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Effect of Leadership Development Programs in the Workplace: Strategies for Human Resource Managers

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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2017

Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2012

BS, San Jose State University, 2009

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Business leaders face the challenge of developing their employees to assume leadership positions within their organizations. However, business leaders devote less than 10% of their time to developing employee leadership capabilities through leadership development programs, resulting in poor leadership development programs designed to prepare employees to assume leadership positions. Using transformational leadership theory, the purpose of this multicase study was to explore strategies that human resource managers use to improve their employee leadership development programs. Participants were purposefully selected for their experience improving employee leadership development programs in organizations in Silicon Valley. Data were collected via semistructured interviews over Skype with 3 human resource managers and a review of organizational documents related to the improvement of leadership development programs. Data were analyzed using methodological triangulation through inductive coding of phrases and words. Three themes emerged from this study: CEO involvement was paramount for leadership development program success; fostering a learning organizational culture promotes innovation, engagement, and trust; and training is most successful when completed as a series. The implications for positive social change include the development of local and global leaders empowered to address larger problems, including homelessness, disease, lack of cultural acceptance, and environmental sustainability.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to several individuals. First, and foremost, my mother and father. You both sacrificed 9 years driving Ricky and me 30 miles one way to enroll in a better school district. Both of you instilled the importance of education so Ricky and I would have better opportunities afterwards. I wouldn't be here without the two of you, biologically and mentally, and for that, I thank you. And let's be honest, you helped pay for this program!

To my grandma, Maria Guadalupe "Mama Lupe" Flores who passed away in 1996, this is for you. Not a day goes by that I don't think about you and what you meant to me, the Flores family, and your role in helping me grow into the man I am today. Siempre te querré y espero verla cuando me toque irme a mí.

Seldom mentioned but also very important, my grandma and grandpa, Herlinda and Jesus Quinonez. After spending 9 years of my life going to their house after school, the bond we built is unbreakable. Los dos siempre me han apoyado y me han dado el amor para seguir con mis estudios. Los quiero mucho!

Although no longer existent, The National Hispanic University (NHU) provided me the platform to continue my education, while making me realize I could make a difference in my community. I acquired an incredible amount of knowledge through my 5 years of employment with NHU. Moreover, I uncovered my true passion of supporting my fellow Hispanics and Latinos in pursuing higher education. Thank you for what you did for my career, life, and for that amazing tuition discount!

Last, but definitely not least, my amazing wife Natalie. September 2, 2016 marked the first day of the rest of our lives, as we got married. To think we started dating when I was one year into my program and you were just applying to your graduate program at CSU – East Bay. How time flies! You've been my best friend and strongest advocate, and pushed me to finish my DBA sooner than later. I love you for all that you are, all you've done for me, and all you'll do with me as we continue our lives and eventually throw some babies into the mix! This moment wouldn't mean the same without you.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me through this integral phase of my life. You all pushed me to my limit and made me realize anything is achievable. This study is dedicated to you and I hope this inspires you to push your own boundaries!

Acknowledgments

Throughout my entire educational career at Walden University, two people inspired me the most. First off, Dr. Marilyn Taylor. Your support and encouragement throughout the entire M.S. in Leadership program was unforgettable. Your positive attitude was the reason I worked hard every day in the program. Moreover, because of you, I became inspired to continue towards pursuing my DBA.

This leads me to my second acknowledgement, Dr. Jorge Gaytan. Words cannot describe how you saved me from myself during a dark time in the DBA program. However, when I saw how supportive you were, I knew I made the right choice changing mentors. Yes, I’m sure I contributed to some grey hairs or hair loss, but I’m sure it was worth it! Your inspiration, selflessness, encouragement, and timely feedback helped me get back on track to completing my DBA. Thank you for everything. This study is a reflection of our hard work! Finally, I would like to thank my second committee member, Dr. Mary Dereshiwsky, and my URR, Dr. Gergana Velkova, for their valuable contributions to my study.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Business owners employ effective leaders to achieve sustainability and organizational success by reducing employee turnover and increasing organizational trust and employee satisfaction (Jones, 2012). The investment in employees has low upfront costs and high residual effects (Sharma, Pande, Dwivedi, & Mohapatra, 2011). Many business owners lack knowledge of leadership development programs (LDPs) to develop their leaders (Packard & Jones, 2015). The purpose of this study is to explore strategies that human resource managers have used to develop and implement LDPs successfully.

Background of the Problem

The United States is experiencing a lack of leaders in many areas of society (Virakul & McLean, 2012). In the business world, owners of business organizations are facing significant difficulties in finding leaders for their organizations because of high turnover rates due to retirement (Jalal & Prezas, 2012; Levanon, Cheng, & Paterra, 2014), dissatisfaction, and other factors (U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, 2015). Adding complexity to this problem, business owners have limited budgets (Estrada & Connely, 2015) and a lack of time and support to develop and implement LDPs (The Bureau of National Affairs, 2012). Business owners are facing rapid changes in a technological and globally competitive environment requiring effective leadership skills (Abrell, Rowold, Weibler, & Moenninghoff, 2011). Moreover, business owners continue to explore innovative ways to increase sustainability and profitability (Bosch-Badia, Montllor-Serrats, & Tarrazon-Rodon, 2015). LDPs present an opportunity for human resource (HR) managers to develop effective leaders able to make significant contributions to organizational success. The focus of this study was to explore the strategies that human resource managers use to improve their LDPs.

