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Recruitment Strategies for Manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Markey Pierre

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Recruitment Strategies for Manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana

by

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MS, Nova Southeastern, 2001

BS, Louisiana Tech University, 1991

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

January 2017

Abstract

Acquiring information about successful human resources strategies that help to effectively recruit skilled labor is critical for manufacturers. Manufacturing is the backbone of the United States, yet 6 of 10 skilled labor jobs are unfilled because traditional methods and strategies used by human resource leaders to recruit are inadequate. Guided through the lens of strategic human resource management and using the concepts and views of resource-based theory, the purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies that manufacturing human resource professionals use to successfully recruit skilled labor in Northwest Louisiana. The data collection for this case study was performed through face-to-face semistructured interviews via purposeful sampling and company documents that included planning materials, corporate hiring strategy documents, and the company website. Data were coded and analyzed to obtain the development of a set of recurring themes. The 4 relevant themes that emerged from the coded data included the following: recruitment methods, external pressures of the region/marketplace, outreach and education partnerships, and leadership support. By implementing strategies supported by senior leadership, human resource professionals have greater levels of success in hiring skilled labor. Implications for positive social change include providing an opportunity for human resource professionals in the manufacturing industry to develop innovative ideas and solutions to respond to the nascent recruitment challenges for skilled labor positions, thereby reducing unemployment and contributing to the local economy.

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Dedication

I dedicate my research to the memory of my late parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Winfield, Sr., my remarkably amazing family, and my intimate network of friends. This tribute to my late parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Winfield, Sr., honors the two people who kindled the flame of my passion. They watered and nurtured the root of my success that stemmed in my early childhood years. They served as my role models that laid a strong foundation that won't crack when times are tough and won't crumble when the rain begins to fall. They taught me that there is hope in the rain, because rain provides a necessary ingredient for growth. They challenged me daily to strive for excellence and told me this could only happen if I got a good education. I am so grateful that I had the love and support of Moma and Daddy that never withered. The encouragement and motivation afforded to me from my family was second only to the divine inspiration I receive from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. My prayer is that this accomplishment will serve as an inspiration to my family that it is never too late and symbolize that success is a result of dedication, perseverance, and commitment.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The need to identify skilled talent is a global problem that impacts economies in advanced and developing countries (Ciuhureana, Fuciu, & Gorski, 2014). In the ever-changing global economy, recruitment strategies necessary to attract the best candidates must be versatile and adapt to the economic landscape. Recruiting employees is a significant challenge for many industries (K. Hsu & Weng, 2014). National and multinational companies indicated difficulties with identifying qualified employees with appropriate skills and competencies (Ciuhureana et al., 2014). Nearly one third of human resource professionals in the manufacturing industry have indicated their inability to fill open positions (National Association of Manufacturing, 2014). It is important for employers to identify appropriate and innovative recruitment measures to secure the right person for the most suitable job. Exploring the recruiting strategies applied by human resource professionals in manufacturing through the concepts of resource-based view (RBV) theory aligns to the research continuum of strategic human resource management (SHRM). The exploration of professionals that manage these efforts will help outline challenges with a real-world view (Yin, 2014).

Background of the Problem

The manufacturing industry plays a prominent role in the United States and world economies, generating annual worldwide revenues of more than \$2 trillion, one third of which is attributable to the U.S. industry and represents 12% of the gross domestic product (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). In 2013, the manufacturing sector employed nearly 12 million workers in the United States at an average salary of \$77,506

annually with full benefits (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). Every dollar spent in manufacturing adds \$1.37 to the U.S. economy, and every 100 jobs within a manufacturing facility create an additional 250 jobs in other sectors (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). As of 2014, manufacturing accounted for the fifth largest employment sector and the third highest average weekly wages sector in Louisiana (Louisiana Workforce Commission, 2014).

The manufacturing sector has evolved and transformed as technology has played more of a role to improve output and maximize profits. Issues of talent shortages plague the industry with more than one half of all open positions requiring science, technology, engineering, and math-related skills. Technological advances throughout the informational age have created millions of highly skilled, high-wage jobs (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). A dearth of skilled labor has negatively impacted the manufacturing industry (Manpower Group, 2014).

Manufacturing leadership has recognized the importance of recruiting a qualified workforce. However, there are challenges in the industry on the strategies necessary to implement effective recruiting policies (B. Campbell, Coff & Kryscynski, 2012). Human resource professionals need innovative ways to address shortages in the workforce pool through the in-house strategic leadership of human resource management (HRM) (Buller & McEvoy, 2012).

Problem Statement

Manufacturing leaders around the world indicated the most problematic recruitment challenges were related to identifying skilled labor in a complex and

changing environment (Y. Hsu, 2016). One third of business failures are due to poor hiring decisions and the inability of human resource leaders to recruit employees that have the necessary skills (Kaur, 2014). The general business problem is that some manufacturing industry human resource recruiters are experiencing difficulty in recruiting a skilled labor workforce, which may negatively impact productivity. The specific business problem is that some manufacturing human resource leaders need strategies to successfully recruit skilled labor.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that manufacturing human resource leaders need to successfully recruit skilled labor. The specific population consisted of human resource professionals from three manufacturing firms located in Northwest Louisiana. A manufacturing firm's human resource professional will have investigated policies and procedures to manage recruitment challenges firsthand. Data from this study may have a positive social impact on manufacturing recruitment efforts by providing human resource leaders with strategies to recruit skilled labor successfully. Furthermore, findings may influence positive social change by providing a greater understanding of employee recruitment efforts, thus reducing unemployment and improving the local economy.

Nature of the Study

Bailey (2014) indicated qualitative research was a multimethod for exploring and explaining human behavior, utilizing interpretive and material practices that will make the world visible. Qualitative research provides an interpretive model of ideas that

researchers could analyze and interpret to launch successful business strategies within a particular setting (Bailey, 2014). Quantitative research provided no objective for examining or seeking correlations of multiple relationships or estimating differences, which meant it would be inappropriate for this research. Mixed methodology approach encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research to enhance the study (Goldman et al., 2015). Therefore, mixed methodology was inappropriate because there was no intent to examine the relationship between variables (Gough, Thomas, & Oliver, 2012).

Yin (2014) described a formal case study as an up-close and in-depth inquiry that explored a single or a small number of cases within their real-world setting. I chose a qualitative case study design that explored certain challenges and influences of the participants. The purpose of case study research is to be able to answer *how* and *why* questions about a phenomenon (Freeman, Gergen, & Josselson, 2015; Yin, 2014). Case studies can be useful in testing existing theory or theoretical models, challenging current theories, or in providing new sources to pursue in quantitative research (Freeman et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). A potential limitation of employing case study research is the inability to provide a basis for generalization due to the finite focus of the research. Despite this limitation, case studies have had a strong tradition in social science disciplines, and specifically in business and management (Freeman et al., 2015; Yin, 2014).

Phenomenology design was not an appropriate design because the approach explores the lived experiences of participants. An ethnographic approach to the research was rejected from consideration because within ethnography the researcher only seeks to understand an entire culture of individuals in their natural settings. Through this study, I sought to

explore and understand successful human resource strategies for recruiting skilled labor in the manufacturing industry in Northwest Louisiana.

Research Question

The central research question was this: What strategies do some manufacturing human resource leaders use to successfully recruit skilled labor?

Interview Questions

1. Please describe the strategies/onboarding processes you use to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry.
2. What is your internal and external recruitment process?
3. What challenges have you faced regarding recruitment efforts for skilled labor in manufacturing?
4. What are the issues associated with skilled manufacturing labor recruiting? (e.g., social, cultural and/or economic)?
5. To what extent have you used technology within your recruitment strategies?
6. To what extent have you used local higher education institutions as a potential pool in your recruitment strategies?
7. How does your company leadership engage and support the department of human resources ability to exploring, developing, deploying, and implementing strategies for skilled labor recruitment?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was SHRM. SHRM provided a framework for assessing the complex recruiting process in a manufacturing environment.

Schuler (1992) first articulated that SHRM encompassed the concepts that guided and aligned HRM philosophy: (a) strategic and long-term goals of the organization, (b) tactical planning, and (c) practice with a particular focus on human capital. The theoretical proposition for SHRM describes employees as individuals with fluctuating goals and needs, not just basic business resources like filing cabinets or vehicles (Ramona & Anca, 2013).

Joyce and Slocum (2012) posited the top management team responsible for generating and retaining strategic human capital also identified and developed critical human resources needs. Thus, the top management team's composition, in terms of human capital attributes, has a significant influence on the development and deployment of strategies for recruiting core employees (Joyce & Slocum, 2012). The transformation of the human resource department from support departments to comprehensive talent management systems emanated from a movement in business and industry (Shaw, Park, & Kim, 2013). Upper management increasingly perceived developing strategies for recruitment of employees as the key element for achieving competitive advantage (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). Human resource professionals in organizations strategically developed and tailored processes and tools to leverage new recruits' uniqueness and utilize their best characteristics (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013).

Operational Definitions

This section includes definitions of key terms found within this study. Scholarly descriptions of such terms underpin most definitions listed below.

Human capital: Human capital is defined as including skills, judgment, and intelligence of the firm's employees (Shaw et al., 2013).

Human resource management (HRM): HRM relates to the set of activities and functions directed to developing and maintaining the labor base of the firm (Ramona & Anca, 2013).

Livable wages: Livable wages are the hourly rate that an individual person makes to support his or her household if the individual is the only provider and is full time, which is 2,080 hours per year. Living wage standards vary by region and are higher than the federal minimum wage (Glasmeier, 2015).

Resource-based view: Resource-based view is a concept that assesses a firm's resources to identify a value that will underline a strategic direction toward identification of competitive advantage. Under this view, resources have a direct correlation with a company's performance (Shaw et al., 2013).

Strategic human resource management (SHRM): SHRM relates to the proper integration of HRM into the primary business strategy of the firm by adapting human resource activities in all stages of the firm (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015).

Talent management: Talent management is expressed as the demand for talented employees being greater than the supply available (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are realistic expectations presumed to be accurate and true (Leedy & Omrod, 2015). A fundamental assumption of this study was that the selected human

resource professionals' familiarity with standard organizational strategies and current labor laws was essential to acquire useful information on SHRM. The second assumption of this study was that human resource professionals would answer all questions and respond honestly. Clarification of anonymity and confidentiality was essential and preserved. Participants were volunteers with the ability to withdraw from participation in the study at any time and with no ramifications.

Limitations

Limitations of a study included aspects that can be considered potential weaknesses that are out of the researcher's control (Martin & Parmar, 2012). According to Martin and Parmar (2012), limitations can vary from one qualitative study to another. Limitations included time constraints to meet and collect information from the participants and the availability of the participant pool. The participants were a purposeful sample of human resource professionals who had been with their organization for at least 2 years. Another key limitation was that the collected data relied on the opinions and beliefs of the participant pool and may not adequately reflect the views or experiences of all human resource professionals. The conclusions reached with participants may limit the transferability of the findings. The geographically restricted sample for this multiple case study was limited to 10 parishes of Northwest Louisiana. The results may not be transferable to other manufacturing firms in the study area or other areas of the United States with different employment and economic challenges.

Delimitations

Delimitations are features and boundaries of the study controlled by the researcher (Guni, 2012). This study was limited to human resource professionals in the manufacturing industry in Northwest Louisiana. A key delimitation in this study related to the homogeneous purposeful sampling of human resource professionals, narrowing down the demographic of participants, and obtaining robust data for the study. Another central delimitation in this study focused on successful recruitment strategies and did not address other human resource issues that may affect the manufacturing industry. Human resource professionals are the best candidates to offer insight into the strategies necessary to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings, conclusions, and recommendations stemming from my study may be valuable to senior management, human resource leaders, and lead engineers for creating and deploying strategic and derivative operational plans to address attrition and skilled manufacturing worker shortages. Through improved recruiting strategies, decision-makers may develop and implement improved talent acquisition processes and thereby reduce unemployment. A greater understanding of improved attraction and recruitment strategies can also lead to a more efficient deployment of direct resources towards attracting future workers and build a competent, skilled workforce.

Implications for Social Change

Findings from this research may contribute to positive social change by identifying new ideas and innovative strategies to respond to recruitment challenges. These ideas may support the reduction of the unemployment rate for skilled labor within the manufacturing sector of Northwest Louisiana. The findings can provide greater opportunities and access to employment that provide livable wage earnings. These earnings can lead to greater disposable income and spending, which improve the overall local economy.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Researchers use the literature review as a tool to organize existing literature conducted by practitioners and scholars (Haller, 2012). The research in this literature review provided the foundation to explore what strategies human resource professionals employed to recruit qualified workers for open positions in the manufacturing industry. The literature review begins with a detailed overview of the Northwest Louisiana economy (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013). Other topics include the labor market, human capital and resource-based view theory, and how research in the field of SHRM demonstrated a trend in the increased interest for workforce shortages. Also included is an overview of human resources practices of recruitment and talent management from an academic perspective. The last section of the literature review includes an evaluation of workforce shortages in the manufacturing industry. For this literature review, professional and academic literature underpinned the topic for workforce shortages. The research was conducted using a variety of academic resources

such as libraries, books, websites, and databases. Primary research libraries and databases included the Walden University Library, ProQuest, Google Scholar, SAGE, Thoreau, and EBSCO Primary. To meet Walden DBA requirements, the document search focused on articles published from 2012 to 2016. The literature review yielded more than 275 articles. One hundred and fifty-two articles were relevant to this study. Of the 152 articles, 92.1% (140) appeared in 2012 or after. Thirteen articles, or 8.5%, had publication dates prior to 2012. One hundred and forty-two articles (93.4%) of the 152 articles were from peer-reviewed or government websites. Key search terms utilized were *human capital, human resource, strategic human resource management, employee recruitment, employee selection, onboarding, talent management, talent shortage, and workforce*. Organization of the research is by topic.

