidentiality of the participants in this study and select the

participants fairly. Participant recruitment and collection of data began after Walden

University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study proposal and issued

approval number 07-18-16-0496538. After I received Walden's IRB approval to conduct

research for this doctoral study, participants received an invitation that included a consent

form and informed them if they decided to join the study, they could still change their

mind later. The participants could withdraw from the study at any time by notifying me

via phone or in writing (e.g., postal mail, or email). Any data collected I would have

removed from the researcher's files, even after the interview was completed. Before the

interview, I provided a consent form to a participant via email and gave information

about this study before they decided to participate. I (a) provided each participant a copy

of the consent form, (b) reviewed the form with them, (c) answered any questions they

had, and (d) asked for their signature as evidence of their voluntary consent to participate

in the study. I also provided each participant a copy of the consent form to retain for their

records at the time of interview. According to Wahyuni (2012), participation in a research

study must be voluntary. I sought the consent of participants to audio record their

interviews and stated in the consent form. Before the interview, I informed orally and in

writing of their right to withdraw their participation at any stage of the data collection

process. All participants agreed to be interviewed; I permanently would have deleted all

recordings and study-related information about participants that decided to withdraw.

Participants could withdraw by not showing up for the interview; however, if participants

wanted to withdraw after the data collection and before final submission of the study,

participants had to contact me. Participants could have withdrawn from this study at any

time during the study without penalty; even after data collection was completed. I

informed participants to contact me to request their withdrawal from study participation

with any medium of communication convenient to them including (a) by phone, (b)

email, and (c) in person. The content of the consent form reiterated confidentiality of

participants and their voluntary right to withdraw from the study at any time without any

adverse consequences, even after the completion of data collection.

By signing the consent form, participants acknowledged their understanding and

willingness to participate in the research. One-on-one semistructured interviews are

beneficial for researchers as detailed responses given by participants are a reputable

source for gathering data (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014). Participants did not receive incentives other than a $20 gift card from Starbucks as a token of appreciation for their participation in study. Each participant also receives a two-page summary of the final approved study by Walden University.

In qualitative research, conducting ethical research ensures human subject protection (Allen, 2015; Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012; McAreavey & Das, 2013). Bell (2013) recommended assigning pseudonyms to participants following each interview. The identities of the home health care agencies and the study participants remained anonymous in this study. To maintain the participants' confidentiality I assigned each participant a pseudonym, which was P1, P2, or P3 that served and identified them in all study-related files and information. The folders included the participant's signed informed consent and interview notes. I assured the confidentiality of agency names by not mentioning them in this study. I took responsibility that ensured that all aspects of this doctoral study maintained ethical integrity, validity, and reliability for future research. Appendix C presented the interview protocol, I informed each participant on my protocol for securing all digital and printed study data when I ask for their participation and review the consent form for signing. Reardon et al. (2013) recommended that all data should remain in a safe location with security procedures in place. I used a locked safe and only I have access to the safe in my home office to store all data from each participant's interview data and relevant organization documents for 5 years following the end of this study per requirements of the Walden University IRB. At the end of this

period, I will destroy all printed information and digital data by shredding for all printed documents, and erasing and reformatting all digital data.

Data Collection Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Codie, 2012; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). The interview questions and the researcher are the instruments for a study (Denzin, 2013). I acted as the primary instrument for data collection for this study. Marshall and Rossman (2014) revealed that using different information sources contributes to a detailed understanding of the phenomenon explored. This section included the basis for selecting data collection instruments. Research is the writing that originates from such disciplines and flows throughout the processes (Yin, 2014). As recommended by Wahyuni (2012) for multiple case studies, the two types of primary data for this study are participant interviews and relevant organization documents. The common types of interviews in qualitative research are (a) structured, (b) unstructured, and (c) semistructured interviews, which include open-ended questions categorized by the degree of structure permitted during the interview (Rowley, 2012). Structured interviews include a greater number of questions that require relatively short responses as compared to unstructured interviews (Rowley, 2012). Unstructured interviews include fewer questions than structured interviews and resemble a conversation rather than a structured line of inquiry to collect in-depth information on the topic of research (Yin, 2014).

The primary data are usually collected using semistructured interviews with the experts in the observed topic from the case organizations (Wahyuni, 2012). I used

semistructured interviews as recommended by Rowley (2012) who stated that in a

multiple case study instruments for data collection include semistructured open-ended

interview questions and document reviews. Yin (2014) suggested guided dialogue rather

than organized queries; the line of questioning in multiple case study interviews is likely

to be fluid rather than unyielding. A face-to-face semistructured interview process is

useful for collecting data from participants to address the research query (Aguirre &

Bolton, 2014; Anyan, 2013; Glover et al., 2014). The researcher is directly involved with

the collection of data from interviews and other sources of evidence in case study

research (Yin, 2014). Researchers function as an active instrument in the process of

information collection during qualitative interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Yin (2014)

suggested the interview process establishes a connection between interviewer and

participant, and motivates the interviewee to provide detailed answers. A qualitative

researcher plays a more complex role in research, because of personal interaction with

participants, compared to the quantitative researcher (Graebner, Martin, & Roundy,

2012).

Karlsson, Friberg, Wallengren, and Öhlén (2014) noted that researchers were the

main instrument in their study and presented an analysis of how to create fieldwork

observations to document a patient's end of life care experience. A qualitative method

helped achieve the analysis and exploration for this study. Before the interviews

commenced, I followed an interview protocol and used an audio recorder to capture the

participant's conversation and responses from the semistructured interviews. A

semistructured interview allows participants the freedom to express their views on their

terms (Ayan, 2013; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2014). I used semistructured face-to-face

interviews guided by open-ended questions to answer my research question because

researchers in a semistructured interview use a list of predetermined questions from the

interview protocol, but allows enough flexibility so that the participant can provide

insights, explanations, and explore information about any topic brought up during the

interview (Stake, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014). Each interview required

approximately 60 minutes and took place at a convenient location for the participant. The

data collection instruments consisted of an audio recorder, laptop, notebook, and writing

implement. I took interview notes with the notebook and pen as the interview progressed.

These instruments ensured transcriptions were reliable and confirmed by the

interviewees. The instrument included an introductory statement ensuring the

confidentiality and reiterating the purpose of the study. A preliminary interview protocol

(see Appendix C) with basic questions for each participant was necessary. The interview

questions included topics relevant to the research question for this study. For clarity, I

had participants repeat some responses during each interview.

