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Driving Strategies in Performance Excellence

Nathan Lawrence
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Nathan Lawrence

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Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2017

Abstract

Driving Strategies in Performance Excellence

by

Nathan Allan Lawrence

MBA, Florida Institute of Technology, 2011

BSOE, Wayland Baptist University, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2017

Abstract

Only a small number of U.S. businesses have implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to improve their performance. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies that executive business leaders use to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The study population consisted of 6 business executives and 2 organizations in the U.S. state of Texas, all with experience in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The theory of high performance work systems provided the conceptual framework for the study. Data were gathered from interviews and record reviews that were conducted within the organizations. Inductive analysis was used to identify words, phrases, ideas, and actions that were consistent among participants and organizations as well as to identify patterns and themes. Triangulation of sources between the interview and record review data was used for consistency. Three main themes emerged from data analysis: organizational leaders embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into native work models; they also used robust strategy deployment systems with accountability for action plans to spread the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence; and, rather than specifically create goals to align with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, they identified actions to reach organizational strategic goals that were created using the Criteria as a business model. Implications for positive social change arising from this study include the potential to increase the number of available jobs by improving overall organizational performance through the increased implementation and use of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence among U.S. organizations.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the loves of my life without whom nothing else would be possible or worth effort. My son Logan is my muse, my reason to fly, my purpose for being better and my hero. My mom Sharon is my dedication, my perseverance, my loyalty and my reliability. My dad Allan is my comedy, my laughing, my smiling, my dedication to doing things right, my work ethic and my zest for enjoying life within the small things. My grandmother Mary, always taught me to play and sing because you only live once. Finally, my love, Irma, is my adventure, my heart, my passion, my calm, and my home.

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To the many along the way who have contributed to my growth. Many served as mentors in my path both in the short and long term. I looked and listened for these moments constantly. Too many are within this realm for me to list them all. However, I would like to especially thank one of my friends, Dr. Mac McGuire, for quickly influencing me to be better and to try to pass the benefits on to improve the world around me.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Organizations use various forms of performance enhancing systems to foster

sustainability. One such system is the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence,

which has been used by leaders to improve businesses within the United States so that

they may be better able to compete globally (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d).

Implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is a large

undertaking as it encompasses almost every aspect of an organization to include

leadership, customers, workforce, processes, metrics, strategy, and outcomes (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 2013b). To successfully implement the Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence, managers must be motivated to take on the challenge, yet many

are not. The focus of my study was to explore the strategies and processes that managers

use to successfully implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. This

knowledge may help to increase the rate of adoption of the Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence.

Background of the Problem

According to Bryson (2012), performance management systems create an

essential connection between the mission, vision, objectives, and public value of an

organization. Various performance management systems are in use in over 80 countries

to enhance business excellence (Kassem, Ajmal, & Khan, 2016). To improve U.S.

corporations, Federal lawmakers created the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

under Public Law 100-107 in August of 1987, which contains the Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence as the foundation to evaluate organizations as part of their

mission (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d). Some of the actions necessary for accomplishing this mission are enhancing the awareness of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence benefits, providing tools, educating leaders on best-practices, and administering the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) for high-performing companies (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013c).

Originally, leaders focused the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program on the Total Quality Management (TQM) model, but they now include other criteria that make for a more robust system (Evans, Ford, Masterson, & Hertz, 2012). Officials at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, administer the national program (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d). In addition, multiple agency programs at the state level complement the Program.

The U.S. economy is not benefiting as fully as intended because of low participation rates in adopting the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence when considering the millions of firms in operation within the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2011). This low participation rate may be because some managers lack knowledge regarding the benefits their organizations may reap from successfully implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. According to the Department of Commerce (2013c), creating this awareness is one of the needed activities for them to meet their mission.

Problem Statement

Business leaders implement the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to enhance organizational performance; however, the implementation of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program is a large undertaking as it covers almost every aspect of an organization (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Only small numbers of businesses are adopting the criteria with the 2012 estimate at approximately 1,400 through all performance excellence agencies (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a). The general business problem is that some business leaders are not aware of strategies to improve performance. The specific business problem is that some executive business leaders are not aware of strategies to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence within their organizations to enhance organizational performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that executive business leaders used to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance. The population for the study consisted of six executive business leaders who had successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance within the state of Texas. Identification of appropriate implementation strategies may help business leaders better implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. This may foster more success among U.S. organizations in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and potentially improving their business operations. Greater adoption of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence may have effects on

the U.S. economy and society such as increased number of available jobs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a).

Nature of the Study

To identify what strategies are successful in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, I used a qualitative approach involving a multiple case study design. I captured experiential, intangible data by probing participants' insights about the phenomenon of interest. According to Chowdhury (2015), a qualitative method is more appropriate than other methods for gathering this type of data. Quantitative researchers define variables based on hypotheses, which they then statistically analyze (Ragin, 2014). A quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because my purpose was not to test one or more hypotheses. Research conducted using a mixed method capitalizes on both qualitative and quantitative methods (Williams & Shepherd, 2015). The design of this method adds richness beyond that offered with a sole qualitative or quantitative study (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Because of my interest in exploring participants' experiences rather than testing hypotheses, I opted against using a mixed-method approach.

I used a multiple case study design to explore strategies in Baldrige Criteria implementation. As Yin (2014 noted, the use of a case study may help a researcher to explain linkages in program implementation. For the purposes of this study, exploration took place to identify a wide range of findings from multiple organizations and individuals. Also, I used multiple sources of data to compile the case study to provide the visual depth into the wider group of experiences needed to identify what is happening on

an aggregate level within real life practice. Further research based on the findings of this study may be beneficial using a phenomenological approach to detail the understanding at a more granular level. Further study with a phenomenological design may allow for insights into the individuals' experience within any phenomenon identified from their perspective. Capturing individuals' experience in a natural environment using a phenomenological study enables a researcher to describe and translate the occurrences into findings (Chowdhury, 2015). The goal of a grounded theory design is the creation of novel theory based on empirical evidence (Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, & Osuji, 2014). Because of my focus on exploring participants' perspectives rather than building a theory, I opted against using a grounded theory design. Ethnographers focus on an up-close observation of the natural world taking place within the context of a study (Kunda, 2013). I decided against using this type of design because the strategies that I explored were not physical task items that I could view or witness in observation. Narrative researchers tell a story with their investigations (Thyme, Wiberg, Lundman, & Graneheim, 2013). I deemed a narrative design as not being in alignment with the exploratory nature of my research question and, thus, not appropriate for this study.

Research Question

I used the main research question as a foundation to the study. The interview questions gathered insights about the strategies that were working in the practice of Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence implementation. The main research question was: What strategies do executive business leaders use to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance?

Interview Questions

I developed interview questions to gain insights from participants about the strategies they successfully used in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The questions were:

1. What alignment activities for the Baldrige Criteria are deployed to managers?

2. What are the incentives used to drive completion of Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?

3. What aspects of the Baldrige Criteria alignment projects are stated within the strategic plan?

4. What formalized action plans are created to show accountability for the implementation of specific Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?

5. What performance measurement and management systems are used to drive Baldrige Criteria alignment?

6. What effects does the success or failure of implementing a Baldrige Criteria alignment project have on the accountable managers?

7. What instruments and procedures do you use to tie the evaluation scores to tangible rewards, intangible rewards, tangible consequences, or intangible consequences?

8. What tools, processes, and methodologies do you use to implement the Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?

9. What is the process for assigning resources to and budgeting for specific Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding the strategies

used in the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence?

I also asked follow-up questions to provide further clarity and richness to responses.

Conceptual Framework

Business leaders must continuously improve the performance of their

organizations to remain competitive in today's markets. They can accomplish such

improvements by implementing business excellence models. Yet, this requires high

levels of organizational performance (Kassem et al., 2016). Members of *The

Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce* identified the theory of high

performance work systems in 1990 in a published public report (Boxall & Macky, 2009).

One of the main components of a high-performance work system is reinforcement

through appropriately used punishment and rewards (Duarte, Goodson, & Arnold, 2013).

A constant theme in studies of organizational change is that the work environment

plays a key role in affecting an individual's buy-in to change (Wright, Christensen, &

Isett, 2013). One way to reduce this resistance to change is for leaders to focus their

efforts on people (Beal, Stavros, & Cole, 2013). Employee commitment to

organizational objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to

organizational performance (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). The achievement of improved

organizational results is a direct result of the linkage of organizational rewards to work

performance (Hamukwaya & Yazdanifard, 2014). Appropriate and aligned incentives are

necessary to stimulate the coordination, knowledge sharing, and a culture of productivity

needed for successful change implementations (Bolton, Brunnermeier, & Veldkamp, 2013).

Operational Definitions

Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is an overall framework for organizational performance improvement administered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology under the U.S. Department of Commerce (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Business excellence models: Leaders use business excellence models to establish criteria guidelines to both evaluate and improve organizations for progression of excellence in performance (Calvo-Mora, Picon-Berjoyo, Ruiz-Moreno, & Cauzo-Bottala, 2015).

Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award: The U.S. Congress established the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) in 1987 to increase awareness of quality management practices and recognize those U.S.-based companies that have successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013c).

Quality Texas Foundation: The Quality Texas Foundation is a membership-based not-for-profit organization providing guidance and resources to organizations in the state of Texas to improve their processes; Foundation leaders use the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and other tools (Quality Texas Foundation, 2015).

Total quality management: The total quality management model is a set of processes and methods that are intended to reduce variation in systems and spur gains in efficiency, reliability, and quality (Singh & Singh, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are things believed to be true without verification (Simon, 2011). In conducting this study, I had three main assumptions. The first assumption was that the participants had in-depth knowledge of the strategies used to drive Baldrige implementation projects within their organizations. I sought to meet this assumption by only including those professionals who had successfully led Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence implementations in their organizations. The second assumption was that participants would respond to the interview questions in an open and honest manner. Human nature was the foundation for the second assumption; therefore, it was difficult to mitigate the potential for constrained and/or dishonest responses. I designed the data capture tools with open-ended questions to encourage participants to respond openly within the scope of the study topic. Additionally, I clearly communicated to the individuals included in the sampling that they could remove themselves from the study at any time without recourse. The final assumption was that the data collected during this study would be sufficient to answer the research question. I mitigated the potential for incomplete data by capturing and analyzing data from multiple sources.

Limitations

Limitations are factors that highlight weaknesses within a study (Simon, 2011). I identified four limitations to this study. The first limitation was that restrictive organizational policies may have impeded the participants' ability to provide details. The number of organizations that met the sampling criteria was large and alleviated the effects of the limitation. The second limitation was the number of organizations available from which to gather participants. Although technically a limiting factor, I conducted the study using only a small portion of the available organizations. The case study design was driving the third limitation. This design may have led to varied data that did not identify any substantial findings or conclusions. Lastly, the instruments used to gather data may have limited the findings of the study. I used open-ended questions in an attempt to capture open details from the participants; however natural limitations existed within the constraints of this process to identify details.