Northwest Louisiana Economy

Northwest Louisiana includes 10 parishes: Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, Desoto, Lincoln Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013). The Red River highlights the geography of the region, which courses through the identified parishes. This geographical area comprises the third largest metropolitan area within the state of Louisiana and plays a major role in Louisiana's economy (North Louisiana Economic Partnership, 2015). Northwest Louisiana has well-developed roads and waterways that efficiently connect the region; however, air service is a point of discontent. The region also preserves the benefits of a relatively low cost of living and a general ambiance of small town living. In 2012, income levels for the region were relatively low at \$50,975 compared to the state average

\$55,144 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The region is connected by a tremendous sense of community and described as an excellent place to raise a family (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013). One of the major challenges that has plagued the region is the racial disparity. The disharmony between the African American community and the White community, most notably in the largest metropolitan area in the region, Shreveport, has been acknowledged in community forums and documented in reports (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013).

Northwest Louisiana intricately links within a single regional economy and workforce market (North Louisiana Economic Partnership, 2015). Corporations and small businesses all hire from the same pool of workforce applicants. The business community documented six workforce development needs for the regional area: (a) the need for improved skills and a more educated workforce, (b) workforce training programs that are designed to meet the business needs, (c) improved interaction between the educational institutions and the local business community to help identify needs, (d) better high school retention rates, (e) enhanced soft skills coupled with a better attitude in the workforce pool, and (f) increased job opportunities for the community (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013).

The Louisiana Workforce Commission identified the top five major employment clusters in Northwest Louisiana as health care, manufacturing, retail trade, educational services, and accommodations and food services (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013). The manufacturing industry through many strategic investments has continued to flourish in Louisiana with the country's second lowest taxes offered for new

manufacturing businesses (Louisiana Economic Development, 2015). The Louisiana Workforce Commission (2014) reported that 23.29% of all open positions in Northwest Louisiana were in manufacturing. The Louisiana legislature has enacted several changes to the Workforce Investment Act to address the challenges of the workforce readiness problems and meet the essential needs of regional employers. (Coordinating and Development Corporation, 2013). As a result of the changes, the business community has a more active role in the design and development of the services and programs offered (North Louisiana Economic Partnership, 2015). Louisiana on average has continued to outperform the other southern states as the country's economic recovery remains in doubt, but unfortunately, many jobs in the state requiring experience and higher education have remained unfilled (North Louisiana Economic Partnership, 2015).

Human Capital Theory

T. W. Schultz was a critical player in the American economy in 1961 and was the first theorist to initiate the concept of human capital as a part of the economic climate (Klein & Daza, 2013; Schultz, 1961). The failure of an organization to acknowledge individual resources as a form of capital has led to the perception that labor is simply physical work requiring very little skills or education (Schultz, 1961). He posited that entwined with the core of economic growth is the investment of human capital that included five main categories: on the job training, schooling, adult education, health, and migration (Schultz, 1961). Gary Becker, an influential and innovative economist, later defined human capital as an individual knowledge, skills, health, and value, and they are inseparable like physical or financial assets (Klein & Daza, 2013). Nerdrum and Erikson

(2001) conducted additional research that further defined human capital in terms of productive capacity to generate added value and thus create wealth. Alavi and Leidner (2014) defined knowledge as an awareness of competencies and capabilities that increases an entity's ability for successful outcomes. Extensive research on the progression of growth in the value of human knowledge occurred on the individual level (Gubbins, 2012; von Krogh, Nonaka, & Rechsteiner, 2012) as well as the individual impact within organizations (Alavi & Leidner, 2014; S. Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2012; Ling, 2012). Literature on human capital drew a parallel to the development of human capital and organizational performance (Buller & McEvoy, 2012; Jiang et al., 2012). Developing an environment conducive to learning was imperative to demonstrate that human capital is an outcome of the learning process (Buller & McEvoy, 2012).

Performance measurements that determined the value of human resource systems, established molded recruitment planning, and shaped employee replacement costs advanced in 1971 (Flamholtz, 1971). By utilizing Gary Becker's cost benefit theory, these measurements showed a correlation between turnover rates and performance (Flamholtz, 1971). Frank and Obloj (2014) have suggested that prior research was accurate in demonstrating the significance of the identification of organizational requirements correlating to actual human talent. They also indicated that human capital coupled with robust financial incentives is complementary and generated positive results. Conversely, the results were skewed and also indicated distorted gamesmanship by managers (Frank & Obloj, 2014). Managers seek innovative opportunities to increase competitive advantage. Kryscynski and Ulrich (2015) posited that an organization's capability, which

comprises leadership, culture, and talent, achieves competitive advantage. However, they further stated that solving problems in theory rather than in practice presented significant challenges to practitioners because the research led them further away from complex organizational realities (Kryscynski & Ulrich, 2015). Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, and Maltarich (2014) suggested that an investment in human capital is most effective when it begins at the recruitment stage if the leadership of the organization is seeking to develop a strong team.

The Value of Human Capital

A highly valued asset within an organization to gain a competitive advantage in the global economy is known as human capital (Shaw et al., 2013; Strober, 1990). Nyberg and Wright (2015) stated that the capacity of human capital to increase an organization's revenues creates value. Human capital is valuable because of the rare and unique qualities and characteristics of an individual, specifically when the skill sets are at a very high level of expertise. Human capital is represented as any supply of knowledge, skill, ability, or characteristic the worker exemplifies that contributes to his or her productivity (Ployhart et al., 2014; Strober, 1990). This is knowledge that is acquired or knowledge that is inborn (Anca-Ioana, 2013; Ployhart et al., 2014). Employees possess the acquired skills and knowledge that organizations require to execute performance (B. Campbell et al., 2012). It is important to note that organizations do not own human capital, individuals do. Human and intellectual capital are a significant resource for innovation within organizations; however, strategic direction to capture this value must be directed from top leadership (B. Campbell et al., 2012). The organization's value

becomes that human knowledge that works together with the collective knowledge of the individuals and the organization's physical principal resources. Organizations use the tangible inputs of employees in order to produce tangible information and outputs that fuel economic growth (B. Campbell et al., 2012). Schultz (1961) and Mincer (1962) were the first researchers acknowledged to show the value associated with an investment in human capital. Each of the researchers relied on an earlier theory by Fisher (1906) to show a relationship to human capital. The contribution from the theory of nature to income asserted that capital is useful only when put to effective revenue- or value-producing usage (Fisher, 1906). The relationship that Fisher's theory had to human capital relative to influencing individuals, organizations, communities, and nations was also demonstrated by Schultz (1961). Researchers initially viewed administrative functions as the only contribution of human resources to the overall organization (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). Incorporating the additional financial value that an individual will generate for a business may be captured and measured specifically (Neiberline, Simanoff, Lewis, & Steinhoff, 2015). Recent researchers who focused on more of an organizational perspective viewed human capital in the marketplace as not just the individual employee, but value associated with employees as a unit (Nyberg & Wright, 2015; Ployhart et al., 2014). A market-oriented belief prevails in an employee resource model for determining if resources will be obtained or minimized (B. Campbell et al., 2012). The literature findings supported and validated the responsibility management should have for respecting and valuing the skilled assets of an organization's workforce. The literature findings further suggested that exploring the relationship between an

organization's responsibilities and their human resource practices relevant to human capital and organizational performance provides a framework for the resource-based view (Nyberg & Wright, 2015). The investments demonstrate and provide the positive outcomes and benefits from human capital.

Resource-Based View

The resource-based view is a model that identifies resources as key to superior firm performance (Wernerfelt, 1984). Resource-based view, first coined in the 1980s and 1990s, gained prominence as proponents of the strategy viewed companies from the inside for sources of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Factions of this view uphold that organizations should look inside the company to find the sources of competitive advantage instead of looking at the competitive environment for it. Originators of this theory stated that the individuals in an organization could organize in a manner that created valuable, rare, inimitable resources for the organization (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). Organizations which desire to take the greatest advantage of strategic resources must ensure that top management works together at all levels (Chadwick, Super, & Kwon, 2015). Companies endeavor to be ahead of their competition all the time. For this reason, they employ different strategies to ensure they that achieve this fete. Much of the internal capabilities, constant upgrading and transformation of base capabilities within an organization demonstrated the same competitive advantage (Costa, Cool, & Dierickx, 2012; Manroop, Singh, & Ezzedeem, 2014; Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014). The above authors concurred that through the transformation of capabilities, demonstration of the same competitive edge occurred even when operating in a changing

environment. The resource-based view is used as a tool that seeks to use resources as a major factor in a firm's superior performance (Costa et al., 2012). A resource needs to exhibit certain aspects to enable the company to attain competitive advantage. These aspects should ensure that the company is valuable, rare, costly to imitate, and organized in a manner that captures the value of the company (Costa et al., 2012). Implementation of a bundle or system of human resources practices with associations to more multifaceted interaction and organizational culture makes it more difficult for a competitor to imitate (Chadwick et al., 2015). Shaw et al. (2013) stated that a company could achieve competitive advantage by leveraging the organization's critical resources as a competitive edge over rivals. The use of the same critical resource creates a new approach that can encompass significant competitive advantage. The primary role of the resource-based views is to assist companies to attain higher corporate performance (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014). Companies look at elements of strengths in the organizations and take full advantage of them. Usually, two major types of resources exist; tangible and intangible (Manroop et al., 2014).

Tangible assets address the physical possessions that a company owns. These could be machinery, land, buildings, and capital. Tangible assets can easily be bought or acquired by other companies that reduce the competitive advantage of the company (Coleman, Cotei, & Farhat, 2013). At the same time, rivals can also purchase the same assets as their competitors thus reducing a company's competitive advantage. On the other hand, intangible assets are all the assets that do not have any physical presence. These include intellectual property, brand reputation, and trademarks. A trait such as

brand reputation takes a long time to acquire and thus, competitors can get a hold of the marketplace (Coleman et al., 2013). Most of the time intangible assets remain within the company and constitutes a large part of competitive advantage for the company, as it is sustainable.

For resource-based view to be helpful to a company it must contain two important assumptions, resources need to be heterogeneous and immobile (Barney, 1991; Costa et al., 2012; Wernerfelt, 2013). Heterogeneous, in this case, means that capabilities, skills and other resources that companies have varied from company to company (Nandialath, Dotson, & Durand, 2014). The difference is when companies use diverse strategies to stay ahead of the competition, as they cannot use the same strategies, as there would be no competition. The scenario of companies employing the same strategies in doing business would lead to perfect competition that is more theoretical than practical (Nandialath et al., 2014). The other attribute is the assumption that resource-based view should not be mobile and not move from one company to another in the short run. This immobility shields the company from replication of resources by other companies for application of the same strategies in their businesses, and thus reduces competitive advantage. Intangible assets that are usually considered immobile include processes, brand equity, intellectual property or knowledge that forms part of intangible assets (Nandialath et al., 2014).

Heterogeneous and immobility are critical resources for a company to attain a swift competitive advantage (Nandialath et al., 2014). However, other strategies exist that add a competitive edge to existing efforts. Analyzing of existing resources occur if they

are rare, valuable, expensive to imitate and cannot be substituted. Resources that tend to be agreeable to these aspects are those considered to be sustainable competitive advantages (Nandialath et al., 2014; Wernerfelt, 2013). On matters of value, resources are valuable only if they help companies to increase the value given to customers. Reducing the cost of production and/or improving differentiation can contribute to achieving these levels. At the same time, resources that do not reach these criteria bring competitive disadvantage. On the issue of rarity, only those resources acquired by one or a few companies are considered rare (Manroop et al., 2014). When the opposite happens where more than a few companies have the ability to get the same resource, it then leads to competitive parity.

Supporters of resource-based view noted that it becomes easier to tap into external opportunities by way of using existing resources in a different way instead of opting to acquire fresh skills for every different opportunity. Szymaniec-Mlicka (2014) demonstrated that even when organizations have similar critical skills and one lacks an interior ability to use the critical skill or resource in a superior fashion; the competitive edge does not exist. Manroop et al. (2014) suggested that resource-based view of the organization considered that resources are rare and provide a significant function in the creation and nourishment for a competitive advantage. Resource-based view is a model used in determining the resource power that a company has to triumph over the competition. Four fundamental areas in reviewing the competitive advantage of a company are value, rare resources not available to the competition, difficulty in imitation

and organization. These traits ensure that a company achieves a competitive advantage and sustains the same.

Researchers argued that applying the views of value, rareness, substitutability, and imitability alone could not form the foundation for competitive advantage because of the imitability of those individual human resource functions (Swart, Hall, & Chen, 2012). The resource-based view models human resources as an asset and emphasizes reward-effort exchange, focusing on workplace learning, which provides a lasting and powerful competitive advantage (Swart et al., 2012). Therefore, they emphasized the importance of qualified and capable employees helped firms to achieve and maintain a greater competitive advantage (Swart et al., 2012). The distinction of the capital pool having specific components such as high levels of skill and high motivation are a consistent principle within the literature.

HRM

HRM is the role within an organization that concentrates on the recruitment and management of the employee. This role also encompasses providing guidance for those employees that work in the organization (Ramona & Anca, 2013). Brock and Buckley (2013) posited that HRM engages in the process of recruitment and selection of potential and existing employees while performing a major function in maintaining a competitive advantage. The traditional function of human resources with organizations has been to recruit, select, place, and promote employees into different jobs. The function has also been responsible for managing and administration of salary and bonuses and other administrative functions relative to disciplining employees (Brock & Buckley, 2013).

However, with globalization and innovative technological advances, human resource departments have had to take on a greater leadership role instead of a supporting actor (Brock & Buckley, 2013; Hollenbeck & Jamieson, 2015). HRM is considered to comprise two types of models that are completely opposite but not conflicting when managing individuals (Jiang et al., 2012). Soft HRM focuses on the individual through a commitment of trust and self control, while the hard model of HRM highlights and places emphasis on communication, leadership, and performance management (Jiang et al., 2012). In many organizations, researchers have identified a combination of both hard and soft models (Jiang et al., 2012; Mitchell, Obeidat, & Bray, 2013). The exact elements of these combinations were unique to each organization, which implied that influences such as culture, structure, internal and external environments, as well as strategy all play a major role in the manner of delivering HRM. The success of recruitment and selection depends on defining and understanding the organization's strategy and its alignment with HRM, assessing the external and internal environments, evaluating the supply position and the requirement of the organization, and evolving strategies to fill the gaps. Thus, effective recruitment practices align to the organizational strategy and based in sound human resources policies. Despite any progress in HRM, there still remains a small number of organizations that have truly implemented HRM policies in a consistent manner. The establishment of a strategic approach towards HRM has changed researchers interest from the soft focus on employee-issues towards the hard focus and examination of HRM's contributions of value within the organization (Gerpott, 2015). Additionally,

organizations are more hard pressed to abandon their mainstream approach to HRM to a focus that aligns more of a link of strategic HRM to performance (Gerpott, 2015).