Problem Statement

Business leaders face the challenge of developing their employees to assume leadership positions within their organizations (Freeman & Siegfried, 2015). Business leaders devote less than 10% of their time to developing employee leadership capabilities through LDPs, resulting in poor LDPs (Winn, 2014). The general business problem is that some business leaders do not devote sufficient time to developing employees to assume leadership positions through LDPs within their organizations. The specific business problem is that some HR managers lack strategies to improve their LDPs.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. The sample population consisted of HR managers from Silicon Valley who had developed and implemented strategies for leadership development successfully. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to contribute to the betterment of their local communities and economies. For instance, leaders may use the results of this study to improve leadership development practices in their organizations, including recommendations to develop improved strategies for more effective and efficient LDPs in community-based organizations. Finally, leaders may use the results of this study to develop the next generation of local and global leaders to address larger problems, including homelessness, disease, lack of cultural acceptance, and environmental sustainability.

Nature of the Study

Three types of research methodologies exist: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Researchers use the quantitative methodology when generating numerical measures to compare, rank, and select data to support decision-making processes (Thamhain, 2014). Because I am not generating numerical measures, the quantitative methodology was not suitable for my study. Although researchers use mixed methods methodology to bring meaning to complex social phenomena, a mixed methods approach presents challenges for novice researchers because of the lack of consensus on design, integration, rigor, and writing (Greenwood & Terry, 2012). For these reasons, I did not select a mixed methods methodology for my study.

The qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to explore the *why* and *how* during the research process (Yin, 2014). In addition, the qualitative research methodology involves using multiple techniques to collect data, such as personal interviews, observations, and review of documentation (Yin, 2014). These qualitative research characteristics were consistent with the purpose of my study because I used multiple data collection techniques to explore strategies that some HR managers used to improve their LDPs. For these reasons, I selected a qualitative research methodology for my study.

I selected a descriptive multicase study research design for this study. Researchers using the multicase research design employ a variety of instruments to collect data, including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014). Researchers use a phenomenological research design when focusing on people-in-society settings and identifying participant perceptions of their own life experiences (Wilson, 2012), which was not the focus of my study. An ethnographic research design was synonymous with prolonged participant observation for data collection purposes (Gelling, 2014; Simpson, Slutskaya, Hughes, & Simpson, 2014), where researchers engage in the participants' lives.

In contrast, a case study research design allows a researcher to collect data impartially from real-life scenarios and ask questions related to *how* and *what* in nature (Yin, 2014). Researchers using the multicase research design increase the likelihood of obtaining strong results and powerful conclusions and demonstrating the researcher's ability to do empirical work (Yin, 2014). The ability to develop a strong study makes the multicase study approach ideal for this study. My goal was to explore strategies that some HR managers have used to improve their LDPs.

Research Question

The overarching research question was as follows: What strategies do human resource managers use to improve their LDPs?

Interview Questions

I used the questions below in semistructured Skype interviews with leaders to collect data.

1. What strategies did you use to motivate your employees to participate in your LDP?
2. Were the outcomes of the LDP you developed fulfilled in the way you originally intended? If so, how?
3. How did information presented in the LDP change the way your employees perceived and completed objectives?
4. Did participants generate new innovative ideas from the LDP? If so, please provide examples.
5. What perceptions did you have of your employees prior to participation in the LDP?
6. Did your perceptions change after the employees completed the LDP?
7. How did LDPs contribute to your employees' leadership potential?
8. What strategies did you use to demonstrate the value that LDPs offer your employees and organization?
9. What barriers/challenges did you encounter when trying to develop and implement LDPs in your organization?
10. What strategies proved successful in developing and implementing the LDP in your organization?

11. What recommendations do you have for other business owners to develop and implement LDPs successfully?
12. In which ways, if any, did the employees become motivated upon completion of the LDP?
13. How did you fund the LDP in your organization?
14. What other factors not mentioned contributed to the success of your LDP?

Conceptual Framework

I used transformational leadership (TL) theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Burns developed TL theory in 1978, and Bass expanded TL theory 7 years later. Burns (1978) asserted that individuals using TL theory become empowered to casually force change that inspires others. Bass (1985) added that leaders using TL theory inspire employees to look past their self-interests for the benefit of the group by meeting their emotional needs or through intellectual stimulation. Understanding TL theory was beneficial to leaders facing challenges and changing environments (Yang, 2014). Therefore, employing TL theory in LDPs may help HR managers develop their employees’ leadership skills to address future obstacles and respond to challenges more effectively.

Constructs within TL theory are similar to outcomes of LDPs. Key constructs of the TL theory include: (a) Idealized influence, including attributes and behaviors, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) individualized consideration, and (d) intellectual stimulation (Abrell et al., 2011). Outcomes of LDPs include fostering team development, increasing knowledge of technical and financial aspects of an organization, promoting career development for young professionals, and developing leadership skills (Brown, Garnjost, & Heilmann, 2011). A key aspect of TL theory was that leaders with charisma engage individuals in meeting a shared goal effectively. Outcomes of the TL theory include increased employee engagement and empowerment, reduced employee turnover rate, increased profits via innovation, increased competitive advantage, decreased training costs, and increased environmental, corporate, and economic sustainability (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2012). As applied to this study, I employed TL theory to explore strategies that some HR managers used to improve their LDPs.