Delimitations

Delimitations are scope limiting and boundary defining characteristics (Simon, 2011). There were two delimitations to this study. The first delimitation stemmed from my use of a sample pool based on top management and leadership from the selected organizations and experts in the field. I considered this sample pool a delimitation because other individuals who did not fall within this inclusion criteria may have provided other data in support of this study. The second delimitation was that the potential sample pool consisted primarily of organizations within the state of Texas. I considered this a delimitation in the geographical boundary.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

This study provided valuable information to the body of knowledge within the topic of Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence implementation. The U.S. Department of Commerce administers the program to improve the competitiveness of American businesses to benefit the U.S. economy. The program leads to improved performance and alignment with customer and industry needs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d). Identification of the strategies that are working for the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence will help organizations align with the top benchmarks identified within the scope of this study. Aggregated data published by the U.S. Department of Commerce suggested that organizations who have successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence increase their median growth in revenue, increase their median job growth, attain a substantial return on investment, and increase their rates of donated services back to the community (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a).

Implications for Social Change

Organizations that have successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence experience increased ability to align and provide value to their customers and stakeholders, improved capabilities and effectiveness in accomplishing goals, and increased workforce and organizational knowledge (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Nationally, this translates to overall organizational performance enhancements and results as well as the identification and dissemination of best practices

throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Increasing the number of organizations that successfully implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence will further enhance the positive effects on the U.S. economy. Improvements in the U.S. economy can lead to positive implications for society such as increased number of available jobs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a).

<p style="text-align:center">A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature</p>

The literature review contains government and peer-reviewed sources related to business excellence, change management, continuous improvement models, engagement, high-performance work systems, incentives, leadership styles, performance management, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership. In the review, I provide readers with the foundation for understanding the importance of strategies within change and performance management for successful implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Of the 169 total sources used in the study overall, 158 (93%) are from government and peer-reviewed sources. Out of the 110 sources used in this literature review, 107 (97%) were published in government and peer-reviewed sources. Additionally, 147 (87%) of the total sources were published between 2013-2017. Government sources included those from the U.S. Department of Commerce. I used the ProQuest research database from Walden University as well as Google Scholar to locate and access peer-reviewed sources. The key words included in the search were *action planning, Balanced Scorecard, Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, business excellence, business maturity, business process management, business process maturity, change management, continuous improvement models, employee engagement,*

empowerment, *goal alignment*, *high-performance work systems*, *human capital*, *human resource theories*, *incentives*, *job performance*, *leadership styles*, *Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award*, *organizational effectiveness*, *performance incentives*, *performance management*, *performance measurement*, *transactional leadership*, *transformational leadership*, *affective versus cognitive trust*, and *total quality management.* I have organized the literature review into 10 sections: (a) high-performance work systems; (b) change management; (c) continuous improvement; (d) product, service, and project quality; (e) human resource management theories; (f) goal alignment; (g) leadership; (h) employee engagement and incentives; (i) business maturity; and (j) business excellence.

High-Performance Work Systems

The members of *The Commission of the Skills of the American Workforce* identified the concept of high performance work systems in their 1990 public report (Boxall et al., 2009). Employee commitment to organizational objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to organizational performance (Shahid et al., 2013). Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to stimulate coordination and knowledge sharing, as well as a culture of productivity among organizational members that is needed for success (Bolton et al., 2013).

Leadership, management, and productivity systems provide the foundation for organizational success, according to Brown, Holland, Bokowy, and Horblyuk (2013). These performance management systems create an important connection between the mission, vision, goals, and objectives of an organization and enable it to better serve its

target community, which serves as the foundation for the organization to exist (Bryson, 2012). The likelihood that an organization has a high level of well-functioning management components increases with a more mature performance management system (Sa, 2013). A main challenge of performance management system effectiveness is the balance between strategic and operational management with the use of meaningful measures (Ates, Garengo, Cocca, & Bititci, 2013). Performance metrics in operational processes are imperative to translate strategy into action (Groen, Wouters, & Wilderom, 2016). According to Kunz, Siebert, and Mutterlein (2016), one such framework of measuring performance and supporting decision-making is the Balanced Scorecard (BSC; refer to Figure 1). Decision-making support systems must enable management understanding of interactions between knowledge assets to stimulate the proper value creation initiatives (Yurtseven & Buchanan, 2016). Members of management use the BSC to focus on the critical business issues including measuring performance and evaluating the implementation of an organization's strategy (Kunz et al., 2016).

Contradictory to the positive mindset regarding performance management and measurement systems, performance management systems may be time-consuming, costly, and labor-intensive processes that lead to feelings of judgment and unfairness (Melnyk, Betitici, Platts, Tobias, & Andersen, 2014). Management use of measurement systems, such as the BSC, receive high criticism because of loose connectivity and lack of critical transparency between the four perspectives of the model (Hoque, 2014). The BSC does not ensure the identification of all relationship correlations in the key performance indicators (KPIs; Janes & Faganel, 2013). Additionally, use of the BSC to

gain formal control, along with service commitments to clients, may decrease the staff

commitment to workload completion (Antonsen, 2014).

Figure 1. The Balanced Scorecard framework depicts four quadrants feeding into strategy and performance measures and targets. Adapted from balanced scorecard basics published online at http://balancedscorecard.org/Resources/About-the-Balanced-Scorecard. Adapted with permission (Refer to Appendix C).

The focus of Category 4 of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is

performance measurement and management (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Examiners and managers use the category criteria questions to answer (a) how the

organization measures, analyzes, and then improves organizational performance and (b)

how the organization manages organizational knowledge assets, information, and

information technology infrastructure (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Further

detailed breakdown includes: (a) performance measures and comparisons; (b)

performance analysis and review; (c) improvement (d) organizational learning and

knowledge management; (e) data and information; and (f) quality, security, and

availability of information (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Change Management

Business managers use performance excellence models to focus on continuous

process improvement and provide value (Yunis, Jung, & Chen, 2013). These continuous

efforts stimulate change initiatives. Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to

stimulate the coordination, knowledge sharing, and culture of productivity that are

needed for successful change implementations (Bolton et al., 2013). According to

MacBryde, Paton, Bayliss, and Grant (2014), the BSC is an appropriate framework for

monitoring and communicating the status of change initiatives. However, as addressed

by Antonsen (2014), the BSC may stimulate decreases in the commitment levels of

individuals.

A constant theme in studies of organizational change is that the work environment

plays a key role in affecting an individual's buy-in to change (Wright et al., 2013). One

way to reduce the resistance to change is to focus efforts on people (Beal et al., 2013).

Business managers can mitigate the team's resistance to change by managing human

resources practices (Yon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014). Employee commitment to the

objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to organizational

performance (Shahid et al., 2013). A main issue that leaders sometimes face is the low

motivation of others to work actively to accomplish the goals of the organization

(Wahyuni, Christiananta, & Eliyana, 2014). A key to systemic change is to maintain the motivation of team members for the duration of the initiatives (Harrison & Rouse, 2015). One of the main components of a high-performance work system is reinforcement through appropriately used punishment and rewards (Duarte et al., 2013). The achievement of improved organizational results is a direct result of the linkage of organizational rewards to work performance (Hamukwaya et al., 2014). Additionally, applying the use of values such as mindfulness and compassion in management practices has positive effects on business performance (Kovacs, 2014).

Varied incentives placed on management have differing effects on staff members' expenditures towards work and productive actions (Eisenkopf, 2013). Organizational transformational activities at times create misalignments between work expectations and individual definitions of self as related to work (Williamsson, Eriksson, & Dellve, 2016). When alignment does not exist within interactions with differing areas of an organization regarding a change, resistance to the change occurs (Latta, 2015). During change, there is an increased need for a higher level of understanding of the leadership role (Van Der Voet, Groeneveld, & Kuipers, 2014). Attitudes towards change are more positive when leaders keep individuals informed, consult with them for input, and provide them with participatory roles (Yilmaz, Ozgen, & Akyel, 2013).

One of the focuses of category five in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is change management (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Business managers can use the category criteria to identify specifically how the organization creates a workforce environment that is conducive to success (U.S. Department of

Commerce, 2013b). Business managers can use the detailed criteria within the category

to answer how the organization prepares the workforce for changing capabilities and

capacity (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Continuous Improvement

An integral part of business excellence systems is the drive for continuous

improvement efforts to create sustainability. Business managers can define continuous

improvement as a grouping of activities in a process that drives improvements in other

processes (Ali, Islam, & Howe, 2013). Professionals using the Baldridge Criteria for

Performance Excellence can locate continuous improvement initiatives within the

learning portion of the approach, deployment, learning, and integration model (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 2013b). In addition, business managers can use category six

to identify the specific continuous improvement criteria (U.S. Department of Commerce,

2013b). Continuous improvement is a management strategy that includes incremental

change to improve processes, products, and services (Singh & Singh, 2015). There are

two fundamental elements involved: (a) drive for continual progress with specified

actions controlled by a systematic process; and (b) the creation of a continuous

improvement culture within the workforce (Clark, Silvester, & Knowles, 2013). Singh et

al. (2015) discussed that continuous improvement success is dependent on three

organizational factors: (a) assignment of resources to the improvement goals; (b)

infrastructure and tools for the system; and (c) training on the tools of continuous

improvement.

A core activity of management is the allocation of resources to project completions (Klingebiel & Rammer, 2014). Klingebiel et al. (2014) continued that the number of projects assigned to resources is important because wider breadth may cause lack of focused efforts and lower the effects of incentives. Incentives proactively persuade the workforce to make progress on the objectives given (Lam, O'Donnell, & Robertson, 2015). Ali et al. (2013) stated that a culture of continuous improvement is difficult to maintain and should include behavioral conditioning of employees to pursue improvements in their daily assignments. A main component in the creation and maintenance of a culture of continuous improvement is a lasting managerial and workforce involvement (Chattergoon, Darling, Devitt, and Klassen, 2014). If the effects of the incentives lower, the culture of continuous improvement within the workforce may suffer. Also, assigning appropriate resources based on the roles needs as aligned with the individual skills and capabilities is imperative for success (Camera e Silva & Costa, 2013).

Various methodologies exist to support continuous improvement efforts within organizations. Two such common methodologies are Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) and the lean six-sigma process known as DMAIC, which stands for: (a) define, (b) measure, (c) analyze, (d) improve, and (e) control (Watkins et al., 2014). The PDCA cycle has been widely used throughout successful companies for many years to create value (Gidey, Jilcha, Beshah, & Kitaw, 2014). The use of the DMAIC process negates the need to rely on the ambiguous and progresses the improvement effort based on valid data (Lin, Chen, Wan, Chen, & Kuriger, 2013). Many tools exist to support theses continuous

improvement methodologies. The use of improvement tools is imperative within a

culture of continuous improvement (Beaudry, Bialek, & Moran, 2014). Continuous

improvement tools originally applied to manufacturing but have grown to include service

sectors as well (Burgess & Radnor, 2013). Quality and process improvement

practitioners use some basic tools (refer to Table 1).

