

2017

Perceptions of Organizational Change Among Minority Owners of Small Businesses

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Chad E. Walizer

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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Perceptions of Organizational Change Among Minority Owners of Small Businesses

by

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MBA, Touro University International, 2004

MS, Johns Hopkins University, 2001

BS, York College of Pennsylvania, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

February 2017

Abstract

Small businesses continue to be a dominant portion of the global economy, and their owners need to understand how they can effectively make organizational changes, including implementing sound decision-making processes and innovation, as well as competing with much larger businesses. Minority small business owners have a particular need for organizational change because of their limited financial opportunities in relation to their nonminority counterparts. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to examine how minority small business leaders in the food service industry in south central Pennsylvania experience and perceive organizational change. Organizational change theory, contingency theory, and situational theory provided the framework for understanding the key research question, which encompassed how minority small business leaders in the food service industry perceived and experienced organizational change. Data were gathered from face-to-face interviews with 25 minority small business owners and analyzed using the Hycnerian analysis process. Results indicated that participants did not have a theoretically recognized definition of organizational change. Results also suggested that the participants devised human capital resources to effect organizational change. Findings support the provision of more education regarding organizational change to the small business community, especially minority business owners. The findings may have implications for positive social change by identifying strategies for minority business owners to employ organizational change through human capital so that they can compete with larger organizations and nonminority-owned small businesses.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my wife Trisha and my children, Kaitlynn, Matthew and Mackenzie, for all the sacrifices, understanding, missed family outings and delayed vacations during my doctoral journey. This study is also dedicated to my parents John and Margaret who taught me from a very early age the importance of education and perseverance, with both, we can achieve anything that we want in life no matter how long the journey.

Acknowledgments

First I would like to thank my family for their patience, encouragement and support during this long journey to accomplish an academic and lifelong goal. I would also like to thank my committee member Dr. David Banner, my committee chairman Dr. Steve Tippins and my URR Dr. Carol Wells for all of their help and encouragement along this journey. I would also like to thank all of my participants. Finally I would like to thank my friend and mentor Mr. Robert H. Lee for his friendship, advice, and guidance over the many years.

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Chapter 1: Introduction of the Study

Introduction

As the global economy continues to expand, investors and the general public often turn to large corporations to help expand local and national economies. In doing so, many government leaders, investors, and researchers overlook small business entities (SBEs) as potential drivers of economic growth. As Griffin, Gunasekaran, and Rai (2011) noted, few researchers, for instance, have examined how SBEs contribute to the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries. This lack of attention and understanding is concerning, given that 90% of businesses in the United States and in most industrialized European countries are classified as either small or medium business entities (SMEs) (Jack & Taylor, 2013).

Normative business practices in large organizations may not work in SBEs, business researchers have noted. Leaders' change decision processes that occur in large businesses may not be considered appropriate or necessary in SMEs, for example (Codini, 2015). As noted by Codini (2015) within larger organizations, there are elaborate and necessary processes that have been established to ensure that changes are implemented in a timely and efficient manner to keep the business moving forward. In small businesses these processes may be less formal, less elaborate and may not be as efficient in implementing the change.

Organizational change is a phenomenon that encompasses leaders' decision-making processes and understanding of what is needed to achieve innovation and spur competition in the business market (Fairlie, 2014; Kotter, 2012; Saunila, 2014). Leaders'

perceptions of organizational change may influence the business operations and financial performance and, subsequently, the innovation and market presence, of their organizations (Saunila, 2014). Organizational changes are an important consideration and needed in order for small businesses to innovate and compete with larger entities. Therefore, small business leaders should take the time to gain a thorough understanding of the processes regarding organizational change, its importance, and how it is essential for SBEs to succeed (Waldman et al., 2014).

Danes and Yang (2015) have evaluated leaders' perceptions of organizational change in quantitative studies. But, based on my review of the literature, few qualitative researchers have examined this phenomenon in depth within SBEs, especially those that have minority ownership. With an increasing number of women and ethnic minorities owning SBEs, researchers need to better understand the role and function of organizational change in these businesses (Clark, Gough, Mazzarol, Olson, & Reboud, 2014; DeLuque & Stahl, 2014; Fairlie, 2014; Fischer, Frese, Glaub, & Hoppe, 2014). Fairlie (2014) and Saunila (2014) highlighted the need for research on perceptions of organizational change and decision making in minority-owned SBEs.

In this study, I examined minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational changes and how leaders' used them to innovate and compete with larger entities. I also examined how those perceptions influenced business outcomes within minority-owned food service SBEs. The potential implications for positive social change is that minority small business owners may be able to employ organizational change through human

capital so that they can compete with larger organizations and nonminority-owned small businesses.

In Chapter 1, I examine the current background regarding leaders' perceptions and lived experiences within small businesses. I then craft the conceptual framework based on organizational change theory, contingency theory and situational leadership theory. I finally identify the significant contributions of the study which identifies the need to increase knowledge and insight from a qualitative examination of leaders' perceptions of organizational change and how their perceptions influence future decisions.

Background of the Study

In the global marketplace, SBEs comprise 70% of global production (Ates & Bititci, 2011). Ethnic minorities start SBEs at higher rates than other populations (Fairlie, 2014). Within the United States, the percentage of startup SMEs, as compared to the total number of startup businesses, changed from just 10% in 2003 to almost 99.6% in 2006, and they employ more than 50% of all workers in the United States (Griffin et al., 2011). Given the growth of SBEs, leaders should understand how their experiences and perceptions influence organizational changes, give them a marketplace advantage. Organizational changes include all changes (e.g., structural, process, and personnel) that are required to innovate and compete in the marketplace (Aaron et al., 2016). If a leader does not perceive organizational change to be important and effective, then he or she is unlikely to implement that change in an appropriate manner (Argyris, 1965). Such a

leader may not be able to adapt to a dynamic organizational environment (Argyris, 1965).

The vast majority of studies within SBE leadership research are quantitative (Baghurst & Stincelli, 2014; Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013; Smollan, 2015). These quantitative studies provide information regarding leaders' perceptions of organizational change relating to SBEs. However, other researchers have focused more on the effectiveness of organizational change, and less on leaders' perceptions that may act as a barrier or enhancement to successful change (Danes & Yang, 2015). There are few qualitative studies regarding perceptions of organizational change and minority SBE owners' perspectives. This phenomenon, is not well understood as it relates to the SBE community, and must be further explored using qualitative studies (De Luque & Stahl, 2014). To gain an increased understanding, Gill (2014) suggest that researchers should conduct additional qualitative work in this area, such as phenomenological studies, which give a rich and deep understanding of the lived experiences of study participants (Gill, 2014).

One aspect of organizational change that needs additional research, based on my review of the literature, is leadership behavior relating to performance and leadership development for SBE leaders. Leaders must understand how their perceptions can influence and affect leadership decisions, which can shape their companies into international entities (Jack & Taylor, 2013; Wu & Zhou, 2014). Sikyr (2013) suggests there is further interest in discovering how perceptions of organizational change and leaders' perceptions relate to their decisions, specifically how past experience and

education can shape these perceptions. What researchers first thought to be several separate processes are in fact an interrelated system that is a direct reflection of the manager's style and maturity (Sikyr, 2013). Thus, in the study, I explored how change affects minority SBE leaders' decision making processes. I also looked at whether leaders understand the importance of change and the processes that they need to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market.

Because the development of leadership is important to the success of any business, part of that development must incorporate a leader's understanding of how his or her perceptions of organizational change influence the social capital and sustainability of a business (Evans, 2013). For companies to remain profitable, they must be able to change and adapt to their customers' needs and the changing marketplace environment (Ates & Bititci, 2011). Leaders must also be able to make decisions to motivate their employees to continue innovation (Evans, 2013; Harbi & Kacem, 2014). To remain successful, SBE leaders also need to promote their employees' innate technical capabilities (Evans, 2013; Harbi & Kacem, 2014).

The sooner SBE owners begin seeking larger markets into which they can expand their business, they tend to start moving towards becoming an international player in the marketplace, the better the odds are that the company will be more successful and improve inclusivity behaviors (Wu & Zhou, 2014). To achieve more success and improved behaviors, a SBE must engage in organizational change (Wu & Zhou, 2014). In 2017, leaders need to understand how to make adjustments that may lead them to adapt

and change the ways that they lead to adjust to cultural and ethnic differences (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2013).

For example, leaders may need to develop alternative leadership styles in order to maintain their businesses' competitiveness within a market (Griffin et al., 2011). Doing so may involve organizational change. As U.S. SBE leaders continue to expand their business into the international marketplace, these leaders may strive to understand how their competitors do business in order to maintain a competitive advantage (Fort, Rehbein, & Westermann-Behaylo, 2015). Minority SBE leaders may use their leadership style to shape and influence the cultural diversity. Their doing so may help them cultivate social capital within their respective organizations.

SBEs drive a large portion of the global economy. Because of this, it is essential minority SBE leaders' to understand how their perceptions shape their decisions regarding organizational changes, including how their perceptions and experiences may act as the barriers and enhancements toward future decisions. It is also essential that SBE leaders understand how their process may differ from leaders in larger corporations. Because of the increase in minority-owned SBEs, it is even more important to gain a complete understanding of leader's perceptions of organizational change within the minority-owned SBE food service industry (Kakabadse, Lee-Davies, Wang, & Xie, 2011). In conducting this study, I sought to provide more insight about leaders' perceptions of organizational change and how those perceptions may act as barriers or enhancements to the implementation of future SME decisions in the United States within the minority-owned food service industry.

Problem Statement

Many leaders practice organizational change to develop their establishments, which can lead to improved use of social capital and human resources (Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013). Leaders' perceptions of organizational change may influence their subsequent organizational changes and act as barriers or enhancements to future changes (Saunila, 2014). The general business problem was that minority SBE leaders may engage in organizational change in order to be effective in the current business market (Wu & Zhou, 2014). The specific business problem was that minority SBE leaders, in the food service industry, require additional awareness about how their perceptions and lived experiences regarding organizational change may influence how they develop strategies for implementing organizational change (Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013). These perceptions include how change affects the leaders' decision making processes and whether the leader understands the importance of change and the importance of the leader's changes for innovation and competition in the business market.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences and perceptions of organizational change of minority SBE leaders in south central Pennsylvania within the food service industry. Some of the leaders' lived experiences included how change affected the leaders' decision making processes and how that affected changes for innovation and competition in the business market. The specific population group under study was minority-owned SBEs within south central Pennsylvania. This geographical area has a significant SBE population that was readily

accessible (U.S. Census, 2015). In this area, Whites constitute 90% of the population while Blacks, Asians, and Latinos, and Native Americans, respectively, constitute 6.3%, 1.4%, 6.3%, and 0.3% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2007) only 3.5% of firms are owned by non-White people out of the 33,591 firms in this area, and only 29.1% were owned by women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Through this study, I addressed a gap in the literature identified by Clark et al. (2014), which was to examine minority ethnic groups as it related to leaders' perceptions of organizational changes in SMEs.

The results of this investigation may lead to suggested guidance for future organizational change to overcome barriers created by leaders' perceptions within minority-owned, food service SBEs (Clark et al., 2014). Through an improved understanding of leaders' perceptions of organizational change and the influence those perceptions have on organizational decisions, leaders, owners, and managers of SBEs will be able to make more efficient and effective decisions. The study may provide information about organizational change within these organizations, including barriers and strategies specific to minority-owned SBEs. This will lead to improved business practices within small, minority-owned food service businesses.

Research Question

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of minority SBE leaders in the food service industry with organizational change?

Conceptual Framework

In this study, I used a framework guided by organizational change theory, contingency theory, and situational leadership theory. Primarily guided by Argyris (1965), Kotter (2012), and Nadler and Tushman (1997), organizational change theories highlight the processes, required leadership behaviors, benefits, and determinants of organizational change. Contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967) examines how leaders evaluate their own expertise, background, and abilities to help decide how to adjust their interface with the group. Situational theory (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982) focuses on evaluating the relationship between the leader's selected style and the maturity levels of the organization's individuals. The leader must continue to adjust his or her style to maintain the most effective group (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982). I further examined the framework in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, and discussed the development of coding and evaluation of these described influences in Chapter 3.

Nature of the Study

The nature of the study was a qualitative phenomenological study, which is consistent with examining the lived experiences of minority SBE leaders during organizational change. These instances can provide higher levels of emotional or intense human interactions because of the leader's close connection to the business. I selected a phenomenological design for this study to gather information regarding a lived experience or derived experience as seen through the eyes of the leaders of minority-owned food service SBEs. Leaders must understand how their own perceptions of organizational change may influence future decisions within their businesses based on

barriers or enhancements created from their perceptions of organizational change within the minority-owned SBE community.

I utilized open-ended interview questions, which aid in examining and analyzing the lived experiences of minority SBE leaders relating to their perceptions of organizational change and the outcomes of those changes relating to day-to-day operations and future decisions. Upon completion of the data collection, I completed coding and theme identification using NVivo 11 to organize the qualitative data. Using data organizing software enabled an establishment of themes within the data that aided in identifying how the leaders' perceptions of organizational change influence and operate during organizational change.

Upon completion of the study, I evaluated the importance and implications of the findings against current SBE practices as determined in the literature. This evaluation highlighted the potential opportunities for development of awareness of organizational change. I made suggestions for improvements to current SBEs relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change. I based these recommendations on the outcomes of the study as well as suggestions for future studies concerning SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change.

Definitions

SBE entity (SBE): any business within the United States that employs fewer than 500 individuals (Harris, 2011)

Minority: women, African American, Asian, Hispanic, Latino, or other non-Caucasian male groups (Clark et al., 2013)

Leadership style: the means and manners by which a leader or manager runs the day-to-day operations of an organization; the way that he or she leads (Mendez, Munoz, & Munoz, 2013)

Organizational change: the ability to effectively influence and change day-to-day functions to garner more effective service and production objectives, including the ability for a leader to influence others to their vision of change; to overcome resistance to the proposed change and manage conflict in the hope of sustained organizational improvements (Nadler & Tushman, 1997)

Entrepreneurial orientation: the sustained exhibition of firm-level entrepreneurial behavior (Chirico, Mazzola, & Sciascia, 2013).

Participative leadership: inclusion of internal stakeholder views in the decision process (Codini, 2015).

Adaptive strategy: engagement of external stakeholders and changing direction based on market feedback (Codini, 2015).

Simplistic strategy: the use of factors that led to success in the past (Codini, 2015).

Organization resilience: the ability of the organization to return to a stable state after a disruption (Edgeman, 2015).

Small or medium sized enterprises (SME): companies with fewer than 500 workers (Griffin et al., 2011).

Differentiated leadership: leadership where leaders recognize the need to respond to individuals on an independent basis instead of a group atmosphere (Li, Liu, Shang, & Xi, 2014).

Assumptions

The study included several assumptions. The first assumption was that the interview questions were a valid instrument for soliciting responses. I utilized previous research to construct the interview questions. The second assumption was that I eliminated researcher bias from the study. To assist in removing bias, I asked open-ended questions to solicit personal responses. The final assumption for this study was that the accuracy of the data collected and used for this study was a truthful reflection of leaders' perceptions of organizational change within minority-owned SBEs in the food service industry.

Scope and Delimitations

For this study, I selected a purposeful sample of approximately 25 minority SBE owners within the food service industry. I selected the participants based on personal knowledge as well as with the help of the local SBE bureau and the local SBE economic alliance. The duration of the study was approximately 9 weeks, which was influenced by the availability of the minority SBE leaders for interviews.

During the interview sessions, I focused on each owner's perceptions of organizational change, and the potential barriers and enhancements created by this awareness, or lack of awareness. In this study, I included how change affects minority SBE leaders' decision-making processes and whether the leader understands the

importance of change and the processes he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. Through this research, I also focused on the level of experience and education that each minority SBE owner had in running their specific businesses, as well as any other training that he or she may have received, whether formal or informal. I did not focus on the participants' perceptions of leadership and organizational change, though according to Blanchard and Hersey (1982), members' perceptions and actions have significant implications for leadership. I used qualitative coding and NVivo 11 software to organize themes within the interview data relating to the various aspects of leaders' perceptions of organizational change (Bell & Bryman, 2015).

Clark et al. (2014) explored leaders' perceptions of organizational change utilizing quantitative methods; researchers need to examine such perceptions in detail through qualitative methods. Researchers must delve deeper into this phenomenon to explain the underlying mechanisms that operate during these processes. Upon completion of the study, I evaluated the results against the current quantitative literature regarding larger companies and those operated by white, male business owners to infer the differences and similarities between these entities and make suggestions for future researchers.

Limitations

The biggest limitation envisioned for this study during the proposal stage was bias on the part of the researcher, based on previous experiences and assumptions regarding food service SBEs. I have previous work experience within the designated population

identified in this study. To address this limitation, I used bracketing (Newman & Tufford, 2010; Chan, Chien, & Fung, 2013) as an ongoing process to minimize any preconceptions held about the phenomenon. Another limitation of the study was the sample size, collected from a limited geographic location. The sub-group of minority SBE owners may not represent the entire group of food service industry owners in other locations, which may have limited applicability to other groups and thus the results are not generalizable.

Significance of the Study

I focused on the under-researched area of leaders' perceptions of organizational change that relates to a population that other researchers have examined through empirical methods. A lack of in-depth, qualitative studies exists regarding the underlying mechanisms of minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change and the potential influences those perceptions have on future business decisions. As a result, the study includes how change affects minority SBE leaders' decision-making processes and whether the leader understands the importance of change and the processes he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. This study provides a more complete understanding regarding perceptions of organizational change that occur within minority-owned SBEs in the food service industry.

Significance to Practice

The study is significant in that it provides insight into minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change. It advances the management discipline by

providing a deeper insight through qualitative study into how change affects minority SBE leaders' decision-making processes and whether the leader understands the importance of change and the processes he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. During the interviews, I focused primarily on the strategies that they used, where they acquired the strategies, and what directed them to their current strategies. I also addressed the obstacles and related that to the strategies that were chosen. As noted by Argyris (1965) and Nadler and Tushman (1997), knowledge of the business practices and strategies employed in organizational change can lead to increased innovation and success; thus, the present study may provide guidance to other minority SBE leaders and potentially increase their competitive strength through knowledge of these strategies. Moreover, the data may provide guidance for future researchers regarding effective, contingent strategies for management within these contexts.

Significance to Theory

The study has additional significance in that it addresses a gap in the literature. Blanchard and Hersey's (1982) situational leadership model described various phases that organizations may progress through, based on the leader-follower relationship within larger organizations. These relationships are based on leaders' behaviors directed toward the organization's members, and the members' readiness to accept the leaders' behaviors. Although researchers understand these interactions well as they occur within larger organizations, limited research exists regarding the understanding of these behaviors as they function within SBEs, especially when those SBEs are led by ethnic and gender

minorities (Clark et al., 2014). Thus, the study addresses a gap in the literature regarding SBEs, specifically those led by minority SBE leaders.

Furthermore, the study has significance in that it may allow minority-owned SBEs to become more competitive with larger entities. Through an understanding of perceptions of organizational change, and the influence these perceptions have on future business decisions, minority-owned SBEs can continue to be competitive in an expanding global marketplace (Nadler & Tushman, 1997). SBEs constitute a significant presence in the global marketplace and supply chain, even to larger corporations (Ates & Bititci, 2011). In order to stay competitive, minority SBE leaders must understand how their own perceptions of organizational change can aid their business entities in developing innovative practices and increase their resource capital efficiency and effectiveness, but these leaders' perceptions may also act as barriers for organizational change (Harbi & Kacem, 2014; Kotter, 2012).

Understanding whether the implementation timeframes in minority-owned SBEs are comparable to those of larger organizations is essential. By gaining a more comprehensive understanding of leaders' perceptions of organizational change and interactions within SBEs, individual business owners can become better leaders within their own organizations. When leaders utilize the most effective strategies for all of the organization's assets and abilities to their fullest potential, those leaders can compete against other market rivals with the best chance for success.

Significance to Social Change

Leaders' perceptions of organizational change influence business decisions, which affect the daily interactions of individuals within minority-owned SBEs in the food service industry. Those interactions go beyond the immediate daily interactions within the business and flow into the local communities, influencing social change.