       The participants answered six interview questions and an additional open-ended

question that invited the participant to mention any other relevant matters not covered in

the previous six questions. Additional data collection sources included relevant

documents such as quality assurance plans and policies and procedures from each

participating organization and added to the richness of the study. Wahyuni (2012)

mentioned that, primary data is usually collected using semi-structured interviews with

the experts in the observed topic from the case organizations. The main feature of an

interview is to facilitate the interviewees to share their perspectives, stories, and experience regarding a particular social phenomenon observed by the interviewer (Wahyuni, 2012). I collected data using semistructured interviews with three managers of home health care agencies. These participants provided an in-depth account of how they successfully used leadership skills to sustain their organization.

Qualitative researchers recommend conducting an expert review of the interview questions as a strategy to enhance the quality of the questions and ensure they are clear to participants as well as to elicit the relevant information for the study (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012; McDermott & Lanahan, 2012; Rowley, 2012). I enhanced the credibility and transferability of my data collection instrument through expert review and member checking. Jones (2014) stated that expert review of a data collection instrument enhances validity and reliability by receiving feedback from an expert through a mock interview. The purpose of an expert reviewer of the interview protocol and questions is to enhance and refine the research instrument from the expert reviewer's comments (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012; Rowley, 2012). The validity of the qualitative data is dependent on the ability of the interviewer to produce data focused on the topic of interest within the time allotted for discussion (Hurst et al., 2015). Likewise, the credibility of the research is not only reliant on the implementation of procedures, but also on the consciousness of the researcher (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). All data remained stored in an information system for keeping track of information, emerging understandings such as research logs, reflective journals with my notes in them, and cataloging and labeling systems. The information system included the interview recordings from the participants

and information from the in-person member checking follow-up interviews with the participants.

      I enhanced the credibility and transferability of the data collection instrument/process by member checking, review of relevant documents, and follow-up interviews as recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2014). I conducted follow-up member checking interviews to enhance the rigor, reliability, and validity of my study findings. After I summarized each set of interview responses, I contacted each participant by phone, set up a time, and reviewed their responses with them. Due to their busy schedule, I was able to meet two participants in person and one participant review done over the phone. Participants verified the information was the correct information that they wanted to provide and agreed with the themes that I identified from the interviews. Member checking is one avenue to prompt the researcher to organize information into clear and manageable sections that are consistent with each participant (Hovmand et al., 2012). Member checking consists of providing each participant with a summary and interpretation of their interview to provide them an opportunity to validate the accuracy and completeness of the researcher's interpretation of the participant's responses (Richard et al., 2013). Member checking is done as part of a follow up during the study to confirm data captured (Yin, 2014). Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions at any time during the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Yin, 2014). Member checking is conducted shortly after the interview and before conducting data analysis (Harper & Cole, 2012; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2014). Approximately one week after I completed each interview, I conducted member checking. I used member checking to enhance the

credibility of this study and ensured that I captured the meaning of each participant's responses.

Data Collection Technique

Researchers use face-to-face personal interviews to collect data for qualitative studies (Haahr, Norlyk & Hall, 2014; Potter et al., 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2014).The advantage of semistructured interviews is the ability of the researcher to preplan the questions in advance allowing the interviewer to prepare, present competently to the participant, and provide the opportunity for the participant to express their views (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview protocol serves as a guide to the researcher for conducting the interviews (Yin, 2014). A semistructured face-to-face interview method provides a guide to interview protocol (De Ceunynck, Kusumastuti, Hannes, Janssens, & Wets, 2013). I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews with each participant as well as recorded and transcribed two interviews. One participant did not consent to audio recording however agreed for me to take notes, which I did. An interview is an appropriate technique for collecting data and establishing rapport in a case study format (Yin, 2014). The advantage of using interviews as a source of data is the ability to prepare interviews in a manner that targets the case study topic directly (Yin, 2014). Interviews are perceptive and can uncover explanations and provide the personal views of each participant (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Stake, 2013; Yin, 2014). Interviews have disadvantages in that they could appear biased, particularly if the questions are not presented adequately (e.g., leading questions), or if the participant has a weak recollection of events. For example, the interviewer's perspective may influence the

interviewee responses or the responses may influence the questions posed by the interviewer (Yin, 2014).

The advantage of a semistructured interview is the relatively short time required to conduct the interview while still providing in-depth information on the research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Rowley, 2012; Stake, 2013). A semistructured interview is easier to conduct for the level of skill and experience of a novice researcher (Rowley, 2012). A potential disadvantage of a semistructured interview is less information collected during each interview when compared with information collected through unstructured interviews (Rowley, 2012). The reduced amount of data collected during semistructured interviews makes the processing of data more feasible as the researcher is obliged to analyze all data that are collected (Rowley, 2012). In general, the design of an interview protocol is less involved and requires less pre-knowledge than the design of a survey questionnaire (Rowley, 2012). The interview process includes preparation on the part of the researcher (Mikene et al., 2013). In semistructured interviews, for example, the interviews may digress from the question that is asked, and the researcher should recognize when to let the interviewee present his or her thoughts and when to return to the question that has not been answered (McDermott & Lanahan, 2012; Mikene et al., 2013; Yin, 2014)).

Before conducting the semistructured interviews, I conducted an expert review of the interview protocol with an experienced individual that was in the target population in the position of manager of home health care agency. Researchers recommend an expert review of the interview protocol as an important strategy to improve the interview

questions through the feedback of a member of the target population (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012; McDermott & Lanahan, 2012; Rowley, 2012). The expert review consisted of me conducting an interview with an expert reviewer, which enabled me to fine-tune the interview questions and ensured the questions were clear to the participants as recommended by Rowley (2012) and Wahyuni (2012). An expert review serves as a practice in performing the entire interview process including providing the background of the research to a participant as well as the logistics of the interview such as audio recording (Banks, 2015). The expert reviewer provided me guidance on how to improve my interview protocol and questions. The semistructured interviews lasted less than 60 minutes in length with managers in the home health care agencies. I explained the procedure to each participant that included (a) the type of interview, (b) the general format, and (c) the ultimate objective. To capture the entire interview, I recorded two interviews and the two participants consented to audio recording on an audio recorder. The third participant agreed for me to take notes because I did not audio record the interview. The audio recorder had encryption and password protection to secure the information. To build trust with the staff and leadership, I was (a) open, (b) transparent, and (c) communicated the purpose of and process for this study. Communications included (a) an e-mail with the details of the study, (b) a copy of the organization consent form, (c) a copy of the interview questions, (d) a copy of the participant's consent form, and (e) relevant organization documents that were available for review. Before the start of the data collection, I called and emailed potential participants a consent form and scheduled for their interviews. Utilization of an interview protocol (see Appendix C)

provided me with a standard for data collection that ensured credibility and transferability of the data.