Table 1

Quality Improvement Tools

Tool	General usage
5 Whys	Process management
Affinity	Process management
Benchmarking	Service delivery
Box plot	Process management
Brainstorming	Service delivery, Process management
Control chart	Process management
Failure modes/effects analysis (FMEA)	Service delivery, Process management
Fishbone diagram	Process management
Flowchart	Process management
Idea map	Service delivery, Process management
Process map	Process management
Run Chart	Process management
Spaghetti diagram	Process management
Storyboard	Process management
SIPOC	Process management
Value stream map	Service delivery, Process management

Note. Adapted from "Service Quality Tools". *American Society for Quality*. Retrieved
from http://asq.org.

Continuous improvement includes many activities that involve learning, which

creates organizational knowledge (Kovach & Fredendall, 2014). Kovach et al. (2014)

continued that the ways in which an organization uses its collective knowledge for

improvement could make or break its competitive advantage. Ali et al. (2013) stated that

the creation of a sustainable system of improvement would create a sustainable

competitive advantage. Tying knowledge to competitive advantage further highlights that an organization's ability to capitalize on the knowledge it creates, retains and pushes through to realization within its staff directly influences its survival (Calvo-Mora, Navarro-Garcia, & Perianez-Cristobal, 2015).

One of the focuses of category six in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is improvement (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Professionals can use the category criteria to identify how the organization manages and improves processes (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Professionals can locate the detailed criteria within the category to answer how the organization improves the work processes (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Product, Service, and Project Quality

Organizational competitiveness is reliant on the quality of the product or service (Sosa, Mihm, & Browning, 2013). Product quality to include conformance, performance, reliability, features, and durability have direct positive effects on business performance (Turner & Von Heusinger, 2014). Therefore, proactive approaches used through quality management systems to improving quality are necessary for continued competitiveness (Dahlgaard, Pugna, Potra, Negrea, & Mocan, 2016). When aligning to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, business managers are taking proactive measures towards business improvement, which is the purpose of national program within the United States of America in order to increase our ability to compete globally (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d).

There are many ways in which alignment with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence can benefit an organization regarding product, service, and project quality. First, one of the key categories within the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is a focus on the workforce so as to engage and align for sustainable value creation (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Maintaining relationships with employees directly affects performance and is a critical element of a quality management system (Mehta, Verma, & Seth, 2014). Second, a key component in maintaining competitiveness is the continuous improvement of the organization, including the products and services that it provides to customers (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Managers use project management processes to manage innovative projects as part of continuous improvement initiatives. The success of a project depends on the quality processes used within project plans (Rich & Valle, 2012). In addition, Rich and Valle (2012) stated that expected performance is achievable and sustainable when the organization uses quality processes. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence contains a category focused on the customer. This customer focus ensures that the organization is aligning to customer wants and needs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Key components of product and service quality stem from customer expectations regarding conformance, performance, reliability, features, and durability (Turner et al., 2014). The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence focuses on product and service quality within category six, processes (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Managers within an organization can design processes, products,

and services that meet customer requirements by using the criterion (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Human Resource Management Theories

Human resource system outcomes are critical components in the success of overall operational outcomes (Jiang, Lepak, Hu, & Baer, 2012). Although business managers can positively affect performance with human resource practices, uncertainty exists regarding the specifics because of differing study foundations, theories, and measures (Buller & McEvoy, 2016). How the human resource practices are bundled into the aggregated system to meet the organizational goals is what is important for organizational performance (Kase, Paauwe, & Batistic, 2014). Jiang et al. (2012) positively correlate motivational factors stemming from human resource practices to organizational performance outcomes. In addition, Jiang et al. (2012) stated that improving employee motivation is an outcome based on performance appraisals, compensation, employee involvement in decisions, and making the work interesting and meaningful.

Harnessing and aligning human capital, in the broad sense, is necessary for a firm to be successful. The definition of Human Capital is the knowledge, skills and abilities of the human resources (Molloy & Barney, 2015). Human Capital has four subdivided categories: (a) general or common, (b) specific and required, (c) specific but discretionary, and (d) co-specialized (Molloy et al., 2015). Molloy and Barney (2015) further detailed that general human capital is the broad range value creating skillset within the human capital workforce, while specific human capital is more limited in its

beneficial spread. Molloy and Barney (2015) continued that value created in the co-specialized category results when the benefit created is greater from the combination of the human capital and the organizational resources than it is individually.

The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence ties into the efficient use of human capital mainly in category five, focus on the workforce (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The category details further on the creation of the appropriate environment for operational success and engaging the workforce to complete the efforts needed (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The criteria details in on how the organization assesses capacity and capabilities; organizes the workforce; creates an appropriate climate and culture; drives engagement; and progresses human resources with learning and development (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Goal Alignment

Work units and individuals within an organization must align and work together when implementing best practices to achieve overall goals (Kaiser, Arbi, & Ahlemann, 2015). Kaiser et al. (2015) continued that resource availability and operational setting may pose constraints that lead to varying levels of achievability, therefore, goal alignment is critical. A good description of goal alignment is the degree to which the goals of an individual are cohesive with the goals of others within the organization (Mom, van Neerijnen, Reinmoeller, & Verwaal, 2015). Mom et al. (2015) continued that this cohesiveness results in cooperative progress towards the common goals and brings the organization together in a shared direction. Goal alignment has two major effects on organizational performance: (a) it allows employees to understand their role in the

strategy of the organization through their daily activities, and (b) the alignment of goals promotes the activities needed to support the strategic plan (Ayers, 2015).

Goal alignment between process improvement efforts and operational business goals can be troubled (Swink & Schoenherr, 2015). In addition, Swink et al. (2015) stated that the processes frequently burden business advancement in the situations where these misalignments exist. The achievement of increased organizational performance is the result of many factors beyond goal alignment such as key performance indicators, measurement of individual performance with varying levels resulting in actions and consequences, employee involvement with regular feedback, and development of staff with training (Ayers, 2015).

One of the focuses of category five in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is employee and work alignment (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Professionals can use the category criteria to identify how the organization aligns the staff to accomplish the needed efforts (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). In addition, business managers can find details regarding how the organization addresses the engagement and motivation of the employees to work effectively towards the creation of value (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Leadership

There are six generally accepted styles of leadership: Coercive or commanding, authoritative or visionary, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and coaching leaders (Fanimehin & Popoola, 2013). The importance of these styles revolves around emotional intelligence, defined as individuals' abilities to both manage their actions as well as their

relationships with others and consisting of the following traits: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills (Fanimehin & Popoola, 2013). Table 2 displays a summary of the basic characteristics of these leadership styles. As aligned with the theory that emotional well-being is an important factor in performance as well as the emotional intelligence tie into leadership styles, a leaders' level of emotional intelligence may then have positive or negative effects on organizational performance.

Table 2

Leadership Style Descriptions

Style	Description
Coercive or Commanding	Demands compliance from others
Authoritative or Visionary	Welcomes others to journey towards vision
Affiliative	Emotionally bonded to people, work is 2nd
Democratic	Drives participation and gains consensus
Pacesetting	Leads by example with high standards
Coaching	Grows and develops others

Note. Adapted from "Effects of career progression, work motivation and leadership styles on job satisfaction of library personnel in the Federal Civil Service of Nigeria" by A. Fanimehin & S. Popoola, 2013. *International Journal of Library and Information Science*, (5), p. 147-159.

Coercive or commanding leaders give clear direction to the team members and are then expectant that the members will all follow the direction (Chapman, Johnson, & Kilner, 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) continued to discuss that commanding leaders are quick decision makers that do not rely on input from others. In addition, these leaders react confrontationally to those that they feel are not performing well, yet reward those who they feel are doing good work. Commanding leaders tend not to be good at listening and sometimes create an atmosphere that demotivates.

Authoritative or visionary leaders give clear direction and set shared goals for the team (Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) discussed that visionary leaders are great at driving teams through problems by motivating members and creating an understanding of the bigger picture. In addition, visionary leaders create engaging atmospheres by promoting autonomy.

Affiliative leaders focus on the positive aspects of communication and relationships and concern themselves with the well-being of the team members (Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) continued that affiliative leaders trust their team, provide high levels of flexibility and autonomy, and provide frequent positive feedback. However, individuals with this leadership style may have difficulty with negative feedback and confrontations. Leaders in this category tend not to provide clear direction to their teams.

Democratic leaders include the team members in decisions regarding the direction of their actions by encouraging the innovative exchange of ideas in a participatory setting (Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) continued that democratic leaders go to the team members for ideas to build consensus when faced with challenges. In addition, democratic leaders may lack in their decision-making ability and rely on others too much.

Pacesetting leaders lead by example and set high standards for the achievement of results (Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) stated that these leaders would move tasks to those that are competent to drive progress. Pacesetting leaders may lack sensitivity and are not tolerant of viewpoints and differing work practices.

Coaching leaders help members identify their strengths, weaknesses, and potential in an effort of supporting each member's growth (Chapman et al., 2014). Chapman et al. (2014) stated that coaching leaders use tools that guide members to resolve their own work challenges. In addition, coaching leaders provide feedback that highlights learning opportunities.

Higher in scope than leadership style, there are overarching leadership approaches to include transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional approaches have an action orientation regarding action and reward or punishment between the leader and the follower, while transformational resides at the higher scope of overall alignment between people and organization (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014). Leaders can display a mixed profile of various leadership styles and behaviors (Antonakis & House, 2014). The appropriate leadership style changes with differing employee and work-related needs (Strom, Sears, & Kelly, 2014). The alignment between the leaders' traits and the trait desires of that leaders' subordinates affect the organizational outcomes, employee satisfaction, and individual commitment (Nichols & Cottrell, 2014). Additionally, Nichols et al. (2014) found that interpersonal traits align with the needs of lower levels, and the higher levels of leadership should display dominance.

Transactional leadership activities take place to ensure expectations are met (Breevaart et al., 2014). Transactional leadership consists of various general styles that lead to differing results: Contingent reward, management-by-exception, and laissez-faire (Clarke, 2013). Breevaart et al. (2014) solidified that transactional leadership consists of incentive activities that include contingent rewards such as bonuses. The use of a

contingent reward structure promotes personal attainment of the goal by the individual with the incentive, however also creates a stress on resources as well as weakens team structure (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014). The management-by-exception style uses the identification of deviations from rules and regulations so that management can make course corrections (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). A laissez-faire style is one in which the activities and decision making of the team do not include the leader (Furtner, 2013). Also, Chaudhry and Javed (2012) stated that laissez-faire leaders rarely provide feedback, are not involved in the work processes, and participate only when needed. These transactional practices lay the foundation from which transformational activities can take place.

A theory exists that top leaders' adherence to transformational leadership practices has positive effects on the organizational project and program performance due to the correlation between transformational leadership and staff levels of orientation towards entrepreneurial activities to progress the organization (Engelen, Gupta, Strenger, & Brettel, 2015). Transformational leaders create the stage for organizational performance by indirectly affecting goal clarity as well as the culture of the organization (Belle, 2013). A direct link exists between organizational performance and transformational activities that stimulate learning and innovation (Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, & Rezazadeh, 2013). Increased understanding and trust in their leaderships' transformational leadership style positively affect the psychological well-being of employees (Kelloway, Weigand, McKee, & Das, 2013). Transformational leadership activities create the perception of procedural justice and influence individual

commitment to the organization (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoglu-Aygun, & Hirst, 2013). Further, a narrow leadership span of control enhances procedural justice (Gumusluoglu et al., 2013).