SHRM

HRM has come a long way from its humble origins in personnel management. Survival in today's competitive world would be difficult, if not outright impossible, for business organizations that fail to acquire, develop and retain world-class competencies, and employ best human resource practices. HRM is a strategic partner in business, giving rise to the concept of SHRM. Exploring strategic planning is essential to understanding the concepts and procedures of SHRM. The concept of strategy embodies how organizational management leads firms to a precise and progressive pathway (Castaneda & Bateh, 2013). The focus has evolved to how to employ HRM to generate and sustain competitive advantage to the firm. In other words, the central issue in SHRM is about how management can apply it so that it contributes to better organizational performance (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). Strategic management ensures proper utilization of the resources of the organization to achieve competitive advantages (Castaneda & Bateh, 2013). SHRM relates to goal setting, formulation of policy and resource management, and aims at fulfilling long-term objectives of the organization. Specific human resources strategies, including recruitment, training, and performance appraisal, are fine-tuned to the overall organizational strategy (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). Through these means, it distinguishes the organization from competitors in terms of capability and performance. The primary responsibilities of the human resources director are (a) recruitment, (b) performance management, (c) training and development, (d) motivation and rewards

(Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). From the literature reviewed and features of SHRM, it becomes clear that certain essential functions in HRM align with the overall strategy of the organization, and that recruitment is one of the core activities of SHRM that plays a key role in its success. Perceived organizational support is an important factor that determines the success of SHRM (Arefin, Raquib, & Arif, 2015). Strategic and effective HRM systems consist of a group of interconnected human resources practices that have a bearing on the ability and motivation of employees to develop and contribute to the organization more effectively (Arefin et al., 2015). These practices include core practices such as recruitment, training and development, performance management, motivation and rewards (Arefin et al., 2015).

Successful recruitment involves a candidate-centric approach (Zaharie & Osoian, 2013). It is important to note that candidates look for long-term career prospects and opportunities to grow. Training and development offer these opportunities, and hence organizations with systems that promote these activities are more attractive to prospective candidates (Arefin et al., 2015). The social exchange approach explains the link between perceived organizational support, the set of interconnected human resources practices, and organizational performance. Social exchange approach postulates that employees reciprocate by greater involvement and commitment when they feel that the organization shows interest in them (Arefin et al., 2015). Moreover, it has an impact on the recruitment process and its effectiveness by influencing the candidates' perception about the organization and its brand image as an employer. Career progression, job enrichment, independence, and performance management are some of the SHRM aspects used to

build an organizational brand in the job market (McCabe, 2012). A look at the other key aspects of recruitment, including its core principles, planning, and workforce strategies suggest that each of the core human resources activities also link to recruitment.

Perceived organizational support is an important factor that determines the success of SHRM (Arefin et al., 2015). This process shapes an important tool in attracting new talent. The review of literature additionally provides an opportunity to contribute to the understanding about SHRM with a particular focus on the strategies that human resources professionals employ to successfully recruit skilled labor.

An analysis of SHRM must contemplate two main issues: (a) identification of the critical human resources practices and, (b) the link between those practices and organizational performance (Mitchell et al., 2013). As previously mentioned, the most critical activities of HRM are recruitment, performance management, training and development, motivation and rewards. While examining the role of SHRM, I focused on recruitment as the key function.

SHRM refers to the linking of human resources policies and practices to the strategic objectives of the organization. It is also viewed as the design of organizational systems to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through people (Chowhan, 2016; Molloy & Barney, 2015). Thus, SHRM can be a process or an outcome. The rationale behind SHRM is that competitive advantage gained through better technology can be duplicated and eroded in a short span of time, whereas the competitive advantage provided by people sustains the benefit over a longer time frame (Chowhan, 2016; Molloy & Barney, 2015). Although the evidence in terms of specifics is somewhat

mixed, and opinion is divided on the finer points, it is generally agreed that strategic HRM contributes to better organizational performance (Sojka, 2015).

SHRM incorporates previously examined theories to implement the most effective use of individuals. Schuler (1992) first articulated the concept of SHRM noting SHRM encompassed the concepts that guide and align HRM philosophy, tactical planning and practice with strategic and long-term goals of the organization, with a particular focus on the individual and their efforts to formulate and implement the strategic needs of the organization. Wright (1992) further defined SRHM as the outline of planned HRM activities envisioned to empower the organization to realize its goals. The authors posited that operational policies and other strategic goals associated with the key decisions made regarding an organization's competitive edge had a direct correlation to the human resources of the organization. The current definition sustained the ideologies of employee management and infused the additional practices that are inclusive of HRM. Furthermore, these definitions encompassed acknowledgment of the strategic role and relationship contiguously aligned to HRM practices (Hollenbeck & Jamieson, 2015; Mitchell et al., 2013). In the 21st century economy, the use of human resource strategies as a strategic tool is critical to the existence of an organization (Mitchell et al., 2013). Awareness of an organization's strategic capacity is a critical component in organizational performance (Mitchell et al., 2013). The preponderance of research completed at the individual organization level relates to strategic human resources. This process acknowledged that practices studied are not accomplished in a comparable fashion, and the impact of the research is limited to individual, organizational outcomes,

such as employee attitudes or performance (Ramona & Anca, 2013; Samnani & Singh, 2013). There is a substantial volume of research indicating that it is the collective interface of human resource systems that affect organizational performance in a positive fashion (Shaw et al., 2013).

Molloy and Barney (2015) stated that SHRM established the need for organizations to devise and implement plans and strategies. Molloy and Barney (2015) further acknowledged that successful SHRM required organizations to interpret and adapt. The major goal of SHRM has primarily focused on competitive advantage (Molloy & Barney, 2015). When leadership decides to move to an SHRM approach, an emphasis placed on management practices that are innovative and research-based fulfill external transactional and functional processes. SHRM should focus on procedures that can build employee knowledge and skills that will enable an organization to achieve competitive advantage in the economy (Molloy & Barney, 2015). Successful SHRM will typically align organizational goals and strategies with the organizational structure in an approach where they are mutually supportive (Molloy & Barney, 2015). The authors further recognized that it is the quality of an organization's human capital in essential executive positions that is probably one the most important factors of an organization's profit potential (Molloy & Barney, 2015). Shaw et al. (2013) indicated that proper approaches implemented through SHRM strategy could benefit organizations that are changing passive processes to initiative, communicating organizational goals clearly, and encouraging the involvement of management and leadership. Mitchell et al. (2013) showed that SHRM could positively impact an organization's performance through

generating structural cohesion within the organization or team while simultaneously enabling the same groups to respond to changing environments. However, the reality of the current business environment provides a landscape of variability and uncertainty. Organizations operate in a period where an organization is actively looking for additional talent while in the very next period they consider the elimination of positions. Another factor compounding the problem involves the constantly changing environment and the need for innovation. These types of fluctuations alter the type of skills needed. If human resources is to function as a strategic tool rather than merely an administrative function, employing predictive technology and appropriate tools is essential (Shaw et al., 2013). Mitchell et al. (2013) also confirmed the same positive correlation between SHRM practices and organizational performance. SHRM approach provides a significant benefit to the organization in the form of tangible and intangible organizational capital. An effective SHRM practice should improve organizational performance and unbridle employee talent.

Recruiting Talent

Talent characterizes the summation of an individual's skills, aptitude, capabilities, commitment, and judgment (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2014). The process of planning for talent is critical to the success of organizations regardless of their location or industry and has become a key management issue in the last ten years (Garavan, 2012; Thunnissen, Boselie, & Fruytier, 2013). Recruitment is a critical activity that makes significant contributions to the organization. Selecting the right persons can enhance the productivity and market value of the organization. A gap in current literature exists regarding the

process of developing effective recruiting strategies. The majority of the literature is relative to external pressures, organizational leadership, marketplace and industry pressures (Ciuhureana et al., 2014; Conen, van Dalen, & Henkens, 2012; C. Lee, Hwang, & Yeh, 2013; McCabe, 2012). Organizations discovered that challenges exist when they seek workers with the certain competencies needed to perform a wide variety of jobs at the wage rates offered (Rothstein, 2012; Thunnissen et al., 2013). Inadequately crafted recruitment strategies have lead to unqualified job applicants who are prone to turnover (Cappelli, 2015; McCabe, 2012). The hiring process in organizations encompasses human resources practices of recruitment and selection. To be most effective, recruitment planning and selection activities need to go beyond the immediate environment of the organization and look at various other factors (McCabe, 2012). This is fast becoming true of not only large organizations but also of smaller ones (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). For an organization to achieve long-term sustainability, the process of recruitment and selection requires critical planning (McCabe, 2012). Applying improper approaches to recruitment and selection practices lead to increased costs to businesses. The success of recruitment and selection will depend on defining and understanding the organization's strategy and its alignment with HRM, assessing the external and internal environments, assessing the supply position and the requirement of the organization, and evolving strategies to fill the gaps, if any (C. Lee et al., 2013). True alignment of human resources policies to the organizational strategy yields more effective recruitment polices (Ciuhureana et al., 2014).

Werner and Herman (2012) argued that some organizations have felt that human resource functions can be too costly for some small businesses. Teti and Andriotto (2013) discovered the extension period of open positions increased the costs to continue searching and employers were under pressure to fill vacancies by employing a worker with inadequate skills rather than wait for the right candidate. Research in talent planning and recruiting has focused on candidate knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal interaction. The reputation of an organization and social media manifestation has increased pressures on recruitment (C. Lee et al., 2013). Successful talent planning involves having qualified talent available, in the right location, at the right time (Cappelli, 2015; Thunnissen et al., 2013). In order to understand the strategies that human resources managers need to employ for successful recruitment, it is first necessary to appreciate the basic principles of good strategic recruitment. While many firms still tend to evaluate the effectiveness of their recruitment activities regarding cost and time taken to fill a vacancy, a frequently overlooked but important consideration is the quality of recruitment (Zaharie & Osoian, 2013). Successful talent planning may also include utilizing appropriate strategies to effectively promote the organizational brand (McCabe, 2012). For organizations operating on a global scale, this process can be quite complex and is considered one of the greatest challenges facing organizations (Thunnissen et al., 2013). Globally, organizations struggled to fill highly skilled positions through a cost effective approach (Cihureana et al., 2014). Unpredicted fluctuations in demographics, societal needs, and diversity require organizational leaders to make changes in the recruiting practices. Alternatively, research has also shown that an organization's competitive

advantage and efficiency increases through the application of sound recruiting practices (Werner & Herman, 2012). An economic downturn can further complicate the talent management process and force companies to create more innovative practices (Garavan, 2012). Organizations have begun to think about their workforce as a true opportunity to improve and manage human and economic capital (Teti & Andriotto, 2013). Recent studies suggested many influences and factors provide challenges for human resource professionals when recruiting and selecting employees (Thunnissen et al., 2013; Zaharie & Osoian, 2013). Organizations are also concerned with the ability to correctly position leaders in an effective manner (Sar, 2012; Thunnissen et al., 2013). In order for an organization to obtain the best and brightest employees for the long-term requires a different shift in the way in which recruitment has previously performed. Human resource departments must be willing to change their paradigms to effectively tap into the top talents of the marketplace. Successful recruiters look everywhere and do not hesitate to consider the most unlikely sources. They employ active screening processes, use competency modeling, and build relationships with the past and prospective employees. Leveraging internships to tap young and promising talent is another strategy employed by successful recruiters (Thunnissen et al., 2013). The recruitment strategies must be aligned to inculcate implementation of programs to cross-skill and to increase their skills to create and maintain a workforce that will be sustainable (Thunnissen et al., 2013). From a strategic point of view, performance management is one of the most critical aspects of HRM because it directly links to the output of individuals and thus to organizational performance (Ciobanu & Ristea, 2015). Its significance to the process of recruitment is

equally strong because best practices in recruitment focus on the employee (Ciobanu & Ristea, 2015). Good performance management systems ensure that organizational objectives align with individual career goals, and both career planning and rewards are equitable. In addition, a well-functioning performance management system should also be an effective instrument in communicating organization strategy, goals and objectives (Ciobanu & Ristea, 2015).

Technology has played a critical role in the rapid absorption of the workforce into the industry. It thus becomes more important for industry leaders to put more focus on recruitment of employees if their purpose is to grow in the future (Garavan, 2012). One of the first steps to effective talent planning is the ability to create an organization that individuals from the talent pool will want to be a part of long-term (Garavan, 2012; Wayne & Casper, 2012). Another factor compounding the challenge of effective talent planning is the constant changing environment and the need for innovation. These challenges have the potential to alter the type of skills needed if human resources is to function as a strategic tool rather than merely an administrative function. In order to plan effectively human resources must to employ predictive technology and appropriate tools (Garavan, 2012). In choosing the best talent in the marketplace, recruiters must seek out individuals and identify traits that are critical in ensuring that potential new recruits are also successful problem solvers. Organizations may not attract the necessary talent if they are not successful in managing and ensuring that the organization is appealing to the candidate pool. Griffi, McNelly, Dollar, and Carrick (2014) indicated challenges faced by the manufacturing industry identified a gap in the talent pool. Griffi et al. (2014)

concluded that jobs are available; however, the perception of many graduates and potential job seekers is that the job is not attractive and appears to require long hours. They further indicated that the industry does provide stable and rewarding careers, however, many graduates asserted that jobs in manufacturing are tiresome and to some extent students opt to avoid technology, science, math and engineering in favor of other service-related fields (Griffi et al., 2014). Strategic talent acquisition processes may aid human resource leaders in the manufacturing industry to higher levels of skilled workers contributing to the enhanced overall quality of life.