I collected data from two primary data sources that were interviews and relevant organization documents. Marshall and Rossman (2014) recognized that multiple sources of data, such as observations, interviews, and document assessment identify case study research. Yin (2014) suggested that researchers take notes immediately after each interview and throughout all stages of the data collection process to ensure vital information is not forgotten or lost. Karlsson et al. (2014) created fieldwork observations to document a patient's end of life care experience. White and Oelke (2012) included field notes as a strategy in collecting data in a nursing facility. Notes assisted me in obtaining additional information that emerged during time I conducted the interviews with the participants.

Silverman (2013) suggested that an interview protocol enables researchers to present the same information and ask the same interview questions to all the participants to mitigate bias. I included the protocol for this doctoral study in Appendix C. The participant had advance knowledge of the length of the interview as described in the invitation (see Appendix B) and the interview protocol outlined in Appendix C. After member checking and agreement from both interviewer and interview participant on the interview questions, alpha and numerical codes were assigned to the participant, per organization and department to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Interviews are instrumental in understanding experiences, opinions, attitudes, values, and processes (Rowley, 2012).

Other collection techniques also included member checking (transcript summary interpretations for each interview question with participants). Member checking is a technique to enhance credibility and robustness of the data collected through interviews (Houghton et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). Member checking is the process to provide each participant the summary of the researcher's interpretations of the participant's responses, and request that the participant verify the accuracy of the summary (Richardson et al., 2013). After each interview, I prepared a summary of the interview responses by each participant and conduct member checking. I provided the summary of my interpretations to each participant and ask if the summary of responses accurately reflected their responses, and if they could provide greater clarity to the information or additional information. Providing an opportunity for study participants to review the accuracy of the interview synthesis can enhance the quality of the data collected (Harper & Cole, 2012).

Data Organization Technique

The preparation for data organization begins before conducting interviews by ensuring that the instruments and materials perform as expected (Potter et al., 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2014) discussed the need for an easy retrieval system to collect data for analysis and the need to adapt pre-defined categories during the analysis phase if required. Yin (2014) mentioned the need to properly format, label, and categorize interview notes. The benefits of a case study database include (a) the ability to make raw data readily retrievable for later analysis; (b) accessibility for external readers or inspectors; and (c) facilitation of the creation of an audit trail with cross-references with

other sources of data (Wahyuni, 2012; Stake, 2013; Yin 2012).

After I interviewed participants, the interview notes and recordings remained in a secure folder until the data analysis phase. A software program such as NVivo®11 can be useful for data organization, analysis, and management (Richardson et al., 2013; Rowley, 2012; Silverman, 2013). I used Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel programs to store and organize data in this study, and NVivo®11 served as the primary software for data analysis. I personally transcribed information I obtained from each participant through the interviews. Mulcahy (2012) and Yin (2014) recommended transcribing the digital recording immediately following the interview. Completing all data processing within 7 days of each interview minimized human error in data transcription and interpretation. I established individual folders with the unique identifier codes for each study participant prior to data collection to ensure efficiency during data gathering. Rubin and Rubin (2012) defined coding as a function of organizing the surface level of information, ideas, or themes as a challenging task. I reviewed the data, made necessary notes, conducted member checking, and uploaded the data onto NVivo®11 software.

Upon conclusion of the interviews, I placed interview notes in a computer folder corresponding to the unique identifier assigned to each study participant, shredded the hard copies after I backed up copies of my data and study, and stored copies at my home office. Yin (2014) argued that maintaining a research journal was a useful approach for data organization. I developed a journal file containing interview notes during the interviews, and then arrange them in categories and descriptions from interview responses. Data security included storing all raw data in a locked safe for 5 years after the

completion of the study. Marshall and Rossman (2014) and Bell (2013) suggested

researchers categorize and label data for consistency. I saved all relevant documents in

labeled file format and categorized the files using identifiers. Data storage on an external

hard drive and a backup copy must continue for 5 years following the end of the study.

Upon completion of the transcription and approval of this study, I will continue to

maintain the electronic data and all printed study information for 5 years, then shred

printed materials, and erase digital data to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis in qualitative research involves (a) collecting data,

(b) analyzing data, (c) organizing data, (d) synthesizing data, (e) searching for patterns,

(f) discovering what is critical and what is to be learned, and (g) deciding what is relevant

(Lawrence & Tar, 2013). Best practices for a qualitative study require the researcher to

set aside all prior experiences and prejudgments as the data analysis process involves a

search for all possible meanings through reduction and analysis of specific statements

into themes (Yin, 2014). Each interview question aligned with the research question that

gathered information on the leadership skills that managers in home health care agencies

need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years. Semistructured interviews with a

manager and relevant organization documents from each of three different home health

care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland provided the information

for this study.

Use of multiple sources of data improves the reliability of the information

included in the study (James, 2012). I used a second source of data, such a review of

home health care agencies quality assurance (QA) plan documents, and policies and procedures (P&P) in combination with interviews for methodological triangulation for this study. Triangulation adds to the richness of the research and helps establish credibility (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Baskarada (2014) stated that triangulation requires more than one approach to investigate the research question and enhance confidence in the findings. Data triangulation involves gathering data through several sampling strategies to enable data gathering from multiple people at different times and in different social settings (Denzin, 2012). Triangulation is a strategy used by researchers to achieve corroboration of findings and to ensure data are complete (Houghton et al., 2013). I triangulated the interview data with archival reports, internal publications, and interview notes using methodological triangulation that ensured credibility during the data analysis.

According to Wahyuni (2012) and Yin (2014), the four methods of triangulation are: (a) data triangulation, which involves the use of multiple sources of evidence such as interviews, document review, and observations; (b) investigator triangulation using different evaluators of data; (c) theory triangulation, which uses different perspectives to view the same dataset; and (d) methodological triangulation, which refers to the use of different methods. Methodological triangulation is an approach to help readers understand the data (Yin, 2014). I used methodological triangulation to triangulate data from interviews and relevant company documents. This enhanced the credibility of the study findings and helped achieve data saturation. A case study research design uses different sources of data, and this design lends itself to the use of a methodological

triangulation technique (Yin, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggested using more than one type of data.

In the data analysis processes from the (a) interviews, (b) documents review, and (c) notes taken during the interview, Wahyuni (2012) suggested that a researcher should dismantle, segment, and reassemble the data to develop themes and draw inferences. I transcribed the interview data as soon as possible after each interview. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested transcribing interviews (a) as soon as possible while the interview data are fresh in your mind, (b) to compare transcribed material with interview notes, (c) to capture the data word for word, and (d) to double check with each member to enhance accuracy. I provided each study participant to review my interpretations of their interview responses, which is a process termed member checking. Member checking involves brief, follow-up interviews with each participant and allows the participants an opportunity to ensure the accuracy of interpretation of the participant's responses by the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Participants added additional information and insights; I made changes and continued until each participant confirmed that my interpretations of their interview responses reflected their perceptions and experiences accurately.