Positive organizational outcomes as a result of leadership effectiveness are a direct result of transformational activities and link to individual differences in leadership members (Deinart, Homan, Boer, Voelpel, & Gutermann, 2015). Conversely, personality traits surrounding ethics, charisma, supportive actions and task-orientation have a strong linkage to effectiveness of leadership (Monsani, Ripoll, & Peiro, 2015). Even though transformational leadership has positive and beneficial effects on the motivation of individuals within the context of organizational productivity, in some cases there are limitations. Organic, free-flowing organizational structures enhance the psychological effects of transformational leadership; however, mechanistic organizational structures and systems have hindering effects (Dust, Resick, & Bardes Mawritz, 2013). Transformational leadership at the project management level had no significant effect on the outcomes of projects, with no clear indication of leadership styles standing out (Kissi, Dainty, & Tuuli, 2013). The transformational style is more aligned with initiating and designing while the transactional leadership style is more in-tune with implementation (Du, Swaen, Lindgreed, & Sen, 2013). In addition, passive, or lack of transformational leadership at the implementation project levels, triggers negative reactions from team members (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014).

In essence, organizational transformations must come from the top level since the middle level does not cause significant changes. Additionally, a well-structured and

controlled organization will gain less during transformational activities than the less structured. This notion is contradictory to the continuous improvement portions of business excellence model theories since they drive towards structure and control.

The culture of trust is also an important variable in the effectiveness of transformational leadership effectiveness. Affective trust between transformational leaders and subordinates contributes to a better organizational outcome than cognitive trust (Zhu, Newman, Miao, & Hooke, 2013). Affective trust is the emotionally bonded vulnerability between the truster and the trustee while cognitive trust is the vulnerability based on integrity and ability (Zhu & Ahktar, 2014). Comparing individual's performance as related to others within an organization has consequences on levels of trust (Zhu & Ahktar, 2014). This makes it difficult to maintain both performance management as well as the levels of trust needed for the positive effects of transformational leadership.

A focus of category one of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence is leadership (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Professionals can use the category criteria questions to answer how senior leaders lead the organization and how they govern the organization and fulfill the societal responsibilities (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Further detailed breakdown includes vision, mission and values; ethics; and leadership performance (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Employee Engagement and Incentives

The statistically validated construct of employee engagement is gaining momentum in practice (Shuck, Adelson, & Reio, 2016). The employee engagement

construct correlates to organizational practices such as human resources practices and organizational outcomes such as growth and lower costs (Shah & Beh, 2016). Employee engagement integrates job satisfaction and organizational commitment with high performance (Townsend, Wilkinson, & Burgess, 2014). Townsend et al. (2014) continued that organizations with high levels of employee engagement as reflected in workforce surveys were performing better. One of the best predictors of overall performance is the level of employee engagement (Shuck, Zigarmi, & Owen, 2015).

Engaged individuals in the workplace feel responsible not only to perform well at functions expected of them but also to work towards progressing discretionary efforts (Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016). People engage themselves within situations that provide them with intrinsic and extrinsic value and tangible and intangible rewards (Shuck & Rose, 2013). Therefore, prerequisite psychological meaning-making engagement activities are the drivers of the employee behaviors needed for completion of strategic change implementations (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013).

There are counters to the mindset that employee engagement is the main factor in job performance. Individual psychological well-being is a high-ranking factor in employee engagement (Rothmann & Welsh, 2013). Additionally, there is a lack of identity and conceptual definition for employee engagement, making measurement and comparison difficult (Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013). From the viewpoint of an organization, evaluation of the employee's needs and as well as their involvement in the development

of management practices is necessary to create the opportunity for full engagement (Mirvis, 2012).

The goal of an organization should be to reach the pinnacle of engagement by attaining intrinsic motivation within the individuals to perform without the expectation of reward or punishment. Accomplishing this level of engagement takes practice using extrinsic motivational factors, or incentives, to reward or punish. There is a critical link that exists between organizational offerings to employees and their performance (Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013). The interconnections between organizational alignment and employee engagement are important to appropriately matching skills and knowledge to organizational processes (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Rewards and recognition are one of the major categories of resources bearing significant importance to employee engagement (Saks & Gruman, 2014). There is a significant impact of incentives on performance (Garber & Konradt, 2014).

There are many differences in the incentives used between differing organizations and industries. Although these variations exist, basic theories are common. For instance, when management tracks key quality indicators and ties a substantial portion of the payment to such quality indicators as an incentive, substantial improvements in performance result (Roland & Campbell, 2014). The foundation of beneficial incentive systems is the ability to monitor and manage employee performance accurately so that those employees who have excellence performance receive appropriate rewards (Rasel, 2016). In addition, Rasel (2016) stated that management should structure incentive

practices into a system that consists of performance pay, HR analytics practices, and IT software for effective control.

Managers use various forms of incentives to include monetary, tangible non-monetary, and intangible (Dzuranin, Randolph, & Stuart, 2013). Dzuranin et al. (2013) continued that managers strive to use nonmonetary incentives to limit the drain on resources. Comparing the various forms shows differences and nuances. Organizations can increase performance at a higher rate with nonmonetary rewards as opposed to monetary bonuses (Bareket-Bojmel, Hochman, & Ariely, 2014). Additionally, Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2014) identified that the removal of monetary bonuses triggered a decrease in productivity while the removal of a nonmonetary reward did not trigger the decrease. Dzuranin et al. (2013) showed that performance was worse with monetary incentives. In addition, Dzuranin et al. (2013) concluded that organizational management can effectively improve productivity and employee satisfaction with the appropriate use of nonmonetary incentives.

The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence focuses heavily on engaging the workforce to create sustainable value in category five, workforce (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The category criteria address the workforce environment to include capability and capacity; change management; the accomplishment of the work; employee benefits and policies; culture; performance management, development and career growth; and engagement specific efforts (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Business Maturity

Overall business maturity development and organizational progress stem from

field level change initiatives that originate from day-to-day process improvements (Looy,

Backer, & Poels, 2014). Organizational managers use business maturity models to

provide methods and approaches for an organization to improve and grow (Roglinger,

Poppelbub, & Becker, 2012). Many versions of business maturity models exist for

comparison (refer to Table 3).

Table 3

Business Process Maturity Models

Model	Description
BPMMM	5 stages within 5 capability areas
PPI	3 maturity levels with 10 key success factors
BPRMM	5 groups
BPMM	5 levels of change
PMMA	5 maturity levels with 9 categories
BPO	4 stages with 3 components of maturity
BPMM-OMG	5 stages of maturity
BPMM-Lee	5 levels of process maturity

Note. Adapted from "Business process maturity models" by M. Roglinger, J. Poppelbub, and J. Becker, 2012. *Business Process Management Journal*, 18, p. 328-346.

In comparison, the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence has six process

and result scoring levels based on an overall holistic approach to driving organizations in

the direction of maturity (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). Five core values and

concepts are the criteria base: (a) systems perspective, (b) visionary leadership, (c)

customer-focused excellence, (d) valuing people, and (e) organizational learning and

agility (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The MBNQA program includes an

application and assessment process by which the applicant organizations request an

evaluation of their level of maturity as compared to the criteria (U.S. Department of

Commerce, 2013c). Examination teams score applicants against the process criteria

using four dimensions: (a) approach, (b) deployment, (c) learning, and (d) integration

(U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The teams score the organizational results by

looking at levels, trends, comparisons, and integration (U.S. Department of Commerce,

2013b). Refer to Table 4 for the six scoring levels used for the process criteria

categories.

Table 4

MBNQA Process Scoring Ranges

Range	Description
0% - 5%	None or little Approach, Deployment, Learning, or Integration (A, D, L, I)
10% - 25%	Early stages of A, D, L, I
30% - 45%	Effective and well deployed Approach, early stages of L and I
50% - 65%	Systematic and well deployed Approach, Mid-level L and I
70% - 85%	Systematic and well deployed Approach with Learning, Mid-level I
90% - 100%	Systematic and fully deployed Approach with systematic Learning and Full Integration

Note. Adapted from "2013-2014 criteria for performance excellence". *U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology*. (2013b).

In addition, examiners rate the applicant organizations against results criteria that include benchmarks with external comparisons based on the item being evaluated (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b). The examination teams score the applicants against the results criteria in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence using three dimensions: (a) levels, (b) trends, (c) and comparisons. Refer to Table 5 for the six scoring levels used for the results criteria categories detailed in the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

Table 5

MBNQA Results Scoring Ranges

Range	Description
0% - 5%	None or poor Levels, Trends, and Comparisons (L, T, C)
10% - 25%	Some L, T, C
30% - 45%	Good L with some T and C
50% - 65%	Good L with good T and some C
70% - 85%	Good L, T, and C
90% - 100%	Excellent L, T, and C

Note. Adapted from "2013-2014 criteria for performance excellence". *U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology*. (2013b).

Business Excellence

The theories and practices involved in holistic approaches such as Total Quality Management have been dominating for more than 30 years (Dahlgaard-Park, Chen, Jang, & Dahlgaard, 2013). The concepts and theories of business excellence span the globe with various models in use in over 80 countries (Kassem et al., 2016). These models share the purpose of restoring and improving organizations. Within the United States, the leaders of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) administer the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, operating under the U.S. Department of

Commerce (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d). Administration of the program

includes activities to increase the awareness of the criteria benefits, providing tools, and

educating leaders on best-practices (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013c). The

Baldrige model consists of seven integrated section categories: (a) Category one,

leadership; (b) category two, strategic planning; (c) category three, customer focus; (d)

category 4, measurement, analysis, and knowledge management; (e) category five,

workforce focus; (f) category six, operations focus; and (g) category seven, results.

Figure 2 shows the interconnections of the categories, which makes the model completely

integrated, all-inclusive, and holistic.

Figure 2. The Baldrige Excellence Framework. Adapted from the Baldrige Performance
Excellence Program. 2015. *2015-2016 Baldrige Excellence Framework.* Gaithersburg,
MD: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology.
Adapted with permission (Refer to Appendix C).

At a more granular level, the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence

focuses on the overall process concepts of: (a) having an approach or process that meets

the requirements of the underlying criteria, (b) deploying the approach to the appropriate

parties in a quality manner, (c) having systematic ways to evaluate the approach and its

deployment, and (d) integrating the approach to align with other systems (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 2013b). This level of detail within each criterion helps to

ensure the level of quality of each process focused to meet the criteria, eventually leading

to an effective overall system.