Subsequently, the leaders' perceptions influence business decisions that can have a positive or negative influence on the local economy (Argyris, 1965; Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 1997). Therefore, leaders' decisions have significant potential to affect social change within the business and within the local community. The proposed study will affect positive social change by allowing minority SBE leaders in the food service industry to improve their knowledge of effective and ineffective strategies for implementing organizational change, and permitting those leaders to work toward its implementation in their businesses and in leadership training.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I introduced the study, including the identification of the shortcomings of the current body of knowledge surrounding leaders' perceptions of organizational change as reported by social researchers. The challenge addressed in this study involves evaluating how leaders' perceptions of organizational change within the food service industry affect the operations of the organization under evaluation. Since the food service industry is highly competitive and constantly changing based on the needs of the clientele, minority SBE leaders must be able to retain current staff as well as recruit new and effective staff. Thus, a leader's ability to effectively lead and make

change decisions, is important for the organization to thrive and grow. The concepts under examination were the leaders' perceptions of organizational change and influence on organization decisions relating to daily operations. Since leaders implement decisions about organizational changes based on their own perceptions, I evaluated those perceptions using a qualitative approach, which other researchers have underutilized in previous studies relating to this topic.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation includes a literature review of the current research relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change, specifically in several areas of interest, which can influence leaders' perceptions and abilities to make future decisions to lead an organization. The literature review encompasses the current state of leadership theory surrounding this phenomenon, as well as minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change and decision processes for their business. Other areas include innovations that SBE leaders utilize to maintain profitability and sustainability. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

All leaders have a designated means of leading their business or organization. This leadership style can change depending upon the demographic of the workforce and other factors, but not all organizational changes are advantageous in all situations. DeLuque & Stahl (2014) assert that a leader of an organization must identify those instances in which his or her leadership style is not working and adopt a different style that may work better for the current work situation. Allen, DaSilva, and Smith (2013) Experts in the field refer to these changes as organizational change.

Based on Linan et al. (2011) examination of organizational change within large corporations, and my examination of the current literature there is very limited qualitative research relating to SBEs and the organizational change relationships that exist within SBEs. SBEs should use organizational changes and leverage their assets to establish a market advantage (Townsend, 2013). Researchers have suggested that in order for owners to do this, minority SBE leaders must be willing to give up some managerial control and commit to organizational change in order to make their businesses more competitive and successful, especially in a changing global economy (Baghurst & Stincelli, 2014; Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013). In order to understand organizational change within SBEs, a more in depth examination using qualitative methods should be used to give a more complete picture of the process.

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences and perceptions of organizational change among minority SBE leaders in the

food service industry. These perceptions included how change affects a leader's decision-making processes and whether the leader understands the processes he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. My first goal for this study was to add to the scholarly body of knowledge on perceptions of organizational change among SBE leaders. My second goal was to create awareness among minority SBE leaders regarding how leaders' perceptions may influence future decisions within the minority-owned or managed SBE community. I hope that this study will lead to positive social change by increasing the ability of minority SBE leaders to compete with the leadership styles of larger corporations.

In Chapter 2, I examine the literature strategy that I used in conducting my research and review of background information. I then outline the conceptual framework that I used to guide my investigation. In this review, I analyzed previous research as well as seminal theories that included situational theory, organizational change theory, and contingency theory in order to illustrate and explore several key aspects surrounding leaders' perceptions of organizational change and how their perceptions influence future decisions.

My first area of interest was current theory related to perceptions of organizational change. I also evaluated the motivations that influence SBE owners during times of organizational change within minority-owned SBEs. In addition, I examined business owners' levels of leadership experience and education relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change, as well as how those perceptions influence a leader's current and future decisions.

Literature Search Strategy

I used keyword searches relevant to the topic under study in the various databases and indexes listed in the next section. At the completion of each respective keyword string search, I evaluated the returned results relating to leadership style change and noted the significance as it relates to the current study. During this evaluation, I eliminated any duplicate returns. I noted that limited qualitative research had been conducted on leadership style change. However, I found that Allan, Godwyn, and Langowitz (2013) had used concepts closely associated to leadership style change. I added these concepts to the list for consideration of possible influences relating to style change.

Because quantitative studies have been the prevalent means of evaluation relating to the area of leadership research (Mendez, Munoz, & Munoz, 2013; Allan, Godwyn, & Langowitz, 2013), I reviewed those studies to identify their significance to the current study. If I identified factors in those studies that related to the current study, I flagged those to be used in this study. Through an analysis of the current literature a gap was identified relating to SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change.

Databases and Search Engines

First, I accessed Academic Search Complete, a comprehensive multidisciplinary database consisting of peer-reviewed journals, conference papers, and periodicals, which has scholarly full text articles from more than 5,300 scholarly periodicals. Second, I accessed Business Source Complete, a scholarly business database relating to all disciplines of business, including marketing, management, accounting, finance, and economics. This database houses more than 1,200 journals, books, major reference

works, conference proceedings, case studies, industry reports, and company profiles. Third, I used ABI/INFORM Complete, which contains thousands of peer-reviewed journals related to business news and working papers concerning all aspects of international business including management practice and theory, as well as other business trends from around the globe.

Two large scientific publishing houses manage and maintain the next two databases that I incorporated, which have direct access to some of the most current research articles. The first scientific publishing database searched was Emerald Management Journals. Emerald is a publisher of research in business and management, and the database is ideal for academicians and professionals. Individuals can search for full-text articles on a variety of business topics, all of which the company publishes directly. The other scientific publishing database was SAGE Premier (formerly Management and Organizational Studies). This database contains the full text of 56 peer-reviewed management journals. Altogether, the databases and resources allowed for a comprehensive overview of the literature related to this topic.

Key Search Terms

The following is a list of keyword strings utilized to search in the databases. Most strings returned articles related to the current study in all of the databases. However, many of the results were outside the recommended range of current research. Since I will complete this study in 2017, a majority of the journal articles must be within a 5-year window. Of the 128 journal articles cited in the literature review, only 17 (13%) are outside of the 5-year window. I utilized the following keyword descriptors: *SBE*, *SBE*

management, SBE leadership, minority SBE, minority SBE leadership, minority SBE leadership change, leadership change, leadership change theory, leadership style, leadership style change, leadership motivations, organizational behavior change, management style, management style change, SBE innovations, SBE family influences, SBE start-ups, minority SBE innovations, SBE globalization, SBE global importance, and SBE economy.

Conceptual Framework

The primary reason why minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change are critical is that those perceptions affect the interactions of organization members (Kotter, 2012). Since members are the main conduit for organizational change implementation, the leader must have a successful and interactive relationship with the members in order to have organizational success (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982; Kotter, 2012). Leadership in all forms influences organizational efficacy; good leaders will have positive influences while inexperienced leaders will grow less effective organizations (Mendez, Munoz, & Munoz, 2013). Thus, the conceptual framework for this study was based on previous studies within leadership theory that involve adaptation and responses to specific situational demands.

The seminal theories in the field of leadership theory shape the framework for this study. The first theory of note is that of organizational change (Argyris, 1965; Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 1997). Due to the increasing need for organizations to implement effective change, Argyris (1965) proposed that organizational leaders required situational effective skills, including physical actions and communication, to guide

change. When implementing changes, leaders should perform the following actions: (a) establish a clearly defined change plan that improves the effectiveness of an organization, including improving interpersonal competencies and maintaining organizational values; (b) maintain a unified change plan that is consistent among all leaders within an organization to ensure harmonious completion of the changes; (c) provide directive leadership during the change process; and (d) make decisions about interpersonal working situations, including potentially separating diverse workers, such as technical and administrative staff, to ensure success in organizational change (Argyris, 1965). Thus, Argyris (1965) provided a pathway by which leaders within organizational change make contingent, informed decisions to efficiently meet the goals of the change plan.

Building on the processes defined by Argyris (1965), Kotter (2012) added to organizational change theory by including the importance of engaging members in organizational change. Though noting that leaders must maintain a clear vision for change, Kotter (2012) also suggested that unless members were included in frequent organizational changes, they would stagnate and become complacent. Moreover, if a change plan failed, members could become resistant to leadership and to future change (Kotter, 2012). Therefore, an effective leader, according to Kotter (2012), should ensure that members have a stake in the success of the organizational change and the organization, establish long- and short-term goals, and motivate members to change through a defined vision of the organization after the implemented change.

Emphasizing the need for strong leadership in organizational change, Nadler and Tushman (1997) stipulated that organizational change is essential to competition for

modern businesses. The advance of technology means that changes occur more quickly, which both allows for greater innovation and demands more of organizational leaders (Nadler & Tushman, 1997). Nadler and Tushman proposed that leaders should understand the importance of organizational change and structure their businesses to employ change easily to maintain a competitive advantage. Without effective organizational change, Nadler and Tushman noted that an organization would fall behind quickly in the contemporary business world.

Building on the theory, Kotter (2012) disagreed with Nadler and Tushman (1997), arguing that instead permanent organizational change is often difficult and slow. Knowledge of multiple processes and interconnecting functions within the organization make organizational change easier (Kotter, 2012). One change within the organization, according to Kotter, has multiple implications; thus, organizational change should be an in-depth process if it is to be effective. Therefore, a series of smaller changes that build towards an overarching organizational change was a best practice for Kotter. Kotter emphasized the importance of leaders, who must continue to champion the change even after it is complete to avoid the organization reverting to old behaviors. Leaders must gain the support of all members, since without full support, an initiative can fail (Kotter, 2012). Innovative and competitive organizations have values that are open to change and learning (Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 1997).

Kotter (2012), like Argyris (1965), championed the importance of the leader's vision, actions, and perceptions to organizational change. Successful leaders are open to ideas coming from anyone in the organization and not just from the top leaders (Kotter,

2012). These leaders must participate and take action to implement organizational change. Kotter continued to infer that the members were an essential part of the organizational change processes. Individuals must have the necessary tools, skills, and authority to enact change. If leaders empower their organization's members, there will be a much greater rate of acceptance by the members to adopt the leader's desired organizational changes (Kotter, 2012).

Because Argyris (1965), Kotter (2012), and Nadler and Tushman (1997) emphasized the importance of making situational leadership decisions for organizational change, the second theory utilized to form the conceptual framework is from Fiedler's (1967) seminal work on contingency theory. Within contingency theory, Fiedler (1967) proposed that a leader has the ability to produce a positive outcome by influencing group members and cultivating leadership ability. Fiedler (1967) also determined that no single leadership style is effective for all situations. Rather, a successful leadership style is contingent upon the circumstances and demands of a particular scenario (Fiedler, 1967). As leaders become more experienced with situational decision making, and with the specific group they are leading, leaders will become much more effective (Droppa & Giunta, 2015; Dabke, 2016; Armenakis, Carter, Feild, & Mossholder, 2013).

Flexibility in organizational change allows leaders to adapt and select the best leadership style based on situational needs. For organizations to have success, leaders must be able to change their leadership styles based on the particular demands of the situation (Basturk, Boz, & Yildiz, 2014). Fiedler (1967) noted that leaders' cultivation of leadership skills may be innate or come from years of experience in various aspects of the

job. The most important aspect of contingency theory relating to the current study is that organizational change can improve an organization's overall performance (Fiedler, 1967). The ability for minority, SBE leaders to change and improve performance would allow minority-owned SBEs to compete against other marketplace competitors.

Organizational change is not the only important factor when making changes within an organization that will improve performance. To assess the influence of members' contributions to organizational success, situational theory (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982), which includes the abilities and maturity level of the group members as the members relate to objective performance for organizational improvement, also comprises part of the conceptual framework. According to situational theory, for a leader to maximize staff potential, the leader must evaluate individuals' abilities to help the group achieve organizational goals (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982). Once the leader understands individual personal interaction, the interactions between leaders and followers will bear a more fruitful experience for everyone involved as well as the organization's overall performance (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982).

According to situational theory, in order to be successful, leaders must understand and manage relationships with members (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982). Leaders must be mindful of the emotional ties that group members associate with projects. Most individuals evaluate projects not just on the technical merits, but also by how the outcomes will affect the individual's feelings once implemented. This can be especially critical in SBE settings when many of these businesses are associated with familial

startups, so feelings have a significant influence on decisions that leaders might have to balance with the future of the company (King & Nesbit, 2015).

In combining organizational change theories, contingency theory of leadership, and situational theory, the conceptual framework of this study highlights the flexibility required for minority SBE leaders to be successful. The proposed study utilizes the processes of organizational change defined by Argyris (1965); the essential role of the member relationship with the leader in organizational change from Kotter (2012); the necessity of the leader to organizational change from Argyris (1965), Kotter (2012), and Nadler and Tushman (1997); and the necessity of organizational change to organizational success (Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 1997). In order to assess the situational relationship Kotter (2012) proposed, contingency theories of leadership (Fiedler, 1967) and situational theory (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982), which rely on a leader's ability to apply contextually appropriate decisions, also comprise a key element of the conceptual framework.

Because SBEs have workforces of limited sizes, the more effective that a leader is in motivating, encouraging the individual's unique skills, and adapting to unique situations, the better the group will perform (Argyris, 1965; Casper et al., 2014; Kotter, 2012; Nadler & Tushman, 1997). Leaders must be able to manage the delicate balance between individuals' abilities and the groups' improved performance when implementing organizational change (Argyris, 1965; Kotter, 2012). Although this is true in both large and SBEs, because of the limited staff and technical pool that SBE owners have to draw on, it is even more crucial to manage these abilities with a well-developed and envisioned

plan for the future of SBEs. This plan is even more important when there may be cultural barriers to success (Aryee, Hartnell, Walumbwa, & Zhou, 2013).

When organizations engage in similar organizational changes, regardless of the SBE owners' cultures, the change produced similar outcomes, including improved performance by group members and increased work engagement (Aryee et al., 2013). The leaders of competitive, diverse SBEs must be able to motivate a multinational staff to share the same vision that the leaders have for the organization, which can prove difficult if the company does not provide a vision that the local members of the organization share (Aryee et al., 2013; De Luque & Stahl, 2014). Performance within minority-owned SBEs improves as the business shifts its vision toward planning and formal strategies for improvements, similar to larger and more successful entities (Groeneveld, Kuipers, & Voet, 2014). Therefore, successful minority SBE leaders must communicate their vision to all employees to provide a unified goal for employees.

Fiedler (1967) and Blanchard and Hersey (1982) demonstrated in their seminal works that leaders must be able to effectively engage in organizational change. It may be even more important for leaders to have an increased understanding of the change process in SBEs, especially since leaders can alter the change process more quickly with fewer individuals involved in the implementation of identified changes and organizational performance (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982; Kotter, 2012).

The conceptual framework highlights that minority SBE leaders must consistently make decisions grounded in circumstances to affect successful organizational change (Fiedler, 1967; Blanchard & Hersey, 1982). Thus, by examining minority SBE leaders'

perceptions of organizational change, and how the perceptions influenced business practices, the current study addressed a missing element in the organizational change theories. The findings may also have implications for the body of research exploring the connection between organizational change and leadership behaviors.

Literature Review

Organizational Change and Leadership Behaviors

For an organization to succeed and grow, it must be able to change and address the current needs of its customers. The organization must also adapt and change with customers' future demands (van der Voet, 2016). If group members are resistant to the proposed changes, the leader must evaluate the situation and convince the members that the decisions and changes are in the best interest of the organization and of the members' well-being (van der Voet, 2016). Since leaders and staff shape the vision of the organization, leaders' behaviors, perceptions, and decisions have a direct influence on the learning potential of the organization (van der Voet, 2016). Thus, leaders' perceptions of organizational change may fundamentally influence the outcomes of that change.

When considering organizational change, leaders must evaluate their own perceptions and experiences in addition to the organization members' experience level. As the level of experience of the members continues to increase, the members must evaluate the type of organizational change that leaders can employ successfully based on the amount of direct control that the leader has over his or her subordinates (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2013). Experienced members require less oversight and are competent in their

daily activities, but less skilled members require direct oversight to assure completion of their required daily tasks (Baesu & Bejinaru, 2013; Blanchard & Hersey, 1982).

Although change for any organization can be positive or negative, the members of the organization may not take a clear stance on the topic, and may show ambivalence toward organizational change. What does this mean? Leaders must understand this aspect of change and continue to utilize various leadership skills to influence individuals in accepting the change for the benefit of the organization (Friedrich, Griffith, & Mumford, 2016). Although an understanding of the organizational processes aids the managers in shaping the current needs and the immediate improvements necessary for the organization, understanding the managerial processes involved in changes, as well as the importance of that change, sets the foundation for sustained and future performance of the organization (Sikyr, 2013).

Organizational change and group performance are dynamic interactions between the leader and group; they also shape and inspire the personal values and visions of the leader and group members, as well as leaders' perceptions (Choi et al., 2015). When leaders and members of the group have a close working relationship that has developed during a period of time, the group members tend to trust the actions and the vision that the leader has for the business. As Caetano, Santos, and Tavares (2015) indicated in their study, the leader's clear vision of the organization promoted members' abilities to improve their adaptive behaviors toward new situations as well as being proactive in their roles within the organization. Members actively seek out opportunities both within the group and outside the organization to build their own abilities, so that they may improve

their individual performance as well as the overall organization, and these are traits that will help the business to stay innovative and competitive (Caetano, Santos, & Tavares, 2015).

Communication within any business is crucial when dealing with change initiatives, especially in relation to leadership style changes. If organization leaders do not clearly communicate these changes to the staff, external partners, and clients, the business may experience a setback or stress may increase in business relations (Ates, Bititci, Cocca, & Garengo, 2013). When leaders can establish a less stressful working environment, members can focus on the organization's goals (McAdam, Reid, & Shevlin, 2014). Therefore, leaders' abilities to promote a clear vision for organizational change are essential to maintaining the success of an organization (Choi et al., 2015; Caetano, Santos, & Tavares, 2015).

Ultimately, the leader has the most influence on organizational performance established by the leader's behaviors and actions toward the other members of the organization (Waldman et al., 2014). A leader must be able to communicate the envisioned end goal to members and have the authority and resources to enact the vision and bring it to fruition (Elvinita, Rawung, & Wuryaningrat, 2015). Waldman et al. (2011) established that leader influences affect the group members and members' attitudes throughout the entire organization. If the organizational environment is positive and reward oriented, then members are more inclined to raise their performance to meet certain expectations (Waldman et al., 2014). A leader must understand the importance of

change to meeting end goals in order to communicate the importance of that organizational change to followers (Waldman et al., 2014).

In order to maintain a high level of performance, leaders must also maintain a positive workforce, which cannot happen if the group members do not embrace the changes that the leader is trying to implement. If the members see these changes as conflicting with personal views, or as a violation of the organization's views, the leader will have a more difficult time implementing the changes (Bakker, Breevaart, Demerouti, & Heuvel, 2015; Choi et al., 2015; Codini, 2015). Leaders must recognize how the tenets of the changes align with the group's values. Leaders must institute changes that will gain favor with the organization's members; therefore, leaders must study and gain insight into the members value system if leaders are to ensure a positive change initiative (Herzog & Skubinn, 2016). The more positive the leader's perceptions of organizational change are the more open and receptive the members will be in implementing the changes (Aaron et al., 2016).

Leadership Experience

The amount of formal education as well as the amount of acquired work experience will shape and form a leader's self-efficacy, perceptions, and abilities to perform the necessary leadership roles (Christakis, Dawes, De Neve, Fowler, & Mikhaylov, 2013). Christakis, Dawes, De Neve, Fowler, and Mikhaylov (2013) noted that the innate ability to lead and the environmental factors combine to influence an individual's leadership ability. When an individual gains both education and experience, that leader is able to identify and take advantage of new and innovative opportunities for

his or her SBEs as well as form certain perceptions relating to organizational change (Christakis et al., 2013). Factors such as innate traits, environmental factors, formal education, and informal training may explain leadership development.

Innate Traits

Researchers have classified some tenets of leadership potential as innate (Atwater et al., 2014). Those individuals who had experiences at earlier stages of their development that encouraged the development of their self-management and social skills have a distinct advantage when developing future leadership skills and perceptions (Atwater et al., 2014). Adolescents with strong personalities tend to take on roles in their scholastic careers and social community that continue to shape their leadership skills, which shape their adult career goals (Gottfried et al., 2011a; Gottfried et al., 2011c). Individuals must have a certain amount of innate ability and potential to develop their leadership skills before the formal stages of development occur (Gottfried et al., 2011b).

Personality traits can predict a leader's perceptions of organizational change and shape the decisions that leader will employ. In situations where a leader's self-ratings and members' leadership ratings do not agree, the relationship between personality and style is difficult to substantiate (Steinhoff, 2015). In addition to self-ratings, both employees and supervisors often rate organization leaders. In instances where group members identified the leaders as having a more empathetic approach to working with their group members, the leader's superiors rated them a better leader, which relates to the appearance of caring about the organization's members through those empathetic interactions (Siengthai, 2015). Specific leadership personality traits may be effective in

one situation, but not in another (Escriba-Esteve et al., 2015; Biemann, Kearney, & Marggraf, 2015).

Gender roles and expectations may also affect leadership. When asked to calculate how others would rate their performance, male leaders were consistently more accurate compared to their female counterparts. However, when self-rating their own competencies, women rated themselves in a similar manner to their male counterparts (Duffy et al., 2015). Once leaders reach a certain level of leadership in the organization, those leaders identify with the role and not their gender, which could explain the similar self-ratings (Duffy et al., 2015).