I used NVivo®11 qualitative analysis software that assisted in identifying themes from the data. NVivo®11 software enables researchers to (a) organize, (b) analyze unstructured data, and (c) import the transcribed interview data. The data transcribed included (a) archival data, (b) financial data, (c) statistics (method triangulation), and (d) transcription interpretation (member checking) into the software for qualitative analysis

as recommended by Onwuegbuzie, Leech, and Collins (2012). The data analysis process includes (a) transcribing the recorded interview data verbatim, (b) creating a code logbook for my personal use to identify precise participants, (c) developing codes for the interview data, and (d) using the codes to develop themes. This process helped identify central themes.

I followed Rowley's (2012) and Wahyuni's (2012) data coding recommendations that data coding consist of assigning labels (codes) that represent the core topic of segments of data. I coded the data collected through the interviews and a review of relevant company documents by coding the data into three broad categories that I had identified through my literature review process. The main categories were (a) leadership skills on business management, (b) leadership skills of managers on capital growth, and (c) leadership skills on knowledge and performance. I added categories as I gathered and analyzed the data. I included new codes identified from the data review as recommended by Elo et al. (2014) and Woods, Paulus, Atkins, and Macklin (2015). I continued the coding process by identifying and coding data into categories of topics. Review and comparison of the different codes led to interpretation and categorization of the data based on the themes identified through the literature review. Researchers refer to this approach to data analysis as thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012). Using NVivo v11 software, I completed a comparison of the key themes resulting from the analysis of the data collected through interviews and document reviews against the key themes from the literature review and conceptual framework to understand the correlation of the study results with my literature review findings.

The themes I identified may contribute to leadership skills managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years. The conceptual framework grounding this study included transformational leadership and the concept of leadership theory. Yin (2014) stated that assignment of codes protects the confidentiality of the participants (e.g., P1= participant 1, P2= participant 2, and P3= participant 3). Only I had access to each participant's identification. Following interview transcription stage, each transcribed interview had the participants' substitute code for data uploaded into the NVivo 11 software for data analysis. After I coded the data and developed patterns and themes with NVivo 11 software, I compared the emergent themes' alignment with the conceptual framework theories and existing literature. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Yin (2014) after the data analysis process is complete, and the thematic coding produced, the process of analyzing will help answer the research question. I used data analysis in identifying the preferred leadership skills needed to sustain new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. Interview transcriptions are essential for data analysis and clarification of findings of a case study (Rohde & Ross-Gordon, 2012). The strength of these interviews is reliant upon the questions posed and the clarity of the responses (Rohde & Ross-Gordon, 2012). Because interviews are the foundation of the study, I carefully articulated my interview questions to avoid individual bias.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are quantitative research quality measures (Yin, 2014). Reliability is the ability of others to repeat a study and achieve similar results (Zikmund & Babin, 2012), and enables researchers to replicate study results (White, Oelke, &

Friesen, 2012). Enhancing the validity of a study requires achieving convergence through information collected from multiple sources (Yin, 2014). Validity involves the ability to confirm the credibility and trustworthiness of the research as presented in the study (White et al., 2012). The following describes how I addressed reliability and validity within this study.

Validity and reliability are two elements that any qualitative researcher should address while planning a study, evaluating results, and assessing the quality of the study (Yin, 2014). Triangulation is a part of qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2014) viewed triangulation as a strategy to ensure the data interpretations are credible. As recommended by Marshall and Rossman (2014) for qualitative research studies, I conducted member checking and used triangulation, which enhanced the validity of this study. The participants I selected for this study had successful leadership skills, which provided me with credible information that analyzed data and discussed the findings. The quality measures for qualitative research are (a) dependability, (b) credibility, (c) transferability, and (d) confirmability (Houghton et al., 2013; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013; Wahyuni, 2012; Yin, 2014).

Dependability

Dependability is a significant consideration during the study design phase, and qualitative researchers include mechanisms for ensuring dependability in the design of their studies to safeguard the integrity of collected data and findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In qualitative research, dependability is analogous to reliability in quantitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). To eliminate doubt and increase

dependability, maintaining consistency throughout the study is critical, from the initial

stage to the conclusion (Svensson & Doumas, 2013). To keep this consistency, the

interview questions are an important contribution as these are significant to assure

dependability. Proper transcription of interview data is critical, and Harper and Cole

(2012) suggested that recording of all interviews would ensure the accuracy and

dependability. Denzin (2012) reported that qualitative researchers establish the

trustworthiness of their research through a focus on dependability rather than reliability. I

used the interview protocol (see Appendix C) to demonstrate dependability to minimize

the effect of prejudice and misunderstandings as recommended by Yin (2014). I arranged

for each interview with participants in a quiet and private setting at a mutually agreed

location and at a time convenient for participants. Jacob and Furgerson (2012),

McDermott and Lanahan (2012), and Mikene et al. (2013) stated that a quiet location is

important for interviews as it avoids interruptions and provides privacy. To support the

dependability of my data collection process, I found a convenient location available for

interviews. Privacy helped minimize interruptions, so the participants were not distracted.

According to Yin (2014) and Rowley (2012), interview privacy will support

confidentiality and ensure the flow of information during the interview. The standard

protocol for the face-to-face interview is open-ended questions (Yin, 2014). Member

checking and data collection techniques enhanced consistency. Member checking

consists of providing a summary and interpretation of each interview presented to

participants for their review (Yin, 2014). I summarized the information gathered during

interviews and provided each participant with a copy to confirm the accuracy of my

interpretations, which enhanced the dependability of this study. Following a consistent approach to implementing the research method and design throughout a study supports the dependability of the research (Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). I did not conduct a pilot study for this study, but I conducted an expert review. I enhanced the credibility and dependability of my data collection instrument through expert review. Jones (2014) stated that expert review of a data collection instrument enhances credibility and dependability by receiving feedback from an expert reviewer. The purpose of an expert reviewer of the interview protocol is to enhance and fine-tune the research instrument from the expert reviewer's comments (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012; Rowley, 2012).

Credibility

Credibility is the researcher's account of the truth outlined (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Toledo and Peters (2013) indicated that credibility occurs when the participants' perceptions align with the researcher's portrayal of them. Harper and Cole (2012) mentioned that member checking aids in accuracy and credibility of the recording of the participant's interview. Member checking is more efficient than transcript review as it validates the interpretation of the researcher and not a verbatim transcription (Harper & Cole, 2012). I used member checking during data collection to help ensure the credibility of my research. White et al. (2012) recommended keeping an accurate and comprehensive record of the steps employed in the study. To ensure reliable data, I audio recorded interview sessions and transcribed the audio recording. I remained open throughout the interview process to ensure credibility. Member checking will help with clarification of data (Yin, 2014). Triangulation consists of comparing the results obtained

by different data collection methods (Denzin, 2012). I used a combination of face-to-face interviews and organizational documents from managers of home health care agencies to enhance the credibility of my findings. Member checking and triangulation are two techniques to ensure dependability and credibility to the study (Houghton et al., 2013). The interview protocol described in Appendix C contributed to the rigor of the study, provided a clear outline and good procedures, so that another researcher could gain a complete understanding and, the researcher has a complete understanding and, in principle, be able to follow the same steps to arrive at the same conclusion.