Table 6

The Economics of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

Description	Amount
Return on investment (dollars spent)	820 to 1
National role models created	93
Dollar value of Baldrige volunteers in 2012	$7.3 million
Dollar value of state program volunteers in 2012	$30 million
Represented jobs (2010-2012 applicants)	450,468
Represented revenue (2010-2012 applicants)	$74 million
Represented number of customers (2010-2012 applicants)	417 million

Note. Adapted from "Baldrige Impacts", 2012. Retrieved from
http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/upload/2012_Baldrige_Impacts.pdf.

More effective business systems lead to better results. Businesses that have

aligned their structure with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence display a

growth in revenue, growth in jobs, increase their rate of community service, and attain a

substantial return on their investment (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a). Those

who used the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence attained an increase in market

values (Breja & Banwet, 2016). Additionally, the structured approach gained by usage of

the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence can enhance an organization's ability to

reach excellence in servicing customers (Asif & Gouthier, 2013). Proactive approaches

to improving service quality are necessary for improving competitiveness (Dahlgaard, Pugna, Potra, Negrea, & Mocan, 2016).

Conclusive evidence regarding the economic values of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program exists. One such example is the ratio of costs to benefits estimated to be between 351:1 and 820:1 as derived from a review of 45 Baldrige National Quality Award applicants with the goal of estimating the social economic value of the program (Umpleby, 2015). Additionally, Table 6 includes information from 2012 data published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology regarding the economics of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

There are many factors which make a successful adoption and implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence difficult. The conclusions of existing research explored in this review contributed these factors to the organization, the individuals within the organization, and even the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence itself. First, an effective system of measurement is the foundation for performance management, which is necessary for improvement activities to include criteria alignment (Evans et al., 2012). Evans et al. (2012) conducted a study using evaluation feedback documents from award-winning organizations, and concluded that a main factor for implementation hardship is the lack of solid measurement systems within the organization taking on the task. Secondly, a major hurdle for organizational excellence policies is the moderate acceptance and exercise by employees (Durrah, Khdour, & Al-Abbadi, 2014). Some major contributing findings stemming from Durrah et al. (2014) were the positive correlation between employee empowerment and

performance and insignificant relationships between performance and financial incentives, wages, and training. The next hindrance is that business excellence implementations suffer from high levels of sophistication in assessment criteria, cumbersome levels of process and paperwork, and lack of focused efforts to use the criteria in practice (Dahlgaard, Chen, Jang, Banegas, & Dahlgaard-Park, 2013). Dahlgaard et al. (2013) conducted the study to identify business excellence needs for further development based on the notion that attainment of a performance excellence award does not secure long-term success. An additional study exploring business excellence factors concluded that employee lack of participation hindered the needed alignment activities identified from self-assessment (McAdam, Keogh, El Tigani, & Gardiner, 2013). Performance excellence implementations that focus on specific criteria within the models have not been successful, but rather all-inclusive approaches to the entire framework, which are more difficult to accomplish (Karimi, Safari, Hashemi, & Kalantar, 2013).

Transition

In section 1, I introduced this qualitative case study with the foundation and background of the topic as related to the problem and purpose statements. Further explanation resides within the nature of the study, research question, conceptual framework, operational definitions, the significance of the study, and literature review. Additionally, I have identified the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study.

In section 2, I addressed the role of the researcher and the participants in the study. The section also encompasses the research method and design, ethical considerations, data collection methods and instruments, and organization and analysis. In addition, section 2 contains a discussion of reliability and validity. In section 3, I summarized the findings of the study, discussed applications to business practice, and identified opportunities for further research that may contribute to the knowledge base of the topic area.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2, I restated the purpose of the study as well as detailed the roles, methodologies, and instruments. I accomplished this in the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, and data organization and analysis areas. Additionally, within the section, I addressed reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that executive business leaders used to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance. The population for the study consisted of six executive business leaders who had successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance within the state of Texas. Identification of appropriate implementation strategies may help business leaders better implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. This may foster more success among U.S. organizations in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and potentially improving their business operations. Greater adoption of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence may have effects on the U.S. economy and society such as increased number of available jobs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a).

Role of the Researcher

I acted as the main researcher and data collection instrument for this study. Clarification of the researcher's role is critical in qualitative research to maintain

credibility by highlighting potential understanding and bias in the area of study due to preconceptions of the researcher (Unluer, 2012). Qualitative researchers must maintain credibility during the research process, which is a subjective endeavor, in spite of any assumptions, interests, and theories they may have about study phenomena (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). In alignment with the Belmont Report protocol, I sought to respect participants' autonomy, secure their well-being, and ensure fairness and equality within the scope of the study. I respected these ethical considerations as part of the informed consent process as well as by providing background information to all participants of the study prior to their participation. Additionally, I asked participants to verify the accuracy of their responses and told them they were free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to or during the interviews by notifying me.

I conducted semistructured interviews with experienced individuals and performed record reviews in specific organizations. I have direct professional experience with implementation and evaluation of organizational alignment to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence through service to the Quality Texas Foundation as well as operational experience within my organization. Many of the members of the sample population had similar service background with the Quality Texas Foundation or other similar agency. To limit the impact of any personal bias I may have had. I followed an interview protocol, which included open-ended questions, and documented all responses verbatim. To capture the details of the experiences of the sample population and limit personal bias, interview questions must be well planned (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013).

As aligned to the mitigation of assumptions, I used open-ended questions. Open-ended

questions enable participants to respond in their own words (Doody & Noonan, 2013). In

addition, I used member checking. According to Reilly (2013), researchers can use

member checking to limit bias and maintain quality during qualitative research. During

member checking, the researcher asks participants to ensure that the data accurately

reflect their contribution (Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, & Bailey, 2013). I also used an

interview protocol. According to De Ceunynck, Kusumastuti, Hannes, Jannsens, & Wets

(2013), researchers can use interview protocols to maintain direction and limit personal

bias. I designed the interview protocol to include an interview script and an ordered list

of interview questions (refer to Appendix A).

Participants

Participants in the study were executive business leaders in two organizations that

had successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. These

individuals were middle and senior level business executives who had led the completion

of Baldrige Criteria implementation initiatives. The quality of synthesis in research is

heavily dependent on participant sampling (Suri, 2011). I selected participants using a

purposeful sampling technique based on criteria to add richness and limit variation.

According to Palinkas et al. (2013), purposeful sampling is a technique that researchers

use to enhance richness of information using a small sample set. In addition, purposeful

sampling is a technique used to limit variation based on participant knowledge while

providing a diverse organizational representation (Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, &

Hoagwood, 2014).

I located and contacted most participants using previously established professional networks and relationships via professional social networks, email, or direct telephone calls. I was a familiar professional acquaintance to many of the study participants and second or third tier for the others. Professional affiliation and other commonalities may make the establishment of a working relationship easier because individuals may have a common understanding of culture, language, and profession (Unluer, 2012).

Research Method and Design

Research Method

In this study, I identified what strategies were working for the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence so that the number of organizations adopting the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence can grow. The study of an organization first requires the discovery of social concepts from which theory building can take place (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). I used the qualitative method to explore individual experiences regarding strategies used in successful implementations of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. According to Chowdhury (2015), the qualitative method is best for the capture of experiential data and identification of intangible items based on individual human insight and experiences.

Quantitative researchers use variables derived from hypotheses and reduce bias by analyzing statistical data (Ragin, 2014). Quantitative researchers gather empirical evidence by deciphering conclusions from numerical data and driven by hypotheses (Yilmaz, 2013). The study was exploratory in nature without the drive to prove or

disprove hypotheses based on numerical data analysis. I explored individual experiences and social concepts within the organizations in order to identify possible theory. According to Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), the qualitative method is best to explore individual experience and social concepts. The qualitative method is best for the capture of intangible items based on individual human insight and experiences (Chowdhury, 2015). The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because this method is not exploratory and not based on individual experience in nature. Additionally, there was no statistical data collection to prove or disprove hypotheses.

Research conducted using a mixed method capitalizes on both the qualitative and quantitative methods (Williams & Shepherd, 2015). A mixed method approach combines both the qualitative and quantitative angels to gather a wider viewpoint (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). The design of this method adds richness beyond that offered with a sole qualitative or quantitative study (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). The research question of this study was driving exploration of the experience for the identification of strategies and process, and no intention of additional focus was present. No hypotheses existed to drive a quantitative study component and data gathered in exploration did not consist of the quantitative data needed for analysis. The study completed gathered non-numerical data regarding individual experiences from a limited sample population and did not include any hypothesis; therefore, the mixed method was not appropriate for the study.

Research Design

I used a multiple case study approach to explore the strategies in Baldrige Criteria implementation. I conducted the case study using multiple data sources. According to Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013), the use of multiple data sources will increase the quality and accuracy of information. Case studies can be useful in the capture of information regarding a phenomenon (Houghton et al., 2013). Qualitative case study methodology is a valuable tool to evaluate programs, such as implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The world is socially constructed, therefore, focusing attention towards the ways in which organizational members understand their experience would be beneficial (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). I explored the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence using a multiple case study approach with multiple data sources. According to Baxter et al. (2008), researchers can use multiple data sources to identify multiple facets of the phenomenon.

Researchers using the narrative approach ask the participants to tell their story (Wattanasuwan, 2012). I did not ask participants to tell a story during the data-gathering phase of this study. Therefore, the narrative design was not appropriate for the exploration in this study. Phenomenology allows for the capture of individual life experiences and biases to shape the overall representative picture of the phenomenon (Trauth, 2011). Phenomenology brings the participant back to relive an experience so the researcher can capture comprehensive experiences that enable for a structured analysis (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological design may be appropriate for further research

on the topic at a more granular level, however, would remain limited to the lived experiences of the participants. Additionally, an ethnography design captures the culture of each organization by direct participation within the settings (Lewis, 2015). The ethnography design was not appropriate for the capture of individual experiences within multiple organizations. I used multiple organizations and data sources for this study. Therefore, ethnography was not appropriate.

Attaining data saturation is a main concern when performing a qualitative study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). It is necessary to reach the point when no new themes emerge from the data (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). I used multiple data sources, to include interview participants and evaluation records. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use multiple data sources to increase the quality and accuracy of information and reach saturation. I reached data saturation when participants repeated the same responses and there appeared to be no new information from the interviews and document reviews. This design enables for the efficient attainment of saturation with variation, diversity, and information-rich sources (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), researchers can use an interview method of data capture to reach saturation.

Population and Sampling

I used multiple participants in the study from two organizations selected through purposeful criterion sampling. I interviewed six participants and reviewed the records of two organizations that had a total of 15 to 30 available participants meeting the inclusion criteria. I used multiple data sources, to include interview participants and evaluation

records. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use multiple data sources to increase the quality and accuracy of information and reach saturation. I used the record reviews as complimentary data. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use complementary data to increase the quality and accuracy of the information obtained. One of the main concerns with sample size in a qualitative study is saturation (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Data saturation is the point when no new themes emerge from the data (Malterud et al., 2016). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), researchers cannot define a specific sample size that ensures saturation, but rather strive for richness and thickness in the data.