Environmental Factors

Gottfried et al., (2011d) noted that environmental factors might also contribute to leadership potential. For example, the influences that people observed in their formative years among adult leaders provide a model for subsequent leadership behaviors (Gottfried et al., 2011d). In addition, leaders' experiences may have led those leaders to develop the need to attempt to correct situations that he or she deemed socially irresponsible or ethically questionable (Gottfried et al., 2011d).

In order for leaders to develop to their fullest potential, Jones and Packard (2011) proposed that leaders establish a comprehensive plan for mapping early leadership development. Once leaders understand possible missed steps in their own or a subordinate's leadership development, leaders can evaluate an individual's need for additional training to augment those areas in which he or she may be lacking. Through

improvement in those skills, these individuals may become more complete leaders (Jones & Packard, 2015).

Leaders develop their social capital in various stages as they grow into their leadership positions. Leaders' social capital skills are an essential part of their formal and informal development, because as leaders these individuals must be able to leverage their contacts and networks to benefit the organization and give the organization a more competitive advantage (Tompson & Tompson, 2013). As organizations develop leaders and structure development programs, organizations must design programs so that a leader's contributions aid in the development of their networking skills (Tompson & Tompson, 2013).

Allen, DaSilva, & Smith (2013) and Duffy et al. (2015) propose that innate and environmental factors combine to form leadership styles. Bringing many individuals together in a joint vision may require additional skills in reading emotions and appropriately responding to those emotions (Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013; Duffy et al., 2015). Partially, these skills may develop through training, such as that experienced in formal education

Formal Education

Formal education has become more popular as an intervention for future business leaders (Roberts, 2015). These programs focus on leadership theory to attempt to foster leadership skills required to be successful in the present business environment (Curphy, & Kaiser, 2013). However, because of the variety of leadership styles and leaders'

varying perceptions of organizational change, the same intervention may have different effects depending on the situation (Curphy, & Kaiser, 2013).

Educational background can influence leaders' perceptions of organizational change and strategies, and establish a basis for the business owner's selection of a particular leadership style (Allen, Godwyn, & Langowitz, 2013). Business leaders' education, whether formal or informal, can influence their perceptions and abilities to be forward thinking and establish business plans for the SBE (Allen et al., 2013).

Educational advantages also depend on the individual's abilities to integrate educational principles into the SBE's business plan, which facilitates achievement of organizational goals (Bourne & Calas, 2013).

Gender may be a factor in the role of education in leadership. Female leaders may be at an increased disadvantage compared their male counterparts. Universities and other formalized educational institutions must continue to produce the best leaders and give all students increased opportunities as the students begin their professional careers (Giacomin et al., 2012). In instances where women have received education opportunities, these women have fared better than other females in similar situations without having the advantages of formalized education (Allen et al., 2013).

Informal Education

Leaders do not gain all of their knowledge in formal settings within educational institutions. Leaders should continue hands-on, practical experience to stay current on their leadership and interpersonal skills and the latest innovations that competitors might be evaluating for implementation (Bakker et al., 2015). Self-development in many

organizations originates with those individuals who are self-motivated to develop as leaders to expand their career potential (Bourne, 2015). However, Ross (2014) found that when organizations removed the need for self-sufficient, prolonged development and the organization supported the individuals, the level of self-development decreased, showing a need for self-directed training.

Thus, researchers have demonstrated that a multitude of factors may influence a leader's development, including innate potential, environmental factors, and formal and informal education. Top organization leaders, especially any higher-level mentors, must encourage leaders to participate in development exercises to advance leadership skills (Bents et al., 2013). These experiences and development opportunities may also influence a leader's perceptions of organizational change. These younger leaders will be the future decision makers for the organization, and must be able to apply the most current leadership knowledge and leverage that knowledge for the betterment of the organization (Bents et al., 2011; Muir, 2014). Because SBEs have limited resources, these businesses must use resources efficiently; therefore, SBEs need to invest in their young leaders' abilities and to assess their perceptions of organizational change to remain competitive.

SBEs and Leadership

Since many jobs are created within SBEs, support for SBEs has become vital for the economy (Busayo, D'Silva, Othman, Sakiru, & Silong, 2013; Allen, Martin & Miguel, 2014). Because of the size, organization leaders can establish SBEs at a relatively faster rate than large corporations can (Schott & Sedaghat, 2014). An organization's leader can establish a business in an area or region that might not support

the size or resources needed that are associated with starting a large corporation (Schott & Sedaghat, 2014). For example, when researchers evaluated group members' outlooks for SBEs in China, the researchers noted that leaders needed democratic or affiliative styles in times of economic flux because of the changing attitudes prompted by these economic situations (Kakabadse et al., 2011).

Another important factor is that SBEs are not microcosms of large corporations (Griffin et al., 2011). Therefore, leaders cannot shrink the ideas and concepts that surround perceptions of organizational change in large corporations to meet the needs of SBEs. What works in large corporations does not necessarily have a direct correlation to similar business practices for SBEs. Consequently, researchers must study and evaluate SBEs independently from large corporations to determine how leaders' perceptions of organizational change function within SBEs (Griffin et al., 2011). These differences include the perceptions of organizational change, which is essential in establishing viable SBEs quickly (Schott & Sedaghat, 2014).

Because of the nature of SBEs, it is becoming more commonplace for researchers to integrate followers into leadership studies in these settings, as the followers become more a part of the leadership system of these SBEs (Latham, 2014). Leaders of SBEs must be able to incorporate various levels of knowledge, both internal and external. Leaders may need to include strategic expert advice related to marketplace advantages utilizing organization change processes (Sikyr, 2013). In order to grow, SBEs must continue to innovate and implement organizational change, which in many cases requires the securing of capital funding for upgrading outdated equipment for operations and

logistics (Danes & Yang, 2015; Hemert, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2013). Nevertheless, little is known about SBE leaders' perceptions and how they influence the necessary innovation skills for SBEs, including making decisions and remaining current, managing intangible assets, building networks, implementing leadership behaviors, communicating vision, and engaging in organizational change.

Making Decisions and Remaining Current

With limited resources, SBEs have increased exposure to financial risk if something negative were to happen (Chiu et al., 2015). Because of the limited resources and reactionary stance that many SBE leaders are forced to take, these SBEs lack the resources to update their technologies and infrastructure, which puts the businesses at a disadvantage against more modern competitors (Evans, 2013). SBE must be able to set manageable goals and implement a sustained strategy that continues to invest in the infrastructure of the business to maintain its competitiveness (Evans, 2013).

Managing Intangible Assets

Although the main resource for most companies is the people with technical skill and knowledge, all businesses and industry sectors also have intangible assets (Crema & Nosella, 2014). These assets are critical resources that effective managers must be mindful of when making decisions about assets that one cannot physically see, but that still generate an added benefit for the organization. Crema and Nosella (2014) identified the essential assets for a successful business as: (a) human capital, specifically its effective training methods; (b) internal structural capital, or those assets that hold the collective non-human knowledge storage capabilities of the firm; and (c) relational

capital, which are all of the external relationships that the company has. Without these intangible assets, SBEs cannot function, and SBEs cannot manage these assets without successful leadership behaviors (Allen, Martin & Miguel, 2014).

Because organization leaders in larger corporations frequently delegate the management of intangible assets, which is a significant endeavor, many SBE leaders do not have experience utilizing these assets effectively (Georgalis et al., 2015). The SBE leader must keep these assets in mind when engaging in organizational change. Otherwise, in a modern global marketplace, SBEs will be unable to continue innovative processes and sustain profitability (Crema & Nosella, 2014).

Building Networks

The SBE leader must be able to build a diverse network that covers all aspects of the business market and technical needs to ensure that the outcomes for the organization are desirable (Georgalis et al., 2015). Networks can be important for SBEs if leaders leverage their connections correctly. These ties may help to generate favor with other groups, to establish the organization within the community, and to aid the SBE through difficult circumstances (Cowley & Sen, 2013). Leaders must understand how those networks are functioning to influence the outcomes or at least be able to project outcomes based on the current influences (Cheng & Jaw, 2014).

Beyond those networks, leaders should limit the amount of time associated with outside contacts to avoid focusing time on pursuits that may not lead to fruitful outcomes (Dinh et al., 2014; Ehrmann & Meiseberg, 2013; Foroudi et al., 2016). Networking benefits SBE leaders by allowing leaders to identify members of the organization that

have a reasonably high aptitude for building social networks and recruit these individuals as part of the team to build the networks for the organization (Bradshaw et al., 2015). By leveraging skills from someone who is already well versed in establishing networks, the amount of effort and training may be minimal. SBE leaders may be able to establish a full-fledged organization communication and human capital network to provide resources for success (Bradshaw et al., 2015). Through professional networks, SBEs may also overcome some social problems in local communities (Muff, 2013).

Communicating Vision

SBE owners may have limited experience influencing others to follow their examples and vision. However, SBE leaders see the dynamic interplay among leadership behaviors and member behaviors more readily since these leaders have direct interaction with group members (Bakker et al., 2015). Leaders must also be able to persuade organization members to support the intended organizational change and be able to communicate how the organization will implement that change, especially those changes that could affect members' daily work activities (Groeneveld, Kuipers, & Voet, 2014). A SBE owner may be willing to take additional risks to cement their business' future, whereas a non-owning leader might be more conservative and limit the amount of risk that business is open to, especially in times of financial difficulty (McMurray & Muchiri, 2015).

Implementing Leadership Behaviors

SBE leaders must involve other members of the leadership team in the decision making process, which includes listening to others who may have different ideas about

the organization's future, as well as other members' evaluation of the proposed changes and the effects on the organization (Baghurst & Stincelli, 2014). Townsend (2013) suggested that in many instances within SBE organizations, the leader could be the sole source of goal-oriented thinking, though this situation may not be productive for innovation and meeting goals. Whether or not the SBE leader is the sole decision maker, ignoring employee criticisms can have an ill-fated effect on the business (Scandura & Sharif, 2014). A SBE leader must therefore be willing to gather the criticism of the members and revise the decisions until the changes prove effective for the group and the organization (Scandura & Sharif, 2014). Thus, within SBEs, it may be more effective to integrate the member-centered leadership styles, such as Blanchard and Hersey's (1982) situational theory.

Decisions leaders make cultural changes within the organization and shape their own ethical framework for future decisions (Choi et al., 2015). These decisions can determine and shape the nature of the professional relationships that the leader will develop with both internal and external clients (Marsh, 2013). A leader's guidance ingrains the ethical practices within the organization's values and influences future innovations, which can carry this positive ethical philosophy forward into all aspects of the organization (Neubert, Roberts, & Wu, 2013).

Leaders of SBEs must be mindful of these considerations when considering organizational change aimed at innovations for the business (Codini, 2015). Codini (2015) noted that simplistic, participative, and adaptive leadership strategies work for SBEs in all stages of company development. Because of the high performance nature of

SBEs, leaders must remain flexible in order to operate efficiently, which requires the leadership team to be open to style changes as the system evolves and changes (DuBois, Hanlon, Kerr, Koch & Nyatuga, 2015). Those systems that confine themselves to specific leadership styles can have problems when addressing the shifting business environment, and can slow down the performance of the business (DuBois et al., 2015).

Galvin, Waldman, and Walumbwa (2012) confirmed that SBE leaders' leadership style, willingness to innovate, proactive actions, and tolerance to risk when evaluating the current marketplace all determine the influence of those leaders. Entrepreneurially oriented business leaders embrace new and creative ideas and genuinely support new ideas with all of the resources at their discretion (Chirico et al., 2013). When these new ideas have sufficient support, performance improves, which shows a positive relationship (Carsrud et al., 2015).

Sikyr (2013) determined that SBE leaders' abilities to affect innovative change involved managing performance, decision-making, communications, culture, and change. The most difficult part of the innovation process is for business leaders to focus on communications and organizational changes instead of performance (Sikyr, 2013). Leaders who were able to focus on this aspect of innovation saw a linked increase in organizational performance showing a direct connection between high performing organizations and better communication between the leader and the organization's members (Sikyr, 2013). A major challenge for SBEs involves balancing the current needs against innovative changes that will sustain the organization into the future (Sikyr, 2013).

Engaging in Organizational Change

Because of limited resources, some SBE owners operate in a reactive mode, responding only to necessary issues (Edgeman, 2015). To stay competitive and shift to a more proactive position, leaders must innovate. Leaders have a responsibility to their organization and all of its shareholders to prepare for setbacks and disruptions to performance (Eddy, Lorenzet, & Mastrangelo, 2014). Those leaders who do not have contingency plans in place to handle these setbacks can set the organization up for failure and potential takeover (Eddy, Lorenzet, & Mastrangelo, 2014). The SBE leader must have enough imagination and forethought, so that the leader can leverage the limited resources effectively and be ready in a proactive manner (Edgeman, 2015). Although SBEs have the flexibility to change quickly, the limited amount of resources that may be available to the business owner can hamper efforts for a recovery if leaders lack foresight or are unwilling to engage in organizational change. Thus, understanding SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change are necessary to their remaining innovative and competitive.

Leaders cannot blindly implement organizational change; leaders must first understand the capacities of the organization to ensure that they have the necessary technical expertise on staff to successfully complete change initiatives. Fuchs and Prouska (2014) suggested that because of limited or restricted amounts of resources, leaders might use simulations to assess skill sets and deficiencies associated with the current organization's skill set. Using modeling and simulation, leaders can more

efficiently identify deficiencies, and then plan for organizational innovations, organizational changes, and improvements (Fuchs & Prouska, 2014).

Since leader behavior and perceptions of organizational change have a wide reaching effect on the organization, it is crucial to understand how leaders receive feedback from their members and the effects that multiple feedbacks have on the behaviors of leaders as well as how feedback influences perceptions (Dabke, 2016). Without the ability to understand and implement organizational change, SBE leaders may fall behind in the competitive marketplace (Fuchs & Prouska, 2014). However, researchers have not yet addressed SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change as a means of verifying their abilities to remain competitive; therefore, little is known about whether and how these perceptions influence SBE leaders' practice. These perceptions may be particularly important in minority-owned SBEs, where additional barriers to success may exist. In the following section, I will review minority-owned SBEs to discuss why leadership behaviors associated with organizational change may be critical for the success of SBEs.

Minority Owned SBEs

Minority-owned SBEs have remained a relatively unstudied population in the literature. The U.S. Census Bureau (2007) reported that out of the 26,294,860 firms whose owners were classifiable by race, ethnicity, veteran status, or gender, as nonminority owners of 20,100,926 businesses, whereas minorities owned 5,759,209. Between the 2002 and 2007 censuses, there was a 45.5% increase in minority-owned businesses (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

Statistics that are more recent suggest that this rapid growth will continue to occur. According to the Kauffman Index, men enter entrepreneurial endeavors more frequently (0.34%) than women (0.22%), though between 2012-2013 male entrepreneurial activity rate decreased more substantially (-.08%) than that of women (-.01%; Fairlie, 2014). Out of a sample of 572,600, 28% (16,033) of individuals began new businesses in 2013 (Fairlie, 2014). What Kauffman ascertained during the three year period between 2011-2013, was that the total percentages of White entrepreneurs was held consistent, while the percentages for Blacks, Latinos and Asians all decreased for that same three year period of time (Fairlie, 2014).

According to the report, all entrepreneurial intent was down in 2013 except for that among immigrants (0.43%). The Kauffman Index suggested that, except for African Americans, all ethnic minorities begin businesses at higher rates than the White population, and that men are more likely to start these SBEs than women are (Fairlie, 2014). However, these business owners remain the minority, which may result in disadvantages. Some barriers that minority SBE leaders may perceive include a lack of support, fear of failure, and lack of competency (Giacomin, Janssen, & Sinnar, 2012). Geho, Harris, and McDowell (2016) noted that federal, state, and local government agencies should assist those individuals that have a desire, but not the resources, to gain the skills and resources needed to begin and run their own SBE.

In an effort to create equity, the U.S. SBE Administration (SBA) maintains its 8(a) Business Development Program, which allows socially and economically disadvantaged SBE leaders opportunities to succeed in their businesses (SBE Association

[SBA], 2015). Those who qualify for the 8(a) program include businesses controlled by at least 51% African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, and Subcontinent Asian Americans, as well as individuals who can prove significant hardship through evidence and documentation (SBA, 2015). The SBA guides businesses through a program to reach success during a specified period. Benefits through the 8(a) program include opportunities for loans, sole source contracts (up to \$4 million for goods and services and \$6.5 million for manufacturing), opportunities to join with other 8(a) programs to receive contracts and become more competitive, and mentoring opportunities (SBA, 2015).

Blount, Smith, and Hill (2013) determined that, specifically, minority-networking opportunities could increase a minority-owned SBE' social capital and thereby increase the firms' success. Blount et al. examined 132 survey responses from minority business leaders in small and large businesses (70% male, 65% African American, 14% Hispanic, 14% Asian, 4% Native American). Results suggested that the benefit of networking opportunities correlated negatively with firm size, suggesting that for SBEs, networking had more positive effects than for larger corporations (Blount et al., 2013). Therefore, the opportunities provided by the SBA may assist with limiting some of the barriers that minority SBE leaders experienced.

Barriers to Minority SBE Leaders' Success

Minority SBE leaders may possess a disadvantage in entering entrepreneurial endeavors (Carter, Mwaura, Ram, Trehan, & Jones, 2015; Parks, Pattie, & Wales, 2012). Bates and Robb (2013) noted that minority business leaders might experience barriers

because of financial inequities. Specifically, Bates and Robb cited minority business leaders' heavy reliance on loans, higher costs incurred on these loans compared to those of Caucasian male business owners, smaller loans available, and rejection for financing. These financial barriers may influence not only the viability of a minority-owned SBE, but also cause negative perceptions and deter potential minority entrepreneurs (Bates & Robb, 2013; Harris, 2011; Liu, 2012).

Carter et al. (2015) noted that some of the barriers that may exist for women and ethnic minority entrepreneurs included both external and internal influences. Included in external influences were (a) access to finance, (b) management skills, and (c) market selection (Carter et al., 2015). Internal influences included (a) whether or not discrimination was present, (b) the quantity and quality of minority-owned businesses, and (c) lack of support for minority-owned businesses (Carter et al., 2015). Parks et al. (2012) proposed that despite the focus on race and gender, a more in-depth investigation might be required to determine the specific aspects of cultural difference that may be affecting the success or failure of minority-owned businesses.

Harris (2011) examined survey responses from 237 participants from the North Carolina SBE and Technology Development Centers (50% ethnic minority; 43% African American; 55% male). Male and female SBE owners experienced barriers similarly, with the exception of strategic goal development as a significant difference between the two groups (Harris, 2011). Harris noted that ethnic minorities rated their difficulties as significantly more pressing than did Caucasian SBE leaders, especially regarding finances, accounting, personnel, management, and purchasing. A deficiency of these data

was the relative lack of representation of diverse minority populations (Harris, 2011). The minority sample was overrepresented by African Americans. Nevertheless, Harris' data suggested the increased perceptions of business barriers by minority SBE owners compared to Caucasian SBE owners.

Parks et al. (2012) examined survey responses from a geographically diverse sample of 128 U.S. SBE owners (29% female, 81.2% Caucasian) to review differences in addition to ethnicity that may contribute to entrepreneurial success or failure among minority and majority SBE leaders. SBEs from the service industry (62% of the sample) included small retail (19%), food (17%), and manufacturing (2%; Parks et al., 2012). One factor that Parks et al. found that fully mediated the difference in performance between ethnic minorities and majorities was financial security, or access to capital. Parks et al. noted that ethnic minorities might not value security, which was determined as critical to SBEs' performance. As Parks et al. discussed, however, the data results underrepresented minorities in this sample. Though Parks et al. noted that this percentage was similar to that experienced in the United States, the lesser population of minorities may not provide as encompassing of a picture of minority values as represented in the majority sample.

To assess the effect of minority status on perceptions of female entrepreneurs, Adkins and Samaras (2013) conducted a quantitative analysis of 438 female SBE leaders in the southern United States (86.6% Caucasian; 7.9% African American; 1.9% American Indian and Alaska Native; 1.6% Hispanic; and 1.2% Asian and Pacific Islander). Adkins and Samaras found minority women more likely to employ part time employees, and to

have begun their businesses more recently, than non-minority women. Minority women reported experiencing business challenges significantly more than non-minority women in all but four categories in Adkin and Samaras' study.