Talent Management

Talent management is the deliberate and continuous process that systematically identifies, assesses, develops, and retains talent. Its foundations can be traced back to 1997 when a pioneering study that expressed that talent shortage was the demand for talented labor that was greater than the supply available (Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2014; Minbaeva & Collings, 2013). Managers emphasized talent management in order to meet the current and future organizational objectives and goals. The organization should allocate the most applicable peoples' skills to the most appropriate position (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; Meyers, van Woerkom, & Dries, 2013). Human resources professionals employ talent management immediately upon hiring the employee and continue throughout the employee's tenure with that organization. Talent management methods, designs, and executions must meet the broader business strategic needs. Organizations can accrue maximum benefits with nimble and consistent practice in talent management

(Cappelli & Keller, 2014). Human resource department and other organizational leaders must collaborate at every level of the process.

Innovation, experience, and the technical know-how are important to the organization in the competitive market (Cappelli & Keller, 2014). The talented employees assist the company in driving these comparative advantages. Talent management should focus on organizational talent, the most experienced and highly skilled individuals (Gelens, Hofmans, Dries, & Pepermans, 2014). Strategies to attract, recruit, and develop talented individuals are crucial to an organizations ability to position itself as a market leader. Talent management policies necessitate a true understanding of the intricacies relative to the trends and shifts in business realities influencing the current and future business environment (Cappelli & Keller, 2014; De Vos & Dries, 2013).

Talent shortages continue to present a concern for business leaders. Emerging economies from around the world predict shortages of skilled labor in a highly competitive global environment (Sanghi et al., 2012). Globalization refers to the footprint widely employed by many individuals when speaking of multiple phenomena such as competition across multinational firms, world trade and individuals who make up the world's labor market (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013; Sanghi et al., 2012). Demographics from a global lens will also shape the challenges facing talent shortages. By 2060, population growth of the traditional working age (15 to 64 years) is projected to decline leading to potentially negative effects for workforce participation (Johansson et al., 2012; Kaliannan & Adjovu, 2014). Eastern and Southern European countries, as well as Asia, are precipitously expecting an aging population within the next 50 years. This is in direct

contrast to other countries that anticipate a decline of approximately 9% in the working-age population (Johansson et al., 2012). Another anomaly worth noting includes emerging economies, such as South Africa and India that diverge from wealthier countries and will experience an increase in their working age population.

The talent management practices developed in the 20th century requires improvements to keep up with the evolutionary pace of the current economic environment. The industry landscape of the 21st century is swiftly evolving because of technological advances that can appear at times too numerous to keep up with (Schiemann, 2014; Thunnissen et al., 2013). The human age defines the business world today. Raw material such as iron, bronze and stones defined the earlier eras. Technology, industries, information and space conquered such eras (Garavan, 2012). Human potential became a catalyst driving the changes in the global force driving, political, social and economic development (Minbaeva & Collings, 2013).

According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2012) the manner in which human resource professionals manage talent will be a game-changer. The HRM professional must show the how the functions create value for the firm. The business leaders and stakeholders will have an opportunity to comprehend the connection between retaining best talents and attaining best results. In addition, it will be critical for the organization to explain the types of developmental opportunities are available for the top talent.

Understanding the cumulative influence of demographic movements combined with uncertainty in the economic environment and intensified by a critical shortage of

labor skills produces a tremendous talent deficiency landscape for the business community (Garavan, 2012). Human resource professionals will need to seek out universal approaches to find and attract the best talent in the market to remain competitive. The war of talent is the current situation and businesses must include strategic methods to address the challenges. There must be sustainable, strategic investment in the process to align of talent with organizational goals (Thunnissen et al., 2013).

Talent Shortages in the Manufacturing Industry

Substantial evidence that demonstrated that organizations around the globe have significant challenges in finding the right talent (Griffi et al., 2014; Manpower Group, 2014). The Manpower Group study (2014) showed an average of 36% of employers indicated they are having difficulty finding appropriate talent to fill positions, in the United States, that number rose to 40%. The results of the study also indicated that organizations are utilizing multiple strategies to address the talent shortages including employee training and development programs as well as, other aggressive recruiting strategies.

A strong manufacturing industry plays an essential role in a country's economic growth and prosperity. The industrial revolution of the mid-18th century contributed to the improvement manufacturing of goods enough to export to other countries (Nicholson & Noonan, 2014). As a result, the people had a better living standard due to the availability of jobs. The United States manufacturers are optimistic that the manufacturing industry will regain momentum after the economic crunch of 2008

(Nicholson & Noonan, 2014). However, the manufacturers faced various challenges and among the challenges was the shortage of talent. The industry for many years experienced significant gaps between the required talent and available talent in the market. Recruitment of talent in the manufacturing industry has been a tricky one for human resource professional in companies that deal with manufacturing as youthful graduates and millennials do not consider a job at a manufacturing plant satisfying (Griffi et al., 2014).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 4.7 million job openings in June of 2015 and more than half of employers responded that they cannot find qualified candidates (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Shifts in the workforce are quickly changing with a mass retirement of aging employees thus creating a widening gap (Datt & Rivera, 2013). The aging labor force in the United States is a tsunami that causes serious workforce shortage across all industries. A notable decrease exists in the numbers of workers aged between 16 and 24 years. The manufacturing industry alone requires 3.5 workers (Nicholson & Noonan, 2014). The skills gap and unfilled jobs are expected to be approximately 2 million. Major factors exist contributing to the gap widening. Baby boomers are of the retiring age, and the economy is expanding (Datt & Rivera, 2013). The retirement of old-age workers creates 2.7 jobs and an estimated 700,000 created as the economy continues to grow and expand (Nicholson & Noonan, 2014).

In addition to retirement and economic expansion, the loss of embedded knowledge is a big challenge. The mobility of the skilled worker is very high.

Manufacturing is still a very source of livable wage employment to both the highly educated and the skilled laborer. Employment in the manufacturing industry yields higher wages than any other industry (Levinson, 2012). Levinson (2012) indicated that manufacturing jobs are growing again because manufacturers are choosing locations that are within the United States. The Manufacturing Institute study indicated that the general public would like to see a manufacturer locate in their community and believe the industry is vital the economic stability in the United States. However, less than 37% of the respondent indicated they would encourage their children to pursue careers in the manufacturing industry (Griffi et al., 2014). The results of the study also revealed that the industry would continue to have a challenge in capturing their fair share of the talent pool in the future because Americans continue to show hesitancy in choosing manufacturing as a career option. Manufacturing continues to be unattractive to the generation Y (19-33) population whose results showed the weakest choice for choosing manufacturing as a career option first (Griffi et al., 2014). Many graduates claim that jobs in manufacturing are tiresome and to some extent students opting to avoid technology, science, math and engineering for other service-related fields (Griffi et al., 2014).

The managers in the manufacturing industry around the globe identify that innovation driven by talent determines competitiveness (Noe et al., 2012). Shortages in this area will have a negative impact on the manufacturer's profitability and growth. Skill gaps influence the ability to implement the increase in productivity and technologies needed for competition (Noe et al., 2012). Additionally, the skills gap has a domino effect

and can negatively impact other aspects such as customer services, development, innovation of new products, and expanding internationally.

Transition

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study provides the foundation for the research, design, and the related concepts associated with the business problem. Planning successful recruitment strategies for skilled labor in the manufacturing industry requires an understanding of (a) the regional landscape, (b) the value of human capital, (c) attraction and talent management and, (d) strategic human resource policies. The applications and effects of the resource-based view model used to determine the resource strength that an organization has in order to successfully compete within strategy literature has led to growing convergence in the field of SHRM and assisted in pushing human resources to the forefront. The four basic areas in the competitive advantage of a company are value, resources being rare to be found by competition, hard to be imitated and placed in an organized manner. These traits help to ensure that a company has a competitive advantage and can sustain. Organizations seeking to be competitive must pursue the best talent and then successfully hire those employees. The ultimate goal of retention is a function of the long-term strategy. Fundamentally, strategic planning can ensure that an organization could obtain the finest possible applicants with the right talents, aspirations, and personalities to match them with the appropriate positions within the organization.

While reviewing the current literature, it was determined that gaps existed in the body of knowledge. A preponderance of the qualitative literature did not identify a clear

pathway for human resource professionals to develop the strategies needed to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry. This qualitative case study represents emergent literature on the need for human resource professionals to develop the appropriate strategies needed to address workforce shortages for skilled labor and the need to understand the relationship between HRM professionals and organizational leadership.

Section 2 contains the research methodology for this research study. In addition, some of the supporting sections include the role of the researcher, study participants, research method and research design, data analysis, and reliability and validity. Section 3 contains the results of the study based on an analysis of the data collected. Likewise, in section 3, I provide the results of my findings with the application to professional practice, implications for social change, and recommendations for action or further research.

Section 2: The Project

Human resource professionals face many obstacles when recruiting. Since the Great Recession of 2008, the labor market has been slow to recover (Cappelli, 2015; Rothstein, 2012). In 2014, 39% of 38,000 employers surveyed in the United States reported challenges in filling jobs as a result of unavailable talent (Manpower Group, 2014). The perception that employers have to be more innovative and adopt more efficient recruiting practices is an open question that was a factor in the skills gap discussion.

Section 2 of this study encompasses the rationale selected for investigating, validating, and interpreting the challenges that human resource leaders face in the manufacturing industry to develop effective strategies for recruitment of skilled labor. Section 2 will also comprise the (a) participant selection criteria, (b) basis for research and design method, and (c) data collection and analysis techniques. The primary tool used for exploration and data collection in this study was semistructured, open-ended interview questions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore challenges facing some manufacturing human resource leaders that lack strategies to successfully recruit skilled labor. The targeted population consisted of three manufacturing firms in located in Northwest Louisiana. This population was appropriate because 23.29% of all open positions in Northwest Louisiana were in manufacturing and thus have a direct involvement with the workforce shortage problem (Louisiana Workforce Commission,

2014). Findings may influence positive social change by providing a greater understanding of employee recruitment efforts, thus reducing unemployment and improving the local economy.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers have a vital responsibility in determining the structure of analysis utilized in research (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). My professional experience provided a sound foundation to my research topic. As a former chairman of the board of the local chamber of commerce, I have had the opportunity to engage with many colleagues regarding the challenges they faced in operating successful entities. Annually, a survey was sent out to business owners in the local metropolitan area asking for the top five of the greatest challenges they are facing. Filling open positions was one of the top three challenges consistently mentioned (Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, 2014), which provided a rationale for the selected topic. Many qualitative researchers have used the interview technique as the primary means of data collection (Condie, 2012). Enhanced interview skills for data collection are a critical skill set for the researcher to employ (Condie, 2012). The role of the researcher for this study included identifying the participants, developing the questionnaire, and interviewing, analyzing, coding, and interpreting the data (Condie, 2012). Semistructured interviews provided the greatest opportunity to capture quality data and were most appropriate (Rowley, 2012).

Ensuring high ethical standards was essential in my research. The Belmont Report protocol identified three key principles that require researchers to treat participants as

autonomous agents, to impose no beneficence or harm on participants, and to treat all participants equally (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). Before engaging any research participant and before the collection of any data, I obtained a study approval number from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). An interview guide was an appropriate tool to employ with participants. The interview guide demonstrated and ensured each participant use of the same form of investigation (Condie, 2012). Because of the sensitive nature of the information obtained from participants, it was essential to conceal the names and locations. I followed a clear and thought-out interview protocol with the appropriate data collection instructions. I approached the study with no preconceived outcomes and ensured that my personal feelings on the topic did not influence the interview. I was also responsible for receiving ethical training from the National Institute of Health, which demonstrated the awareness of the ethical treatment of research participants (Akhavan, Ramezan, & Moghaddam, 2013; Haahr et al., 2014). As a scholar-practitioner, I was required to show honesty, trustworthiness, and credibility. I preserved my opinions to remain objective and mitigate bias. Excluding human resource professionals with a perceived or recognized relationship mitigated any inappropriate influence. Ensuring that biases, assumptions, and attitudes would be limited was accomplished by adhering to appropriate guidelines and standard protocols for qualitative research (Yin, 2014).

Participants

The Manufacturing Managers Council of Northwest Louisiana (MMC; 2014) is a member-based nonprofit organization comprised of executive leaders of manufacturing

companies and regional organizations that provide support to manufacturers located in Northwest Louisiana. The MMC meets monthly to discuss and identify the needs of manufacturing companies in the area. The solicitation of participants for interviews for this study was nonrandom, thoughtful, and based on their detailed knowledge of human resource strategies. The industry targeted for this study was manufacturing. The MMC was the targeted organization to help identify eligible manufacturers. Eligibility requirements for manufacturers included manufacturers that were licensed in the state of Louisiana, currently employed at least 100 people, and were located within the Northwest Louisiana region. Eligible participants were invited to participate from the pool of eligible manufacturers identified by the MMC. Eligibility requirements for participants included human resource professionals over the age of 18 who had at least 2 years of tenure in the organization and had the ability to hire employees. The thoughtful and deliberate choice of participants focused on a population that met specific criteria to answer the research question (Robinson, 2014).

Sampling in qualitative research usually focuses on a small number of interviewees, relying on the richness and depth of detail to obtain a pertinent understanding (Crocker et al., 2014; Williams, Burton, & Rycroft-Malone, 2013). Developing an effective relationship with participants in a study is necessary to successful qualitative research (Haahr et al., 2014). Communicating the purpose and objective of the study—explaining how the research may bring greater awareness of improved attraction and recruitment strategies leading to a competent, skilled workforce—established trust. This process included a communication strategy that

incorporated (a) a formal recruitment letter or a recruitment e-mail to the appropriate individual; (b) an overview and extent of my role in this study; (c) information on organizational approval and the participant's consent to participate in this study; and (d) my contact information for those who were willing to participate in the research.

McLevey (2015) posited that suitable procedures with a link between the researcher and the participants include clear messaging and multiple communication channels.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Three methodologies exercised in business research include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Quantitative research employs numerical data to test hypotheses (Hoare & Hoe, 2012; Ma, Mazumdar, & Memtsoudis, 2012). Quantitative methods focus on testing the hypothesis through measurement and analysis of specific variables (Hoare & Hoe, 2012; Kozlowski, Chao, Grand, Braun, & Kuljanin, 2013). Quantitative methods were not appropriate for this study. Mixed methods research encompasses multiple ways to explore the problem. Eliminating quantitative methodology from consideration eliminated mixed methods as an option because it is the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods combined (Goldman et al., 2015; Gough et al., 2012). Qualitative researchers conduct research in their natural settings while trying to make sense of what is being observed or interpreted in a way that brings meaning to people (Crocker et al., 2014; Freeman et al., 2015). The fundamental strength of this type of research is the depth of conducting research and writing descriptions, usually resulting in sufficient details for the readers to understand

the ideologies and grasp the situation (Freeman et al., 2015). Qualitative studies are the instruments that are employed when describing and attempting to understand human behavior (Trotter, 2012).