The essential aspect in the selection of participants is that they have experienced the phenomenon or topic of the study (Moustakas, 1994). The main criterion for the selection of the study's participants was their experience with the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence within an organization. I selected participants with whom I had knowledge of their direct experience with the topic. Additionally, each participant represented middle to upper management within an educational institution and a healthcare facility that had implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I used multiple participants selected through purposeful criterion sampling. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use multiple data sources to increase the quality and accuracy of information obtained. This method of choosing the participants in the study enables for the efficient attainment of saturation with variation, diversity, and information-rich sources (Gentles et al., 2015).

Face to face transactions are preferred (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2012). The time and place for an interview should be comfortable and convenient for the participant, and be free from personal distraction (Doody et al., 2013). The environment should be comfortable in order to stimulate natural conversation (Bredart, Marrel, Abetz-Webb, Lasch, & Acquadro, 2014). I conducted each interview face to face at a convenient time for the participant in a relaxed, quiet, and private area away from the participant's place of employment, such as a café or coffee shop based on their discretion. I recorded the interviews for review and analysis at a later stage. I took these steps to allow for a more natural flow in the conversation without the need to break to write detailed responses from the participants during the interview process. I gathered document data from the organizations regarding the strategies used during implementation and alignment projects with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I gathered the document data from performance goal setting and evaluation systems as well as strategic and action planning documentation provided by the organizations.

Ethical Research

The foundation for an informed consent is the potential participants having the information needed to understand what is expected, their willingness to volunteer, and their ability to make a decision to participate (Roberts, 2002). Each potential participant received the informed consent, (refer to Appendix A), via email prior to agreeing to participate. This served as the sole agreement document for participation in the study. For effectiveness, an informed consent must be easy to understand for the intended audience (Mandal & Parija, 2014). I used the template from Walden University to

maintain effectiveness. The procedure consisted of an informational pre-interview conversation used to provide the potential participant further details about what they can expect and allow them time for consideration. The participants consented via email reply per the instructions within the informed consent form. Potential participants could choose not to participate in the study, and those that chose to become participants could withdraw at any time prior to or during the interview without repercussion by notifying me via any means to include email. Participation in the study was voluntary with no compensation tied to participation.

In alignment with the Belmont Report protocol, I respected each participant's autonomy, secured their well-being within the scope of the study, and ensured fairness and equality within the scope of the study. I respected these ethical considerations as part of the informed consent process as well as by providing background information to all participants of the study prior to their participation. Additionally, participants verified the accuracy of their responses and were free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to or during the interview by notifying me.

All records, both paper and electronic, will remain secured in a federal bank lock box for 5 years to protect the confidentiality of participants, after which time I will destroy them in a secure manner. I will shred paper documents and permanently delete any electronic files kept on an electronic storage device. I will maintain the participant privacy and confidentiality. Researchers must maintain privacy and confidentiality, unless they identify an ethical concern that legally requires the release (National Ethics Advisory Committee, 2012). All participant information will remain confidential, and

only the researcher will have access. I ensured the maintenance of confidentiality with the use of codes instead of names for identification on the documentation, such as A and B for the organizations and 1-3 for the individuals within them. The study documents did not contain the names of any individuals or organizations. The Walden IRB approval number was 01-12-17-0382566.

Data Collection Instruments

As the main data collection instrument, I conducted semistructured interviews and reviewed records to gather data. I gathered document data from the organizations regarding the strategies and processes used during implementation and alignment projects with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I gathered the document data from performance goal setting and evaluation systems as well as action planning documentation. I used the data included in the documents to complement the data gathered from the interviews in theme development. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use complementary data to increase the quality and accuracy of the information obtained. I used semistructured interviews in which I asked the participants to discuss their experiences, opinions, and beliefs surrounding the interview questions. According to Rowley (2012), researchers can use the data collected from interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the research question. I used an interview protocol (refer to Appendix A). Interviews took place face to face. Face to face transactions are preferred (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2012). I recorded the interviews for review and analysis at a later stage as well as to allow for a more natural flow in the conversation without the need to break to write detailed responses from the participants.

I conducted the multiple case study using multiple data sources, to include interview participants and evaluation records. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use multiple data sources to increase the quality and accuracy of information and reach saturation. In addition, I provided the participants opportunity to check their responses. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use member checking to ensure accuracy. Member checking is a main component of maintaining quality during qualitative research (Reilly, 2013). Members ensure that the data accurately reflect their contribution (Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, & Bailey, 2013).

Data Collection Technique

I used both interviews and record reviews to collect the data for this case study. I used the data gathered from the records reviews as complimentary data to the interviews for theme development. Interview data are the empirical backbone of many qualitative studies (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pederson, 2013). An advantage of interviews is that the interaction enables participants to explore internally their experience and communicate in-depth information (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I used interviews in which I asked the participants to discuss their experiences, opinions, and beliefs surrounding the interview questions. According to Rowley (2012), researchers can use the data collected to gain a deeper understanding of the research question. I conducted the interviews face to face. Face to face interviews are the preferred method (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2012). I asked the participants to discuss their experiences by asking planned questions. According to Rowley (2012), researchers can use planned questions aligned with the research question to gain a better understanding. I followed an interview protocol (refer

to Appendix A). A disadvantage of interviews is that they produce data in a format that is sometimes difficult to analyze (Doody & Noonan, 2013). To mitigate the loss of information and to provide an opportunity for further analysis, I preserved the data by recording the interviews for later review and reference.

I also conducted record reviews regarding the strategy, action planning, and performance management system used within the organizations during the timeframe of Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence implementation. An advantage to the utilization of record reviews as complimentary data is that the use of multiple data sources increases the quality and accuracy of the information obtained (Houghton et al., 2013). In addition, document data is an accurate depiction of historical events. I gathered qualitative document data from the organizations regarding the strategies used during implementation and alignment projects with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I gathered the document data from performance goal setting and evaluation systems as well as action planning documentation. I asked for and obtained access to these documents from the management of the organizations. A disadvantage to this data collection technique was the difficulty in gaining access to the data. I did not experience difficulty due to the varied documentation practices within the organizations. I used the data included in the documents to complement the data gathered from the interviews in theme development. I triangulated the data from the records review with the interview data. According to Denzin (2012), researchers can triangulate data from multiple methods to gain depth. I used triangulation of sources to identify consistency. According

to Denzin (2012), researchers can identify consistency in the data using triangulation of sources.

A main quality component of qualitative research is member checking (Reilly, 2013). I conducted a member checking process, or participant verification, during follow-up interviews. According to Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, and Bailey (2013), researchers can use member checking to ensure that the research analysis consists of accurate accounts from the participants. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use member checking, or participant verification, to ensure the accuracy of information captured and to identify saturation.

Data Organization Technique

I organized the interview data into a transcript for each participant. Since there is no ability to go back to the interview event, researchers must rely on tools such as recording or field notes (Tessier, 2012). I catalogued and linked field notes, transcripts, and reflective documents for each participant by labeling with letter identification rather than names (i.e. participant A). I recorded each interview as well as documented brief notes during the interviews that did not interrupt the flow of discussion. I transcribed each interview verbatim into written format without edit or summarization. When an intermediary uses a message verbatim with little alteration, integrity is achieved (Carroll, Huang-Horowitz, Weberling McKeever, & Williams, 2014). I conducted record reviews surrounding performance management processes used during the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence within the organizations. I catalogued the document review notes with the same letter naming technique as interview data. I used

triangulation of multiple data sources by comparing the qualitative data from the records review with the interview data. According to Denzin (2012), researchers can gain depth and identify consistency by triangulating the data from multiple sources. I then used NVivo® software to assist with the synthesis of data into themes. According to Castleberry (2014), researchers can use NVivo® software to aid in the identification of themes. I secured all data, notes, recordings, transcripts, and electronic files in a federal bank lock box, where they will remain for 5 years, after which time I will destroy them in a secure manner. I will shred paper documents and permanently delete any electronic files kept on an electronic storage device.

Data Analysis

I transcribed each interview verbatim into a written transcript format without edit or summarization. According to Carroll et al. (2014), researchers can achieve integrity by leaving the message unaltered. I used triangulation of sources by comparing the qualitative data from the records review with the interview data. According to Denzin (2012), researchers can use triangulation of sources to identify consistencies and achieve a higher level of validity and depth. I then used NVivo® software to assist with the synthesis of data into themes. I compared interview data with record review data. I used the tools in the NVivo® software to code and link data together to develop themes. According to Castleberry (2014), researchers can use NVivo® software to aid in the identification of themes. Last, I compared and contrasted the themes to the main ideas identified in the literature review as well as the conceptual framework. Completing a

thorough comparison to show similarities and contrasting differences is an imperative step within qualitative studies (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

In general, there are no commonly accepted validation guidelines for qualitative research (Venkatesh et al., 2013). The investigation is reliable, valid, and dependable when the descriptions gathered enable the understanding and meaning of the experiences (Moustakas, 1994). To ensure dependability, I used purposeful criterion sampling of the multiple participants, member checking of the data gathered, and an audit trail. This method of choosing the participants in the study enables the efficient attainment of saturation with variation, diversity, and information-rich sources (Gentles et al., 2015). I provided audit trails and held follow-up member checking sessions with each participant to provide them the opportunity to check their responses. According to Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use member checking to ensure accuracy. Member checking is a main component of maintaining quality during qualitative research (Reilly, 2013). Members ensure that the data accurately reflect their contribution (Perkins et al., 2013). Researchers can increase dependability of a study by providing audit trails (Leung, 2015).

Validity

I supported credibility by establishing trust and using open-ended questions that did not lead the participant. Open-ended questions enable participants to respond in their own words (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I conducted a preliminary discussion with each of the study participants prior to the interview session. This technique enhanced the

opportunity to establish trust and rapport by allowing for the review of ethical

considerations and research questions so that the participants can prepare (Englander,

2012). This established an appropriate atmosphere for the participants to openly share

their information, helping validity. I conducted a member checking process, or

participant verification, during follow-up interviews. According to Perkins et al. (2013),

researchers can use member checking to ensure that the research analysis consists of

accurate accounts from the participants. According to Houghton et al. (2013),

researchers can use member checking, or participant verification, to ensure the accuracy

of information captured and to identify saturation. Members ensure that the data

accurately reflect their contribution (Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, & Bailey, 2013).

Transferability refers to a researcher applying a research finding to another

situation without changing the context (Houghton et al., 2013). Researchers can

strengthen transferability of a study by providing thick descriptions of the research

(Cornelissen, 2016). Although the transferability of this study is a judgement made by

the reviewing researcher, further research based on the findings of this study may be

beneficial using a phenomenological approach to detail the understanding at a more

granular level. Further study with a phenomenological design may allow for insights into

the individuals' experience within any phenomenon identified from their perspective.

Capturing the individual experience in the natural environment would enable the

researcher to describe and translate the occurrences (Chowdhury, 2015).

To ensure confirmability, I held follow-up member checking sessions with each

participant to provide them the opportunity to check their responses. According to

Houghton et al. (2013), researchers can use member checking, or participant verification, to ensure the accuracy and confirmability. Member checking is a main component of maintaining quality during qualitative research (Reilly, 2013). Members ensure that the data accurately reflect their contribution (Perkins et al., 2013).