Definition of Terms

Some terms that I used in my study may not mean the same thing to all readers. I defined the following terms that I used in this study:

Coaching: Coaching is the process of finding agency and empowerment through a series of learning dialogues (Armstrong, 2012).

Mentoring: Mentoring is the relationship between an aspiring individual and an experienced and knowledgeable individual (Wakahiu, 2013).

Servant leadership: Servant leadership refers to the belief in serving others; leaders develop followers into future leaders to help their companies succeed (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to acting responsibly to limit an organization’s environmental footprint and forcing leaders to contribute to a sustainable future (Pless et al., 2012).

Transactional leadership: Transactional leadership occurs when leaders reward their subordinates for effort or correct subordinate behavior (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership: TL refers to a leader's empowering of employees to look past their self-interests to that of the group, leading to a shared vision and employee performance beyond expectations (Abrell et al., 2011).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In this section, I presented a discussion of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations made in this study. Assumptions are specific beliefs about a study that the researcher believes to be valid or true or for the purpose of that study (Burnes, Wood, Inman, & Welikson, 2013). Research limitations are generally issues out of the researcher's control and contribute to a study's weaknesses (Simon, 2011). Delimitations are imposed boundaries (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) or ranges set by the researcher (Włodarczyk, 2014).

Assumptions

I made four assumptions throughout this study. The first assumption was that participants were honest and provided reliable answers throughout the interview process. The second assumption was that the sample size represents the larger target population of HR managers. The third assumption was that the interview questions encompass critical elements to help me address the business problem in this study. The fourth assumption was that the articles within the literature review included an accurate description of the state and gaps within LDP research.

Limitations

I identified four limitations in this study. The first limitation involves this study's design and methodology. By selecting a qualitative research method, the drawback involves room for misinterpretation (Cutcliffe & Harder, 2012), resulting from lack of clarifying questions, gauging questions, or committing basic human errors. The mixed methods research methodology was another design option but requires researchers be well-versed in qualitative and quantitative research (Parylo, 2012). Employing a mixed methods approach involves statistical interpretative analysis (Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2013), both with which I have no experience. Finally, researchers use a quantitative approach to test a hypothesis using data-driven evidence (Tsang, 2013). Because I am not testing a hypothesis, neither the mixed methods nor the quantitative research approaches apply to my study.

The second limitation of my study involves the sample size. Although the population was composed of HR managers, interviewing only three of them limits the generalizability of results. The third limitation was that varying industries may affect the role HR managers have in developing and implementing LDPs. The fourth and final limitation relates to the nature of the form in which HR managers deliver LDPs in each organization and the timeframe used, which could skew results of this study.

Delimitations

A researcher establishes delimitations to narrow the scope of a study (Rusly, Corner, & Sun, 2012). I addressed delimitations by targeting HR managers in the Silicon Valley. I reached data saturation by interviewing three participants until no new themes emerge. Results from my study may differ depending on the industries, organizational cultures, and geographic location of the organizations. Rusly et al. (2012) stated that the researcher should use delimitations to narrow the study scope by stipulating areas that were not included in the study. The target population in this study includes one organization in Virginia and as many participants as possible until I reach data saturation or redundancy. The outcome of the research might be different if I included multiple organizations throughout the United States or internationally.

Significance of Study

Individuals demonstrating leadership characteristics are essential to business and society because they respond to challenges effectively (Seki & Holt, 2012). The shortage of effective leaders in many areas of society was another concern (Kaufman, Rateau, Carter, & Strickland, 2012). This study has value to business owners striving to develop and implement LDPs within their organizations. Understanding and promoting the value of LDPs may provide business owners with a roadmap for the successful development and implementation of LDPs within their organizations and communities.

Several factors play an important role in employees developing or enhancing their leadership capabilities. Professional development, training, and advancement increase employee satisfaction, effort, and perceived effectiveness of leaders (Kim, 2012; MacKie, 2014). LDP participants may expand their skill base and knowledge (Mirocha, Bents, LaBrosse, & Rietow, 2013), resulting in reduced costs associated with employee turnover (Kwon & Rupp, 2013) of up to five times an employee's salary (Kimeldorf, 2013; Wang, 2013). As an organizational benefit, employee participation in LDPs can lead to increased sustainability via innovative thinking, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and risk-taking dispositions (Juanmei, Yueru, Weibo, & Bing, 2014; Mirocha et al., 2013). Leaders use LDPs to gain a better understanding of cultural and societal issues (Tuleja, 2014). Employees participating in LDPs may develop skills useful to respond to problems and issues at the local, national, or global level.

Leaders may use the results of this study to learn about leadership development (LD) that may translate into learning about their potential effect on their communities and addressing local or global societal problems, epidemics, or other community-based issues. Effective leaders can transform the world through effective communication across cultures, addressing global trends (Seki & Holt, 2012). Contributions from this study to society may include the creation of more LDPs in local schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations to develop leaders empowered to address larger community problems, including homelessness, environmental sustainability, and cultural acceptance. Global leaders must also understand ambiguous situations and challenges to be successful (Popescu, 2013). Individuals learning about their leadership potential, ability to influence others, and interests in the welfare of others contribute to social change (Yin, Leong, & Fischer, 2011).