In order to support the rationale for using a qualitative method for this study, I reviewed other qualitative research studies. Researchers can have a broader and deeper understanding through qualitative inquiry and have determined it was appropriate for understanding challenges facing human resource leaders (McCabe, 2012; Werner & Herman, 2012). McCabe (2012) used a qualitative method to explore human resource recruitment efforts in the convention and exhibition industry. Likewise, Werner and Herman (2012) investigated HRM practices as a competitive tool for small businesses. The research method chosen was a qualitative case study because it encompasses a focus on the central research question from a broad perspective and explores particular challenges and influences of the participants (Freeman et al., 2015).

Research Design

Upon completion of an in-depth analysis of all research designs, I selected a multiple case study design for this study to explore the strategies human resource leaders in the manufacturing industry need to address skilled labor shortages. The case study design was more appropriate and provided an advantage over phenomenology or ethnography designs because the researcher can understand the complex relationships among the participants within a smaller time frame (Njie & Asimiran, 2014).

In phenomenology, the researcher relies on seeking out the lived experiences of the participants (Freeman et al., 2015). A phenomenological design aims to illustrate the

experiences of a phenomenon in a situation that already occurred (Walker, 2012). The phenomenological design is appropriate for a study when the researcher seeks to understand lived experiences utilizing a minimum of 20 participants without using secondary sources (Kafle, 2013). The phenomenological design did not match the needs of this study to explore strategies human resource leaders in the manufacturing industry lack to address skilled labor shortages.

In ethnography, the researcher is seeking to understand a specific culture within his or her field or natural setting (Vesa & Vaara, 2014). An ethnographic inquiry design meets the needs of a study when a researcher absorbs and becomes a part of the cultural characteristics of a whole group of the daily activities for an extended period (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012). The ethnographic research design did not match the needs of the study because the focus was not to understand the phenomenon of a particular group or culture.

Using a multiple case study design enables a researcher to generate a comprehensive picture to review the strategies along with insight gained from the human resource professional experiences (Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2014). Case study research also allows multiple data collections strategies that will enhance the information for discussion and analysis. Samples in qualitative research are extracted to reflect the goal and purpose of the study (Walker, 2012). Leedy and Omrod (2015) reasoned that a small sample size is appropriate when conducting qualitative research.

Data saturation occurs when the ongoing collection of data generates no new information or additional benefit (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Fusch and Ness (2015)

described data saturation as the position within data collection when a researcher locates little or no change in themes or codes. A total of three human resources professionals participated in the interview process. Each human resources professional came from one of three different manufacturing companies. This approach to sample size aligned to the study and ensured an in-depth understanding of the human resources policies and strategies employed for recruiting. Based on the case study design and using the technique of member checking to verify the data, I concluded that three participants provided assurances to support the study and achieve data saturation. My strategy for achieving saturation included conducting interviews with human resource professionals, performing member checking sessions, and reviewing relevant company documents to verify information obtained from interviews. To ensure data saturation achievement, I committed to perform additional interviews if necessary. The manufacturing industry restricted to Northwest Louisiana confined the research scope of this study; this restriction was a limitation that helped to achieve appropriate saturation.

Population and Sampling

In qualitative research, the process of selecting an appropriate participant pool can be a challenge. The researcher must outline a blueprint of how the study will progress utilizing a well thought out strategy for a suitable population for recruitment and the appropriate size for the sample (Palinkas et al., 2013). Depth instead frequency determines the appropriateness of the sample size in qualitative research (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Therefore, samples of participants should include those participants who will best represent the research topic

selected. This type of strategy underpinned the selection of participants for this research. A homogeneous sampling includes selecting a particular group with similar characteristics and perspectives that are of interest for the research topic, and it is one of many types of purposeful sampling designs (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Palinkas et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling is extensively used in qualitative research to identify and select information-rich cases (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). In qualitative case studies, purposive sampling practices are more suitable than the random sampling method because of the specific boundaries comprising the nature of the case study (Yin, 2014). In this study, the type of sample was purposeful. The goal of purposeful sampling was to gather information of central importance to the research to obtain maximum knowledge (Robinson, 2014). This method was based on the concept that the researcher desires to discover, understand, and gain insight (Crocker et al., 2014).

The population was selected through a homogeneous purposeful sample because the researcher can gather information of central importance to the research to obtain maximum knowledge (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw, & Casey, 2015). Through utilizing a homogenous purposive sample, I interviewed participants that had a conscious awareness of the organization's current human resource practices and regulatory employment laws. A significant advantage of purposive sampling in qualitative research is the ability of the researcher to engage with participants that have the requisite knowledge and experience (Walker, 2012). The population for this research only included private sector manufacturing firms located in Northwest Louisiana with specific criteria for efficient sampling. Criteria for selecting companies to participate included the following: (a)

manufacturing company must be licensed in the state of Louisiana (b) manufacturing company must have a minimum of 100 employees and (c) manufacturing company must operate within the boundaries of Northwest Louisiana. Other researchers exploring human resource strategies have successfully employed homogeneous sampling that provided in-depth, rich data (Abraham, Kaliannan, Mohan, & Thomas, 2015; Sandoff & Widell, 2015; Sinthunava, 2014). Human resource professionals composed the sample from the identified population of manufacturing firms located in Northwest Louisiana. Human resource professionals selected had to be 18 years or older, had a minimum of two years of experience in their firms and had the ability to hire employees to be eligible participants for this research. The research employed one human resource professionals from three different manufacturing firms. Yin (2014) suggested that the location for the participant interviews should be at a secure location of their selection and at a time of their convenience. I ensured that interviews were in a comfortable and non-threatening environment when conducted. This allowed participants to be open and honest in their responses.

This research involved a qualitative case study approach in inquiry of data from the participants of the study. Obtaining the appropriate sample size is critical (Leedy & Omrod, 2015; Marshall et al., 2013). Leedy and Omrod (2015) further articulated that a small sample size is appropriate when conducting qualitative research. Bailey (2014) noted a significant consideration when identifying participants is to find individuals who may have the best information to address the study's research questions in the research setting. This research was limited to three human resource professionals from

manufacturing companies to ensure a comprehensive understanding of human resource policies about recruitment efforts for skilled labor positions in the manufacturing industry. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) indicated that data saturation occurs when the researcher obtains meaningful data through validated investigation by employing participants with the greatest knowledge of the subject matter. The rationale for the sample size allowed for sufficient data for the research and aligned to the study to ensure an in-depth understanding of the human resources policies and strategies employed for recruiting. The sample size provided me as the researcher three strengths (a) the ability to gather specific and detailed data for each individual case, (b) the ability to investigate the complexities of each individual case, and (c) the ability to compare and contrast the cases. Njie and Asimiran (2014) described the case as a unit that has borders that will make it unique and distinctive from other cases. For the purposes of this study, each individual interviewed defined a case for investigation.

Suitable sample sizes vary based on methodology; studies that utilize a qualitative design characteristically have a smaller sample size than quantitative designs (Marshall et al., 2013). In qualitative research, the sampling approach is largely influenced by the appropriateness and sufficiency of the sample rather the size of the sample (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). The concept of data saturation was fundamental to this research because it addressed whether the research had an adequate sample to demonstrate reliability and validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Walker (2012) stated that samples extracted in qualitative research reflect the goal and purpose of the study. The manufacturing industry restricted to Northwest Louisiana confined the research scope of this study. This limitation aided in

providing an in-depth, intensive and detailed approach to the interviews and research. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) stated that data saturation occurs when additional interviews conducted provide to no additional significant data to the research. Limitations, multiple interviews and the data collected ensured data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). To achieve data saturation, I committed to perform additional interviews if necessary.

Ethical Research

Ethical standards are a critical component of conducting research and provide guidance on the standards of conduct regarding data collection in natural settings (Haahr et al., 2014). Researchers should safeguard confidentiality by removing any information gathered that could connect participants to the research before any distribution of the data (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012). The ethical compliance process used in this study strictly complied with Walden University's ethical standards and the Belmont Report. I obtained the certificate of completion from the National Institute of Health, Office of Extramural Research that verified my compliance of ethical respect for the protecting human research participants prior to beginning my proposal (Certification Number: 1653201). No data collection for this study occurred until after Walden University IRB approval.

Explaining the research protocols before asking any participant to sign the Walden University Informed Consent Agreement adhered to the greatest level of integrity. This process began with a consent form that included the data collection process and all relevant details of the study. The process also included an effort to obtain

a letter of cooperation from the participating manufacturing organization before soliciting any participants. This process assured the IRB that the manufacturing company provided permission for me to conduct the research within the facility and to promote the protection of human subjects to participants associated with the cooperating company (Appendix A).

Participants of the study received a copy of the consent form before the interview process. The consent form included information on payments, confidentiality, and the contact information for a Walden University representative and was signed prior to participation. I explained the components of the consent form to each participant prior to the interview. Prior to the interview, the participant and I signed the informed consent form with a detailed explanation. The explanation included the overview and background of the research, what to expect during the interview process, such as duration and types of questions, risks, and benefits of participation in the study, and the voluntary nature of the study. The participant and host organization received assurances that the names and any other identifiable information would be omitted from the study to protect their privacy and confidentiality rights. Unique identifiers utilized for participating companies included labels such as Company A, Company B, and Company C. Participants were labeled with unique identifiers such as HRP1, HRP2, and HRP3 to ensure confidentiality and privacy. Required records retention was five years from the date of the study's approval in a locked safe as required by Walden University. Data is password protected on a thumb drive and stored in a secure, fireproof vault for 5 years. Shredding and destroying paper

records occur at the conclusion of the five-year period. Furthermore, deletion of digital data on the thumb drive occurs at the conclusion of the five-year period.

The Walden University Informed Consent Agreement had a statement regarding the voluntary nature of the study. Participants understood that they had the ability to opt out and withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty. I verbally restated the voluntary nature of participation when I explained the consent form. Solicited participants are volunteers and; therefore, compensation is not offered for their involvement. I did not offer any incentives or compensation to a participant to avoid the appearance of unethical enticements. I restated that participants may withdraw at any point during the study upon completion of the explanation of the consent form.

Upholding the ethical principles to ensure the rights, dignity, and safety of each research participants is essential (Haahr et al., 2014). The interview process was scheduled in one-hour increments to minimize any inconvenience to the participant and accommodate for schedules and availability (Rowley, 2012). The risk posed by the interview process was minimal and reasonable and only caused minor inconveniences. Additionally, the participants had the ability to stop the interview process at any time to reduce harm if a heightened alleged risk of exposing confidential information (Rowley, 2012). I did not publish participants' names or their associated organizations in this study; coded participant's names have the standard initial HRP for human resource professional and was assigned a number one through three. There are no legal or economic risks for participation in the study.

I applied for a Walden University IRB approval prior to the start of the interview process. The consent form included the Walden IRB number and the expiration date.

Data Collection Instruments

This section included specific information regarding the tools used to gather data in this study. Qualitative research is the practice of asking simple questions to obtain complex data (Rowley, 2012). The appropriate development of effective qualitative questions can provide shape and direction to research (Bailey, 2014). The researcher serves as the principal instrument in qualitative studies that will inquire through a variety of questions that focus on the how and why of human interaction (Freeman et al., 2015; Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). I was the principal instrument for data collection in this study. Chakraverty and Tai (2013) posited that explaining individual philosophies and assumptions that could potentially influence the data collection and analysis in the study is imperative.

The qualitative research instrument is designed to capture and collect rich information from the participants on the described issue based on their knowledge (Hurst et al., 2015). Case study research permits the researcher to use multiple methods to collect data that will enhance the information for discussion and analysis (Robinson, 2013; Yin, 2014). The primary data collection instrument for this study was semistructured interview questions (Appendix B). Utilizing semistructured interviews along with organizational records such as company documents enabled me to triangulate data in this study. Data triangulation is a justified technique to assess and ensure the trustworthiness in a case study (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014).

Ensuring reliability and validity of the data collected from the participants was essential. Utilizing member checking to verifying information with the participants accomplished this process. Member checking is the process of sharing the interpretation and findings with the participants (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). This process allows them to review the findings and provide feedback for authentication (Harper & Cole, 2012). I conducted short follow-up interviews to share my preliminarily interpretations and findings with each participant to allow for a review and feedback thus ensuring the accurate and correct interpretations. During the member checking process, I discussed my interpretations with the participants and ask them to verify that my interpretations of the information they provided in the interview are correct.

The primary method of data collection for this study was through open-ended questions in a semistructured format (Appendix B). The use of the semistructured interview questions allows the participant additional flexibility when answering the questions (Rowley, 2012). I utilized a digital voice activated recorder to record individual interviews of each participant to help identify major themes and codes. Participants provided permission to utilize a digital voice activated recorder upon signature of the informed consent. Utilizing factual data from relevant company documents from the organization helped to validate the responses from the interviews.

Data Collection Technique

The procedure for data collection in this multiple case study included interviewing three human resource professionals from the manufacturing industry in Northwest Louisiana. The interview protocol (Appendix C) for this study contained a

standard list of open-ended research questions presented to participants through semistructured interviews. Having an interview protocol is an essential practice in qualitative research (de Ceunynck, Kusumastuti, Hannes, Janssens, & Wets, 2013; Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). Each face-to-face interview consists of seven open-ended interview questions (Appendix B). Additionally, interviews utilize a voice-activated digital recorder. Building trust is an extremely vital component when the researcher uses recording devices (Speer & Stokoe, 2014). Ensuring that the recorder was visible to the participant and notification is given when the recording begins and ends is important. Providing identification of the red LED light as acknowledgement of the beginning of the recording provided further assurance to the participant. Face-to-face interviews provide advantages that include the ability to capture verbal and nonverbal signs, emotions, and certain behaviors during each interview (Speer & Stokoe, 2014). Disadvantages of face-to-face interviews include the researcher's inexperience in conducting qualitative interviews, a smaller sample size, and limited time (de Ceunynck et al., 2013). An in-depth interview protocol includes creating qualitative questions or adopting an existing valid and reliable guide for interviews (de Ceunynck et al., 2013). The interview protocol (Appendix C) included conducting the interviews using the interview questions created to help understand the strategies needed to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry.