I established validity by identifying redundancy in the information gathered from the participants during the data collection process, or data saturation. If a group of sample participants provides the same information when asked the same questions, reliability and saturation are established (Robinson, 2014). Data saturation is the point when no new themes emerge from the data (Malterud et al., 2016). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), researchers cannot define a specific sample size that ensures saturation, but rather strive for richness and thickness in the data. I interviewed multiple participants from multiple organizations selected through purposeful criterion sampling until I reached the point of saturation or the minimum sample population. Researchers can efficiently attain saturation with variation, diversity, and information rich sources by using this method of choosing the participants in a study (Gentles et al., 2015). In addition, I pre-analyzed the data to determine the need for more data capture during the process. According to Elo et al. (2014), researchers can look for saturation using pre-analysis during data capture.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 addressed the role of the researcher and the participants in the study. The section also encompassed the research method and design, ethical considerations, data collection methods and instruments, and organization and analysis. Additionally,

section 2 contains a discussion of reliability and validity. In section 3, I presented the

findings of the study and discussed the applications to professional practice. In addition,

I made recommendations for future research and shared my concluding thoughts.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies used by business leaders to successfully align their organizations with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I conducted interviews with six business executives and performed record reviews within two organizations in Texas. I compared data from all sources, to include the interview data and record review data, using triangulation of sources. I maintained the confidentiality of the participants with the use of codes instead of names for identification on the documentation, such as A and B for the organizations and 1-3 for individuals within them. I reached saturation in the data using an experienced population that was successful in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I used inductive analysis to analyze data. In doing so, I sought to identify words, phrases, ideas, and actions that were consistent in participant interviews and organizational records in order to identify patterns and themes. Lastly, I compared and contrasted the themes to the main ideas identified in the literature review and conceptual framework to answer the main research question. Three main themes emerged from data analysis. These included that organizations embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into native work models, they used robust strategy deployment systems with accountability for action plans to spread the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, and they did not specifically state strategic goals to align with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this study was, what strategies do executive business leaders use to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance? Six executive business leaders in two organizations described the strategies that they used to successfully implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Following are the three themes I identified from the data and how they align to the literature.

Theme 1: Business Leaders Embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into Native Work Models, Processes, and Verbiage

The business leaders of the organizations embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into native work models, processes, and verbiage used in their organizations rather than undertook organizational changes to convert to the Baldrige language. Leaders within both organizations faced initial trouble with the acceptance and buy-in from staff to take on the efforts needed to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Organizational transformational activities at times create misalignments between work expectations and individual definitions of self as related to work (Williamsson, Eriksson, & Dellve, 2016). When alignment does not exist within interactions with differing areas of an organization regarding a change, resistance to the change occurs (Latta, 2015). In both instances, the business leaders mitigated this resistance by systematically improving current processes, goals, and action plans using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence structure as a model. One executive business leader in the sample population stated that the top 5 executives maintained

knowledge of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and used that knowledge to mold the structure and contents of process steps into current systems at the time of strategic process improvement. The business leaders used this practice instead of developing new practices and verbiage for the staff to adopt. The business leaders used this practice to successfully manage changes and align the workforce to complete the implementations, almost without being aware of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence at all.

In many aspects, this theme aligns with the literature I found regarding change management theories. Wright et al. (2013) stated that there is a constant theme in studies of organizational change is that the work environment plays a key role in affecting an individual's buy-in to change. Employee commitment to organizational objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to organizational performance (Shahid et al., 2013). Organizational transformational activities at times create misalignments between work expectations and individual definitions of self as related to work (Williamsson, Eriksson, & Dellve, 2016). When alignment does not exist within interactions with differing areas of an organization regarding a change, resistance to the change occurs (Latta, 2015). The business leader participants in my study focused attention on the continuous improvement of current processes rather than the undertaking of a new system that would need change management using human resource practices beyond what they were already using. This displayed a slightly different practice than the ones discussed in the literature regarding the use of employee motivation to manage change. The organizations had strong goal alignment and human resource practices, but

specifically regarding the implementation of Baldrige Criteria for Performance

Excellence, the business leaders used practices to focus away from the change by

highlighting incremental improvements in native systems. One way to reduce the

resistance to change is to focus efforts on the people (Beal et al., 2013). Business

managers can mitigate the resistance to change by managing human resources practices

(Yon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014). A key to systemic change is to maintain the motivation of

team members for the duration of the initiatives (Harrison & Rouse, 2015). One of the

main components of a high-performance work system is reinforcement through

appropriately used punishment and rewards (Duarte et al., 2013). The achievement of

improved organizational results is a direct result of the linkage of organizational rewards

to work performance (Hamukwaya et al., 2014). Attitudes towards change are more

positive when leaders keep individuals informed, consult with them for input, and

provide them with participatory roles (Yilmaz, Ozgen, & Akyel, 2013). The business

leaders included in the study lessened the change management scope of implementing the

Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence by minimizing the initiative impacts

through less obtrusive measures. The business leaders molded the practices discussed in

the literature when implementing this particular model by meshing the Baldrige Criteria

for Performance Excellence into the native business practices rather than focus on the

efforts needed to manage a large buy-in to a major change.

The organizational practices I identified by analyzing data aligned with the

literature I found about the successful management of continuous improvement in an

organizational transformation. Continuous improvement is a management strategy that

includes incremental change to improve processes, products, and services (Singh &

Singh, 2015). Two fundamental elements are involved: (a) a drive for continual progress

with specified actions controlled by a systematic process; and (b) the creation of a

continuous improvement culture within the workforce (Clark, Silvester, & Knowles,

2013). In both of the organizations in my study, I witnessed strong cultures of systematic

improvement. Transformational leaders create the stage for organizational performance

by indirectly affecting goal clarity as well as the culture of the organization (Belle, 2013).

A direct link exists between organizational performance and transformational activities

that stimulate learning and innovation through various means of employee engagement

(Noruzy, Dalfard, Azhdari, Nazari-Shirkouhi, & Rezazadeh, 2013). Transformational

leadership activities create the perception of procedural justice and influence individual

commitment to the organization (Gumusluoglu, Karakitapoglu-Aygun, & Hirst, 2013).

In both organizations, the leadership successfully completed the transformation by

creating the perception that they were completing incremental improvement changes

rather than holistic transformational initiatives to mitigate change management buy-in.

This finding was consistent with my conceptual framework in that the executive

business leaders were continuously striving to improve the performance of their

organizations in order to remain competitive. They did so by implementing a business

excellence model. Employee commitment to the objectives and effective participation as

a team member are essential to organizational performance (Shahid & Azhar, 2013).

Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to stimulate the coordination,

knowledge sharing, and a culture of productivity needed for successful change

implementations (Bolton, Brunnermeier, & Veldkamp, 2013). The business leaders of both organizations recognized this and had strong systems in place to align and drive improvement efforts.

Theme 2: Business Leaders Used Robust Strategy Deployment Systems with Accountability for Action Plans to Spread the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence

Business leaders within the organizations used robust strategy deployment systems with accountability for action plans to spread the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to develop it as the business model throughout. Leaders in both organizations used a well-deployed and controlled strategy to implement the incremental changes through action plans aligned with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence model. The organizational leaders aligned the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence model into the native structure of goals and action plans. One of the organizations did not have a fully developed strategic planning and deployment process initially. The business leaders within this organization stated in response to the interview that they realized its importance and worked to implement that system prior to taking on the full gamut of alignment initiatives.

The executive business leaders of both organizations described systems and processes that aligned with the practices explained in the literature. The business leaders in both organizations described their use of the strategic plan to drive action alignment. Business leaders in both organizations stated that they molded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into improvement action plans within the strategic plan and

deployed through the system. In each organization, the business leaders stated that they

directly linked the success of the implementation to their string strategic plan deployment

capabilities. Participant B2 stated that the business leaders used the strategy deployment

process to drive Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence implementations.

Participant A1 affirmed that business leaders developed a strategic deployment process as

part of the implementation efforts and used the process to drive Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence alignment. Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to

stimulate the coordination, knowledge sharing, and a culture of productivity needed for

successful change implementations (Bolton et al., 2013). Work units and individuals

within an organization must align and work together when implementing best practices to

achieve overall goals (Kaiser, Arbi, & Ahlemann, 2015). Business leaders in both

organizations discussed and displayed performance management systems and metrics to

support achievement of the strategic plan. Participants B2 and B3 displayed how the

strategic plan directly linked to performance measures throughout the organization.

Participant A3 affirmed that accomplishment of the strategic objectives comprised the

majority of performance metrics. Leadership, management, and productivity systems lay

the foundation for organizational success (Brown, Holland, Bokowy, & Horblyuk, 2013).

These performance management systems create an important connection between the

mission, vision, goals, and objectives of the organization and enable it to serve better its

target community, which serves as the foundation for the organization to exist (Bryson,

2012). Performance metrics in operational processes are imperative to translate strategy

into action (Groen, Wouters, & Wilderom, 2016). Mom et al. (2015) stated that this

cohesiveness results in cooperative progress towards the common goals and brings the organization together in a shared direction. Goal alignment has two major effects on organizational performance: (a) it allows employees to understand their role in the strategy of the organization through their daily activities, and (b) the alignment of goals promotes the activities needed to support the strategic plan (Ayers, 2015).

One area was evident in practice that did not align with some of the literature. The executive leaders in both organizations discussed in detail and displayed the positive effects of using a balanced scorecard system. This system was the foundation tool used by both organizations to drive alignment of staff activities toward strategy achievement. Although in alignment with much of the literature, I found descriptions in the literature that contained negative feedback of the balanced scorecard system. There is high criticism for management use of measurement systems such as the BSC because of loose connectivity and lack of critical transparency between the four perspectives of the model (Hoque, 2014). The BSC in real practice does not ensure the identification of all relationship correlations in the key performance indicators (Janes & Faganel, 2013). Additionally, use of the BSC to gain formal control, along with service commitments to clients, may decrease the commitment to workload completion (Antonsen, 2014). Although the literature suggested these negative aspects of the BSC, business leaders in both organizations showed the use of the BSC was beneficial to the alignment of activities to include strategic, operational, and transformational.

As with the first finding, this finding was consistent with the conceptual framework in that the executive business leaders were continuously striving to improve

the performance of their organizations to remain competitive by implementing a business excellence model. Employee commitment to the objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to organizational performance (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to stimulate the coordination, knowledge sharing, and a culture of productivity needed for successful change implementations (Bolton, Brunnermeier, & Veldkamp, 2013). The business leaders of both organizations recognized this and had strong systems of aligning and driving improvement efforts through deployment of the strategic plan.