Review of Related Literature

My literature review encompassed topics related to TL theory and LDPs found in books, journals, government websites and reports, and other peer-reviewed sources. I used the following databases to obtain literature for this study: Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, SAGE Knowledge, SAGE

Research Methods Online, and SAGE Premier. Moreover, I conducted several searches within Walden University's library using combinations of keywords including: *charismatic leaders*, *TL*, *servant leadership*, *transactional leadership*, *leadership development*, *leadership development program*, *cost*, *benefits*, *drawbacks*, *leadership theories*, *mentoring*, *coaching*, *employee turnover*, *talent management*, and *business performance*. Of the 333 references used in this study, 99% (328) were peer-reviewed references. The literature review section contains 97% peer-reviewed references. Furthermore, 89% of the references in this study were published within 5 years (2013–2017) of receiving approval from Walden University's chief academic officer (CAO) for graduation. The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. In this study, I interviewed three HR managers to understand their experiences regarding the way LDPs positively affected organizational and individual employee performance.

The first section of this literature review includes the application to the applied business problem. The next section includes a discussion of the TL theory, followed by a review of research studies that have used TL theory in LDPs. Then, I present a discussion about contrasting leadership theories, including charismatic, transactional, and servant theories. Following this section, I discuss the types of LDPs and the cost savings of LDPs. I present information to help readers gain an insight into the importance of LDPs and how business owners can successfully develop and implement LDPs. Exploring how researchers used TL theory in LDPs successfully was the main focal point in this literature review.

Application to the Applied Business Problem

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. I collected data from three HR managers located in Silicon Valley who had developed and implemented LDPs successfully. My goal was to demonstrate how HR managers benefitted from LDPs, which could encourage business owners to invest in LDPs within their organization.

Managers and executives concur that LDPs generate a positive effect on leaders and organizations (Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, & Steed, 2012). LDPs are experiential in nature, combine experience with learning, and are supported by decades of literature (Brown et al., 2011). However, extensive research on the evaluation of LDPs was lacking (Abrell et al., 2011) and, consequently, brings into question the true effect LDPs have on organizational and individual performance. LDPs serve multiple purposes that require organizations to cater to the needs of the business.

When coupled with business strategies and support from senior-level management, LDPs have a positive effect on an organization' success. Business leaders use LDPs to develop and foster a culture in which leaders and employees value LD, tailoring LDPs to an individual's needs (Mirocha et al., 2013). Effective LDPs also result from collaboration between academics and practitioners (Hite, Nandedkar, Mercer, & Martin, 2014). The U.S. Army emphasizes LD, requiring it for promotions into positions of leadership (Kirchner & Akdere, 2014). Its approach includes training and development, organizational development, and career development (Kirchner & Akdere, 2014). Making LDPs a requirement for promotion emphasizes their importance while reinforcing the need to develop leaders within the organization.

Several factors play an important role in the development and enhancement of employees' leadership capabilities. Professional development, training, and advancement increase employee satisfaction, effort, and perceived effectiveness of leaders (Kim, 2012; MacKie, 2014). LDP participants may expand their skill base and knowledge (Mirocha et al., 2013), resulting in reduced costs associated with employee turnover (Kwon & Rupp, 2013) of up to five times an employee's salary (Kimeldorf, 2013; Wang, 2013). As an organizational benefit, employee participation in LDPs can lead to increased sustainability via innovative thinking, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and risk-taking dispositions (Juanmei et al., 2014; Mirocha et al., 2013). Leaders use LDPs to gain a better understanding of cultural and societal issues (Tuleja, 2014). Employees participating in LDPs may develop skills useful to respond to problems and issues at the local, national, or global level.

Results from this study may contribute to individuals learning about their leadership potential and potential influence on societal change within their local communities. Effective leaders can transform the world through effective communication across cultures, addressing global trends (Seki & Holt, 2012). Leaders may also use this study to learn how leadership development can contribute to addressing local or global societal problems, epidemics, or other community-based issues. Lastly, there may be a larger investment toward developing and implementing LDPs in local schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations to address larger community problems, including homelessness, environmental sustainability, or cultural acceptance.

Transformational Leadership Theory

In this section, I present a discussion of TL theory, which was the theory I selected as the conceptual framework for this study. Tenants of TL theory include empowering individuals, promoting change, and inspiring individuals and leaders to look past their self-interests by establishing an emotional connection or intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders' standards of ethical and moral conduct are also very high (Effelsberg & Solga, 2015; Schuh, Zhang, & Tian, 2013). The effectiveness of transformational leaders requires acting ethically in all situations.

The TL theory is a powerful tool to help achieve positive business results. Strong leadership increases the likelihood of outperforming competition by 13 times in key bottom-line business results, such as profits (Tonvongval, 2013). Leaders take action to empower followers and achieve important objectives (Wu & Wang, 2012). Followers also tend to do more than initially expected (Brown, 2014), particularly when the leader stimulates and encourages them (Gillet & Vandenberge, 2014). As specified within TL, employee empowerment was a means to achieve an organization's ultimate goals.

As the single most studied and debated idea within the leadership field (McClesky, 2014), notoriety and several questions emerge from TL theory. Transformational leaders help inspire, energize, and intellectually stimulate employees via forming optimal relationships and working towards a shared goal (Bass, 1990). This process results from leaders raising employees' morals, values, and ideals while promoting changes in individuals, groups, and organizations as a whole (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Transformational leaders also attempt to influence and engage customers and subordinates (Brown, 2014). Within this theory, leaders look past their self-interest and focus on the interest of the group.