According to Yin (2014), implementing the use of a protocol constructively impacts the reliability of a study. Pilot studies provide advance cautions on proposed protocols, instruments, and schedules that are too complex, inappropriate, or fail to gather

the necessary data sought (Baškarada, 2014). Yin (2014) posited that a pilot study could enhance the reliability and validity of a study's research questions and data collections practices. Upon receiving approval from Walden University's IRB, I conducted a pilot study involving an in-depth interview. The pilot study involved one semistructured interview with a manufacturer in Northwest Louisiana as preparation to inform and help refine protocols, questions, and data collection plans. To select a participant for the pilot study, I utilized a purposeful sample to mitigate any bias in selection. The ability to practice the interview technique, including digital audio recording along with transcribing serves as an invaluable skills training (Baškarada, 2014). Receiving feedback from the participant regarding the procedures provides valuable information needed to refine protocols and processes (Yin, 2014). Pilot study reports should reflect on the lessons learned and provide a pathway toward the actual study (Yin, 2014).

The interviewing process in qualitative research is critical (Condie, 2012; Parker, 2014; Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). There was a requirement in place to obtain a letter of cooperation from the participating manufacturing organization before soliciting any participants (Appendix A) before contacting any participants. Participants in this study obtained a consent form prior to the beginning of the interview process. The consent form included information on confidentiality and the contact details for a Walden University representative. A required signature prior to participation documented authorization. I summarized what the participants could expect during the interview process, and I reaffirmed confidentiality and the participant's right to withdraw from the research process at any time. I asked participants if they had any additional questions and if they

consented to the use of a digital voice activated recorder during the interview. All scheduled interviews lasted for approximately 45-60 minutes at a date and time of the participant's choosing. Exercising reasonable efforts to accommodate the participant's time constraints minimized any conflicts with daily work activities for interviews.

The interview protocol also included transcribing, analyzing, and coding the responses from participants to help identify patterns and themes. The collection, review, and analysis of other relevant governmental and organization documents serve as an appropriate secondary data sources (Denzin, 2012). Participants received a copy of their summarized responses for member checking to enhance reliability and validity on the accuracy of the summarization and my interpretation of the findings within the context of the research question via e-mail. I followed-up with a scheduled phone call within 1 to 2 weeks to review the summarization of participants' response and allowed them an opportunity to determine if the summarization correctly outlined the information provided during the interviews.

Providing the participants an opportunity to check the validity of the study findings through member checking enhances research creditability and dependability (Harper & Cole, 2012). Every participant had an opportunity to review the interview summation and receive a final analysis of the findings. The practice of following up with participants for clarification, known as member checking, is another tool that will be utilized to further augment the effort to enhance participant trust (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012).

Data Organization Techniques

In qualitative research, the organization of the data must have a structure (Anyan, 2013). This structure should occur before any of the interviews begin to ensure that all of the instruments and technology used will perform as intended (Potter, Mills, Cawthorn, Donovan, & Blazeby, 2014). I analyzed, transcribed, and coded the interviews in Microsoft Word upon a thorough review of the information collected with NVivo 11, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012; Rowley, 2012; Yin, 2014). NVivo 11 is a powerful tool that assists with the organization of interviews, handwritten notes, audio recordings, and journals (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). In qualitative inquiry, identifying words or phrases that capture certain components of the data content for additional analysis is considered the coding process (J. Campbell, Quincy, Osseman, & Pedersen, 2013; James, 2012; Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Coding makes it easier to search the data, make comparisons, and identify any patterns that compel further exploration (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). The list of codes identified helped to classify the issues that are within the data. The transcribed and coded data assisted to identify patterns and common themes in participant's responses and to evaluate in detail. Onwuegbuzie et al. (2012) suggested that researchers use multiple iterations of coding to translate information from the specific details of each participant's interview to the broader meanings and themes across interviews. I will keep all data on a password protected external hard drive for 5 years and then destroy it.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis enables a researcher to identify and evaluate the significance of all of the data collected (Yin, 2014). The data analysis for this multiple case study encompassed a repetitive and vigorous method to identify unique emerging themes to improve the ensuing phenomenon (Elo et al., 2014; Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). The purpose of my data analysis was to uncover themes to answer the central research question. I collected data for this study by utilizing seven open-ended interview questions administered through semistructured interviews (Appendix B) along with relevant organizational documents. All of these resources enabled me to triangulate data in this study. Data analysis of case studies includes the use of certain protocols that ensure the accuracy of data collected and explanations known as triangulation (Yin, 2014). The use of triangulation will enhance the richness of the research, the confidence of findings, and help to establish credibility (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Denzin, 2012; Kaczynski, Salmona, & Smith, 2013). Yin (2014) identified four forms of triangulation: (a) data triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation and, (d) methodological triangulation. Investigator triangulation utilizes multiple researchers during the analysis process (Archibald, 2015). Typically, multiple researchers in a common field of study investigated using the same qualitative methods and then compared findings to gain a deeper understanding of the problem. This is certainly an effective method of triangulation. However, the cost and time constraints make it impractical and did not meet the needs of this study. Theory triangulation exercises multiple perspectives of researchers within different disciplines to triangulate information

based on various theoretical ideas (Burau & Andersen, 2014). It is similar to investigator triangulation and presents the same constraints of cost and time consumption. Therefore, theory triangulation did not meet the needs of the study. Methodology triangulation uses multiple methods for gathering data to yield results that support a hypothesis or a theory (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). I am only conducting a study using a qualitative methodology; therefore, this type of triangulation was not appropriate for this study. Data triangulation uses multiple data sources as evidence to improve the creditability of a problem by analyzing research findings (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014). Multiple data sources are the instruments used for evidence, and therefore data triangulation met the needs for my study.

Data analysis will include the researcher reviewing the data to discover important descriptions, themes, and categories (J. Campbell et al., 2013; Lancaster, Milia, & Cameron, 2012; Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Yin (2014) outlined five steps to analyze textual data that I will follow in this study: (a) compiling, (b) disassembling, (c) reassembling, (d) interpretation, and (e) narration. After gathering all of the transcribed interview data, member checking the interpretations of the interview data, qualitative data analysis occurs. A digital record of data and a literal transcription of each interview was the beginning of data analysis. Upon completion, uploading the data into NVivo 11 allowed for compilation, disassembly and reassembly of data. Transferring the data to the software designed to aid in the data analysis for this study to identify themes and patterns in the data provided by participants is an accepted process of qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). NVivo 11 software sorted words and phrases that

assisted in the identification of themes in the data, categories, and tags using word recognition and automatic coding functions to ensure thorough data analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012).

Themes in this study related to the research questions. The initial categories of themes and codes relate to exploring the types of strategies, processes, and challenges that human resource professionals use to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry using the answers from Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Next, are themes and codes based on outreach and partnerships exercised by human resource professionals following Interview Questions 5 and 6. The third category of themes and codes will relate to the integration of SHRM as suggested by Molloy and Barney (2015) aligning the answers captured from the participants in Questions 1 and 7. These initial themes and codes are only an idea of what the categories will look like; the data collected were the true indicator of what the themes and codes ultimately became because other themes and codes emerged upon completion of data analysis. During the data collection and analysis process, I also searched recently published literature for themes that may not have emerged from the literature review (J. Campbell et al., 2013; Freeman et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). The conceptual framework was the link that connected the methodology, literature, and the ultimately the results of this study (Borrego, Foster, & Froyd, 2014; Gough et al., 2012). I analyzed the data in the view of SHRM theory and used this framework to assist me in interpreting the meaning of data collected.

Reliability and Validity

Standards of research quality are important in both qualitative and quantitative research (Yin, 2014). Quantitative research strictly relies on empirical data and experimental approaches to test and examine hypotheses (Gough et al., 2012). Reliability and validity are concepts in quantitative research and do not have the same meaning when used to describe qualitative scholarly research (Kornbluh, 2015). Dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability are four concepts in qualitative research that support the trustworthiness of the data and establish the quality of the case study (Cope, 2014; Guba, 1981; Yin, 2014). Addressing these four concepts ensures a rigorous qualitative process (Kornbluh, 2015).

Dependability

Dependability is related to reliability in quantitative research and occurs when researchers can replicate the decision path of another researcher's study (Cope, 2014). Venkatesh et al. (2013) affirmed that dependability in qualitative research occurs when other researchers can replicate the research in a similar background and using similar resources. Describing the interview protocol (Appendix C) contributed to the rigor of the study and demonstrated dependability. It provided clear procedures to allow other researchers a thorough understanding and the ability to replicate similar steps in order to achieve a similar conclusion. The more consistent the process, the more dependable the results (Koelsch, 2013). Member checking was another technique used to mitigate researcher bias and ensure the authenticity of the data. Member checking allows the

participants an opportunity to assess and review the accuracy and completeness of the data (Harper & Cole, 2012; Koelsch, 2013; Kornbluh, 2015).

Credibility

Researchers used validity to establish the credibility of data collection, analysis, and findings. The process of member checking to share the interpretations and findings with the participants establishes credibility (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Cope, 2014; Harper & Cole, 2012). This process allowed participants to review the findings and provide feedback for authentication. To complete this process, I scheduled short follow-up interviews to share preliminarily interpretations and findings with each participant to allow for a review and feedback thus, ensuring the accurate and correct interpretations of their interview responses. During the member checking process, discussion about the interpretations occurred with the participants followed by a validation request to ensure the interpretations of the information provided as accurate and correct.

The goal of qualitative research is to minimize researcher bias and mistakes to maximize data trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). Yin (2014) indicated that triangulation increases validity and confirmability in qualitative research. Triangulation required the researcher to use multiple data sources to compare and determine alignment with the central research objective. The use of data triangulation will also help to establish credibility and increase the dependability of the data collected (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Denzin, 2012). Documentation, interviews, participant observations, and artifacts are resources used by researchers for case study verification (Yin, 2014). For the process

of triangulation, I triangulated the interview data and member checking sessions with the organizational records collected to check for validity.

Transferability

In qualitative research, transferability is not determined by the researcher, but to the external audience of the research (Cope, 2014). I worked to enhance transferability by providing a thorough description of the research framework that are fundamental to the research (Cope, 2014). I worked to enhance transferability through providing case selection, geographic location, participant criteria, and detailed reporting in the analysis and results. Utilizing transferability criteria allows new researchers with an interest in exploring methods of SHRM to address certain labor shortages to transfer the findings into other research contexts (Elo et al., 2014; Keane, Lincoln, & Smith, 2012). The implementation of a standardized protocol for investigation aids in preparation prior to interviewing participants, data collection and analysis, and reporting (Yin, 2014).

Confirmability

Confirmability is the way in which data can be confirmed by other researchers and is closely linked to dependability (Elo et al., 2014). Qualitative researchers corroborate confirmability by ensuring the accuracy and objectivity of the data (Cope, 2014). I demonstrated confirmability by providing a thorough audit trail that will demonstrate a rationale for each decision. I utilized NVivo 11 to enhance the rigor of the research by providing a detailed track of decisions made during data collection and analysis process (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). NVivo 11 will also aid in allowing the researcher to review findings and guard against any bias that could be present.

Data Saturation

Data saturation is crucial in the organization and subject matter of qualitative research, and there is no one specified method for achievement (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Walker, 2012). The concept of data saturation is fundamental to research because it addresses whether the research has an adequate sample to demonstrate reliability and validity (Fusch & Ness, 2015). O'Reilly and Parker (2013) stated that data saturation occurs when additional interviews conducted provide to no additional benefit to the research. Limitations, multiple interviews and the data collected will ensure data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). For this study, I used a small sample size of human resource professionals with experience providing strategies for hiring employees in the manufacturing industry. My strategy for achieving saturation included conducting interviews with human resource professionals, performing member checking sessions, and reviewing relevant company documents to verify information obtained from interviews. I committed to perform additional interviews to achieve data saturation, if necessary. The manufacturing industry restricted to Northwest Louisiana confined the research scope of this study. A delimitation that helped to provide a rich, in-depth, intensive and detailed approach to the interviews and research. Data triangulation, utilizing multiple data sources, aids in ensuring data are rich in depth and will help to contribute toward saturation (J. Campbell et al., 2013; Lancaster et al., 2012; Pierre & Jackson, 2014).

Transition and Summary

In this qualitative multiple case study, I explored the types of strategies used by human resource leaders to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry in Northwest Louisiana.

Section 2 comprised a comprehensive account of information regarding (a) participants, (b) research method and design, (c) population and sampling, and (d) ethical research. I further illustrated how I implemented the data collection, data analysis, and conceptual framework to explore the participant's expertise regarding strategies used to recruit skilled labor. I concluded section 2 with information that detailed the reliability and validity of the data describing dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability.

Section 3 provides an overview of the study and a presentation of the findings. Additionally, Section 3 provides an application to professional practice along with considerations for the implication for social change. Section 3 concludes with recommendations for actions, further research, reflections, and the study's summary and conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that manufacturing human resource leaders needed to successfully recruit skilled labor. The concept of resource-based view theory, aligned to the research continuum of SHRM, underpinned this study for the conceptual framework. Three human resource professionals operating in manufacturing facilities within the boundaries of Northwest Louisiana participated in face-to-face, semistructured interviews that revealed various strategies they used to recruit skilled labor. The human resource professionals offered practical experience, knowledge, and understanding of recruitment and selection strategies for skilled labor positions. Participants responded to seven interview questions outlined in the interview protocol (Appendix C). Interviews lasted from 30 to 45 minutes. To capture a better understanding, I applied member checking and follow-up interviews. To achieve data triangulation, I examined various company documents that outlined hiring strategies that supported the reliability and validity of the answers. Company documents included (a) planning materials, (b) corporate hiring strategy document, and (c) company website. The research indicated that recruitment strategies among manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana varied in methods but shared a common tenet of using their online resources and communication for recruiting.