Theme 3: Business Leaders Did Not Specifically State Strategic Goals to Align to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence

Business leaders within the organizations did not specifically create strategic goals to align with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The leaders instead, aligned the native organizational strategic goals to the business model of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. In alignment with the other themes, business leaders in both organizations embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into the current verbiage and practices rather than focus on a separate item. Business leaders within both organizations faced initial trouble with the acceptance and buy-in from staff to take on the efforts needed to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Organizational transformational activities at times create misalignments between work expectations and individual definitions of self as related to work (Williamsson, Eriksson, & Dellve, 2016). When alignment does not exist within interactions with differing areas of an organization regarding a change, resistance to the

change occurs (Latta, 2015). In both instances, the business leaders mitigated this resistance by systematically improving current processes, goals, and action plans using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence structure as a model. One executive business leader in the sample population stated within the interview response that the top 5 executives maintain knowledge of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence and use that knowledge to mold the structure and contents of process steps into current systems at the time of strategic process improvement. The business leaders used this practice instead of developing new practices and verbiage for the staff to adopt. Participants A2 and B2 discussed how the business leaders molded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into the current business format and verbiage. The business leaders used this practice to successfully manage changes and align the workforce to complete the implementations, almost without being aware of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence at all.

This theme coordinates with the literature regarding the drive of transformational activities using systematic improvements. Business managers can define continuous improvement as a grouping of activities in a process that drives improvements in other processes (Ali, Islam, & Howe, 2013). In these instances, the strategic plan aligns to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence without separating alignment as an individual item to attain. Business leaders in both organizations used this practice to link the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to the native functional reasons for the organization to exist rather than identify it as a separate entity. Performance management systems create an important connection between the mission,

vision, goals, and objectives of the organization and enable it to serve better its target community, which serves as the foundation for the organization to exist (Bryson, 2012).

This finding was consistent with the conceptual framework in that the executive business leaders were continuously striving to improve the performance of their organizations to remain competitive by implementing a business excellence model. Employee commitment to the objectives and effective participation as a team member are essential to organizational performance (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Appropriate and aligned incentives are necessary to stimulate the coordination, knowledge sharing, and a culture of productivity needed for successful change implementations (Bolton, Brunnermeier, & Veldkamp, 2013). The business leaders of both organizations recognized this and had strong systems of aligning and driving improvement efforts by embedding the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into other goals and deploying through the strategic plan.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings revealed in the study have two main areas of positive influence in business practice: (a) The additional information available to organizations considering the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence provides a proven method to help them succeed; (b) The increased amount of successes in implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence may stimulate an increase in the number of organizations who start the journey to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, further expanding its reach of positive influence on the American economy.

The themes provide application guidelines for future business leaders to use in the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. When combining the themes into practice processes, an organization could align current strategic goals and action plans to the Baldrige framework provided by the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence without changing the current structure or native verbiage. Combining the themes into practice would promote the adoption of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence as a business model without the need for additional cultural acceptance of change due the embedding into current business structure. Through the combined practices, the business leaders could align the organization to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence by spreading it through the strategic plan deployment, reinforcing the infrastructure of the organization with the proven foundation that the Baldrige Criteria provides. A successful alignment with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence may bring the organization the many benefits that are common in aligned organizations.

Both organizations successfully transformed by implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence by embedding the criteria into the native organizational systems. Embedding the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into current structures required less struggle to create the buy-in and motivation of the staff to adopt. This finding has the potential for development into a new method for businesses to complete transformations, whether a relationship to the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence exists. Additionally, both organizations completed their transformations by deploying the changes through robust strategic systems, without

specific mention of the transformation within the strategic goals. This finding

highlighted a possible future transformation technique for business leaders to use in

deploying transformational programs with a lessened need for change management

techniques to stimulate adoption of the changes. This method of deployment with the

lack of stated alignment goals may assist organizations in their development of a stronger

foundation business model without the need to create buy-in to the Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence. This method of deployment may lessen the resistance to accept

the change by taking out the stigma associated with a performance award system.

Implications for Social Change

Organizations that have successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for

Performance Excellence experience (a) increased ability to align and provide value to

their customers and stakeholders, (b) improved capabilities and effectiveness in

accomplishing goals, and (c) increased workforce and organizational knowledge (U.S.

Department of Commerce, 2013b). Nationally, this translates to overall organizational

performance enhancements and results, as well as the identification and dissemination of

best practices throughout the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013b).

Increasing the number of organizations that successfully implement the Baldrige Criteria

for Performance Excellence will further enhance the positive effects on the U.S.

economy. Improvements in the U.S. economy can lead to positive implications for

society such as increased number of available jobs (U.S. Department of Commerce,

2013a). The findings positively influence changes by providing a proven method to help

organizations succeed in the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance

Excellence, which may stimulate an increased amount of organizations who start the journey to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, further expanding its reach of positive influence on the American economy. Adoption of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence leads to improved performance and alignment with customer and industry needs (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013d). The main goal of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program is to improve competitiveness. Improving the competitiveness of these organizations will enable them to reach new markets and offer competitive American products and services to the population of low-income countries. Identification of strategies that are successfully working in practice will help future organizations overcome complacency and implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence by aligning with the top benchmarks identified within the scope of this study. Aggregated data published by the U.S. Department of Commerce suggests that organizations who have successfully implemented the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence increase their median growth in revenue, increase their median job growth and reduce unemployment, attain a substantial return on investment, and increase their rates of donated services back to the community (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2013a).

Recommendations for Action

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to identify strategies that have worked to stimulate successful alignment with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The themes identified provide application guidelines for future business leaders to use in the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

When combining the themes into practice processes, it would be feasible for an organization to align current strategic goals and action plans to the model provided by the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence without changing the current structure or native verbiage. This action would promote the adoption of the business model without the need for additional cultural acceptance of change due the embedding into current business structure.

Many groups should pay attention to the results of this study because of the potential benefits gained. These groups include organizations who are currently implementing or those that are exploring the possibility of implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, the consultants in the field of assisting organizations with the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, the national and state level performance excellence system administrators such as the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program and the Quality Texas Foundation, and any of the previously mentioned groups using another system of performance excellence other than the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The awareness and implementation of the practices stemming from the results of this study will disseminate the information naturally via benchmarked best practices, the nature of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I will disseminate the study findings via publication of the study, as well as professional dissemination of the information in my efforts with the Quality Texas Foundation, the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, my professional work efforts with my employer, and my consulting and teaching efforts both academically and in professional settings.

Recommendations for Further Research

Limitations are factors that highlight weakness within the study (Simon, 2011).

The primary limiting factor in this qualitative study was the case study design. This

design could have led to high-level data that did not identify granular detailed findings or

conclusions. I used open-ended questions to capture open details from the participants,

however further research based on the findings of this study may be beneficial using a

phenomenological approach to detail the understanding at a more granular level. Further

study with a phenomenological design may enable insights into the individuals'

experiences within any phenomenon identified from their perspective. Capturing the

individual experience in the natural environment would enable the researcher to describe

and translate the occurrences (Sergi & Hallin, 2011).

The other possible limitations discussed in the proposal did not have impact on

the outcome of this study; however, future researchers should consider for future studies.

The first possible limitation detailed was the possibility of restrictive organizational

policies that may limit the ability to gather detail. A future researcher could mitigate this

by securing confirmation and commitment from the organizational leaders prior to

conducting the study, which is a current step in the study process. If the organization

initially selected has such restrictive policies, the number of possible other organizations

is large enough to mitigate the effects of this limitation. The last possible limitation

identified was the number of organizations available from which to gather participants.

Although technically a limiting factor, many organizations throughout the United States

of America may meet the selection criteria if the scope of sample participant is broad enough.

Reflections

I have endeavored a great learning experience within the DBA process. I have expanded and further solidified my understanding of implementing the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, specifically my knowledge on successful strategies to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. I took many actions to limit my personal bias within the scope of this study. I used well-planned, open-ended questions in an interview protocol and documented all responses verbatim. Planning interview questions well helps limit personal bias (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). In addition, open-ended questions enable participants to respond in their own words (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I also used member checking to limit my bias and maintain quality during this qualitative research (Reilly, 2013). Members ensure that the data accurately reflect their contribution (Perkins, Columna, Lieberman, & Bailey, 2013). I used an interview protocol to maintain direction and limit my personal bias during the process (De Ceunynck et al., 2013).

My thinking on the topic of implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence has changed since completion of the study. The main area of change for me resides in the change management technique that both organizations shared. In both cases, the management staff mitigated the resistance to this project by embedding the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into the organizations framework and verbiage rather than change the organization to its verbiage and basic

structure. In a sense, the management hid the effort so that the staff would not be aware of the presence of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. This allowed the organizations to strengthen their framework without having to retrain or familiarize staff to the structure and verbiage of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.

Conclusion

Only a small portion of businesses adopt the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies that executive business leaders use to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The population of the study consisted of 6 business executives and 2 organizations, all with implementation experience of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. The high performance work systems provided a conceptual framework of the study. I captured data using interviews and record reviews within the organizations. I used inductive analysis to analyze data and identify words, phrases, ideas, and actions consistent among participants and organizations to identify patterns and themes. I used triangulation of sources between the interview and record review data for consistency. Three main themes morphed from the study; business leaders embedded the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence into the native work models, business leaders used robust strategy deployment systems with accountability for action plans to spread the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, and business leaders did not specifically state strategic goals to align with the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. Expansion of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence can stimulate positive influence on the American economy.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Introduction: Welcome the participant and explain that the scope of the interview is to collect data regarding the main research question and sub-questions.

Main Research Question: What strategies do executive business leaders use to implement the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to enhance organizational performance?

Interview Questions:
1. What alignment activities for the Baldrige Criteria are deployed to managers?
2. What are the incentives used to drive completion of Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?
3. What aspects of the Baldrige Criteria alignment projects are stated within the strategic plan?
4. What formalized action plans are created to show accountability for the implementation of specific Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?
5. What performance measurement and management systems are used to drive Baldrige Criteria alignment?
6. What effects does the success or failure of implementing a Baldrige Criteria alignment project have on the accountable managers?
7. What instruments and procedures do you use to tie the evaluation scores to tangible rewards, intangible rewards, tangible consequences, or intangible consequences?
8. What tools, processes, and methodologies do you use to implement the Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?
9. What is the process for assigning resources to and budgeting for specific Baldrige Criteria alignment projects?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding the strategies used in the implementation of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence?

Interview Close: Thank the participant

Schedule Follow-Up Session: Follow-Up session for further clarification as well as Member Checking Session.

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

Letter of Cooperation

Organization
Address

Contact Information

Date

Dear Nathan Lawrence,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Driving Strategies in Performance Excellence within 'organization'. As part of this study, I authorize you to select and interview participant individuals regarding the strategies used to drive performance excellence implementation, and review supporting records regarding the same. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Access to selected individuals for interview, minor usage of rooms and clerical resources for records review, and access to individuals that can assist with obtaining the needed records. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.
I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Appendix C: Permissions for Figures

Figure 1 Permission:

We are inclined to grant permission of the use of our copyrighted "figure image".

Regards,

Contract Specialist
Balanced Scorecard Institute
a Strategy Management Group company
www.balancedscorecard.org

Figure 2 Permission:

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program permits use of the graphic for educational purposes.

Sincerely,

Baldrige Customer Service
Baldrige Performance Excellence Program
National Institute of Standards and Technology