Different from the charismatic leader's relationship with followers, transformational leaders hold emotional connections with employees, striving to meet their needs and encouraging development (Bass, 1990). Residual effects of employing TL include increased trust, motivation, engagement, collaboration, and contribution of positive business results. Researchers also linked TL theory to job satisfaction, leader admiration, and follower loyalty (Yang, 2014). Intellectual stimulation is another key characteristic of TL theory that promotes employee development and understanding.

Key to TL theory, *idealized influence* occurs when followers identify themselves with their leaders and organizations (Shih et al., 2012). Leaders also exhibit characteristics including charisma and high ethical and moral behaviors (Sosik, Chun, Blair, & Fitzgerald, 2014). Outcomes of idealized influence include increased employee trust towards the leader, high empathy and charisma from leaders, and alignment of values and beliefs embraced by both leaders and followers (Ilies, Curşeu, Dimotakis, & Spitzmuller, 2013). Idealized influence plays an important role in building follower commitment to transformational leaders.

Leaders gain interest from followers through a clear articulation of appealing visions (Shih et al., 2012). When leaders meet followers' emotional needs or excite them to consider attainable ideas, followers make an extra effort (Bass, 1990). Inspirational motivation involves encouragement of followers to envision future states for themselves, or the organization, which becomes a challenge (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Leaders use visions to appeal, encourage, motivate, and challenge followers to work toward a goal. In turn, individual performance increases, as followers strive to master challenges just like their leaders (Yin et al., 2011).

Key for innovation, leaders promote intellectual stimulation by having employees look at old problems in new ways, view obstacles as challenges to be met, and emphasize rational solutions (Bass, 1990). Moreover, leaders elicit feedback from followers and promote risk-taking activities (Shih et al., 2012). As transformational leaders promote intellectual stimulation, they increase innovation, creativity, and critical thinking amongst employees (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Encouraging different perspectives amongst followers also stimulates conversation and collaboration (Abrell et al., 2011).

Transformational leaders are successful because they pay attention to each employee, acting as mentors to those requiring assistance in growing and developing (Bass, 1990). Leaders accustomed to paying attention to followers' needs assist with goal-achievement and growth via teaching, coaching, and creating new opportunities (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Acting as mentors, leaders offer followers a unique advantage because the focus is on individual goals. Moreover, leaders become active listeners to address each follower's concerns (Shih et al., 2012). Key to this metric is the development of the follower (Abrell et al., 2011).

Relationship building is key to transformational success. Transformational leaders develop healthy relationships through providing support to others (Selcer et al., 2012).

The key to accomplishing a strong leader-follower relationship is the assistance provided from the leader to the follower. Employees with transformational leaders tend to exert more effort and contribute more to the business than individuals with transactional leaders (Bass, 1990). TL theory's 4-I's include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to develop coaching or mentoring roles to assist with delegating tasks (Tonvongval, 2013). The characteristics listed above make TL theory a unique approach to leadership.

Transformational Leadership Theory and LDPs

In this section, I review studies whose researchers used TL theory in LDPs. Organizational leaders commonly use LDPs in many industries. From 2000 to 2010, 80% of Texas' superintendents, participating in a leadership academy built upon TL theory, led their school districts in performance, measured by state standards, achieving exemplary or high-achieving administrator status (Fenn & Mixon, 2011). Moreover, since 2002, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) allocated over $158 million to 90 funded programs for a school leadership program (SLP) implementation to address quality and accountability issues (Mast, Scribner, & Sanzo, 2011). The common theme found in these cases is the use of LDPs to address concerns and reach organizational goals.

The contribution of LDPs to society could come by way of religion, community (Godwin & Heymann, 2015), or service (Wallace, O'Reilly, Morris, & Deem, 2011). For instance, Hine (2014) examined student LDPs in a Catholic secondary school in Australia. Although Hine linked LDPs to forms of transactional, transformational, and servant leadership, evidence of the use of TL theory was compelling. Participants engaged in leadership roles at school; conducted and participated in trainings; served as mentors; developed skills, strategies, and visions; promoted change; and learned to embrace change (Hine, 2014). Each of these action is a characteristic of TL theory (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Participants within the nursing field also benefitted from TL. Responses compiled from 1,184 nurses from various countries demonstrated the effect TL theory had on their lives and jobs. Nurses who participated in LD activities, both through formal education and training, demonstrated TL theory traits including empowerment, mentorship, acquisition of new knowledge, changed agency, enhanced skills, and collaboration (Galuska, 2014). Healthcare leaders can also implement LDPs for their young and eager workforce to help replace the aging middle management workforce (Hunter, 2014).

The healthcare field also benefits from engaging in LDPs with a TL theory focus. In a study of 40 clinicians, coaching within LD yielded positive training experiences, increased self-ratings of performance, and leadership skills (Budhoo & Spurgeon, 2012). Participants learned the basics of coaching and the way coaching affects their relationships with subordinates, in addition to their own performance. Participants engaged in supportive, nonconfrontational methods of development to increase their charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Budhoo & Spurgeon, 2012). However, Budhoo and Spurgeon (2012) recommended further research on the topic because of the lack of evidence to make any general conclusions.