Transferability

The readers of research apply transferability, which is a determination of whether similar processes might apply to other settings and cultures (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The research question posed for this study directly influenced the strategies used to achieve transferability. To enhance transferability, I gave complete details for this study related to the type of industry, geographic location, and the population. From a qualitative perspective, a determination of transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one transferring the study methods and findings (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I prepared thick descriptions that demonstrated transferability. As recommended by Houghton et al. (2013), a thick description strategy requires the researcher to be able to describe the context of the research rigrously so that readers can make judgments as to similarities with other situations. The burden of demonstrating that a set of findings applies to another context rest more with another researcher who would make that transfer than the original researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The reader decides on the

transferability of the findings to a different situation (Houghton et al., 2013). Researchers

can share, or transfer, the information to advance further research. Although qualitative

researchers do not expect their findings as transferable to all other settings, the lesson

learned in one setting might prove useful to other researchers (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2015). The richness and level of the amount of detail in the background and the context

of the findings helps the reader make their decisions on the study (Bloomberg & Volpe,

2015). A future researcher who participates in the same study and achieves similar results

meets the requirements for transferability (Yin, 2014). I documented thick descriptions of

steps in this study to allow for reproducibility of the research to demonstrate

transferability.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to whether others can confirm the findings to ensure that the

results reflect the understandings and experiences from observed participants, rather than

the researchers preferences (Wahyuni, 2012). The implications of this study's findings are

the results of the research, rather than an outcome of the biases and subjectivity of the

researcher. Similar to dependability, one of the vital elements that are part of an effective

confirmability is the maintenance of the audit trail (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015).

Interviewing three participants helped ensure data saturation was achieved as

recommended by Yin (2014).

Data Saturation

Data saturation is a tool used for ensuring that adequate and quality data collected

to support the study and frequently reported in qualitative research (Walker, 2012). Data

saturation is a crucial methodological concept in the organization and content of qualitative research (Walker, 2012). To achieve data saturation, I (a) interviewed three participants, (b) used the strategy of member checking, and (c) document review until no new data emerged. The chance of achieving data saturation increases by using a second data source such as document review (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The achievement of data saturation requires the continual collection of data until no new data emerges (Walker, 2012). Data saturation may occur when analyzing data collected from the interviews, which is the primary strategy for data collection (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Targeting managers with information needed to answer the research question is a logical course when seeking data saturation. I discussed my interpretation of transcripts from the initial interviews with the participants through member checking. Follow-up interviews contribute to member checking for the richness of data and achievement of saturation (Yin, 2014).

Methodological triangulation is an analysis that I used to compare data sources to help me determine when I had achieved data saturation. I collected data from multiple sources. A case study research design uses different sources of data, and this design lends itself to the use of methodological triangulation (Yin, 2014). I used methodological triangulation to triangulate data from interviews and relevant company documents such as organizational mission statements, policies, procedures, and home health care agency quality assurance documents. This enhanced the credibility of the study findings and helped to achieve data saturation. I targeted a sample of three managers from home health

care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland. I used data saturation as the criterion to determine when to stop collecting data.

Transition and Summary

In section 2, I reinstated the purpose of this study, identified the role of the researcher, and included a description of the participants. I discussed and elaborated on the rationale for selecting a qualitative methodology and multiple case study design over other methods and designs. This section included descriptions of the (a) population, (b) sampling technique, (c) ethics, (d) data collection, (e) data organization, (f) data analysis, and (g) reliability and validity. Section 3 includes the findings of the completed research and the importance of the results to professional practice. The study addresses managerial leadership skills necessary for the sustainability of home health care agencies. I discuss the implications for social change, recommendations for actions and further study, and reflections. The research concludes with recommendations for future studies.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In section 3, I present the findings of this research study. This section includes an overview of the study, presentation of the findings, implications for social change, applications to professional practice, recommendations for action, and recommendations for further research. This section ends with my reflections and a summary of study conclusions.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. In devising my study, I drew from Northouse's (2015) assertion that leadership skills can be acquired and leaders can be trained to develop them. I conducted semistructured, face-to-face interviews to collect information from leaders of three home health care agencies located within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland, who had successfully managed their agencies beyond 5 years. In addition to the interviews, I reviewed relevant company documents such as charts and other records related to leadership skills that were provided to me by my participants.

Comparing data from relevant agency documents, reflective journal, and results from interviews led to a comprehensive analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). I conducted the interviews in a private environment where the participants felt comfortable and provided detailed answers. The duration of each interview was less than 60 minutes. I triangulated data from the interviews, documents reviews, and the reflexive journal using NVivo v11 software. Analysis of data yielded four themes related to leadership skills (a)

business management, (b) capital growth, (c) knowledge and performance management, and (d) transformational leadership.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was: What leadership skills do managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses beyond 5 years? The four main themes that emerged from my data analysis were (a) business management, (b) capital growth, (c) knowledge and performance, and (d) transformational leadership. Some of my findings are consistent with what I found while reviewing literature on knowledge management and leadership while others differ and generate opportunities for future research.

I highlighted the most frequently used words in interview transcripts and company documents. In relation to leadership skills, the words *management*, *passion*, *leadership*, *performance*, *growth*, and *knowledge* were frequently mentioned in interviews (see Figure 1). This preliminary analysis of data revealed words that supported the themes identified through the literature (namely, leadership skills on knowledge management, transformational leadership, and small business growth). The most frequent words in document sources were (a) quality training, (b) passion, (c) communication, and (d) organizational culture (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Word cloud showing the 50 words most frequently used in participant

interviews.

Figure 2. Word cloud showing the 50 words most frequently used in document sources.

 Theme 1: Business Management

The first theme that emerged from the analysis of participants' responses and

relevant agency documents was business management of leaders. Participants' responses

to the first two interview questions emphasized their business management skills. All

participants had 5 years or more experience of business management. P2 had 5 years of

business management experience while P1 and P3 had managed their agencies for 9 and

11 years, respectively.

When asked about the leadership skills that they used and the skills they deemed

most helpful in managing their agencies, all three participants mentioned that effective

business management involved ongoing passion and positive attitude towards organizational learning. Interview data included several references to enhanced management, which reflects how passionate home health care agency managers are about providing quality services. My findings are similar to those of Kohtamäki, Kraus, Mäkelä, and Rönkkö (2012) who explained in order to improve management; effective implementation of management is needed for organizational learning.