Adkins and Samaras (2013) examined: (a) securing capital for building or growing a business, and understanding the tax codes; (b) obtaining procurement opportunities in the public and private sector; (c) managing relationships with legal advisors and certified public accountants; (d) understanding new accounting regulations; (e) finding and maintaining an effective workforce; (f) networking effectively; and (g) balancing life and work obligations. Those areas where minority women did not perceive a statistically significant increase in challenges compared to non-minority women were (a) health insurance costs, (b) the current state of the economy, (c) competitive business environments, and (d) regulatory burden (Adkins & Samaras, 2013). The perceptions of barriers may affect entrepreneurial intent among minority women (Adkins & Samaras, 2013; Liu, 2012). These barriers may also influence a leader's entrepreneurial intent and perceptions (De Luque & Stahl, 2014).

Minority SBE Leaders' Entrepreneurial Intent and Perceptions

Cultural and gender differences may influence entrepreneurial intent (De Luque & Stahl, 2014; Giacomin et al., 2012). Giacomin et al. (2012) examined quantitative survey response data regarding entrepreneurial intent and perceived barriers to entrepreneurial success among 761 university male and female (55% male, 45% female) students in the United States ($N = 285$), Belgium ($N = 329$), and China ($N = 147$). Giacomin et al.

determined a statistically significant relationship between females in all three countries and a perceived lack of support for entrepreneurial endeavors.

In Belgium and the United States, Giacomini et al. (2012) also determined that women had an increased likelihood for fear of failure and lack of competency, though in China, no statistically significant difference was determined between men and women in these factors. The perceived barriers were found to affect entrepreneurial intent differently depending on the culture: (a) gender played a moderating role on the relationship between lack of support and entrepreneurial intention (negative in the United States and Belgium, and positive in China); (b) gender had no role in the relationship between fear of failure and entrepreneurial intention; and (c) gender had a positive role in the relationship between lack of competency and entrepreneurial intent in the United States, but not in the other countries. Thus, Giacomini et al. determined culture and gender had significant relations to perceived barriers and the effects of these factors on entrepreneurial intent.

Schoon and Duckworth (2012) also found a relationship between gender and entrepreneurial intent. Examining longitudinal survey data from 6,116 full time employed participants in the 1970 British Birth Cohort and follow up surveys at ages 10, 16, and 34, Schoon and Duckworth found several trends among the British sample (97% Caucasian; 3% Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African, Caribbean, Chinese, or of mixed origin; 36% female). In this sample, men were more likely than women to become entrepreneurs ($p < .001$); 20% of women became entrepreneurs (Schoon & Duckworth,

2012). Because of the lack of minority data, this factor was not considered in this study (Schoon & Duckworth, 2012).

Schoon and Duckworth (2012) suggested family data affected men and women differently in this sample, with women's entrepreneurial intent being linked to their families' socioeconomic resources, whereas men were influenced by their fathers being self-employed, and less likely to engage academically. Schoon and Duckworth (2012) noted that the findings for men may have been because of the increased likelihood of fathers to pass on businesses and legacies to their sons. However, the researchers did not specifically examine this factor in the survey.

Linan, Santos, and Fernandez-Serrano (2011) examined data from the Global Entrepreneurship Database and culled global responses from entrepreneurs in 16 countries who had not yet entered entrepreneurial activity ($N = 33,731$) and responded to the survey in 2004. Linan et al. utilized this dataset to determine whether individual perceptions, perceptions regarding entrepreneurial opportunities, and sociocultural perceptions affected entrepreneurial intent (the intent to begin a new business within three years). Globally, males were 1.846 times more likely to have entrepreneurial intent than women, and those individuals with higher education levels and with lower income levels were more likely to report entrepreneurial intent.

Factors that increased entrepreneurial intent included (a) knowing a role model, (b) having self efficacy, (c) the presence of opportunities for entrepreneurs, (d) positive media representations of entrepreneurs, and (e) positive perceptions of entrepreneurs in one's country (Linan et al., 2011). One factor that decreased entrepreneurial intent was

perceived failure (Linan et al., 2011). However, Linan et al. did not parse the specific effects in each country, nor did the researchers examine differences within the countries examined. Minority business leaders may have perceptions that differ from the ethnic majority within their countries (Liu, 2012; Giacomini et al., 2012).

Analyzing data from the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics (PSED) II, a widescale examination of new entrepreneurs and their motivations conducted in 2005–2006, Liu (2012) attempted to discover the rationale behind entrepreneurial intent for African Americans and Hispanics compared to Caucasian entrepreneurs. Liu examined a sample of 79 Hispanics, 149 African Americans, and 902 Caucasians, with approximately 1 in 4 Caucasian and African American and 16.5% of Hispanic entrepreneurs possessing a bachelor's degree. From this sample, 32% of African Americans, 40% of Hispanics, and 28% of Caucasians possessed a high school diploma or less (Liu, 2012).

In this sample, Liu (2012) determined that Caucasians and African Americans perceive more social support for becoming entrepreneurs, whereas Hispanic respondents perceived less of this acceptance. African Americans and Hispanics reported neutral and disagreement, respectively, with the statement that they perceived government support and the presence of entrepreneurial networks, though Caucasian entrepreneurs agreed with both. Liu noted that this presence was in discordance with the government options for minority SBE leaders' support. Ultimately, African American respondents reported entrepreneurial intent being determined by motivational factors, whereas Hispanic respondents noted generational inheritance and role models as spurring entrepreneurial intent (Liu, 2012).

Thus, it is clear that minority status influenced the perceptions of SBE leaders regarding entering into business in the first place (Linan et al., 2011; Liu, 2012). Further research is necessary to determine if and how minority status also influences perceptions business decisions made by these SBE leaders (Liu, 2012). For a business decision that is inherently risky, such as organizational change (Argyris, 1965), the increased pressures and barriers of being a SBE leader may particularly influence perceptions. Further research is necessary to understand this gap in the literature.

Gap in the Literature

Fiedler's (1967) and Blanchard's and Hersey (1982) seminal works set the framework for the current study pertaining to minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change. More qualitative inquiry will help identify factors and perceptions specific to minority SBE leaders. Previous researchers have not examined minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change. However, within the last five years, researchers have explored the topic of perceptions of organizational change and organizational change in general, utilizing quantitative methods primarily to study large organizations (Clark et al., 2014; Linan et al., 2011 ; Marsh, 2013).

The predominant assumption that SBEs follow the same organizational changes as larger organizations does not provide an adequate depiction of the inner workings of SBEs, especially for minority owners (Carter et al., 2015; Griffin et al., 2011). Thus, the proposed study may potentially highlight an additional barrier to minority SBE leaders. Considering the importance of organizational change in SBEs, minority SBE leaders' perceptions may serve as the catalyst for determining their ultimate success.

Current researchers, scholars, and practitioners have evaluated many influences relating to perceptions of organizational change utilizing a quantitative approach (Danes & Yang, 2015). Upon thorough review, researchers determined that a disparity exists for studies utilizing a qualitative approach relating to leadership style changes, specifically for SBE owners (Baghurst & Stincelli, 2014; Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013).

Researchers have identified influential changes and correlations between organizational change and discrete concepts, but researchers have not evaluated this phenomenon in-depth with an open, and interconnected approach, as may be accomplished in a qualitative study (Clark et al., 2014; Linan et al., 2011 ; Marsh, 2013). Several scholars have determined that these processes do not operate independent of one another, but act in unison contributing to an all-encompassing vision of any specific phenomenon under study (Fiedler, 1967; Curphy, & Kaiser, 2013).

Leadership and organizational change are dynamic interactions between the leader of the organization and members of the group (Choi et al., 2015). Researchers must evaluate the implementation process as it relates to the perceptions that leaders have of organizational change. This approach will add a more complete and thorough understanding of how a leader's perceptions influence, or the perceptions are influenced by, the organizational change selected by the leader(s) of an organization. The results may also serve to educate other minority SBE leaders and stakeholders about their current perceptions and how these attitudes may be influencing organizational success. Through this study, I endeavor to highlight minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change to examine this underexplored area in the literature.

Summary

The study adds to the body of knowledge regarding organizational change, minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change, and the implementation process that minority SBE owners utilize to affect changes within their organizations, as demonstrated through this literature review. Significant work exists relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change from a quantitative approach, but limited to almost no work exists from a qualitative approach, especially in studies relating to minority SBE owners. Most of the current research studies in the area of leadership relate to large corporations. In this study, I evaluated organizational change relating to SBE leaders' perceptions of future business decisions.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation provided the framework from which I established the methodology for this study. The gaps in the current research aided in establishing the population of interest, the approach, as well as the type of organization that I focused on because of a lack of available studies on those aspects of organizational change and leader perceptions thereof. In Chapter 3, I further elaborate on the methodology selected for this study based on these evaluations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Many leaders practice organizational change in an effort to influence changes within their establishments. A leader's understanding and use of this phenomenon can lead to improved use of social capital and human resources for improved effectiveness for the organization (Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013). Organizational change in large corporations is well studied and understood, but similar changes within minority-owned SBEs are not well understood or studied (Codini, 2015). There is a gap in the literature relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change within SBEs, specifically how such perceptions may influence subsequent organizational changes and act as either barriers or enhancements to future changes (Saunila, 2014). There is a need to address this deficiency in the literature as it relates to minority business leaders' perceptions of organizational change, including the obstacles and benefits these perceptions create in future organizational decisions (Clark et al., 2014).

An opportunity exists for researchers to qualitatively evaluate minority SBE leaders' perceptions of organizational change. My focus is on the how change affects the leaders' decision making processes and whether a leader understands the importance of change and the processes he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. In conducting this investigation, I sought to provide knowledge to SBE leaders that could guide them through the organizational change phenomenon. My goal is to bridge the gap of knowledge about

how this phenomenon functions within SBEs and its correlation to well-established and understood practices that function within large corporations.

In this chapter, I will discuss my methodology and design. I will also discuss my role in the research process. I will examine the logic that underlied participant selection and the criteria I used to identify interview participants. In order to describe the research study in complete detail, I will also report the required instrumentation and data collection procedures. I will also describe the data analysis plan in full, addressing issues of trustworthiness and the means by which I ensured the confidentiality and protection of participant information. The final topic discussed concerns ethical procedures. The chapter concludes with a summary and a transition to the following chapter.

Figure 1 illustrates my process in completing this study. Six distinct and sequential steps are shown. The figure begins with the formulation of the research question. Following that is a discussion of the research design I used and my reasons for selecting it. The next stage represented in the figure is participant selection followed by data collection and concluding with data analysis.

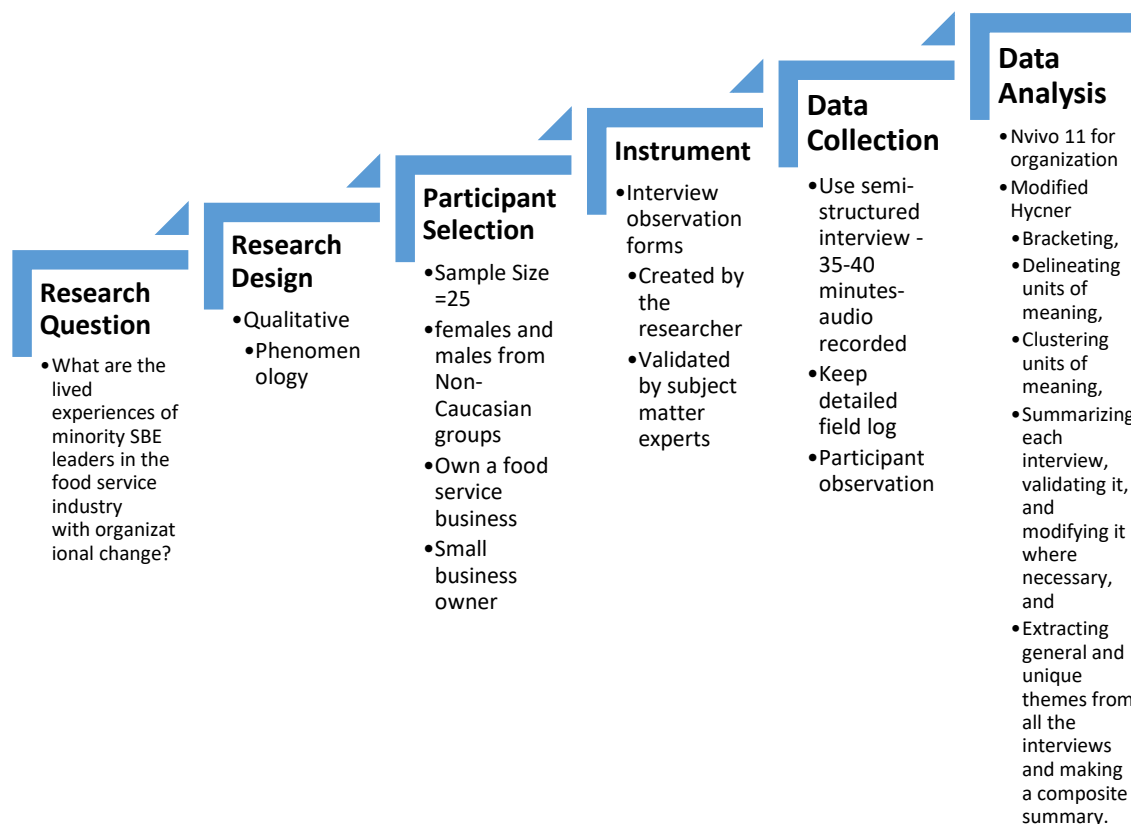


Figure 1. Methodological process used in the study.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question for this study was, What are the lived experiences of minority SBE leaders in the food service industry with organizational change?

The phenomenon I examined was organizational change and leaders' perceptions of organizational change as the phenomenon relates to future decisionmaking. The vast majority of studies within SBE leadership research are quantitative (Baghurst & Stincelli, 2014; Allen, DaSilva, & Smith, 2013;

Smollan, 2015). For this study, I used a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of leaders' perceptions of organizational change and the influence leaders' perceptions of organizational change have on business decisions. The results of previous quantitative studies helped me to shape several of the interview questions for the current study. I focused the interviews questions on leaders' lived experiences relating to their perceptions of organizational change challenges that leaders may have experienced in their businesses. Through the use of specifically crafted interview questions, as shown in appendix A, I examined how participants managed the implementation of organizational changes. I also assessed the factors that influenced the participants' perceptions of organizational change including the amount of leadership experience and educational level the leaders possessed at the time of implementation.

This study was qualitative in nature. I used a phenomenological design in order to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experience of SBE leaders during an organizational change. I selected phenomenology as the research method because researchers can use it to help examine, explain, and describe the lived experience of individuals (Giorgi, 2009). Van Maanen (1988) wrote, "Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences" (pp. 9–10). According to Patton (2014), qualitative methods are appropriate when little knowledge exists regarding a phenomenon. Researchers using qualitative methods seek a more complete understanding of the phenomenon under investigation that researchers may not discover with quantitative analysis. Examples of this information can include

values, beliefs, motivations, and underlying emotions regarding a phenomenon (Doran, Fox, & Rodham, 2015). The phenomenon I examined in this study was the lived experiences of minority SBE owners managing organizational change. Utilizing a phenomenological approach can enable a researcher to discover the unique perspective of the participants who lived the experience (Moustakas, 1994).

The three branches of research methodology include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Because I designed this study to examine a lived experience rather than to prove or disprove a specific hypothesis, I chose to employ a qualitative method. Qualitative methods considered for this research study included ethnography, case study, and grounded theory.

Ethnographers study the behavior, rules, language, and mores of a culture or in-group (Tracy, 2013). These researchers often embed themselves in the groups they are researching and incorporate multiple roles including participant, observer, and researcher (Tracy, 2013). During a period of time, ethnographers collect data and gain clarity about the group under study (Patton, 2014). Because I do not seek to understand a culture, I did not choose ethnography as the method for this study.

Case study methods are chosen when a researcher seeks to understand a bounded case and utilizes *how* and *why* questions (Yin, 2008). When conducting a case study, the researcher attempts to gather data from many sources in order to triangulate information to ensure accuracy (Yin, 2008). Case study researchers can employ a variety of methods such as interviews, data mining, and observations to collect information. Because I am

attempting to understand a lived experience rather than how or why the experience occurred, a case study method would not have been effective.

If researchers wish to understand the social world and create a theory to explain what they observe, researchers must employ grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). This method, as with all qualitative methods, is inductive and relies on the use of theoretical sampling and the use of constant comparison to analyze the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Theoretical sampling allows for gathering individuals with direct knowledge or experience with the information necessary to create a theory (Patton, 2014). Using this method enables a researcher to access the data necessary to build a theory. As a researcher analyzes and reanalyzes the data, the researcher gathers more questions and conducts further inquiry, constantly comparing the new information with the old (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). This process will continue until the researcher creates a theoretical construct. Because I was attempting to understand the experiences of my participants and was not building a theory, I decided that grounded theory would not serve my purposes.

Role of Researcher

As a researcher conducting a qualitative study, I acted as the instrument by recording, collecting, compiling, and analyzing the data I gathered from all participants (Martins et al., 2014). To be able to conduct an appropriate interview, I developed a specific skill set. I needed to encourage thick descriptions, accurately record what I observed, and was able to gather and analyze all the data effectively (Martins et al., 2014; Bahramnezhad et al., 2014). A skilled interviewer also needs to develop and use

appropriate interview questions and have the ability to follow questions with appropriate prompts to gather the necessary details (Moustakas, 1994).

I followed carefully laid out procedures and collected data from a variety of sources in order to arrive at an accurate portrayal of the findings. I used the behaviors listed above to encourage *thick descriptions* of the phenomenon under study. The definition of a thick description is when the researcher gathers detailed observations, thoughts, feelings, and ideas about a specific phenomenon (Holloway, 1997).

I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews to collect data. I encouraged the participants of the study to speak openly and honestly with as much detail as possible (Byers & Onwuegbuzie, 2014). Because I have no relationship with any of the participants and currently work in a different professional field, there was no undue influence or power differentials with any of the participants in the study. Although I have had previous experience in the industry, an extended period has passed since working in the food service industry. I used bracketing as an ongoing process to minimize any preconceptions held about the phenomenon attributable to my previous extended work experience within the food service industry (Newman & Tufford, 2010; Chan, Chien, & Fung, 2013). I remained mindful of my experiences through the bracketing process to minimize or eliminate any biases and preconceptions of the phenomenon that might remain.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The population of interest in this study was minority SBE leaders who operate businesses within the food service industry, specifically minority business leaders. The geographical area selected for the study was the south-central region of Pennsylvania. The use of purposeful sampling, specifically maximum variation sampling, more accurately represented the overall population from which I took the sample for this study (Patton, 2014; Robinson, 2014; Duan et al., 2015).

Utilizing the local SBE association to help identify potential participants within the food service industry enabled me to find participants. Through the local, SBE administration and economic alliance, I identified minority SBE owners within the food service industry as potential participants for this study. I conducted further evaluation to determine if the participant should be included in the study through an in-person introduction to see if he or she fits within the study's parameters by asking several, brief questions. To be included within the study, the business owners had to identify as a person from groups other than Caucasian males, their business had to operate within the food service industry, and their business had to be classified as a SBE. If a potential participant fell within these parameters, he or she may have been included in the potential candidate pool and I excluded those who did not fit from further consideration for this study.

The sample size for this study was 25 participants. I established the initial number of participants at 25, which would allow for enough information to be gathered to

create a study that was thorough and filled with rich and thick data. Merriam (2009), Saldana (2011) and Cardon et al. (2013) all recommend 5–25 participants for a study; therefore, I deemed 25 appropriate, however the number of participants needed cannot be completely agreed upon by researchers and can be influenced by other factors in order to obtain rich thick data (Griffith, 2013). The duration of the study was 9 weeks and was dependent upon the participants' schedules and availability for interviews. During the beginning of the study, I contacted each of the identified potential participants in person to establish initial interest in participation and arranged a separate time to explain the project in detail. After the initial contact, I asked the participants to join the study if they matched the predesignated study criteria.

Instrumentation

I used interview observation forms of my own design to collect data. These forms had space to write the participants responses and any additional questions asked during the interview that I deemed of interest and added to the study. I also recorded the interview sessions using a digital recording device with the consent of each of the participants. I then transcribed the interviews upon completion. I drafted the questions for the interview observation form based on the study's research question relating to leaders' perceptions of organizational change. I constructed the questions based on the recommendations from Seidman (2013) and Brinkmann (2013) reflecting on motivations and current life experiences surrounding the phenomenon of leaders' perceptions of organizational change.

I established content validity by locating several subject matter experts to comment on questions in the interview form. Having experts review the form enabled me to avoid creating any unintentional bias, leading questions, or questions that were not relevant to the study. These experts reviewed the questions and offered comments and feedback that helped me create questions designed to address the research problem.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

The study consisted of initial interviews with a series of questions that addressed the leaders' experiences and perceptions of organizational change. Using a semi-structured, open-ended format, I created the interview to gather rich description. This format enabled me to continually gather data via the use of probing and follow-up questions. To add further information and detail to the data, I kept a detailed field log. In the log, I kept a record of my thoughts and internal reactions. I also took notes on any external reactions, including tone of voice, expressions and body language, as well as any observations about the participant (Groenewald, 2004; Jamshed, 2014)).