LD continues to play a large role in the development of nurses. Within the healthcare field, LD and ongoing education were critical success factors for engaging nurses while simultaneously shaping future healthcare delivery systems, policies, and practices (Lacasse, 2013). Oncology nurses also benefit from LD activities including formal and informal education, networking, intellectual stimulation, and modeling self-care (O'Connor, 2011). Mentoring, a component of TL, is another component of nursing LD that nurses engage in to learn leadership skills and influence the healthcare system (O'Connor, 2011). TL theory in LDPs plays a vital role within the healthcare field.

In a separate study, 56 middle- to senior-level leaders in the public sector partook in a two-year long transformational LDP, practiced TL theory behaviors; attended workshops, executive coaching sessions, external trainings; and received 360-degree feedback (Mason, Griffin, & Parker, 2014). Coaching (Anderson, 2013; Gatling & Harrah, 2014; Selcer, Goodman, & Decker, 2012) and 360-degree feedback (Johnson et al., 2012) are key aspects of TL. Researchers found the leaders' well-being affected their ability to change their behaviors and, in turn, affected their ability to build relationships, promote change, and reach their aspirations (Mason et al., 2014). Although participation dropped by half after the first year and the population was from the same company, a link between TL theory and leader behavior was evident.

Research conducted in Dubai provided insight into TL theory and its effect on organizational innovation. In a study of 248 participants from public and private sectors, researchers sought to determine the link between LDPs engaging in TL theory to innovation. Researchers found managers providing resources, motivation, learning opportunities, and high expectations for employees led to increases in innovation, organizational performance, and employee adaption to unstable business environments (Alsalami, Behery, & Abdullah, 2014). Themes related to TL theory included innovation, collaboration, and promoting a learning organization. Because findings in Dubai, a non-Western country, were consistent with those within the U.S., reliability and validity of findings increased.

Incorporating TL theory in LDPs can have positive effects on participants. Researchers linked TL theory with personnel development (Loon, Lim, Teck, & Cai, 2012), an outcome of LDPs. Personnel development is achieved by way of coaching (Gatling & Harrah, 2014), mentoring (Shih, Chiang, & Chen, 2012), enhancing leadership skills (Brown et al., 2011), and teaching employees to become creative and innovative thinkers (Pless et al., 2012). When linked to job-related learning, incorporating TL theory qualities increased employee job performance, skill enhancement, acquisition of new knowledge, intellectual stimulation, trust, confidence, ability to become a visionary, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Loon et al., 2012). In turn, increased job satisfaction leads to lower turnover (Jones, 2012; Yang, 2014), resulting in lower costs incurred by business owners associated with training new business leaders for their companies. LDPs must take into account the importance of ongoing coaching and mentoring (Kwamie, van Dijk, & Agyepong, 2014).

Transformational leaders serve as catalysts to develop leaders into coaches or mentors for their followers. Within TL, coaching enhances elements of the theory (MacKie, 2014). Companies today invest in coaching as a form of human resource development (HRD) to meet organizational goals. For example, evidence-based leadership coaching (EBLC) focuses on developing a coachee's leadership skills (Kinsler, 2014). Coaching covers several aspects of an employee's development that contribute to organizational performance. The four main categories of coaching include coaching, executive coaching, business coaching, and life coaching (Gatling & Harrah, 2014).

Coaching is a form of LD that helps employees and supervisors enhance skills and leadership characteristics to continue with the development and facilitation of transferrable leadership characteristics in the workplace (Selcer et al., 2012). Business coaching focuses on skill development and, with the application of authentic leadership, helps achieve positive business outcomes (Gatling & Harrah, 2014). The coach-client relationship is also important to understand. LD focuses on the growth and attainment of skills, knowledge transfer, and overall development of employees. Mentors serve as catalysts because they effect LD outcomes (Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, & Avolio, 2011). Mentorship programs are a cost-effective form of LD (Lester et al., 2011) that help employees adapt to rapid change within their organization (Chopin et al., 2012). Mentoring then becomes a critical factor for organizational and leader sustainability (Johnston, 2013). The same applies to innovation.

Today's business world requires innovative leaders to propel their organizations to new heights. Leaders' influence links to successful innovation and the creation of innovative cultures (Mabey, Kulich, & Lorenzi-Cioldi, 2012). Serving to exploit new ideas, innovation is essential to gaining a competitive advantage in a global environment

(Ozorhon, Abbott, & Aouad, 2014), optimizing team development (Juanmei et al., 2014), and converting information into money (Whitfield, 2014). The three stages of achieving innovation include idea generation, promotion, and implementation (Juanmei et al., 2014). Succeeding in all three stages increases the likelihood of positive results obtained from innovative ideas. Employing TL theory characteristics within leaders may achieve positive results by encouraging, engaging, and motivating employees to become innovative (Whitfield, 2014).

Creating change agents is another outcome of LDPs incorporating TL. Proper education, training, and empowerment allow individuals to become change agents within their own lives, communities, and workplaces (Wiggins et al., 2013). In turn, change agents become the catalyst for large-scale changes. Linked with TL, change agents are champions for change (Wallace et al., 2011) seeking to increase innovation, process improvement, and collaboration towards a shared goal (Gaiter, 2013). Change agents also seek to address social, economic, and environmental problems affecting the global community (Godwin & Heymann, 2015). Global issues, such as climate changes, water scarcity, social unrest, internal organizational hostility, and competition increase the need for change agents in all facets of life (Seki & Holt, 2012).