The theme of business management relates to the conceptual framework of how transformational leadership and the concept of leadership theory. A small business leader's transformational leadership skills may influence the success of a business (Northouse, 2015). Vohra, Rathi, and Bhatnagar (2015) identified effective leadership skills as a leader's ability to solve the kinds of complex social problems that arise in organizations. Participants' passion and positive attitude towards providing quality care has enhanced their leadership skills. As Zarook, Rahman, and Khanam (2013) noted, leadership skills are necessary for small business owners to plan, organize, control, and direct operations. Participants' strong passion towards managing their agencies relates to transformational leadership, thus their ability to manage and successfully operate their organizations. Small business owners with a stronger desire or passion to succeed tend to thrive more than those who do not have a zeal for the business (Desai, 2015). P1 and P3 own their agencies; however, all participants expressed passion and dedication as a key to successful business management. When managers of home health care agencies improve their business management skills, they minimize any lack of leadership skills due to enhanced effective management skills.

Theme 2: Capital Growth

All three participants stated that ability to manage capital growth is vital to the long-term success of any business. This viewpoint aligns with the literature on resource starvation. An ability to measure the financial health of business can help one assess whether the business is likely to succeed or fail (Lerner & Malmendier, 2013). Inadequate financial resources impact the success and growth of any business (De Clercq, Lim, & Oh, 2013). All three participants stated that ability to manage capital growth is vital to long-term success of any business. Business owners without sufficient capital to operate their business cannot yield any profit (Atherton, 2012). Participant 1 and 3 said working capital and reserve funds are needed to sustain and operate their agencies. Participant 2 stated, "to keep up with current trend and parity there are expensive ongoing training and without sufficient capital it is impossible to get things done we cannot afford to mismanage our funds." Capital growth relates to Blackburn et al. (2013) findings in which they stated that profitability is most strongly associated with smaller, older businesses. This reinforces the notion that the owners who develop the most profitable businesses are those who are content to grow their businesses steadily (Blackburn et al., 2013).

Under the concept of leadership theory, leaders use skills to influence others to work towards common goals. Amoako (2013) emphasized the importance of maintaining proper books of accounts and sound accounting practices for small and medium sized enterprises (SME). The participants demonstrated leadership in capital growth in successfully managing their health care agencies. Increasing organizational capital and

sound management of business funds was strongly encouraged by Participants 1 and 3. Without adequate financing and proper or continuous education and upgrades to enhance business performance, success is impeded (Gummesson, 2014). Acceptable capital growth can provide the advantage of business expansion or competitive quality services. As stated by participant 2, concerning parity, it is expensive to remain at a competitive advantage however doing so helps sustain businesses long-term.

Theme 3: Knowledge and Performance

Triche (2013) indicated in the ever-changing and competitive market place, organizations need to continuously improve their competitive advantage. All three participants mentioned that knowledge and performance in managing any organization is important in sustaining a business. Participant 2 stated that, to gain competitive advantage is to offer consistency and be consistent in knowledge and show quality in performance. Participant 1 stated, "One thing I must tell you is that you must know your stuff and determine to be knowledgeable about constantly changing agency policies and regulations to be at the cutting edge."

Knowledge management (KM) initiatives create business value and are a major focus for many organizations (Mousavizadeh, Harden, Ryan, & Windsor, 2015). Knowledge management and quality performance were discussed in the policies and procedures (P&P) and quality assurance (QA) plans by participants. I obtained a policy and procedure and quality assurance plan that showed step-by-step knowledge and performance process of how agencies operate and manage their businesses. Participant 3 explained that the implementation of a good QA plan helps their agency perform well by

providing quality service. Participant 2 also stated that policies changes are constant and very fluid and information needs to be managed properly and has everything to do with succeeding in the business. Participant 1 mentioned that they use the QA plan to address issues and resolves problems regarding performance in their agencies. Participant 1 further mentioned that in the QA plan they make realistic goals and outcomes of the goals are managed in a way that positively impacts their agencies. Mousavizadeh et al. (2015) confirmed that knowledge management success is tied to its impact on organizational performance.

The participants' knowledge management and ability to lead their organizational staff towards positive performance relates to the concept of transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people (Northouse, 2015). Researchers have revealed that (a) transformational leadership influences organizational performance positively through organizational learning and innovation; (b) organizational learning influences organizational performance positively, both directly and indirectly through organizational innovation; and (c) organizational innovation influences organizational performance positively (García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, 2012). Researchers analyzed the relationship between transformational leadership, trust in supervisor and team, job satisfaction, and team performance via multilevel analysis (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013).

Theme 4: Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture

Leaders play an important role in enhancing job satisfaction among the nurses (Ahmad, Adi, Noor, Rahman, & Yushuang, 2013). Transformational and transactional

leadership are the most influential among the leadership styles in attaining job satisfaction (Ahmad et al., 2013). Ahmad et al. investigated the transformational and transactional leadership styles that contributed to the job satisfaction among professional nurses and found transformational leaders contribute more to job satisfaction than transactional leaders. All three participants expressed how passionate they are towards their organization. Participant 1 stated, "the passion I have drives me and motivates me and it filters through to other members in my agency like my staff." Nixon, Harrington, and Parker (2012) indicated that through the ability to create a shared vision, transformational leaders could achieve both team and project management success. Participant 2 mentioned that, "for long-term success you need a dedicated and passionate executive to begin with to be steering all the affairs of the company." Vision sharing enhances worker commitment and the performance of both the individual and the project (Nixon et al., 2012). Participant 3 stated that, "a dedicated and passionate manager is a recipe for business success because if you can positively influence your staff towards your goal for the company you will succeed."

The findings from all participants are relevant transformational leadership theory in that each enhanced their skills in communication through adherence to their organizational culture. Participant 3 improved on communication through personal working relationship and integrity as part of positive company culture. Northouse (2015) mentioned that when catastrophes require quick action from those present, good organizational culture has a huge impact on workers' behaviors, attitudes, and communities in which companies operate. Participant 2 improved on listening and

conflict resolution through training and development as part of organizational culture.

Participant 1 improved communication and ongoing training provided to their employees

reinforces their organizational values. All three participants also mentioned that attentive

listening skills enhanced problem solving and increased trust within their company.

Communicating and promoting the organizational values to employees increased their

acknowledgement and acceptance of its influence on workers ethical decision-making

(Northouse, 2015). Managers of home health care agencies who train and further develop

their transformational leadership and organizational culture succeed in business because

training and development are required for organizational success. According to Loon,

Lim, Teck, and Cai (2012) the use of transformational leadership principles assisted

leaders in identifying employee growth needs to enhance the learning process.