After I received responses from potential participants, I contacted the individuals in person and used this time to build rapport, to explain the study requirements, and to request their consent to participate. I answered any questions the participants had about the study and requested that they sign an informed consent form, which contained additional information about the study including the time required for the interviews, which was approximately 35–45 minutes per interview.

During the interview, I used the interview observation forms to take notes during the session, but also used a digital recording device that was later used to transcribe the

interview into actual text as described by Doody and Noonan (2013). As a precaution, I carried an extra recorder in case the primary recorder failed. I kept all participants' personal information confidential. Participation in the study was voluntary with the understanding that any participant could have left the study whenever he or she chose to. Participants received no incentives for participation. After each interview, I answered any other questions the participant had. I ensured that the participant had my contact information in case any questions or concerns arose later.

I transcribed each interview and assigned a participant number to each participant. I then returned the transcripts to the participants during a follow-up session, to conduct transcript reviews so participants could confirm the results of the interview through their review of the transcript and correct errors prior to inclusion in the study's results. During the analysis I found there was no need to contact the participants for any further clarification. To maintain confidentiality, all data has been kept, including field notes, recordings, transcripts, documents, and any other information gathered in a locked safe and will remain there for a period of 5 years, after which time it will be destroyed.

Data Analysis Plan

In order to connect the research question with the participants' responses, I used NVivo 11 software to organize the interview responses, which allowed me to attune with the participants' views and values (Saldana, 2013; Bell & Bryman; 2015). I then used a second cycle of coding with the same software to help refine and identify patterns within the data to show themes present in the study. After I identified the themes, I interpreted the themes to determine their significance to the study and the large body of knowledge.

During analysis of the data, I used a simplified version of Hycner's (1999) approach to analysis. The simplified approach formulated by Hycner provided an efficient process for data extrication by culling a concise 6-step process from the original 14-step framework (Groenewald, 2004). Hycner (1999) stated that phenomenological data is not analyzed, which implies breaking apart, instead the researcher must understand the data as a whole. Because of this, handling data with care, and thoughtfulness is essential. Choosing the correct process that matches the phenomenon is an essential part of the process, and I chose the modified Hycnerian method as one that matched my objectives. The steps in this process include:

1. Bracketing,
2. Delineating units of meaning,
3. Clustering units of meaning,
4. Summarizing each interview, validating it, and modifying it where necessary,
and
5. Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary (Groenewald, 2004, p. 17).

The initial step in this process involves reflexivity or bracketing, which is consciously setting aside preconceived ideas, beliefs, or thoughts about the participants and the phenomenon under examination (Moustakas, 1994; Rossetto, 2014). I listened to the audio recordings several times so that I could form a picture of the entire interview (Hycner, 1999). I then began the initial readings of the transcripts to understand what the participants said during each interview. I separately thematized each interview, then

examined the interviews and compared and contrasted the responses to each other as I searched for overarching themes and subthemes (Tracy, 2013).

I read and reread the transcripts until I started to identify units of meaning. The units were put together to form various themes and models as I continued to organize and understand the themes (Groenewald, 2004). Continuing the analysis, I began to group together the information as I sought associations and themes (Hycner, 1999). Factors I explored in this analysis were specific word usage, tone of voice, and intonation from the recordings, as well as any observations I recorded in the field notes while conducting the interview (Hawkins, Mountain & Smith, 2016). I then note theme frequency, theme interactions, and the emergence of sub-themes (Groenewald, 2004).

During the collecting and analysis of data, I identified no cases of discrepancy or disconfirming cases, which would have helped establish the boundaries around the rest of the confirmed data (Seidman, 2013). I identified no negative cases during the study, which will be addressed in Chapter 5.

When analyzing qualitative data, research is inductive and free of preconceived notions (Patton, 2014). Analysis is the primary means for eliciting and condensing meaning from data, and providing summary with clear links between the data and the research questions (Groenewald, 2004). All of the research findings will be explainable (Groenewald, 2004). Employing transcript review is a way to determine whether the data analysis is consistent with the participants' experiences (Bennett et al., 2014).

Issues of Trustworthiness

For qualitative research, the researcher must consider the trustworthiness of the information shared. In establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study, a researcher must accurately reflect the actual views of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Zohrabi, 2013)). Quantitative researchers assess the internal validity and generalizability of the sample as measures of trustworthiness (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within qualitative research, the concepts of credibility transferability, dependability and auditability, and conformability are paramount in good quality research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility refers to how well results reflect what participants attempted to convey (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013). A researcher risks reactivity and bias when the researcher's interpretation does not convey the participant's intended meaning (Noble & Smith, 2014). *Reactivity* refers to the effect a researcher has on the participants that might alter the findings (Chawla & Pandey, 2016). An example within the current research would be conducting interviews in an environment that is not secure and private. Minority SBE leaders may be reluctant to offer candid and honest feedback in this environment. Providing a secure, private area to conduct interviews and being mindful of the phrasing of interview questions may aid in reducing reactivity and increase how receptive participants are to the interview process. In order to minimize bias in the results reporting, I will engage in bracketing. By bracketing my personal experiences, I

can ensure that my opinions and beliefs do not influence the interviews or data analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

I further established credibility using transcript review. Following the interview, I returned individual participants' interview transcripts during a follow-up session so that the participant could review the transcript for accuracy. In the reporting of the results, rich, thick descriptions aid credibility. Thick description helps describe and interpret social actions, capture thoughts and emotions, and provides descriptions that are rich enough for the reader to feel the truth of what is stated (Dahl et al., 2016). Providing this level of detail helps convey the sentiments of participants as he or she stated.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which results are generalizable across other individuals or settings (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2011, Casey et al., 2013)). I used thick description to ensure transferability of the results. Additionally, during data analysis I evaluated the data and determined the responses presented saturation, which in this context is defined as the point where adding additional participants does not add to the information gathered (Tracy, 2013; Fusch & Ness, 2015), increases variability within the sample, and assists with transferability of the results.

Dependability

Dependability is the ability to replicate the study in the same context, participants, and method and draw similar results (Dahl et al., 2016). Creating a solid and well-documented audit trail is fundamental to dependability. All steps and decisions implemented in the data collection and analysis procedures were documented in detail for

replicability (Corley, Gioia, & Hamilton, 2013). A detailed journal of field notes was kept during the study. These measures, combined with the measures taken to ensure credibility, increase the validity of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Audit trails, such as field notes, help to add transparency to the study and allow others to replicate the study with different populations, which further adds dependability. I contacted an independent auditor for the data collection and analysis procedures who identified potential bias or distortion of the results.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). One aspect of confirmability is reflexivity which is that a researcher has natural bias during research. One of the tools used to help address this issue is the use of a journal. Within the journal researchers can keep track of their methodological decisions and why they selected those specific choices. They can also record personal reflections about their own values and interests, which can assist researchers during data analysis to help ensure that their own bias are not introduced into the study (Bahramnezhad et al., 2014).

Ethical Procedures

Following approval by Walden IRB, I recruited potential participants. I provided potential participants with copies of the Walden University Informed Consent Form in addition to an explanation of the risks, benefits, compensation, confidentiality, and objectives of the study. I also informed the participant that I was conducting this study to fulfill a requirement of my doctorate degree. I provided the timeline for the study and

informed participants that the study was voluntary, and as such, the participants could leave the study at any time without fear of consequence. I notified participants that if they opted to leave the study, I would remove their data from the study. Prior to participation, minority SBE owners completed and signed the informed consent. I have no personal or professional influence on the participants within the study; therefore, there are no issues concerning influence, or power over the participants.

I ensured participants' autonomy through the informed consent procedure. I assigned each participant a code to ensure the privacy of each individual's data and all information gathered during the study would remain confidential. I maintain sole access to the code sheets and the code sheets remain in a locked safe, separate from the data. I will secure all data related to the study in a locked safe for the duration of the study and for 5 years after the close of the study. After 5 years, I will shred all hard copies of the data and erase the electronic copies.

Summary

In this chapter, I have examined the rationale for the methodology selected for this study. I have described my role as the researcher and how data was collected, stored, and analyzed for this study. I discussed the selection of the participants, the analysis plan, and issues of trustworthiness. I explained issues of ethical procedures, including the ways in which collected data will remain secure and confidential even upon completion of the study.

Chapter 4 will present the results obtained during the course of this study. Chapter 4 will also contain a description of the overall participant demographics of the

study, the data collection process used in the study as well as further expand the actual analysis of all of the study's data and how issues of trustworthiness were addressed. This dissertation will be concluded in Chapter 5 with a discussion of the results, implications for practice, directions for further research, limitations of this study and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences and perceptions of organizational change among minority SBE leaders in the food service industry. I sought to better understand how change affects leaders' decision-making processes. I also wanted to understand whether leaders understand the importance of change and the processes they need to achieve innovation and spur competition in the business market. My research question was, what are the lived experiences of minority SBE leaders in the food service industry with organizational change?

In Chapter 4, I discuss the methods of data collection and also the means by which the data was examined and categorized into the various themes presented during the interview process. Next I discuss the ways that various areas of trustworthiness were addressed in this study. Finally I break down each of the noted themes and present a detailed analysis within each area as it relates to leaders experiences and perceptions of organizational change.

Research Setting

Many of the participants that I spoke with during the interviews had been experiencing a down turn in sales and they were going through a change process to improve the number of customers. Most of those participants indicated that they were trying to implement changes, specifically menu changes and specials that help to boost sales. Another consequence of the limited business sales was that until they were able to

improve their bottom line they would not be able to hire any more help and the current employees would be working limited schedules to help keep their labor overhead to a minimum. Besides a hire freeze, the participants other concern relating to staff was that they wanted to boost sales to prevent any of their current staff from being temporarily laid off. Many of the employees were thought of as family and the participants didn't want to negatively influence that relationship for the benefit of the business in the short term, which might negatively impact the business in the long term. Many participants understand that many customers come not just for their product but to also socialize with the staff as many customers were long term patrons. All of these things had influence on the participants' answers and in turn might have directly the results of the study.

Demographics

The population of interest in this study was minority SBE leaders who operate businesses within the food service industry, specifically minority business leaders. The geographical area selected for the study was the south-central region of Pennsylvania. The use of purposeful sampling, specifically maximum variation sampling, which allows for maximum diversity in regards to my research question and aided me in representing the true ethnic diversity and thought processes of the various groups that encompass the overall local population from which I used to draw my sample for this study.

The gender breakdown of SBE owner participants in the study was 6 males and 19 females. The ethnic composition of my sample population consisted of 16 Whites (none of whom were males), 5 Hispanics, 1 Asian, and 3 individuals who identified as Other or as not fitting into any of the five groups identified by the U.S. Census Bureau in

2015 (i.e. White, African American, Latin, Asian, or Native American). Although several African American small business owners were contacted to participate in the study, I received no interest from them in participating in the study.

Data Collection

I used the local SBE association to help identify participants who matched my specific selection criteria. I conducted a further evaluation to determine if a participant should be included in the study through an in-person introduction and initial screening to see if he or she matched the study's parameters. To be included, participants had to be from a group other than Caucasian males and had to own a business within the food service industry. Also, their businesses had to be classified as SBEs by the local small business association. Once the potential participant fell within these parameters, I included him or her as a potential candidate for consideration in this study.

The sample size for this study was 25 participants. This sample size allowed for enough information to be gathered to create a study that was thorough and filled with rich and thick data. The duration of the study was approximately 9 weeks and determined by participants' schedules and availability for interviews. I contacted potential participants in person and established their initial interest in and eligibility for participating. I then arranged a separate time to explain the project in detail and conduct the interviews. After I made initial contact, I asked potential participants to join the study if they matched my predesignated study criteria.

The settings for the data collection was varied with a majority of the participants asking that the interviews be conducted at their business location either before or after business hours. The rest of the participants suggested that I meet them at a separate location either before or after their business hours so they would not be disturbed during the interview. Those who choose an offsite location to conduct the interview, ironically selected another food service establishment to hold the interviews.

The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. The transcriptions were then checked by the respective participants for accuracy. Additionally, during the interviews, notes were also take to be referred to later and compared to the audio recording for accuracy. The notes also were used to aid in the analysis. The notes contained my impressions, observations, and comments on the interview content.

The biggest challenge I faced during the data collection was an inability to recruit participants from the local African American or Native American populations. Although I spoke with several potential candidates, I had no interested parties who were willing to participate in the study. I had hoped to reflect the demographics of the local population, which would have included at least 2 African Americans and 1 Native American small business owner. The other challenge that I faced, was that a majority of small business owners in the food service industry within South Central Pennsylvania are predominately women, which is not reflective of the general population of the area. According to the latest census, in south central Pennsylvania, 29.1%, of small business in the area are owned by women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). However, this does not reflect small

business owners within the food service industry, which has a larger portion of female business owners than is reflected in the general numbers by the census bureau.

Data Analysis

In order to connect the research question with the participants' responses, I used NVivo 11 software to organize the interview responses, which enabled me to carefully organize and analyze the participant responses. I then employed a second cycle of coding with the same software to help refine and identify patterns within the data to show themes present in the study. After I identified the themes, I interpreted the themes to determine their significance to the study and the large body of knowledge.

During analysis of the data, I used a simplified version of Hycner's (1999) approach to analysis. The simplified approach formulated by Hycner provided an efficient process for data extrication by culling a concise 6-step process from the original 14-step framework (Groenewald, 2004). Hycner (1999) stated that phenomenological data is not analyzed, which implies breaking apart, instead a researcher must understand the data as a whole. Because of this, handling data with care, and thoughtfulness is essential.

The initial step in this process involved reflexivity or bracketing, which is consciously setting aside preconceived ideas, beliefs, or thoughts about the participants and the phenomenon under examination. I took time to identify any preconceived thoughts, ideas, or biases in order to set them aside and fully enter into the life world of the participants.

I began by listening to the audio recordings several times to form a picture of the entire interview. Once this step was complete, I began the initial readings of the transcripts to understand what the participants said during each interview. I read and reread the transcripts until I started to identify units of meaning. At this point, I uploaded the transcripts into Nvivo 11 to aid in the identification process. As I found a unit of meaning, I highlighted and assigned it a code. Each code reflected the meaning of the selected data using a short phrase or word. I continued this process until all data were analyzed and assigned appropriate codes. A list of initial codes is found in Table 2.

Table 1

List of Data Codes

Theme	Sub Grouping
Definition of organizational change	Changes to be competitive - liquor license
Education and experience - linked to current job	Changes to be competitive - customer feedback on pricing
Education and experience - have used in business	R and D do market research
Education and experience - about people skills	R and D for changes - consult other similar businesses
Education and experience - know your customer	R and D for changes - customer feedback
Education and experience help me manage others expectations	R and D for changes - getting further education
Education and experience not directly linked to current business	R and D for changes - government information
Feedback - accommodate customer requests	R and D for changes - media tv ect
Feedback - from employees	R and D for changes - mentors
Feedback - keep records and emails	R and D for changes - no role models
Feedback - pilot program	R and D for changes - nothing formal
Feedback - sales reps	R and D for changes - traveling
Feedback - test marketing	R and D for changes - trial and error
Feedback about changes - informal - social media and face to face	R and D for changes - use focus group of customers
Feedback used for customer satisfaction	R and D for changes - use the internet
Feedback used for employee changes	Communicate changes - be transparent
Feedback used in conjunction with employee input	Communicate changes - face to face with staff
Feedback used to avoid making the same mistakes	communicate changes - in writing
Feedback used to create future changes	communicate changes - meetings
Feedback using surveys	Communicate changes - through training
Use negative feedback as opportunity for growth	Communicate changes - use social media
Word of mouth is a powerful tool	Communication is easy with a small team
Lessons learned - be open minded	Communication is key
Lessons learned - be willing to delegate	Communication is transparent

(table continues)

Theme	Sub Grouping
Lessons learned - be willing to wait	Strategies to help employees accept changes - be flexible
Lessons learned - communication is the key	Strategies to help employees accept changes - manual

Lessons learned - get accustomed to change	Strategies to help employees accept changes - communication
lessons learned - go with your gut	Strategies to help employees accept changes - have a lead person-ownership
Lessons learned - it's about giving	Strategies to help employees accept changes - incentives
Lessons learned - keep it simple	Strategies to help employees accept changes - management presence
Lessons learned - know your customer	Strategies to help employees accept changes - trial and error
Lessons learned - stick to the plan	Strategies to help employees accept changes - we don't have a specific strategy
Lessons learned - trial and error costs money	Successful changes - have employee respect and trust
Lessons learned - voice my opinion	Successful change - male employees feel valued
Leverage staff - flexibility and communication	Successful change - staff has to accept the changes
Leverage staff - know our limitations	Successful changes - be careful who you hire
Leverage staff - look for staff strengths	Successful changes - employee input
Leverage staff - make them feel valued	Successful changes - staff buy in
Leverage staff - managers do the work as well	Successful changes - transparency and sharing information
leverage staff - personal relationships	Successful changes - low employee turn over
Leverage staff - share knowledge	Take care of your employees
Leverage staff - use their input	We never change
Leverage staff - we don't have to do that they accept	Temporary changes - use communication
Leverage staff - work as a team	Temporary changes - reward staff
Provide education	Temporary changes - handle them as they come
Customer need and request - cannot be all things to all people	Temporary changes - progress and adaptation
Customer needs and requests - be accommodating	Temporary Changes - seasonal
Customer needs and requests - customer feedback is helpful	Changes made based on identifying market
customer needs and requests - do an assessment	Changes to be competitive - be unique
Customer needs and requests - get a lot of requests	Changes to be competitive - better product
Customer needs and requests - respond to perceived needs - casual	changes to be competitive - added and change dishes

(table continues)

Theme	Sub Grouping
Change is progress	Changes to be competitive - liquor license
Change lead to edge - it's who we are	Changes to be competitive - use customer feedback on pricing

Changes - added flavors	R and D do market research
Changes - ask people to be understanding	R and D for changes - consult other similar businesses
Changes - decisions made with parents first	R and D for changes - customer feedback
Changes - easy to make changes one person biz	R and D for changes - getting further education
Changes - frequent buyer cards	R and D for changes - government information
Changes - grew size of restaurant	R and D for changes - media tv ect
Changes - increased advertising	R and D for changes - mentors
Changes made based on identifying market	R and D for changes - no role models
Changes to be competitive - be unique	R and D for changes - nothing formal
Changes to be competitive - better product	R and D for changes - traveling
changes to be competitive - added and change dishes	R and D for changes - trial and error

The coded units were then searched and gathered together in categories. Data that did not provide answers to the research question was discarded. The created categories contained units with similar meanings or relationships. This process continued until no further reduction was possible. Factors explored during this process included in this analysis were specific word usage, reoccurring phrases, patterns, tone of voice, and intonation from the recordings, as well as any observations I recorded in the field notes while conducting the interview. Once this was complete, the remaining groups were then examined for depth and breadth. The groups were then assigned a final name and became the themes that made up the lived experiences of the participants. Total of 10 themes were identified. The themes that emerged were: (a) *definition of organizational change*, (b) *participants using changes to be competitive*, (c) *education and experience*, (d) *meeting customer needs*, (e) *soliciting feedback*, (f) *using research and development*, (g) *temporary change*, (h) *successful changes and strategies to help employees*, (i)

leveraging employees, and (j) *lessons learned*. The themes are discussed in detail in the results section of this chapter.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

For qualitative research, the researcher must consider the trustworthiness of the information shared. In establishing trustworthiness in a qualitative study, a researcher must accurately reflect the actual views of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013). Within qualitative research, the concepts of credibility transferability, dependability and auditability, and conformability are paramount in good quality research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility

Credibility refers to how well results reflect what participants attempted to convey (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013). In order to increase credibility, I focused on reducing reactivity and minimizing researcher bias. To reduce reflexivity, interviews were conducted in an environment that was secure and private in order to allow minority SBE leaders may to offer candid and honest feedback. Ensuring a minimization of any possible bias was of paramount importance. I engaged in bracketing my personal experiences, and ensured that my opinions and beliefs did not influence the interviews or data analysis.

I further established credibility using transcript review. Following the interview, I returned individual participants' interview transcripts during a follow-up session to allow the participants to review the transcripts for accuracy. In the reporting of the results, I

provided rich, thick description to aid credibility. Providing this level of detail helped convey the sentiments of participants in the study.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which results are generalizable across other individuals or settings (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2011; Casey et al., 2013). I used thick description to ensure transferability of the results. The ultimate transferability of the results is the responsibility of the reader. I included details about the sample, the data collection process, and data analysis to aid the reader in determining the transferability of the results.