Unlike other forms of leadership, TL theory has a strong emphasis on developing employees via motivation and encouragement. Workplace engagement can be a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state of employee well-being (Kim, Kolb, & Kim, 2013). Leaders promoting and encouraging the development of their followers increase engagement and motivation (Brown, 2014). Leaders accomplish this goal through appealing to employees' emotions and shared values. Employee engagement and commitment to the employer increases, as well as the employees' willingness to work outside of their comfort zones and provide assistance in areas needed for company success (Tonvongval, 2013). Successful TL theory is incumbent on employee empowerment and engagement (Abrell et al., 2011).

Another benefit of TL theory within LDPs is the incorporation of emotional intelligence (EI). Successful leadership traits have links to understanding the emotions of oneself and others (Hess & Bacigalupo, 2013). Researchers also argue that EI is key to effective leadership because leaders recognize, appraise, predict, and manage emotions of followers (Sadri, 2012). Within the business context, researchers linked EI to leader and follower effectiveness and performance (Brown, 2014). In contrast, a study of 144 business leaders disconfirmed the link between EI and TL theory (Grunes et al., 2014). Integrating EI into LDPs may be beneficial to business owners, but there is a need for more research in this area.

TL theory can also have an effect on knowledge creation and transfer. For instance, leaders exhibiting transformational traits increase employee intentions to share knowledge, mitigating self-interests (Liu & DeFrank, 2013). Leaders promoting knowledge creation and transfer demonstrate supportive behaviors, foster innovation and creativity, and enhance followers' problem-solving skills (Carmeli et al., 2013). Moreover, several individuals view knowledge managers as mentors, facilitators, and innovators (Martín-de-Castro & Montoro-Sánchez, 2013). LDPs also provide an avenue to facilitate knowledge creation and sharing.

Research into the length of LDPs provides further insight into challenges some business owners face. While some traditional LDPs focus on individualized action plans and increasing skill sets, others focus on improving workplace knowledge and skills via group seminars (Wilke, Wilke, & Viglione, 2015). However, the infusion of TL theory into LDPs generated noticeable results. Participation in an intensive, one-year long transformational LDP increased contingent rewards, TL theory behavior in supervisors, productivity, and employee satisfaction (Brown & May, 2012). Moreover, business leaders started viewing employees as part of a family, resulting in increased collaboration (Wilke et al., 2015). Leaders learning about TL theory changed their perspectives and guided their employees towards a common goal.

In a separate study of 488 French workers, results linked HRD opportunities to affective and normative commitment, increased perception of job characteristics, and effort (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). Managers promoting employee development and adopting TL theory behaviors helped empower employees and increase employee commitment (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). Participants of a Full Range LDP engaging in coaching, reflection, self-analysis, and self-planning activities increased their TL theory behaviors while increasing organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and effort amongst employees (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014). Researchers suggest that training programs must focus on developing leadership skills and relationships with employees and creating an environment of collaboration and novelty for organizational success (Ghosh, Reio, & Haynes, 2012).

Creating a collaborative environment is essential to obtaining knowledge. Some commitment-driven HR practices, such as training programs, incentive policies, and employee selection, contribute to knowledge exchange (Liu & DeFrank, 2013). Leaders who inspire creative work, make small gestures of recognition, and decrease employees' fear of failure positively contribute to organizational performance (Pitra & Zaušková, 2014). According to researchers (Budhoo & Spurgeon, 2012), engaging in coaching activities within LD increases ROI and TL theory styles. When designing and implementing LDPs, these suggestions may allow leaders to achieve maximum ROI.

In a separate study of managers and occupational health and safety managers, researchers explored the role TL theory played in the safety of the organizational culture. Experiences of 28 managers demonstrated the importance of trust between supervisors and their teams to building a safe organizational culture (Bahn, 2013). Data gathered from interviews with managers yielded trends. Specifically, findings included the importance of coaching, exerting TL theory traits, and the lack of trained or skilled supervisors needed within the industry (Bahn, 2013). Recommendations included providing training to support managerial roles and engaging in TL theory activities to influence a safe culture.

Mentoring. Different from coaching, mentoring focuses on building a long-term partnership between mentor and protégé or mentee. The intense relationship consists of a senior employee helping with the development of a less experienced employee (Wakahiu, 2013; Chopin, Danish, Seers, & Hook, 2012). Within this partnership, the mentor emphasizes the importance of growth and development via feedback (Smith, 2013), comparable to the TL theory framework.

Similar to TL, mentors motivate others to exceed expectations, work harder, and achieve higher performance (Yin et al., 2011). Trust built within the relationship allows mentors to influence the leadership efficacy beliefs within their protégés (Smith, 2013). The connection between a mentor and a protégé fosters and cultivates a strong relationship not achievable through coaching. Moreover, mentoring focuses on career and vocational development (Chopin et al., 2012).

Transition periods prompt mentors to serve as guides to help others along the pathway of life (Laughlin & Moore, 2012). The relationship between mentor and protégé is one of respect, admiration, and development. Because protégés perceive mentors as role models, they become attentive and open to feedback from mentors. Mentors empower and support protégés, resulting in increased confidence, encouragement, and motivation (Johnston, 2013). As mentors and mentees go through the process of mentorship, mentors reflect life change for mentees (Laughlin & Moore, 2012).