Pilot Study

Before initiating the main study, I conducted a pilot study. There was no recruitment of participants before I received IRB approval with a Walden University

approval number (Appendix D). The pilot study aligned to the main study's criteria, delimitations, and protocol. This process of preliminary investigation to test the questions eliminated the opportunity for bias with a smaller test group and added validity and reliability to ensure my research was clear. The pilot participant selection was done through purposive sampling of manufacturers located in Northwest Louisiana. The pilot study clarified and refined the interview questions and allowed for any needed modifications that may have been necessary. The pilot participant signed the informed consent form as required by Walden University's IRB. Upon completion of the interview with the pilot participant, I scheduled a follow-up member-checking interview via e-mail. Once I completed the written summation of the interview responses, I e-mailed a copy of the summation to allow the participant to review the document prior to the scheduled call. During the member-checking interview, I asked if the interview summation provided an accurate depiction of the responses. I also asked if additional information was necessary to saturate the data. The pilot study results established that my approved IRB study plan needed no changes.

Based on the results of the pilot study, the interview questions as shown in Appendix B established the suitability and appropriateness of the seven interview questions for data collection. I coded each sentence/passage of the text with one or more codes. Codes were derived from participant words. As the process continued, codes were added or modified as necessary as new meanings or categories emerged and reduced into common sectors. After identification of the sectors, I pulled the most coded sector items with the highest frequency to identify emerging themes. The most coded items are the

codes that have the highest number of sources and references. These themes became the key product from data analysis to produce useful outcomes.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question that guided this study was the following: What strategies do some manufacturing human resource leaders use to successfully recruit skilled labor? I conducted the research applying a qualitative multiple case study approach using face-to-face interviews. The case study approach enabled me to gather, investigate, and interpret data obtained from the participants on their views, perspectives, and experiences. Njie and Asimiran (2014) indicated that a researcher could understand the complex relationships among the participants within a smaller time frame using a case study approach. Robinson (2014) indicated the importance of using a purposeful sample to gather information of central importance to the research to obtain maximum knowledge. The specific business problem was that some manufacturing human resource leaders needed strategies to successfully recruit skilled labor. Participants were asked seven open-ended questions (see Appendix B) and also responded to follow-up questions. I applied member checking through follow-up interviews to enhance accuracy and validity in the data collected. I coded the names of the participants with the pseudonyms HRP1, HRP2, and HRP3. I achieved data triangulation through the collection of data from the interviews, member checking, and the review of company documents, which included (a) planning materials, (b) corporate hiring strategy documents, and (c) the company website. Bekhet and Zauszniewski (2012) posited that using data triangulation ensures validity and trustworthiness in a case study to enhance research results. Bekhet

and Zauszniewski further indicated that the member checking process enhances the rigor of data collection.

Upon completion of the data collection process, I imported the information collected into NVivo 11 software to assist me with analysis and identification of emergent themes derived from the participant responses. I coded each sentence and passage of the text with one or more codes. The specific codes came from the participants' words. When new meanings or categories emerged, I modified or added codes as necessary. Upon establishment of the codes, I systematically compared each piece of text and assigned one code. I rechecked codes and assigned text to assess coding consistency. I identified 26 codes that I combined and then further collapsed into four major themes: (a) recruitment methods, (b) external pressures of the region/marketplace, (c) outreach and education partnerships, and (d) leadership support. The four codes that emerged from the data received the greatest number of reference frequencies represented at 46.15%. Upon completion of the coding process and theme development, no additional information emerged, therefore indicating that data saturation occurred at three interviews. SHRM aligned to the concepts of resource-based theory was the framework for this study that helped to outline the strategies used for recruitment of skilled labor. The results of the research provided content rich cases that stemmed from a combined total of 64 years of recruitment experience from the participants.

Theme 1: Recruitment Methods

Participants' responses showed manufacturing human resource professional leaders exercised various methods to recruit skilled labor internally and externally.

Notable keywords documented from the participant responses comprised the pillar of this research. The responses included *job notices*, *temporary agencies*, *advertising*, *online application*, *job fairs*, and *word of mouth*, making up 40.28% of the codes. Table 1 indicates the frequency of codes that make up Theme 1 and identified fundamental talent acquisition functions that are useful in improving recruitment of skilled labor. These findings confirmed previous research by McCabe (2012).

Table 1

Recruitment Methods

Codes	<i>N</i>	%
Temp Agencies	8	13.11%
Internal job notification	4	6.56%
Matriculation	3	4.91%
Interview	4	6.56%
Advertise/ career builders	3	4.91%
Job fairs	7	11.48%
Online applications	7	11.48%
Word of mouth	2	3.28%
Limited technology use	2	3.28%
Social media	2	3.28%
Website	6	9.84%
Tests	8	13.11%
Union	3	4.91%
Non-union	2	3.28%

Note. *N* = the number of frequency of that particular recruitment code. % = the percentage of total frequency of that particular recruitment code.

All three participants described their recruitment processes and acknowledged that having a pool of available skilled labor was critical to the success of their company. Looking through the lens of resource-based view, Szymaniec-Mlicka (2014) found that organizations that strategically evaluated their resources and external pressures and managed organizational growth demonstrated competitive advantage. Shaw, et al. (2013) extended the resource-based view theory with SHRM and posited that employee recruitment is a strategic activity, indicating that resources such as human capital are a vital means of establishing competitive advantage. All three participants revealed that they experienced challenges when recruiting for skilled labor in various positions. HRP1 indicated that many of the manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana were struggling to obtain employees with the type of skill sets that they needed. HRP2 echoed that they were experiencing similar challenges relative to the limited pool of skilled workers available that met necessary criteria. Rothstein (2012) documented significant levels of difficulty that organizations faced when seeking out workers with specific competencies. All participants, however, indicated that they advertised on their company websites and externally through e-recruitment websites such as Careerbuilders, Indeed, and Monster. HRP1 was the only participant who revealed the company still advertised by traditional means in the daily newspaper. HRP2 used expressions like *vital* and *essential* to continued growth and development. HRP2 also stated,

One of the ways that we try to entice applicants is through job fairs. Utilizing job fairs in the metropolitan area is how we get our name out through branding and

attract people to apply. I also find that we have a lot better luck with employee referrals.

HRP2 further specified,

For them to put their name on somebody and say, “Hey, you really need to let this guy into test,” or whatever, that’s a big deal. We’re trusting their opinion, and it’s gotten, just since I’ve been here, if we do hire who they referred, they stick with us. They end up being a good employee.

HRP2 affirmed that promoting from within the organization, when utilized properly, was a successful recruitment tool that presented employees an avenue for matriculation and advancement. HRP3 specified that a serious problem existed when economic times are tough and employees have not been trained or retrained for technology. Furthermore, HRP3 indicated that if 100 applicants applied, the most they would be able to seriously consider would be a handful. HRP3 stated, “The biggest challenge is finding people able to pass the direct test and the background check. The second, I think, would be not only are we competing with other manufacturers in the area.”

The analysis of Theme 1 included an acknowledgment of the complications human resource professionals face in recruiting skilled labor from all three participants. Thunnissen, Boselie, and Fruytier (2013) recognized that challenges exist when seeking to identify workers with the certain competencies needed. All participants indicated that utilizing online/e-recruitment was one of the most effective strategies in recruiting skilled labor. Results revealed that all company websites had varying levels of technology that

allowed individuals the opportunity to review job opportunities and apply. The need for all participants to broaden their scope for recruitment was a finding that resonated among all participants. However, the data revealed that each manufacturer applied different methods in order to create competitive advantages through recruitment. Company hiring documents showed broad strategies that were not very detailed in structure, but allowed for latitude and discretion within the respective human resources departments. This confirmed that companies that identify resources of strength and value can position themselves for competitive advantage (Coleman et al., 2013). In response to the central research question, a key point in Theme 1 was that manufacturing companies could have increased productivity despite the shortage of skilled labor by applying market-specific procedures of recruitment and identifying rare resources.

Theme 2: External Pressures of the Region/Marketplace

External pressures and barriers are found in almost every field of the marketplace including the human resource recruitment process (Ciuhureana et al., 2014; Joyce & Slocum, 2012). The research revealed that all participants had experienced varying levels of external pressures and barriers that presented opportunities for the companies to refine their recruitment processes. Notable keywords that emerged from participant responses included *family, work ethic, pay competition, benefits, generational gaps, cultural, location, and finding people*, making up 15.38% of the codes. The research revealed that while some manufacturers identified location as a barrier in a negative interpretation, other manufacturers used location as a positive recruitment tool. The results of the research demonstrated it is possible to use external pressures as a positive tool when they

are strategically identified and illuminated to support the company vision. Table 2 indicates the frequency of codes that make up theme 2.

Table 2

External Pressures of the Region/Marketplace

Theme	<i>N</i>	%
Cultural/Social	2	12.50%
Work ethic	2	12.50%
Difficulty finding people	3	18.75%
Competition	3	18.75%
Benefits	2	12.50%
Competitive pay	4	25.00%

Note. *N* = the number of frequency of that particular recruitment code. % = the percentage of total frequency of that particular external pressures code.

HRP1 argued that location was a problem for their manufacturing company and it was sometimes a significant barrier to filling skilled positions. However, HRP3 indicated location was a positive tool and not a barrier. Identifying and assessing external pressures and environments at the organizational level aids in the success of recruitment strategies (C. Lee et al., 2013).

HRP2 stated,

One of our challenges is finding people in the area who have these skills that we need that are more likely to stay, because there is a strong family and locational

bond for people who are born and raised in this area, maybe stronger than a lot of other places I worked”.

Like HRP1, HRP2 also indicated that there is a real challenge in this region to maintain employees in the area. HRP2 indicated that some applicants hired, accept positions because of the need for immediate employment. Results have shown that employees displaying this type of behavior do not always remain with the company if a position more attractive and accompanied with competitive salary and benefits materializes. Every participant indicated that social barriers were a major concern for the region, however, the nature of those social barriers varied. Participants indicated that they experienced many occasions when applicants call to reveal that they either do not have computers to apply or they don't know how to use the computer to apply for the available skilled jobs.

HRP1 indicated the biggest social barrier is finding people able to pass the direct test and the background check. Criminal records exclude approximately one fifth of job seekers that are qualified applicants (Von Bergen & Bressler, 2016). HRP3 further indicated that there is a pool of applicants that apply but do not have the minimum education requirements. This includes low literacy levels, modest to poor communication skills, and the lack of a high school education were some of the most repeated barriers identified.

The analysis of Theme 2 identified external pressures and barriers in the region to recruitment efforts; However, after thorough review, it would be beneficial for manufacturers to look at them collectively as an integrated system of employers. This

collective lens may require more comprehensive and collaborative solutions that will help to develop a better tool that addresses known barriers to recruitment for the Northwest Louisiana region. Operating individually in a vacuum may continue to yield the same negative results.

Theme 3: Outreach and Education Partnerships

Outreach and education partnerships theme represented 28.84% of the codes that emerged from the participant interviews (see Table 1). Many of the skilled labor positions within the manufacturing industry do not require a 4-year degree. However, they do require some advanced credentials that exceed a high school diploma, such as technical preparation from a community/technical college or credentialing organization (Manpower Group, 2014). Employer engagement with education institutions can lead to the development of workplace relevant curricula that respond to the needs of the industry (Rao et al., 2014). While all three participants articulated their engagement with the education community, the data revealed varied levels of involvement and outreach. Table 3 indicates the frequency of codes that make up Theme 3.

Table 3

Education Partnerships

Code	<i>N</i>	%
Schools	2	7.41%
Community college 1	9	33.33%
Grants to help train	2	7.41%
High schools	3	11.11%
Partnering through internships	2	7.41%
Curriculum	2	7.41%
Community college 2	2	7.41%
Community college 3	5	18.51%

Note. *N* = the number of frequency of that particular recruitment code. % = the percentage of total frequency of that particular education partnership code.

All participants pointed to collaboration with educational institutions as a strategic recruitment practice for human resource professionals; however, none of the company documents reviewed indicated a procedure or plan to provide guidance and direction for this process to occur. HRP1 indicated that they were currently working towards developing a strategic plan of how they engaged with higher education institutions, as well as, K-12 schools within the parish. HRP1 affirmed the development of their strategy to engage the local K-12 schools and technical colleges. HRP1 additionally revealed the relationships currently developed had varied levels of success with community and

technical colleges, even indicating that some were more successful than others at helping to identify potential applicants or developing relevant curricula.

HRP2 touted their outreach to the community colleges and vocational and technical schools. HRP2 indicated they had high levels of involvement with two specific institutions and was willing to reach out to others, but stated there was not a strategic plan in place that guided the relationship and goals relative to development of curricula. A review of the company's strategic hiring documents confirmed the lack of direction in this area. HRP2 identified they did not have a relationship with K-12 schools in the region but thought it was probably a good idea.

HRP3 indicated that working with local higher education institutions for recruitment and internships was a positive and effective recruitment strategy. HRP3 identified the types of support offered by the community and technical colleges to help identify potential candidates for skilled labor. HRP3 said,

At the end of every semester, myself and our plant manager actually go over to the community college and ahead of time, we are given the resumes of every single student that's either finishing either the certificate or the associate's, and we interview every single one of them.

HRP3 furthermore acknowledged that out of three community colleges in the region, they only utilize one.

The analysis of theme 3 showed fluctuating trends of employers identifying education partnerships to aid and assist in recruitment efforts. Not one participant had engaged in a strategic process to formalize agreements with education institutions to

address measurable ways to identify or create available skilled labor workforce pools. Werner and Herman (2012) posited that competitive advantage increases through the effective application of sound recruitment practices. In fact, organizations must be willing shift their paradigm if they are effectively going to secure the competent skilled labor force needed to provide the long-term sustainability.

The results of the research revealed that inconsistent forms of support offered by education partnerships exposed fluctuating stages of programs with local community colleges and tapered engagement with regional parish high schools. On the other hand, an intrinsic benefit emerged from participants indicating that collaborating with educational institutions provided name and brand recognition for manufacturers among graduating students. These results further confirm prior research that recognizes that organizations managing reputation to ensure that they are appealing to potential candidate pools (Griffi et al., 2014).