Dependability

Dependability is the ability to replicate the study in the same context, participants, and method and draw similar results (Dahl et al., 2016). I created a solid and well-documented audit trail. All steps and decisions implemented in the data collection and analysis procedure were documented in detail. These measures, combined with the measures taken to ensure credibility, increased the validity of the results. The audit trail increased the transparency of the study and can allow others to replicate the study.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). I used a journal that helped address issues of bias. I was able to keep track of my methodological decisions and why I made the specific choices. I also used the journal to record my personal reflections about some of my bias and values surrounding the topic I was addressing in the study. This

helped me to minimum any bias that I may otherwise have introduced into the results of the study (Bahramnezhad et al., 2014).

Study Results

The analysis of the data resulted in the emergence of 10 themes. The themes are described in this section along with supporting excerpts. The excerpts were employed to aid in illustrating the analysis using the words of the participants.

Definitions of Organizational Change

All participants had responses included in this theme. Generally, their responses were very brief, and many initially were puzzled when asked for their definition of the concept of organizational change. The participants hesitated and often searched for words when attempting to define the concept and did not seem to have a clear-cut idea of organizational change and how it applied to them. Some gave it a negative definition, while others associated it with big business. Overall it seemed as if it was not a concept which had relevance to many of the participants.

The most commonly used phrases when speaking about organizational change were related to practical changes in the business such as buying new ovens, changing menus, staying on trend with the food industry, or changes in the business policies and procedures. A few participants spoke about changes in the culture or structure of the business. Participant 21 described it as, “Adapting to what people are looking for.” Other phrases used included, “Change in an organization for the good of the company.” (Participant 22); “Organizational change would be anything deviating from the normal

procedures, policies or procedures.” (Participant 20); and, “You just have to go with the times” (Participant 19). These participants did not have a clear definition of organizational change and seemed to equate the term with change in general. They did not see it as something used to change or grow a business, but instead looked at it as daily changes necessary to work in a business.

Some participants did look at organizational change as defined in this study. They described it as change for growth or changes in order to be more effective. For example, Participant 1 stated, “I think it is something that impacts the culture of the organization, the branding associated with that or the customer’s perception and anything that directly impacts your internal operations.” He saw organizational change as a significant change that could affect internal culture, business processes, or customer viewpoint. Participant 3 had a similar viewpoint and said, “I think of restructuring a business. Possibly, well restructuring as far as work duties....maybe adding staff...eliminating staff.” This participant saw it as a change, but a change in any manner, whether it was to grow or shrink his business.

Participant 9 described organizational change as, “Organizational change is when you have change within your staff, within the way you do business, change from a paper to a POS system would be a change.” He regarded it as a change in policy and procedures, as did some other participants. Finally, a few participants indicated that organizational change was something that was more applicable to larger businesses. Participant 13 stated, “Either in a larger organization higher ups making a change in how management runs, or just the concept of the business.” Most of the participants did

associated organizational change with some type of growth, with Participant 17 exemplifying this group of participants and stating,

I run this business by myself right now, but as it grows, I'm certainly going to need some organizational change, where I would have to appoint a manager, and then prep cooks, and bakers, you know, something that would be conducive to the type of business that I'm running. You know I would need maybe a fundraising organizer or a wholesale organizer or something like that

Participant 17 did not see organizational change as something that would be applicable to him until he started to grow and needed to add staff. Until that point, he did not see it as a relevant concept.

Participants using Changes to be Competitive

The participants spoke about change in a variety of ways. They felt it was important to use change to grow their businesses and stand out from the competition. When talking about changes participants gave specific concrete examples of changes that had been implemented in their businesses. In order to be competitive some changes participants spoke of included uniqueness, promotions, growth in size, advertising quality, and menu.

One of the main areas the participants spoke about was being unique. They felt it was essential to find something new and different in order to compete with other businesses. Participant 20 was opening a coffee shop. He felt it was important differentiate himself from other cafes and was bursting with ideas. He saw a unique niche in the market and stated:

For instance, you can't go to Starbucks and get a whole Carafe of coffee, so I am going to sell a whole carafe of coffee. So if you are there with your wife and having a conversation or reading your book on a Saturday afternoon or whatever, or your having a meeting with your business partner and it is going to run a bit long and you want a whole carafe of coffee I'm going to sell you a whole carafe of coffee.

He believed it was important to stand out and thought that having different offerings on his menu would enable him to do so. In addition, he planned to use his café as an event place, art consignment store and café. He pictured his business becoming a community hub, and focused his energy in creating ways to have his customers commit to spending blocks of time at his business.

Participant 3 spoke about being unique in a different fashion. Like other participants he wished to stand out and be noticed by potential customers. He spoke about his food philosophy and said, "I look for a particular flavor, and I try not to repeat that flavor, I want something different, than what is out there." He spent time creating his menu and stated:

[I'm looking for] something that's not introduced out there yet, so therefore you're not creating a competition in the same cuisine, you're actually offering somebody something different and giving them a choice between those things.

He explained that he was creating an Indian fusion restaurant. He felt melding different cuisines would give him a unique twist and make him stand out from other food based businesses in the area.

Another specific change that participants spoke about was having a constantly evolving set of offerings or menus. Participant 10 said, “We’re always adding new dishes so it’s not boring but holding onto the ones that the customers come for every week.” He struck a balance between keeping popular items on the menu and trying new food items in order to be competitive and offer his customers variety. The participants felt it was important to stay fresh and current with food trends and ensure their customers were satisfied. Participant 15 spoke about his business and said, “Cheese popcorn. Yep...I never carried it. Customers kept beating me up...saying you need to have cheese, but I had to have a good cheese before I would sell it. So it took me a while to find something really good.” He was willing to change his product, but would not sacrifice quality to do so. Thus, he took time ensuring that he could create the best product possible. Once he had developed a product that met his standards, he began to produce it.

Building on the idea of quality some of the participants spoke about the importance of ensuring the food they produced was a better product than what was currently available. Participant 17 spoke about his baking business and said, “my hope is that they [will] choose to buy certain items from me, because it’s always gonna be fresh and it’s never going to be frozen.” He felt he could supply a fresher product and please customers with the quality of his offerings. Participant 17 shared his point of view and said:

There are other vendors that do soups, there’s probably 4 other vendors that do soups, well no there’s actually 6, 6 other vendors that do soup. My edge is that I make sure my product is better, for what I am putting out, better quality and better

taste. So, just making sure I am the best at what I am doing, so if the same weekend the three of us are making the same soup, I know people are going to come to me because mine taste better and better presentation, adding a real garnish on top makes a difference in eye appetite to people so that helps me as compared to some of the others.

He made the effort to use better quality ingredients, better presentation, and better taste in order to beat his competition. By producing a product that was superior he felt that he would stand out and increase his customer base.

Other participants reported evolving their offerings in order to be competitive. As they became established they repositioned their businesses to meet customer tastes.

Participant 21 spoke about the evolution of his business and remarked:

We started off as an art gallery, added the food feature, which started off as a coffee feature and then has expanded into a full menu with food and sandwiches and that was according to what people continued to ask for.

When he opened his small business, the focus was on art. However, based on customer demand, he began evolving and started by adding coffee. That led to further expansion into the food service industry, and today he serves a variety of foods. Participant spoke about his business and said:

My restaurant is a relatively new business, I have owned another business before, but it wasn't in the food industry. I think something that we've done, a change that we've made is trying to play to audiences outside of our own interests. I think you know we're a group of young foodies....(giggles) if you will and I think we

initially were like oh it would be so awesome to have a ramen shop and a dumpling house and all this stuff and then at some point we had the realization like oh maybe the average local clientele just kinda wants to eat a pulled pork sandwich. So I think the smartest change we made was really diversifying our offerings.

He began his business with many different ideas based upon what he liked to eat. He quickly realized he needed to diversify his offerings in order to meet the palates of his customers. Being responsive to customer tastes helped him be successful and grow his business.

Other participants listed a variety of different things they did to make changes and be competitive. These changes included using customer loyalty cards, growing in size, offering liquor, and adding flavors. Some participants increased their advertising, with Participant 10 stating, "I've done a little more advertising within the market and we're going to be doing some outside advertising as well." Other participants spoke about using customer feedback to implement pricing and menu changes. Overall, the participants all indicated they were always looking for practical things they could do to change their businesses, help them to grow, and satisfy their customers.

Education and Experience.

Most of the participants indicated that their prior life education and experiences were very important. They used everything they knew in order to be successful. For some being in the food business had always been planned, while for others it was a second

career. Over half of the participants indicated that they used their prior education and experience to handle the demands of running a small business. Participant 22 said:

My experiences as a um, my whole life been, besides the café I've been an RN in a hospital, so that pretty much prepared me for anything at this level. Things change every day in health care. Things change every day with food as well. With prices, with desires, with market changes, marketability, customers, you adapt every minute of every day.

Her education and experience was in a different field, and entering food service was a second career for her. In spite of the wide difference in the fields, she was able to use her experiences in healthcare and apply them in her business. She was used to constant challenges and changes. She believed the ability to adapt that she learned while working in healthcare prepared her to deal with the constantly changing demands she faced as a small business owner. Participant 18 was also a career shifter who felt his previous experience, not education, prepared him to own a small business. He said:

I did 2 years of chemical engineering and actually was able to work in the field for almost 5 years in corporate America for a Pharmaceuticals company. It, that process has helped me from a, everyone always asks like, "How does chemical engineering relate to a restaurant", and for me it's the systems and the processes.

He had no hesitation when answering this question and firmly believed his previous experiences were very helpful when it came to managing his business.

Many of the participants in the study believed that a combination of education and experience prepared them to work and own a small business. Participant 17 felt especially strong about this fact and said:

I think my education has certainly helped me. I have an associate's degree in business and a bachelor's degree in law and society from Penn State. So you know, having a strong legal background in my education has definitely been helpful as far as what protocol do I have to take to get this business up off the ground and you know the business background that I have with my associate's degree is certainly helpful in how to create a spreadsheet to keep track of my numbers and my money and things like that. And I have 15 years of restaurant experience too, so customer service wise, I would say that that is probably my forte. I was a server in a restaurant for many years. I started serving French fries from a food truck when I was 10.

For him, a combination of education and experience helped prepare him to own a small food business. His education taught him how to run a business, while his experience in food service prepared him to deal with the daily ins and outs of food service. Participant 10 spoke about continuing education and said, "I stay current on all of the required certifications and I am always researching just in case they change certain things on the requirements." He combined this with his experience and felt he used his education and experiences on a daily basis.

A few participants indicated that they saw little linkage between their previous education and experiences with their current business. Participant 1 simply stated, "I have

a lot of years of education and a lot of years of experience that has absolutely nothing to do with owning this business, but all of that has somehow led me to this.” He saw his previous education and experiences as part of a journey that led him to where he was today, but did not think that it applied to his current work. Participant 4 agreed and said, “My academic background really has nothing to do with that. I was an English and Theater double major. I have a Master’s in English. I’m a PhD drop out in History and somehow found my way into the Marketing field.” Like Participant 1 he did not see any link between his previous education and experiences and his current business.

Meeting Customer Needs.

Participants felt that meeting customer needs was a priority, although some did acknowledge that they could not be all things to all people. It was important to address customer feedback and requests, but to do so in a manner that made sense. Many of the participants believed it was essential to meet their customer needs and requests.

Participant 21 said, “We keep adding products according to what customers ask for.” He felt it was important to ensure that customer requests were honored. He expanded both products and services based on customer input. Participant 14 spoke at length about the importance of accommodating customer requests:

Absolutely, so we’re in a gluten free society right now and I’m a pasta place. So [we get] a lot of requests for gluten free vegan vegetarian options. And being a scratch kitchen it grants us the opportunity to pretty much create a dish on the fly if I have a guest with certain allergies or dislikes. So, we’ve kind of made it part of our business model to accommodate every guest because where we are our

philosophy is you “live to eat” where everywhere else you “eat to live”. So if there is someone that comes in with an allergy of course I’m going to have done my research and have different kinds of pasta shapes on the shelf and then also developing our own recipe for house made gluten free. Then it actually becomes a draw because where else can you go to get that, unless you’re going to Giant and buying a \$10 box of pasta, where are you going to be able to go to a restaurant where they actually accommodate with a gluten free pasta let alone a scratch made gluten free pasta so in retrospect it may be a little more work but there’s a draw for it, so why not create the want for the people who need the need and that’s our philosophy “feed everybody”.

He based his business model around meeting customer needs. He felt that he was able to offer unique options to accommodate customer’s dietary needs. Participant 14 believed he was positioned uniquely to make people feel accommodated and cared for because of his kitchen set up and he wanted people to come in, enjoy his food, and know that their needs would be respected. He believed by honoring customer requests, he was creating a unique dining experience that would encourage customers to return to his business.

Participant 8 spoke about his customers and said, “With us, the customer is 99.9% right unless it’s somebody that is trying to get over on us, then we have to put our foot down.” While he was willing to make sure he was making customers happy, he was not willing to be taken advantage of by them. He continued on to say:

We do bend over backwards for our customers, you know if I make a mistake I will over compensate with the customer, I give them something extra we take full

responsibility for the mistake. You know if I'm closed and the customer needs something I'll make arrangement to meet them if we have to, we really try to make ourselves accessible and really go out of the way for the customer.

He valued his customers and wanted to ensure that they were happy with his service. He believed it to be important to go out of his way to care for their needs. Participant 3 also believed in caring for his customers and adapting to their needs. He said:

So when you are willing to adapt yourself to change, you learn something new. And learning and change is always good. Change is progress. Change is always a progress. As you can see it's from years and years. Change is always progress. So my clients are gluten free, so I've learned about certain products that I didn't know. That it contains gluten, so I'm learning and I'm creating recipes just to cater to them.

He felt it was important to adjust to customers changing needs. He found change to be invigorating and educational and looked forward to learning new ways to meet customer needs.

While wishing to meet customer needs, some participants also felt it was important to know where to draw the line. While they wished to care for their customers, they did not wish to be taken advantage of by other people. Participant 19 acknowledged that, "sometimes you can't please everybody, you know. I do take into consideration what they say and what they suggest and just kind of listen." He was willing to try to be accommodating up to a point, but he was aware that he could not please everyone. He tried to strike a balance between customer needs and what was good for his business.

Participant 9 said, “The customers have to understand that you can’t do everything, you have to, you have to be good at what you do and focus on that.” He believed that focus was necessary for success. Because of this he was willing to acknowledge customer requests or comment, but endeavored to stay focused on his goals. Participant 1 summed it up best when he stated, “We cannot be all things to all people.”

Soliciting Feedback

Participants mainly received feedback from face to face interactions with customers. Many participants also used social media. Some participants solicited feedback from employees and some used surveys. Feedback was used to improve their business and to help growth. All feedback was taken seriously. Participants indicated that feedback helped them avoid mistakes, make changes, and helped employees feel valued.

For the majority of the participants in this study, feedback was solicited and received in an informal manner. Generally, the participants reported speaking to their customers face to face and asking them questions or hearing their comments. Participant 22 felt this was especially important and said, “With clients, we try 100% of the time to visit each table while they are eating and ask how everything is, if they need anything. . . listening to customer’s feedback, that’s our number one thing.” He used what his customers told him, both positive and negative, to make changes in his business. He believed if customers were happy he would be successful. Participant 15 said he received feedback “just verbally.” Many other participants agreed with this method of soliciting input with comments such as: “I believe in one on one conversation. (Participant 10)”; “I

do a lot of interaction with my customers. (Participant 9)”; and, “talking to them directly (Participant 5).”

Many participants also spoke about the use of social media. Many used Facebook as a place to advertise their business and to get feedback from customers. Participant 7 spoke about feedback and said, “I might do something on Facebook.” He used social media as a way to connect with his customers and hear their opinions. Participant 5 spoke about social media as well and said, “We use our social media a lot to engage with people and so trying to get their feedback before we start something.” He used social media as a launching pad for changes and sought feedback through its use before he implemented new ideas. Participant 1 agreed and said, “We do not have a formalized process from customers, but we do rely on them to use social media.”

A few participants had adopted Square to accept payments. Through the use of this technology they could email customers their receipts and surveys. They used these surveys to gather feedback and then that feedback can be used to improve customer experiences. Participant 13 said:

But I also get feedback through square that I use for my credit card service, it gives them a survey at the end of their transaction. Which it will be able to, once I have the full point of sale system, it won't just be for credit card transactions, even if someone is doing a cash transaction, I can email or text message them a receipt and it will have the survey attached to it.

Participants also sought feedback from their employees. They wanted to gather information from them to improve practices and avoid making future errors. Participant 19 spoke about this and said:

We do weekly meetings, where I go over things, this is what I'm seeing, I'm not happy with this, this is what I need, this is where you're doing good at, I give them the good and bad and ask for their input. What do you think would help, what do you think would be better? One big thing I do ask is how are customers reacting to certain things, what dish are they complaining about, what dish do they love, and they know that more than me, what's left on the plate, what's always left over they never finish it, so that's another change I'll make, If I know it's not that good, I'll either fix it and make it better or I'll stop selling it.

Everything I put out I want to be good.

He relied on his employees to give him information about customer experiences so he could make improvements as necessary. Many participants indicated that their employees were on the front lines and were helpful in gathering information from customers and sharing it with them. Participant 14 said:

So, I have a round table that we do every Friday, so I take all of my employees and we sit down and we just talk shop. What are your frustrations? What isn't happening? What would you like to see happen? How can I make your life easier? So I ask them that, they give me their opinions and what they've seen.

Listening to the employees helped increase staff commitment and also helped Participant 14 make changes. Generally, the participants felt their employees were a valuable source of information and feedback.

Overall, the participants found feedback to be valuable. They used it to gauge how they were doing, make changes, and avoid further mistakes. The participants felt feedback helped them make decisions about changes and welcomed input from others. In addition, listening to customers improved their levels of satisfaction. Participants reported that customers felt heard and appreciated that their opinions mattered.

Using Research and Development

There were many different ways participants used various methods of research and development to help improve their businesses. The most commonly mentioned methods were the internet, market research, and using media such as television, magazines and books. Other methods they spoke about included education, mentors, SCORE, travel, as well as, trial and error.

Many of the participants simply stated they used the internet to stay current with trends that affected their business. Participant 16 stated, “Well I’m a big internet searcher. So I...you know I definitely use internet to answer any questions that I have.” The internet was a free resource that was easily accessible on a regular basis. Participant 8 stated, “A lot of the research and development I’m doing online, I’m constantly googling recipes to try to get in new products, I’m googling trends, like food trends and basically doing it all on line.” Participants could research everything from recipes to the latest food trends. Participant 14 agreed that the internet was a valuable resource and said, “we are

very much a technological based society now, so everything is pretty much a search on the internet.”

Some participants spoke about using mentors or SCORE to help them develop their business with Participant 14 saying, “I take it a step further looking for a mentor that has done it and done it very well.” He wanted to learn from the experience of others in his field, especially those who had been highly successful. Participant 16 spoke about SCORE and said, “they do small business mentoring. I do try to get out to see them once a year at least, because I have found that they have made a lot of good suggestions to me, that I have been able to help grow my business.” By accessing available mentoring and small business support options these participants were able to lean on and get advice from others in order to grow their businesses. Participant 14 continued onto say, “Sometimes it’s just nice to be able to sound something off of somebody outside of the family or outside of your employees.” He found getting an outside more objective and removed opinion helpful when considering changes or new ideas.

A few of the participants spoke about the benefits of travel. Participant 14 spoke about a trip he took and stated, “You make the trip and go out there and you see what they’re doing in the old country, you see how they’re creating this special flour to make this special dough to make this special pasta that nobody knows about locally.” He used his travels to learn different methods to use in his business and was able to expand his offerings into something different from his competitors. While Participant 8 did not travel just to do research, he said, “Except if I travel. . . I’ll make it a point to go check out bakeries in different cities if I’m there. Now I haven’t gone to a particular city for

that purpose.” However he felt as if he would eventually travel just to learn and said, “I do see that coming down the road.”

Some of the participants did not have a specific method to use for research and development. They indicated that for them, it was often trial and error. Participant 13 said, “Some of it is just trial and error, when I’m trying a new product I’ll make it myself and test it out.” Participant 1 agreed and indicated, “A lot of it is just plain old trial and error. You know, we throw something out there, see how it fares in the market and adapt from there.” They felt once they had come up with an idea or new recipe, simply trying it out was the most straightforward method to use to see if it succeeded or failed.

Another method of research and development mentioned by participants was to solicit customer feedback. Participant 13 spoke about developing new recipes and said, “I test it on people I know, friends and family, I test it on other vendors, customers that I know very well that are in on a regular basis, I have them try that. So, that is part of my R&D.” He used that process to gather feedback and used that information to improve recipes before finally deciding to put them on the menu or discard the idea. Participant 10 did not mention any specific process and said, “I listen to customers what they want.” he made changes based on their feedback. Participant 1 agreed and summed up many others comments by stating, “We use a lot of customer feedback. We have a very strong base of dedicated customers, so we rely heavily on them for their input.”