Applications to Professional Practice

This study is important to understand the leadership skills needed by home health

care agency managers for their businesses. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case

study was to explore the leadership skills that some managers in home health care

agencies needed to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. Findings

from the study and recommendations might contribute to an understanding of the

leadership skills required by managers in home health care agencies for successfully

sustaining their businesses beyond 5 years. The results could provide strategies for home

health care agency managers to adapt to challenges and opportunities that enhance their

business success.

The findings from the study are in line with the transformative nature of

transformational leaders as suggested by García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez (2012). The results indicated that leadership skills that brought new ideas and innovations enabled clients of better managed home health care agencies receive improved patient care. Improved patient care positively affects employees' long-term employment, patients' health, and provide safety assurance for patients' families. Transformational leaders influence both leaders and their employees to be creative and solve existing problems in a way that promotes productivity. Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people (Northouse, 2015). Researchers have revealed that (a) transformational leadership influences organizational performance positively through organizational learning and innovation; (b) organizational learning influences organizational performance positively, both directly and indirectly through organizational innovation; and (c) organizational innovation influences organizational performance positively (García-Morales et al., 2012).

The findings were relevant to professional practice, as this study would provide practical solutions as to how home health care agency managers lead their businesses. In addition, the findings would provide a practical guide to home health care managers and ensure clients of better-managed home health care agencies might receive improved patient care. Improved patient care would positively affect employees' long-term employment, patients' health, and provide safety assurance for patients' families. This study's findings and recommendations added to the knowledge of business development through identifying the needed leadership skill that sustains the businesses.

Effective Business Practice

The study's results are consistent with existing literature on effective business practices and emphasize the impact of transformational leadership needed to sustain their new businesses. Researchers analyzed the relationship between transformational leadership, trust in supervisor and team, job satisfaction, and team performance via multilevel analysis (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013). Braun et al. (2013) concluded transformational leadership positively related to followers' job satisfaction at individual as well as team levels of analysis and to objective team performance. Mediation by trust in the supervisor as well as trust in the team are linked to transformational leadership.

Findings from this study support effective business practice. The use of transformational leadership skills improves (a) leader-worker relationship, (b) business ethics, and (c) business performance. In conclusion, the transformational leadership skills of managers in home health care agencies help sustain their new businesses. Findings from this study align with existing literature on transformational leadership and effective business practice.

<center>**Implications for Social Change**</center>

Transformational leadership as an approach that legitimizes concentrating power into the hands of the few who then probably see their mission as being that of transforming other people (Tourish, 2013). Cavazotte, Moreno, and Hickmann (2012) investigated the effects of intelligence, personality traits, and emotional intelligence on transformational leadership and the effective performance of leaders in the organizational

context. Ahmetović and Delić (2013) mentioned that most leaders are so preoccupied with current problems that they often do not pay enough attention to important issues. Because of this, overall operations may not be efficient and plans not achieved as outlined. Leadership skills can be acquired and leaders can be trained to develop them (Northouse, 2015).

The implications for positive social change include the potential to develop leadership skills. The ability of small businesses to continue operating successfully beyond 5 years could have a significant effect on job creation and job retention (Haltiwanger, Jarmin, & Miranda, 2013). Application of leadership skills by home health care agency managers might have positive effects on startup home health care businesses in the Baltimore area and are worthy of exploration. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations from this study may contribute to information on managerial leadership skills that are important to the success of home health care agencies. Home health care agency patients are likely to receive better care because of improved leadership skills of home health care agency managers, and improved home health care could provide safety assurance to the patients' families. The findings from this study may encourage business owners to adopt leadership practices that promote growth in business.

<center>**Recommendations for Action**</center>

Utilizing leadership skills of home health care agency managers may provide strategies for agency managers to adapt to challenges and opportunities that enhance their business success. Home health care agencies that are unsure what leadership skills to use to sustain their businesses successfully beyond 5 years can use the findings from this

study to assist them. Some home health care agency managers have utilized

transformational leadership successfully in the health care industry. Home health care

agency managers may use this study to promote leadership skills to sustain new

businesses. Management can use this study to help reduce the failure rate for leadership

skills to sustain their new businesses. The dissemination of findings in this study to health

care publications, academic research journals, and business journals could broaden the

reach of this study. I will disseminate the findings of this study to home health care

professionals and agencies through (a) academic research journals, (b) business journals,

and (c) health care journals. Presentation of the findings to management of home health

care agencies through professional conferences, written materials, and training sessions

may help home health care agency managers.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills

that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses

successfully beyond 5 years. The small sample size is a limitation of this study.

Recommendations for future studies include larger samples, quantitative or mixed

methods to produce findings that will be generalizable to a larger population, and studies

on leadership skills in other industries.

This study was limited to three different home health care agencies within a 75-

mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland, who had successfully managed their agencies for

more than 5 years. Since the geography was a limitation, further research in a larger study

area might strengthen the findings from this study. Conducting a quantitative study would

provide different information such as statistical analysis on this study. Applying a

quantitative method could produce results that would generalize to the study population

(Yin, 2014). A quantitative study would allow for determination of the frequency of the

phenomenon (Petty et al., 2012). A quantitative follow up study could use this study to

determine the frequency of each leadership skill used in home health care agencies.

Future research could use the qualitative findings from this study to develop a survey for

a large sample of home health care agency managers to a larger population so that the

findings may be more generalizable to home health care agencies outside of Baltimore,

Maryland.

Reflections

The Doctorate of Business Administration (DBA) program has been challenging.

There were times I wondered if I could really accomplish this goal, but with

determination and desire to keep pressing on I held on to the believe that I could do

anything I set my mind to do and it will only come to pass if I stayed focused. The DBA

program has stimulated my intellectual skills and unlocked leadership potentials I never

noticed prior to the program. I eventually became a great resource to fellow cohorts and

am glad I made positive influence on some. I had the opportunity to interview managers

of home health care agencies within a 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland who are

managing successful agencies and have been in business for more than 5 years. This

research study expanded my knowledge of doctoral research. My knowledge and

understanding of leadership in small businesses, and specifically in home health care

agencies, grew through this study. Through purposeful sampling, I accessed participants

that were relevant to the study, and all participants willingly accepted the invitation to participate.

All participants shared practical job experiences with me without holding back information. After completing interview questions, the participants encouraged me to reach out for additional information if needed and I gladly did. The participants gave me lots of insights on how to operate a successful business. The findings from this study have changed my personal perception of leadership skills as it relates to business growth.