Theme 4: Leadership Support

Leadership support theme represented 15.5% of the codes that emerged from the participant interviews and is the membrane casing for this research. Data from this theme provided an indication of the level of implementation of SHRM by manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana. Developing new strategies and competencies is essential for human resource professionals leading the conversation for managing talent (Fratričová & Rudy, 2015). All three participants indicated that their human resource departments had a major role in leadership development and strategy of their respective companies. SHRM relates to the incorporation of HRM into the business strategy of the organization (Sawitri &

Muis, 2014). A review of the company website and hiring documents indicated that all three of the human resource departments were major actors in the executive administrative structure. Websites observed specified statements such as “human resources are their strongest assets” and “human resources are grounded in the company’s value.” The research also revealed support for high-performance management through the application of effective recruitment and selection practices. The existence of a strategic arrangement may imply that the manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana have applied the first stage in SHRM. Table 4 indicates the frequency of codes that make up Theme 4.

Table 4

Leadership Support

Code	<i>N</i>	%
Highly support HR	4	28.57%
HR a part of leadership team	5	35.71%
Weekly meetings, HR involved	5	35.71%

Note. *N* = the number of frequency of that particular recruitment code. % = the percentage of total frequency of that particular leadership support code. HR = human resources.

HRP1 and HRP2 affirmed a significant balance of autonomy at the local level of their companies and felt it is important to allow the company hiring documents to remain broad. The participants further indicated that local independence permitted the human resources department to be nimble. HRP1 indicated that the opportunity to modify

strategies and best practices as environments and circumstances changed was an advantage that allowed the organization to be innovative and responsive.

HRP2 and HRP3 also acknowledged that they are a part of the leadership team as they develop long-term strategy. HRP1 and HRP2 discussed long-term strategy goals in terms of workforce/recruiting and the impact to production. HRP2 stated, “We explain the activities related to recruiting in terms of success.”

HRP2 and HRP3 felt they did a suitable job of identifying and describing the requirements of the all career and skilled labor positions relative to the company’s long-term plan. They further indicated that human resources and productivity are key priorities to improving competitive advantage in the long-term blueprint. Chadwick et al., (2015) posited that organizations seeking a competitive edge, take advantage of their strategic resources by ensuring that senior management works together at all levels.

The analysis of theme 4 showed that the level of practices of SHRM fluctuated from one manufacturer to another. SHRM could provide human resource manufacturers with a broad range of solutions for complex issues associated with external environment/pressures (Gerpott, 2015). All of the participants identified enforcement of increased performance management through the application of effective recruitment and selection processes. The data indicated varying levels of SHRM within the manufacturing firms but suggested that SHRM was key to their organizational strategy and that recruiting is identified as a source of competitive advantage.

Ties to Conceptual Framework and Literature on Effective Business Strategies

The findings of this research link to the conceptual framework of this study, SHRM, and to existing literature on effective business practices. Upon the completion of data collection, I analyzed the data and concluded that SHRM aligned to the concept of resource-based view helps manufacturers to formulate key strategies that can lead toward the achievement of business strategies. A close link exists between the larger body of literature and SHRM. Human resources have been considered one of the most significant resources of an organization and are critical to its existence (Mitchell et al., 2013). It is essential for businesses to deal with increasing competition in a rapidly changing environment. The findings indicated a combination of approaches crucial to manufacturers to implement efficient and reliable strategies for recruitment of highly trained labor. SHRM focuses on understanding, development, predicting, and directing human behavior and human resources of an organization (Molloy & Barney, 2015). Implementing the procedures recommended by the participants should assist manufacturers to search for skilled labor employees to align with organizational long-term strategic plans.

Application to Professional Practice

The findings from the qualitative multiple case study show that SHRM plays a significant role in the recruitment of skilled labor for Northwest Louisiana manufacturers interviewed. This research is very meaningful for recruitment processes in the manufacturing industry. The employment of skilled labor has been of increasing concern to all stakeholders in the manufacturing industry (Manpower Group, 2014). Exploring

strategic recruitment solutions for the manufacturing industry might be vital to ensure sustainability and growth in the market. The findings indicated a blend of various methods that are important to improving the recruitment of skilled labor positions. From the findings, key elements of human resource strategies that provide for more successful outcomes for recruitment are (a) recruitment methods, (b) external pressures of the region/marketplace, (c) education partnerships, and (d) leadership support. Understanding these variable elements could improve the success rate of employing skilled labor. The findings are relative to SHRM because it may lay the foundation for making better business rationales for human resource professionals. For those in the business community and manufacturing industry, the results of this study might provide a more enhanced and profound appreciation for the traditionally *intangible* impact and effect of talent/skilled labor.

Implications for Social Change

The manufacturing industry plays a prominent role in the United States and world economies (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013). National concerns regarding increased unemployment levels in the manufacturing industry relative to skilled labor positions have plagued policy makers and industry leaders (Cappelli, 2015). Expressing a public concern that affects a broader population and to provide solutions to the challenges that inherently alter behaviors, patterns, and norms describes social change (Pollak, 2013). A study of the literature revealed numerous recruitment challenges in the manufacturing industry for skilled labor positions. The results from this study might affect social change by revealing potential key factors for successful and effective talent

planning for skilled labor positions that lead to greater access to employment opportunities that offer livable wage earnings. The implications for social change also provide an opportunity for human resource professionals in the manufacturing industry to develop innovative ideas and solutions to respond to the nascent recruitment challenges for skilled labor positions that aid in reducing local unemployment. These solutions may yield job opportunities with earnings that lead to greater disposable income and spending which improve the overall local economy.

Recommendations for Action

The findings of this study aid in encouraging manufacturers to consider recommendations for implementing strategies and practices for the recruitment of skilled labor positions. When formal strategies do not exist within the organization, human resource professionals develop individual goals hence generating a loss of time that could impact the overall production and performance of the organization. Identifying one universal answer to the challenges may not exist; however, the recommendations provide a framework that practitioners can use to find the right answer for their organizations.

The recommendations include (a) create and implement formal strategic recruitment plans that will help identify highly trained, qualified candidates, (b) work more strategically with community and technical colleges within the region to develop curriculum that helps to develop a pool of available and qualified candidates, (c) engage and develop relationships and articulation agreements with the parish school systems to help train those students who are seeking career readiness opportunities. The findings of this research are important to CEOs, senior management, human resource professionals,

and lead engineers. The application of these strategies will benefit the organization and the entire manufacturing industry in general. For human resource professionals, it sets the groundwork for making better business cases. Finally, for everyone in the business community, it provides a greater appreciation for the traditionally “intangible” contributions of talent. This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on recruitment and provides manufacturers with resources they can use to develop improved attraction and effective recruitment strategies.

I will disseminate the findings from this study to the president of the Manufacturing Managers Council of Northwest Louisiana and the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council Career Readiness Subcommittee. The study will be available through the ProQuest/UMI Dissertation database for academia. Scholar practitioners may also view the findings of this research in scholarly publications for future research in SHRM.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings from this research warrant further investigation of recruitment strategies. Regardless of the industry studied, senior management needs to implement effective and trustworthy strategies for recruitment of highly trained labor to strengthen their competitive edge. Future researchers should conduct further studies to explore problems not covered in the study and to address delimitations. Additionally, because this study focused on a particular geographical area in Northwest Louisiana, I recommend conducting the study to explore recruitment strategies manufacturers use in a different geographic location. This study was also limited to skilled labor positions in the manufacturing industry. Expanding the scope of positions and/or providing an analysis of

union vs. non-union may also be beneficial to human resource professionals and senior management.

Reflections

This doctoral journey has significantly affected my entire life in a way I never imagined. It has challenged me both personally and professionally to enhance my knowledge through an evidence-based process. In qualitative research, adhering to standard protocols and guidelines ensured that biases, assumptions, and subjectivity were limited (Yin, 2014). Scholar-practitioners are required to show honesty, trustworthiness, and credibility (Fusch & Ness, 2015). To ensure unbiased results, I reserved my opinions and judgments of experience, knowledge, and beliefs garnered as a business professional in the Northwest Louisiana community for more than 30 years.

My reflections of the findings of this multiple case study shed light from the professional experiences of human resource professionals that have a conscious awareness of current trends and practices within the field of human resources. I contacted each participant after the letter of cooperation was signed via e-mail. I scheduled participant interviews via e-mail and provided the participant consent form in advance for review. Interviews occurred at a location of the participant's choice. Once I arrived I followed a strict interview protocol and obtained a signed participant consent form prior to beginning, so each participant was comfortable moving forward. I was inherently impressed with the participants in which I interacted. The level of knowledge and the commitment shown to continue to enhance their area of expertise was noteworthy. As the research themes began to emerge during the data collection, I immediately realized that

many of the challenges they faced to identify skilled labor were similar; however, the manner in which they implemented their various strategies was different based on unique circumstances. I expected to find similarities in the data; however, I was shocked in the consistency of statements from the participants.

Conclusion

Manufacturers are major drivers of growth worldwide and are vital to the creation of jobs (National Association of Manufacturing, 2014). The industry has experienced challenges because of the constant changing environment and the need for innovation (Garavan, 2012). Human resource professionals need efficient strategies to effectively recruit skilled labor. The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that manufacturing human resource leaders need to successfully recruit skilled labor. The study's findings indicate that the major areas to enhance recruitment strategies include: (a) create and implement formal strategic recruitment plans that will help identify highly trained, qualified candidates, (b) work more strategically with community and technical colleges within the region to develop curriculum that helps to develop a pool of available and qualified candidates, (c) engage and develop relationships and articulation agreements with the parish school systems to help train those students who are seeking career readiness opportunities.

For manufacturers to plan effectively, they must employ predictive technology and the appropriate tools (Garavan, 2012). SHRM provided a significant framework upon which I established the findings and recommendations in this study. Utilizing SHRM provided a significant benefit to the organization in the form of tangible organizational

capital. SHRM also enabled management to form a more structurally cohesive organization allowing rapid response to changing environments to achieve a competitive advantage.

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Appendix A: Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

Statement of Understanding for Permission to use Premises, Names, and Documents

Dear [name of the requested party],

I am a student at Walden University seeking a Doctorate of Business Administration. I am conducting a research study entitled Recruitment Strategies for Manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana. The purpose of the research study is to explore what kind of strategies do human resource leaders use to recruit skilled labor in the manufacturing industry in Northwest Louisiana.

I am seeking manufacturing companies that meet the following criteria:

- Manufacturers that are licensed in the state of Louisiana.
- Currently employ at least 100
- Located within the Northwest Louisiana region.

Likewise, I am seeking face-to-face interviews with human resource professionals who meet the following criteria:

- Employed by the organization for at least two years.
- Must be 18 years of age and older.

I developed the study selection criteria to assure that human resource professionals are likely to possess knowledge and information that are relevant to the purpose of this study.

The researcher will request voluntary participation from participants within your organization. This requested participation will involve answering open-ended questions in face-to-face interviews. The participants may choose not to participate or to withdraw from participating in this study at any time without penalty or forfeiture of benefit to the individuals. The results of this research study may be published, but neither the organization's and participant's name nor position will be used or will the identity of the participants be compromised by the participant's responses. To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity, the participant responses will be assigned a letter and numeric code to protect their identity, and I will maintain the master transcript in confidence.

In this research, the only foreseeable risk to the participants includes personal sensitivity, heightened awareness, or emotional responses related to a participant talking about their past and current experiences regarding human resource strategies.

There are no direct benefits to the participants for participating in this study. By

taking part in this study, the participants may increase their knowledge to help leaders better assess their preparedness for the challenges associated with recruiting skilled labor in the manufacturing industry and the impact that this loss may have both toward business and social benefits.

The return of the completed permission to use premises, name and subjects form will be considered as your organization's consent to participate. Please contact me should you have questions concerning this research study. You may contact me via telephone at XXX-XXX-XXXX or XXXX.XXXX@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. XXXXX.

Dr. XXXXX is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Their phone number is XXX-XXXXXXX. Please print or save this letter of cooperation from a research partner for your records.

Sincerely,

Markey W. Pierré, DBA Candidate
Walden University

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. Please describe what strategies/onboarding processes you use to recruit for skilled labor in the manufacturing industry?
2. What is your internal and external recruitment process?
3. What challenges have you faced regarding recruitment efforts for skilled labor in manufacturing?
4. What are the issues associated with skilled manufacturing labor recruiting? e.g., social, cultural and/or economic?
5. To what extent have you used technology within your recruitment strategies?
6. To what extent have you used local higher education institutions as a potential pool in your recruitment strategies?
7. How does your company leadership engage and support the department of human resources ability to exploring, developing, deploying, and implementing strategies for skilled labor recruitment?

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

1. Prepare notes with reminders of what the researcher should do to ensure the intent of the phenomena under study.
2. I will begin each interview with an opening protocol statement and introduction statement (*see below*).
3. I will ask open-ended face-to-face interview questions with each participant in the same order using the same interview questions (*see Appendix B*).
4. I will note and clarify any non-verbal communication such as tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, behavior, gestures and posture as needed.
5. I will ask probing questions as a continuum to help each participant think more thoroughly about the issue at hand and gather additional clarification.
6. I will record reflective notes throughout the entire interview process.

Introductory Protocol Statement:

To facilitate note-taking, I would like to audio record our conversations today. This was outlined in the informed consent process. Essentially, this document states that: (a) all information is confidential, (b) your participation is voluntary and you may halt the interview at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (c) I do not intend to cause any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate, I have planned this interview to last no longer than 60 minutes. During this time, I have a few questions that I would like to cover. You should have ample time to answer all questions in as much detail as you wish without fear of interruption. Should an unexpected event occur during data collection, the

interview and data collection process will cease immediately.

Introduction Statement

You are being asked to participate in this study because: you are a human resource professional and possess knowledge and information that is relevant to the purpose of this study. You have been employed by the organization for a minimum of 2 years as a human resource professional. The purpose of my study is to explore challenges facing human resource leaders in the manufacturing industry in developing strategies for recruitment of skilled labor.

Appendix D: IRB Approval

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the application for the study entitled,
"Recruitment Strategies for Manufacturers in Northwest Louisiana"

Conditional Approval Date: **September 19, 2016**

Final Approval Date: **October 13, 2016**

Approval number: **09-19-16-0489061**

IRB approval expiration: **September 18, 2017**