Some of the participants used market research to determine what changes they considered making to their businesses. Participant 1 spoke about opening a location and said:

For the research, the market research numbers I am relying on my realtor to rock. So he has given me numbers on foot traffic so I am relying on hard numbers in research, but I am also relying on my experience and my trying to develop a lot of contacts in the community.

Before selecting a location, he wanted to make sure that it would support his business and spent time and effort conducting research. Participant 14 felt that the food service industry was very competitive. He said it was necessary to, “calculate your risk, and you have to know there is a return on it.” Participant 4 spoke in some detail about the market research conducted before he and his partners opened their business as well as ongoing research. He said:

You know we started out with a lot of market research. We make pretzels. We are here in the snack food capital of the world. So obviously there are a lot of other pretzel companies here. So, taking a look at what some of those other companies are doing, have done to get where they are, and then knowing what we said at the beginning was going to be you know what set us apart. So, comparing the competitors to us and who we wanted to be. For us any changes that we make in the organization always come back to an assessment of our resources, so financial resources, but also human resources. You know and what our team can handle and then evaluation of the market and the demand that we are seeing and what changes we think make sense to grow while keeping in mind our resources, obviously and you know the brand that we had started in the beginning, the core of who we wanted to be.

By being diligent and understanding the market he and his partners were able to calculate their risks and create a model that would be successful for them.

Some other briefly mentioned methods of conducting market research included continuing education classes, reading books and magazines, consulting others in the same type of business and using available government information and statistics. The participants generally did not limit themselves to a single method of research and development. Most used a variety of different options and were always seeking out new information.

Temporary Change

When speaking about temporary changes, almost all of the participants focused on seasonal changes they made to meet customer needs. Very few of the participants had any other examples of temporary change. Many of the customers indicated that it was important to vary their menus depending on the season. Those changes occurred as a result of customer demand and product availability. Participant 17 said, “a good example of that would be a temporary change in that there are certain pies that I can only make certain times of year. People aren’t going to order a pumpkin pie in March or April. You know, they are going to order them in the fall when pumpkins are readily available and it’s like a flavor of the season.” He found that he needed to be responsive to customer taste and make changes that were dependent on the season.

Participant 16 spoke about making temporary stocking and staffing changes dependent on the season. He said:

November, December we will just, things will fly off the stand and that's because we become a stocking stuffer. So we already know that in November and December, our employee won't keep up. So at that point, I'm gonna have to provide her help, so either I'll go out there and help her or I will hire somebody to help her. So right now we do have a possibility lined up of a man that used to work for me at market and used to buy from me.

Because the volume of his business increased around the Christmas shopping season he needed to be aware and ensure he a higher quantity of stock and enough employee aid to meet his customer's needs. Participant 9 spoke about making changes in his specials that were dependent on the sports calendar. He said, "We also offer seasonal changes we offer Monday and Thursday Specials as well as Saturday specials that are all geared around football and around the bar to keep the bar [business] increased." He used sports and specials to gather more customers. By making those changes he was able to meet customer need.

Many of the participants indicated that they handled temporary changes as needed. Participant 19 said, "I just come in that day and make that decision, and prep work changes all the time." His business had constant changes depending on what was required that day. He knew that he constantly needed to make adjustments and handled each change as he came upon it. Participant 18 agreed and stated, "You just gotta do em! I mean, like, I mean, temporary changes, I mean those happen every day."

The most important thing about temporary changes, according to the participants, was to ensure that the line of communication with staff remained open. Participant 1

simply stated, “Temporary changes.....I think it’s as simple as communication.” In order to handle the challenges associated with temporary or last minute changes, it was essential for the staff to communicate. He continues on to describe his process and said, “We just figure out a way to work around it and as long as we all communicate with each other, so that everybody knows. We leave a lot of notes.” Participant 4 also indicated that communication was essential to handle temporary changes by saying, “we had that conversation where it’s like ok Thanksgiving’s coming, holidays are coming. . . so it’s really all hands on deck and communicating that with the team.”

Successful Changes and Strategies to Help Employees

The participants spoke about changes they made to their business and how that occurred. For a few, who owned larger businesses, change was more organized and involved partners. For others changes happened in a less planned manner and seemed to happen as a reaction to events. In order to have successful change participants believed it to be essential to have employee input, staff buy in, and transparency with information sharing.

Employee input was valued by the participants when looking at changes that could be implemented to help their businesses grow. Participant 14 spoke about the importance of employee input and stated:

I’m not just their leader, I accept and want and ask for opinions or different suggestions or opportunities that they can bring to the table and then I help to execute them. I make it very much an environment where everyone has a role instead of just me asking them something, it’s a teamwork mentality which I feel

in this day in age especially is very important if you want the productivity out of people. They have to feel that they are also invested so if they have an idea and it comes to fruition I love seeing that employee feel that and I love seeing other employees jump in line which brings up the work atmosphere where everyone just loves to show up for work every day.

He saw that encouraging employees to invest into his business with their energy was good for his business. Participant 4 agreed and said, “We also look to them [employees] for input, I mean they are, you know they are our boots on the ground, they are the ones who are able to fill us in. He knew that often, employees were at the front lines of the business and were in a position to observe customers. They would be the first people to see how things worked and their input was invaluable in setting changes for their business.

One of the areas spoken about by the participants was staff buy in. The participants felt in order for change to be successful, it was necessary to have employee buy in about the proposed changes. Participant 13 spoke about this subject and said, “I just always found that if someone knows why the change is happening and how in the long run it’s going to benefit the business and benefit them and make it easier for them [they are more likely to comply.] He believed the best way to develop staff buy in towards changes was to educate them about the change, why it was occurring, and how it would affect them. If they understood the effect of the change on the business and how it could lead to improvements, they would be willing to help implement the changes. Participant 6 also shared this view and stated, “I’m a big believer in getting my

employees to understand the greater purpose and process of what's happening.”

Participant 20 agreed with this view and elaborated on staff buy in by stating:

If they don't accept change it could be disastrous, so my business will not be run like a dictatorship, it will be run like a team or family. And I think an important thing of that is hearing what people's point of view are and listening to it and then explaining if somebody has an idea and we are not going to do that idea why we are not going to do that idea. Or ok let's try that idea and set a boundary and like we are going to do that for a week and were going to readdress it and see how it goes for people, if it's working great if it isn't then we will go on to the next.

He solicited staff buy in through not only explaining changes but by soliciting staff input on possible changes. He clarified this idea and explained that he wished staff to come forward and give suggestion. He felt if the staff operated as a team, then they would feel a sense of commitment to the changes and be willing to implement them accordingly. He also felt it was important to attempt changes but be flexible enough to assess the effectiveness of the change. If changes did not work, he was willing to change course as necessary to continually attempt to improve his business.

One of the points many employers made was that the quality of staffing had a direct effect on their ability to affect change and get employee compliance. Participant 14 said, “So it [my business] is very passion driven, I have an idea and need a team to execute it. I 100% invest my time and energy and passion into the people that work with me, not for me. It's very much a team driven mentally.” He felt by investing in his employees, they would in turn invest in his business. This level of commitment was seen

by many to be determined by the quality of their hires and retaining staff was essential.

The longer staff stayed with the business, the more they felt like a part of the team, the greater commitment they had to the business, which in turn increased their willingness to help the company grow through implementing changes.

Sharing information with staff was another component of successful change. Participant 4 explained this very simply and said:

I think giving them that information from the beginning and being transparent and bringing them along the way, has helped to reassure them that every change that we make, that every decision that we make is ultimately trying to get us to that end goal.

He believed sharing information about the potential changes lessened staff anxiety. If they understood the why behind the changes, they would be able to accept the changes and help implement them in a positive manner. Participant 22 agreed with this and said, "I just always found that if someone knows why the change is happening and how in the long run it's going to benefit the business and benefit them and make it easier for them." He found that helping employees see the benefits of the proposed changes and making sure they understood what would happen help create a smoother transition and less staff resistance.

Communicating changes was important and most participants spoke about transparency, face to face meetings with staff, written forms and notes. Communication was regarded as essential when it came to making changes. The clearer they were about the changes the greater the success. Ensuring that staff understood the changes was

essential. The participants mostly indicated that changes were communicated face to face during staff meetings. Participant 14 spoke about the importance of clarity and said:

I also need to be able to explain things and communicate it clearly to them, if I don't communicate it clearly they might misunderstand what I want from them, having worked in the corporate world, where I was at the peon level, there is a lot of times when changes come down and they say just do it, and you know you have to just do it, but it is easier to get people on board if they know why you're doing it.

Having been on the receiving end of implementing change without understanding why the changes were occurring were, in his experience, challenging. He wanted to make sure his employees always felt as if they were in the loop and understood the reasoning behind the changes. He found the most effective way to do this was meeting face to face with his staff.

Participant 4 used a combination of meetings and paper communication. He described his use of hard copies of changes and said, "you know there's labels everywhere and we have the binder and we have all of these kind of things and it's that sort of over communication you know to make sure that things are, that things are going the way that we want them to." He felt by using hard copies, employees could read about changes and make sure they understood. If they did not understand, they could formulate questions based on what they had read to ensure they understood what was expected from them. Participant 4 went on to say, "we have a very thorough kind of manual essentially that we set up, that we've kept from the beginning." Through using this manual in

conjunction with regular staff meeting, the employees could gain a clear understand of expectations and be more comfortable with expectations.

A small group of participants indicated they had no plan for changes. They mostly worked by trial and error. For example Participant 19 said, "I've rearranged the waitress station thinking it was going to work better and it didn't and we changed it right back, whatever works for you guys. We just try it, if its better we keep it, if it's not we change it right back, I guess trial and error." He would try different changes and if they did not work go back to what was previously effective.

Leveraging Employees

For many of the participants in the study, the idea of leveraging employees was not an important topic as they were smaller operations with no employees. For the participants who did speak about this topic, using employee strengths and abilities was important. They said they worked as a team, communicated, shared knowledge, and looked for strengths in their staff.

The participants whose responses were included in this theme felt that leveraging employee strengths was essential. Participant 14 looked for employees who were willing to go above and beyond expectations. He believed those employees showed commitment to the business and cared about their jobs. He spoke about them and said, "If you are going to show up 15 minutes early and you're going to polish 15 more glasses before shift, then guess what, I'm going to note that and the next time I need someone to work a good section you're going to get it." He believed in rewarding those employees for their dedication and recognizing their effort was important. Participant 4 spoke about his staff

and said, “we have such a strong team and everybody has been on the same page from the beginning.” He was careful when he hired to look for individuals who would work together as a team and use each other’s strengths to be successful. Because of this he saw few difficulties and said, “[this] allows us to sort of be quick on our feet and to adjust.

Participant 1 carefully watched his employees. He said:

We really try to draw on everyone’s strengths, so I would not have someone be responsible for something that they are not comfortable with or that they don’t feel confident in doing. Just for a simple example if we’re making an actual recipe change to one of our meals, we’re not going to ask our operations manager to be responsible for that, so it’s really about knowing where people’s strengths are and what their comfort level is.

He knew his employees and leveraged their strengths to ensure that his business was successful and able to meet challenges. He believed in using employees effectively and in a manner that used their strengths and gave them opportunities for growth. Their willingness to share knowledge helped him and them when it came to assuming responsibilities and filling a variety of roles.

The key to leveraging employee abilities was considered to be clear communication combined with flexibility. Participant 22 spoke about the importance of listening to his employees and said:

The more that I listen to them and their suggestions [the better we do], I don’t think of everything. You know we all have our own way of doing things. I listen to them and make changes, they listen to me. We talk as a team, we work better as

a team, people aren't afraid to make suggestions or criticisms or suggestions...you know just "Hey I think we should put cheese on this and not this" and every...we just talk about it and go "Yeah, no, yeah, ok". Kind of make everybody feel like an equal part of the team.

His willingness to treat his employees as equals provided a space where they felt free to offer suggestions that were both valuable and timely. By listening to their ideas, he showed them they were valued members of his team, and in return they felt free to offer ideas that could help the business. Participant 13 agreed with this view and said, "I don't ask anything unreasonable of them which helps, you know if you only have a staff of 3 to 5 people, you know I do have some that fill in here and there." Not only did he value their willingness to pitch in, he also worked at the same tasks. Because his business was small he often filled in doing the actual work. By communicating with his employees and being flexible and open to suggestion, they were able to accomplish their tasks easily. The give and take he created with his staff allowed him to build respect and a relationship built on communication and flexibility.

Lessons Learned

The participants offered a wide variety of information when it came to speaking about the lessons they learned while operating their businesses. This theme encompassed all their varied experiences and knowledge to show how many different things should be considered when running a small food business. The few areas of overlap in this theme were communication and open mindedness.

Being open minded was regarded as an important lesson by the participants who spoke about it. Participant 17 stated, “I’m open to change too at my restaurant, so it’s mine and I want things to be done a certain way, but if my mom comes up there and she says, ‘You know you really should try to do it this way’, I would certainly try that and if it works for me I would do it.” He believed that trying to do things in different ways was important. He knew that he could learn from others and felt it was valuable to do so. Participant 11 felt it was important to, “think outside the box. The way, sometimes the way I think is straight and narrow, but you’ve gotta think outside the box and try to put other people’s thoughts and ideas into the process.” He felt being open minded and trying different ideas was essential to success. Everyone had valuable insights they could bring to the table. Participant 10 agreed and went one step further when he said, “Well in a business when you’re working with people you have learn to be open minded and not be offended.” He commented that not only was it important to listen openly, it was also essential to not be defensive. Hearing what people said without reacting negatively helped him to grow and learn.

A few of the participants believed that communication was an important lesson they learned. Participant 14 believed it was important to communicate openly with his staff. He gave specific examples and said:

Being able to communicate with my staff during Monday meetings [is essential], and being able to implement a Friday’s roundtable when I’m telling my servers what I need, and then next servers class that comes in and we can tell them this is what is really expected here and anticipated, you’ve now created this environment

here it's a well-oiled machine all around and there is protocol now and if it doesn't meet up then the guest is like what is going on, something is wrong here. Then overnight you are either a success or failure based on all of these tiny details that have to run in a full circle to implement the entire vision of the scratch made pasta.

He felt his success was tied to the level of communication he employed. It was important to have a clear vision and articulate that vision to his staff. Open communication was tied to educating his staff on his expectations.

Participant 19 spoke about how he changed his method of communication as he gained experience in his business. He stated:

The way I do my food is the way I do my food, the way I talk with people as a business owner, the way I treat my workers with my temper, that is where I make changes. I try to communicate differently, instead of screaming and yelling and saying do this and do this. I'll just leave notes, where I want it and how I want it done. Instead of saying don't take any of my food out of the fridge without asking, you can do whatever you want just ask first. I put a note on the door. I think with me it's more with communication, I'm happy with the way my food is, and the way we do that.

Initially, he yelled and screamed at his staff when they made errors. He quickly learned this was not effective and instead examined his behavior and changed how he communicated. He knew that he needed to find a better method to use to express himself

and turned to writing. By doing this, he showed his staff respect and was able to get his point across.

Other lessons learned by the participants included taking the time to understand your customers and area, with Participant 2 stating, “you just have to know your customer really. You have to know your customer and the population and who you are dealing with.” He felt that knowledge helped him be successful because he was able to respond to customer needs. Another lesson was that trial and error costs money. Participant 8 spoke about this and said, “we did have a lot of trial and error and it affects waste. And we had lot of trial and error when we came in here, I think it will affect the future by not wasting as much money because we have a lot of errors out of the way.” He felt that he had made many mistakes in the beginning. The important thing, for him was that he learned from those errors and looked forward to fewer mistakes in the future.

Participants also mentioned they learned to delegate, to voice their opinions, and to stick to their plans. They felt each lesson they learned taught them something valuable and made them better business owners. Other areas where they learned lessons included, keeping it simple, trusting their instincts and that they needed to be willing to wait for the right time to implant changes or new ideas. Overall, the participants loved what they did and looked forward to applying the lessons they had learned to this point to aid the future success and growth of their businesses.

Summary

The participants in this study shared their experiences of being small business owners of food based businesses. They spoke in detail about lived experiences and

perceptions of owning and growing their businesses. For many of the participants organizational change was not a concept they found to be applicable. They associated it more with larger businesses. Many participants used their previous education and experience in owning and running their businesses, although for some moving into the food industry was a complete change in direction. The participants shared how they used change to be competitive and often did not have a specific procedure to formalize how change occurred. They felt one of the most important things they used to manage any changes was communication with all involved in their businesses. The participants felt that satisfying their customers was of utmost importance, but, many did indicate they could not be all things to all people. The participants generally employed an informal research and development process, which often involved use of the internet. Some also used travel, education, and mentors to help in their research and development process. SCORE was mentioned as a resource that proved to be helpful as the participants created, managed, and grew their business. For these participants, temporary changes to their businesses generally occurred in response to the seasons and they managed changes by communication with their employees. The participants used their employees and their skills to run their businesses and shared information about how they encouraged employee participation.

This chapter was used to describe the results of the study. Included was information about the demographics of the participants, data, collection, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness, and a report of the results. Chapter 5 will be used for a

discussion of the results, implications for practice, directions for further research, limitations of this study and implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to examine the lived experiences and perceptions of organizational change among minority SBE leaders in the food service industry. Perceptions include how change affects the decision-making processes and whether the leader understands what he or she needs to undergo in order to affect changes for innovation and competition in the business market. The specific population group under study was minority-owned SBEs within south central Pennsylvania. I used a qualitative approach and phenomenological design. Twenty-five minority SBE leaders completed face-to-face interviews regarding their lived experiences during organizational change. As I discussed in Chapter 4, I identified several themes, including (a) definition of organizational change, (b) participants using changes to be competitive, (c) education and experience, (d) meeting customer needs, (e) soliciting feedback, (f) using research and development, (g) temporary change, (h) successful changes and strategies to help employees, (i) leveraging employees, and (j) lessons learned.

Chapter 5 includes a further discussion of the themes. Specifically, I interpret the findings based on the current literature and how the current findings contribute to the current body of knowledge. Then, I discuss the limitations of the study and make recommendations for future researchers. Finally, I discuss the implications of my research for positive social change.

Interpretation of Findings

In the following section I discuss each of the themes in detail using specific quotes from participants to address key points as it relates to the current body of knowledge. I address key points from the participants that are inconsistent with current literary practices and the possible implications associated with those actions. Finally, suggestions are given to address future actions and possible outcomes based on current practices as noted within the literature.

Theme 1: Definitions of Organizational Change

Regarding the first theme, the majority of participants did not have an easy or readily available definition of organizational change. Many of the commonly used phrases by the participants related to practical changes and daily changes, with only a few speaking about the culture or structure of the business. Nevertheless, an interpretation of the findings is that the specific, day-to-day changes that the participants did cite, including “adapting to what people are looking for” (Participant 21) and “go[ing] with the times” (Participant 19) are in line with the concept of organizational change as proposed by Argyris (1965), who held that organizational leaders required situationally effective skills, including physical actions and communication, to guide change. The first theme was also in line with the idea of contingency theory of leadership (Fiedler, 1967). Theorists and researchers may need to devise or revise the theory to have better applicability and perceived applicability to SBEs. This is consistent with the idea that SBE owners require different concepts than those in larger corporations, and that some

concepts and theories that apply to larger enterprises might not apply on the smaller scale of SBEs (Griffin et al., 2011).

Alternatively, it may be that the lack of a definitive theory of organizational change may preclude minority SBE leaders from integrating an appropriate process of organizational change, as defined by theorists such as Argyris (1965), Kotter (2012), and Nadler and Tushman (1997). By failing to leverage staff, minority SBE leaders may not be maximizing their potential. Enacting this process is essential, according to organizational change (Kotter, 2012) and situational theorists (Blanchard & Hersey, 1982).

The theory of organizational change was not a well understood or relevant concept for many participants; in fact, some participants viewed organizational change as something that was relevant only to bigger businesses while others viewed it as a negative concept. In this case, minority SBE leaders may require additional education regarding organizational change and processes in order to be competitive in the business marketplace with larger businesses and corporations (Fuchs & Prouska, 2014; Nadler & Tushman, 1997). The need for effective organizational change according to the literature is also in line with current best practices (Danes & Yang, 2015; Hemert, Masurel, & Nijkamp, 2013). Implementing best practices consistent with Harris's (2011) definition of organizational change might help SBE leaders overcome some limitations of SBEs, such as having fewer resources to implement changes (Evans, 2013). Sparse resources may prove especially challenging for minority SBE leaders (Bates & Robb, 2013).