Conclusion

Leadership skills are skills and abilities learned and developed. Although personality plays are integral role in leadership, the skills approach suggests that knowledge and abilities are needed for effective leadership (Northouse, 2015). Business owners need to know the factors that influence business growth, support survival, and enhance employment to better plan and manage their businesses (Strielkowski, 2013). Managers-practitioners know the importance of their work and inspire others to work successfully (Petkevičiūtė & Giedraitis, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies needed to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. The study findings will serve as a basis for the development of transformational leadership skills among home health care agencies in Baltimore, Maryland. Vohra, Rathi, and Bhatnagar (2015) identified effective leadership skills as a leader's ability to solve the kinds of complex social problems that arise in organizations.

The findings from this study indicated that transformational leadership practices contribute to the growth of home health care agencies. Home health care agency patients are likely to receive better care because of improved leadership skills of home health care agency managers, and improved home health care could provide safety assurance to the patients' families. The findings from this study may encourage business managers to adopt leadership practices that promote growth in business.

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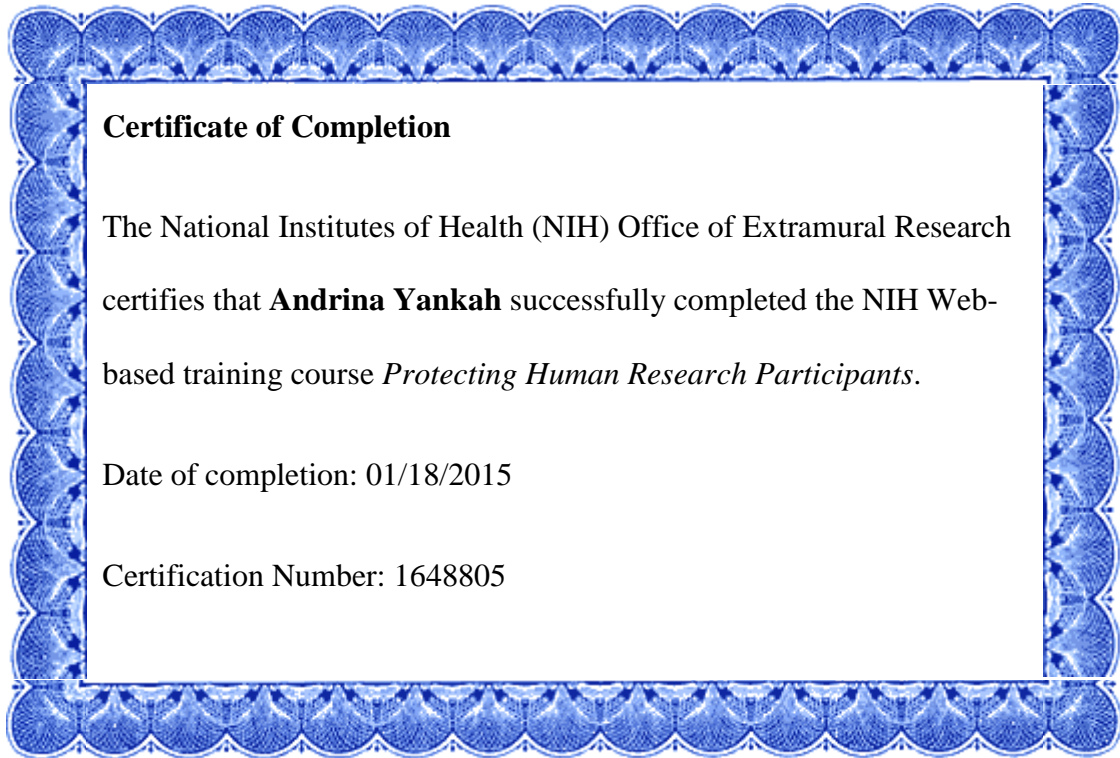
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Appendix A: Human Subject Research Certification

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Andrina Yankah** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course *Protecting Human Research Participants*.

Date of completion: 01/18/2015

Certification Number: 1648805

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Date:

Re: Doctoral Study Research that may interest you

Dear Sir/Madam,

As part of my doctoral study research at Walden University, I would like to invite you to participate in my research study on leadership skills that some managers in home health care agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years. If you accept my invitation to participate in this study, I will arrange for a face-to-face interview in a private and comfortable place at a time and date that are convenient for you. I contacted you to participate because you are a manager in a home health care agency within 75-mile radius of Baltimore, Maryland. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential.

Please read the enclosed consent form carefully and ask any questions that you may have before acting on the invitation to participate. To achieve the objectives of the research study, your participation depends on satisfying certain criteria in addition to being the manager of a home health care agency. To include: (a) participant must supervise more than 5 employee, (b) must successfully manage their agencies for more than 5 years, (c) participant must be with a home health care agency licensed by the state of Maryland and (d) participants must be 18 years of age, with no maximum age requirement. If you satisfy these criteria and you would like to participate in this study, please feel free to contact me by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxxxxx @waldenu.edu to schedule a convenient time for interview.

I anticipate that the total time required for each interview will be 60 minutes. The interviews will be audio recorded, and participants will have the opportunity to review the transcribed interview for accuracy prior to inclusion in the study. I sincerely appreciate your valuable time and thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Andrina Yankah

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

The purpose of this interview is to answer the research question on leadership skills that some managers in home healthcare agencies need to sustain their new businesses successfully beyond 5 years.

I will complete the following steps during each interview.

1. The interview will begin with a brief overview of the research, the purpose, and the time required for the interview.

2. I will thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the interview.

3. I will present a copy of the informed consent form (see Appendix B) and review the contents of the form with the participant. The items included in the consent form are: (a) the expected length of time to participate in the interview; (b) the interview will be audio recorded and if a participant chooses not to be recorded, handwritten notes will be taken; and (c) a summary of the interview will be presented to each participant to validate my interpretations of their responses to each interview question.

4. I will explain that their participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw from the study at any time without prior notice and through a verbal or email request, even after the completion of data collection.

5. I will provide my contact information to each participant in case he or she decides to withdraw from the study.

6. I will obtain the participant's signature on the consent form as an indication of their agreement to participate in the study.

7. I will collect the signed consent form and provide the participant a copy of the consent form for his or her records.

8. I will use a sequential coding system to identify the participants during the interview recording without using their names. For example, I will assign each participant an identifying pseudonym, such as P1, P2, and P3. I will explain that I will be the only person with access to the name of each participant associated with each pseudonym and that data from their interview will be identified in my database using only their assigned pseudonym.

9. I will record the interview, if permitted, after a participant signs a consent form (see Appendix B) and begin with open-ended questions, which may include probing questions to expand on the participant's responses.

10. At the end of the question period, I will remind the participant that I will provide him or her with a summary of the interview and my interpretations of their responses to review and validate.

11. Request documents that I have been granted permission for the participant to provide copies of documents related to home healthcare agencies such as schedules, charts, graphs, or other internal records related leadership skills that the organization is comfortable sharing. This has been approved by the authorized representative of the company in the letter of cooperation.

I will end the interview and thank the participant for taking the time to participate.