Theme 2: Participants Using Changes to be Competitive

The second theme was the use of change to be competitive. Participants said that change was important to compete; however, when they discussed this theme, they noted specific changes to the food product, advertising, and store offerings, rather than structural changes to the company. As noted by Nadler and Tushman (1997), organizational change is essential to competition for modern businesses. The advance of technology means that changes occur more quickly, which allows for greater innovation and also demands more from organizational leaders (Nadler & Tushman, 1997).

I demonstrated that SBEs choose to implement smaller scale changes as a means of being competitive, rather than changing infrastructure or updating their technology. Changes, such as new food products or menu items, may prove easier within SBEs because they have greater flexibility. Participants all indicated that they were always looking for practical things they could do to change their businesses, grow, and satisfy their customers. SBE leaders may require innovativeness to circumvent the limited resources that some SBE leaders experience which may in turn restrict minority SBE leaders from making larger scale changes (Evans, 2013).

An additional potential interpretation of the use of change to be competitive, but only to product, is that SBEs primarily operate in reaction to outside influences (Edgeman, 2015). For example, Participant 15 discussed the decision to offer cheese popcorn as a result of customers' repeated demands. Many participants similarly cited customer demands or customer satisfaction as the impetus for change. Minority SBE leaders may be reluctant to make preemptive changes or to anticipate customer needs,

because of the risk for failure and misallocation of limited resources (Bates & Robb, 2013; Evans, 2013). Particularly, minority SBEs may have less access to funding for such changes (Carter et al., 2015); therefore, they may wait to make changes until they are sure the changes will make their business more competitive. This interpretation is inconsistent with McMurray and Muchiri's (2015) findings, which suggested that SBE owners may be more likely to take risks than non-owning leaders. The difference may be that because of the increased financial restrictions on minority SBE leaders (Parks et al., 2012), that these individuals are more cautious than SBE leaders in nonminority positions.

Theme 3: Education and Experience

The third theme was regarding education and experience. Christakis, Dawes, De Neve, Fowler, and Mikhaylov (2013) noted that the amount of formal education as well as the amount of acquired work experience will shape and form a leader's self-efficacy, perceptions, and abilities to perform the necessary leadership roles. Most of the participants indicated that their prior life education and experiences were very important, and over half of the participants indicated that they used their prior education and experience to handle the demands of running a small business. They used everything they knew in order to be successful. For some being in the food business had always been planned, while for others it was a second career. Others indicated that prior experience and education did not influence their business.

That the majority of minority SBE leaders perceived their education and experience as a shaping influence in their career was consistent with the literature.

Previous researchers have noted that formal business training is becoming more popular among SBE leaders (Curphy & Kaiser, 2013; Roberts, 2015), and such education can inform leaders' decisions regarding organizational change and leadership style (Allen et al., 2013). For example, Participant 17 felt strongly that his academic training in business helped him to be a better business owner. The interviews also revealed that some minority SBE leaders perceived their academic training in other fields, such as chemical engineering, as relevant, whereas others found that their academic training was completely unrelated to their current endeavors. It might be interesting to further investigate which nonrelated majors were perceived as applying in SBEs.

The idea that other work and life experience influenced minority SBE leaders was also consistent with the literature. Informal education can influence decisions regarding organizational change (Allen et al., 2013). Some of the participants in this study related prior career experiences that helped them develop necessary skills for their positions. However, unlike in the literature (e.g., Bakker et al., 2015; Bourne, 2015; Bents et al., 2013; Ross, 2014), none of the participants cited their ongoing on-the-job experience in their current position as informal education that helped them succeed. This may be due to a deficiency in the interview protocol for the present study, which future researchers may need to address.

Theme 4: Meeting Customer Needs

The fourth theme related to meeting the customers' needs. One of the most important aspects of business is that for an organization to succeed and grow, it must be able to change and address the current needs of its customers. The organization must also

adapt and change with customers' future demands (van der Voet, 2016). Most participants felt that meeting customer needs was a priority, although some did acknowledge that they could not be all things to all people. It was important to address customer feedback and requests, but to do so in a manner that made sense. This decision-making process was consistent with contingency theory of leadership (Fiedler, 1967) and with the concept of organizational change and leadership put forth by Argyris (1965).

In all, the participants demonstrated awareness that to make effective leadership decisions, they must make contingent decisions based on the circumstances experienced in their SBE. Many of the participants believed it was essential to meet their customer needs and requests, yet they understood that they must draw a line at some point. As Evans (2013) and Chiu et al. (2015) noted, SBEs have limited financial resources that reduce the scope of changes that an SBE leader can make, and this is particularly true for minority SBE leaders, who may have even less resources (Carter et al., 2015; Parks et al., 2012). As such, the findings of the present study suggested that minority SBE leaders become experts at juggling the demands of customers with their limited resources. Moreover, the study shows that minority SBE leaders are particularly prone to the reactionary stance noted by Evans (2013), wherein they react to customer demand rather than making preemptive decisions regarding organizational change.

Theme 5: Soliciting Feedback

The fifth theme involved the minority SBE leaders soliciting of feedback to make changes. The SBE leaders noted that they used face-to-face methods to informally solicit feedback, but they also increasingly garnered feedback through technology, including

social media and online surveys through Square. Overall, the participants found customer feedback to be valuable. They used it to gauge how they were doing, make changes, and avoid further mistakes. The participants welcomed input from others and felt feedback helped them make decisions about changes. In addition, listening to customers improved their levels of satisfaction. Participants reported that customers felt heard and appreciated that their opinions mattered.

The minority SBE leaders also solicited feedback from their employees. The most frequently cited method of getting such feedback was through a weekly meeting, which seemed to serve as both a place to provide guidance to employees, get information about customer feedback on the product, and gain insight regarding the potential need for organizational change. The behavior of seeking out feedback from employees was consistent with the literature. For example, Scandura & Sharif (2014) noted that ignoring employee feedback could be detrimental to SBE success, and that the SBE leader should undergo ongoing processes of organizational change in response to such feedback to be successful.

Regarding theory, the results regarding soliciting employee feedback were consistent with Kotter's (2012) additions of the member to the organizational change process. Thus, within SBEs, it may be more effective to integrate the member-centered leadership styles, such as Blanchard and Hersey's (1982) situational theory. This finding may be especially true considering in SBEs, leaders and followers have greater dynamic interactions than in larger corporations (Bakker et al., 2015). The study also increased understanding of organizational change in minority-owned food service SBEs; Dabke

(2016) noted that leaders collecting of member feedback and actions relating to that feedback was essential for understanding organizational change. Despite lacking a formal definition of organizational change, participants understood and valued member feedback. For businesses in the service industries, theories of organizational change may also need to integrate customer feedback and minority SBE leader responses.

Theme 6: Using Research and Development

The sixth theme that emerged was the use of market research and development. Leaders of SBEs must be able to incorporate various levels of knowledge, both internal and external. Sikyr (2013) remarked that leaders may need to include strategic expert advice related to marketplace advantages utilizing organization change processes. The participants generally did not limit themselves to a single method of research and development. Most used a variety of different options and were always seeking out new information, which included the internet, market research, and media such as television, magazines and books. Other methods they spoke about included education, mentors, SCORE, travel, and trial and error.

The findings showed that in lieu of access to large-scale research and development resources available at larger organizations, minority SBE leaders used their own time as what Crema and Nosella (2013) called an intangible asset. They leveraged this asset in order to remain competitive. These findings seem to suggest that for minority SBE leaders, who experience financial restrictions on their development (Parks et al., 2012), intangible assets, such as their own labor, become essential in the process of organizational changes. In addition, the participants built relational capital in the form of

mentorships, SCORE, and customer relationships to help them gain information about how to be successful in their organization. This is one potential difference between the theories of organizational change primarily directed at large corporations (e.g., Argyris, 1965; Kotter, 2012).

Theme 7: Temporary Change

The next theme related to temporary changes. Participants noted that the nature of the food service business called for a variety of temporary changes, including seasonal menus and staffing. Leaders of SBEs must be mindful when considering organizational change aimed at innovations for the business (Codini, 2015). As Participant 18 noted, much of the leadership of a food service SBE called for being flexible and responding to the needs of the day. Again, these types of sentiments echoed Argyris's (1965) theory of organizational change regarding adaptation and contingency as well as Fiedler's (1967) leadership theories. Minority SBE leaders must make rapid, sound temporary changes based on the fluctuating demands of the day.

While the seasonal changes seemed more like a permanent fixture in the food service SBEs, leaders also recognized the daily fluctuations and minor changes required based on the needs of food service. The process of temporary change could also potentially be integrated as simulation process, which Fuchs & Prouska (2014) suggested might be a solid strategy for SBEs with limited resources. SBEs may not want to engage in permanent changes without assurances that the changes will be successful, and many businesses engage in temporary changes to see if they will work before committing to more permanent changes. The findings of this study suggested that these types of

temporary changes may not be viewed in the larger picture as a tool by the participants of this study.

From the interviews, a general idea of best practices for temporary change emerged. Specifically, the participants noted that it was essential to onboard staff with the changes. They achieved this buy in through clear communication with organization members. The need for effective communication in organizational change supported the body of literature (e.g., Groeneveld et al., 2014). The findings relating to this theme also showed that minority SBE leaders are aware of the essential role of their staff in making organizational change successful, consistent with the theory of organizational change proposed by Kotter (2012).

Theme 8: Successful Changes and Strategies to Help Employees

Successful changes and strategies to help employees was another theme of the interviews. As previously observed by Scandura and Sharif (2014), whether or not the SBE leader is the sole decision maker, ignoring employee criticisms can have an ill-fated effect on the business. Consistent with the dynamic, close relationships in SBEs described by Bakker et al. (2015), participants in this study noted the need to build a team mentality among their staff to create success in their organization. Soliciting employee feedback was one way participants cited of creating buy in. Additionally, participants cited communication and transparency as other essential factors; specifically, participants cited the communication of a shared vision for the future and how the change fit into the future, in line with Argyris (1965) and Kotter's (2012) discussion of organizational

change. These strategies were also consistent with best practices discussed in the literature (Scandura & Sharif, 2014; Groeneveld et al., 2014).

Because of the essential role of staff, the participants cited the need for effective hiring and retention policies. This discussion related to the understanding of human capital as an essential, intangible resource for minority SBE leaders. The minority SBE leaders created a team atmosphere and an open, communicative atmosphere in order to attract and retain employees; this practice serves as another example of minority SBE leaders utilizing the nonmonetary tools available to them to compensate for a lack of financial resources to make organizational changes. This finding is a key contribution of the present study to the body of literature regarding the role of minority SBE leaders in the organizational change literature.

Theme 9: Leveraging Employees

Directly relating to the previous theme, participants created strong relationships with employees and valued their contribution to change. However, the theme of leveraging employees as resources was not utilized by the majority of the minority SBE leaders who participated in this study. This was consistent with the finding that many SBE leaders do not have experience utilizing intangible assets effectively (Georgalis et al., 2015).

Nonetheless, five participants noted that they carefully evaluated employee strengths and positive behaviors as a method of cultivating their staff. They also invested resources in cultivating a team-building environment. These participants then utilized these employees and their teamwork as valuable resources for organizational change.

The organizational change processes noted by these participants were consistent with best practices for organizational change, and the essential role of followers, proposed by Kotter (2012).

As Edgeman (2015) indicated, SBE leaders must have enough imagination and forethought so that the leader can leverage the limited resources effectively and in a proactive manner. For some of the participants in the study, the idea of leveraging employees was not an important topic as they were smaller operations with no employees. Because of the nature of SBEs, it is becoming more commonplace for researchers to integrate followers into leadership studies in these settings, as the followers become more a part of the leadership system of these SBEs (Latham, 2014). The findings of the present study suggest the need for education regarding effectively allocating and employing human capital in SBEs. Especially since participants cited a significant amount of personal labor invested in increasing relationships with staff, the minority SBE leaders should expect a return on this emotional investment and employ that return effectively to facilitate organizational change.

Theme 10: Lessons Learned

The final theme that emerged in this study was that of lessons learned by the business owner. Since leader behavior and perceptions of organizational change have a wide reaching effect on the organization, it is crucial to understand how leaders receive feedback from their members and the effects that multiple feedbacks have on the behaviors of leaders as well as how feedback influences perceptions (Dabke, 2016). Participants offered a wide variety of information when it came to speaking about the

lessons they learned while operating their businesses. This theme encompassed all the participants' varied experiences and knowledge to show how many different things should be considered when running a small food business.

The lessons learned by the business owners regarding operating an SBE included innovation, open-mindedness, communication, learning from experience, delegating, and sticking to plans. The idea of innovation and sticking to an initial plan was consistent with the need for well-implemented organizational changes in food service SBEs. Interestingly, this lesson learned seemed to contradict with the common theme that participants largely made decisions in response to feedback from employees and customers, suggesting they primarily reacted rather than anticipated, as cited in the open-mindedness lesson learned and discussed in previous themes. It is worth further examining definitions of innovation as related to minority owned SBEs to view where the impetus for organizational change stems.

The idea of learning from experience seems to be an extension of the education theme. However, as previously mentioned, no participants cited their experiences as informal education that was necessary for making organizational changes. The idea that on-the-job experiences provide valuable lessons was consistent with previously published literature (Bakker et al., 2015; Bourne, 2015; Bents et al., 2013; Ross, 2014).

Limitations of the Study

The primary original limitation was bias on the part of the researcher, based on previous experiences and assumptions regarding food service SBEs. I have previous work experience within the designated population identified in this study. To address this

limitation, bracketing was used (Newman & Tufford, 2010) as an ongoing process to minimize any preconceptions held about the phenomenon.

Another limitation of the study was the sample size, collected from a limited geographic location. The sub-group of minority SBE owners may not represent the entire group of food service industry owners in other locations, which may have limited applicability to other groups and thus the results are not transferable (Casey et al., 2013).

The final limitation noted in this study is the lack of representation of African American SBEs because of a lack of response when approached about conducting the interviews. Although several possible African American participants were approached, none responded. Thus, I was unable to capture that aspect of the SBE with the south central Pennsylvania region that the study was conducted.

Recommendations

There are several opportunities for future researchers based on the present study. First, I recommend future researchers attempt to address the limitations borne from the present study. For example, researchers should seek out more objectivity for the findings, perhaps using quantitative research, potentially through a survey developed based on the results of the present study. In addition, researchers should attempt to gain further insight from a wider geographical sampling site. This could include either several qualitative interviews from different regions to create a broader picture, or distributing a quantitative survey electronically to enable a broader national depiction of the experiences of SBEs with organizational change. Finally, the most important aspect of the current study that must still be investigated is SBEs owned by African Americans.

Since I was unable to capture the feedback from those owners due to lack of interest or other personal beliefs, it is important to see whether their insight into this phenomenon varies drastically from other minority SBEs or if they align with others.

Further recommendations for future research are based on my observations and field notes as well as the analysis of the data. Based on my experiences and the results, the concept of organizational change may be too grand a concept or too grand in terminology to study in SBEs. As noted in this study, very few participants really understood the overarching concept of organizational change, and instead related it more towards daily activities as it related to daily operations and not so much the change in structure of the organization. Nevertheless, such changes are consistent with processes of organizational change (Argyris, 1965).

A primary direction for future research involves the use of intangible assets by minority SBE leaders to compensate for financial deficits. As Park et al. (2012) discovered, minority SBE leaders are disadvantaged with regards to financial resources. The findings of the present study suggested that as a result, minority SBE leaders invested their “free” resources, including their own physical and emotional labor, to compensate. For example, the participants conducted their own research and development off the clock, and they created and maintained relationships with employees and customers. The leveraging of intangible assets in organizational change to overcome minority adversity is a novel finding, worthy of further pursuit in future research.

Since many of the participants had no formal education in business, future researchers might reach out to formally educated minority SBE leaders to see if they had

a more specific understanding of the benefits of organizational change. They might also investigate which nonrelated majors provided a foundation for business, based on the revelation of the interviews that some minority SBE leaders found their majors helpful, despite not being in business. The same study might further explore the perceptions of ongoing on-the-job informal training and its influence on organizational change practices. Alternatively, business theorists may choose to create theories of organizational change more fitting to SBEs, including grounding them in specific everyday practices and focusing less on large structural changes.

Results from this study also showed that many small businesses, although limited in size, do not leverage or utilize their staff as a benefit to the company. Many of the owners indicated that they are so small that they had no need to leverage that resource. A future study might involve researchers investigating at what organization size owners find the need to leverage their small staff in order to be competitive in the local market, or examining minority SBEs that did leverage their staff to see whether and how they experienced success from leveraging their staff.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study may provide an outlook regarding organizational change in SBEs and the way that minority SBE leaders implement those changes. Through a better understanding of organizational change and the benefits that it may bring to SBE owners, it may lead to an improved and more effective decision process and allow minority SBE leaders in the food service industry to improve their knowledge and strategies for implementing organizational change as well as their leadership skills.

In addition, the study findings promote the use of intangible assets as a method for minority SBE leaders to overcome the financial adversity that they experience. While they may be doubly disadvantaged as both SBEs and as minorities, the participants in this study leveraged intangible assets as a method of increasing the success of their SBE. Strategies included soliciting additional feedback from staff and customers, employing their own time and labor to increase change, and creating strong relationships. The participants leveraged the above mentioned resources to make informed decisions regarding organizational change and to ensure the success of that change. Minority SBE leaders may view this leveraging as a strategy for future success in SBE leadership. Moreover, understanding methods of overcoming financial adversity may help prospective minority SBE leaders feel less hopeless about their abilities to participate in SBE leadership (Carter et al., 2015).

A second aspect of this study is education and the way that it may shape the perceptions of the small business owner. Although formal education may teach certain aspects of society as a whole, based on the outcomes of this study, all aspects of education both formal and informal education are equally important to the success of the business. The study indicates that less formal education, such as through the local small business associations or other such entities, might be a useful avenue to reach out to the local small businesses and educate them on the importance of true organizational change and the benefits that it may have for their personal businesses.

Through the interview process, I also discovered a valuable piece of information and that is that buying a small business is not a cut as dry and many believe it is. There is

a long and drawn out process in the south central Pennsylvania region, the local business association which is connected to the business development office of the local chamber of commerce is involved with approving the new local businesses. Although many SBE owners have education and some previous practical business management or ownership, it may be a valuable practice to have owners go through a basic ownership or management course as it relates to effective leadership and organizational change. Through ensuring that new business owners are successful, there will be fewer failed businesses and in turn better revenue stream for all parties involved in the endeavor. It would also reduce the number of failed businesses and empty shops that the local banks hold deed to.

Summary and Study Conclusion

Within most of the industrialized countries of Europe and within the United States, 90% of businesses are classified as either SBEs or SMEs as described by their respective governments (Jack & Taylor, 2013). Since these businesses drive a large portion of the global economy, an understanding of how minority SBE leaders' perceptions shape their decisions regarding organizational changes, including the barriers and enhancements toward future decisions, is as important as understanding those made by leaders of large corporations.

As these SBEs continue to impact the global economy, it is also important that the owners and business leaders understand how their own perceptions of change influence the way that they make business decisions. The study revealed that business owners value their employees input into the change process but that the ultimate decision is left

to the business owner. They hope that the employees understand that they must make the best decisions they can for the business and the group and not just for the individual.

The study also showed that small business owners do not have a complete understanding of the phenomenon of organizational change and that their basic understanding is that of daily operational or day-to-day changes to allow the business to function on the basic level. SBE owners are in need of further information on organizational change and how it is a larger and more encompassing concept than they currently understand. There is a need for more information and education, whether formal or informal, regarding this phenomenon, to be disseminated to the small business community especially to the minority business owners.

Through improved understanding of organizational change, SBE owners could put together more effective and efficient business plans as they relate to changes for the business beyond the simple day-to-day activities and address the longer-term goals of the business. As small businesses continue to be a dominant portion of the global economy, their business owners must understand how they can effectively make large-scale changes that will continue to allow them to be competitive locally and internationally against much larger business that have well established plans for organizational change. In addition, SBE leaders must better understand the implications of embracing organizational change to remain competitive.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Describe your concepts/ideas about organizational change.
2. How have your experiences and education shaped the way that you handle organizational change?
3. Describe the process you use to research, develop, and implement organizational changes to your business.
4. Describe how you respond to customer needs or requests that would require organizational changes to your business.
5. Describe some of the organization changes that you have implemented for your small business that made you more competitive in the marketplace.
6. Describe the practices you use to communicate with your employees about organizational changes.
7. What kind of acceptance do you need from the employees for a successful organizational change?
8. When you make changes for the business, describe the strategies that you use to get the employees or members to implement those changes.
9. How do you leverage limited staff size when making organizational changes?
10. How do you manage temporary organizational changes?
11. What processes do you have in place to capture feedback from clients and employees about organizational changes?
12. How do you evaluate and incorporate feedback into current and possible future changes?

13. How have the outcomes and lessons learned about organizational change affected your future decisions?