Coaching. The effect of coaching has an effect on many aspects of a coachee’s life. Coaching is a helpful relationship between a coach and a coachee that incorporates active listening and action plans to develop a coachee’s cognitive, behavioral, emotional, and learning patterns to achieve organizational goals (Berg & Karlsen, 2013). Business coaching is a booming industry in several sectors. Sought after to help improve the client’s leadership-related issues, business coaches work in fields including business, non-profit, Fortune 500, and small- and mid-size businesses (Gatling & Harrah, 2014).

Coach-client relationships require high levels of trust and honesty, service orientation, and the use of aspects of servant leadership (Van Genderen, 2014). Coaching can also be directive, future-oriented, action- and goal-focused, and performance-driven making the coach-client relationship filled with dynamics and complexity. The coaching relationship requires the coach to be well versed in leadership and management theories, models, and best leadership practices to best assist the coachee (Kinsler, 2014).

The purpose of coaching is to help develop employees personally and professionally. Coaching helps employees reach performance goals and develop skills needed to be successful in work and life. Coaching also contributes to goal attainment, life satisfaction, a sense of control, engagement, and physical and psychological well-being (Kinsler, 2014).

Managers use coaching as a stress-reducing intervention for employees whose work carries heavy demands (Berg & Karlsen, 2013). In time, the client increases self-awareness (Van Genderen, 2014), problem-solving skills, openness to new challenges and overall engagement within the organization. The positive influence coaching has on a client’s mentality, outlook, and confidence is evident. As discussed in the following paragraph, LDPs also benefit organizations through their focus on mentoring.

Innovation. Leaders are the drivers of innovation within an organization. Instead of viewing organizations as a set of processes, leaders depict organizations as complex centers generating innovation, learning, and market adaptability (Geer-Frazier, 2014). Leaders also encourage employees to take risks, engage in groupwork activities, and complete tasks outside of their normal routine (Juanmei et al., 2014). Innovation is an essential component of leadership (Whitfield, 2014), making it a critical aspect and determining factor of organizational outcomes. Furthermore, leaders must promote a diverse workforce capable of functioning in a complex global environment (Latham, 2014).

In addition to effective leadership, innovation helps increase sustainability and engagement among employees and stakeholders. Leaders create value for stakeholders when using imagination and reinventing of systems occurs (Latham, 2014). Employees also acquire value through shared leadership. Leaders actively promoting and engaging in shared leadership increase innovative behavior (Hoch, 2013). Innovation involves changing minds instead of making plans (Whitfield, 2014), and is a key aspect of TL. Leaders must also empower employees to be innovative by promoting a culture that values and rewards it (Shanker, Bhanugopan, & Fish, 2012).

Quality improvement and firm performance also result from an optimal combination of leadership styles and innovation (Latham, 2014). Leaders promoting innovation help their organization adapt to change and remain competitive (Hoch, 2013). Something else to note is that leaders are not the sole drivers of innovation. Common factors influencing innovation include leaders, culture, climate, and organizational design (Shanker et al., 2012). Leaders assist with innovation, but they also rely heavily on organizations providing the foundation to be innovative. As discussed in the next section, collaboration plays a vital role in innovation.

Collaboration. Communication and collaboration are essential within a business to increase knowledge sharing. From 1980 to 2010, Fortune 1000 firms' team-based work increased from 20% to 80%, requiring the need to understand and implement collaboration (Hollenbeck, Beersma, & Schouten, 2012). However, although 97% of senior leaders believed in the power of collaboration, only 30% of followers believe their leaders are skilled in the art (Wilson, 2013b). Success relies on knowledge, skills, and attitudes of leaders within the organization (Casey, 2013). Knowledge exchange also results from trust resulting in TL theory (Shih et al., 2012). Collaboration also requires alignment of end-users with the vision and mission of organizations and communities (Abram & Cromity, 2013). Leaders must realize the organizational value and benefits of collaboration for successful implementation and optimal results.

Leaders generate value when they emphasize the importance of collaboration within the workplace. Addressing the value of collaboration requires LDPs highlighting the relationship of collaboration on productivity, organizational culture, and employee motivation (Hite et al., 2014). Leaders possessing an understanding of the value of collaboration have the ability to change the trajectory of the organizations. Increasing collaboration builds trust, shares power, and increases employee potential (Wilson, 2013b). However, collaboration commences when people desire to work together to achieve a goal (Wilson, 2013a).

Engaging in collaborative efforts starts with a leader-member exchange of roles and responsibilities. Today’s collaboration models promote cross-departmental interaction towards shared goals, as opposed to hierarchical-motivated collaboration (Wilson, 2013b). The establishment of both facilitates cooperation, allowing participants to exhibit courage, reciprocity, honesty, humility, and collaboration (Colbry, Hurwitz, &

Adair, 2014). Transformational leaders must also serve as facilitators, supporters, consultants, and teachers throughout the collaborative process (Sullivan, Williams, & Jeffares, 2012). Collaboration allows leaders to solve social problems and address common goals in public and private companies (Wilson, 2013a). Understanding TL theory can assist with this endeavor.

Collaboration has an effect both locally and globally. Effective collaboration results from successful negotiation within a cultural, economic, and political environment within a leader's organization and institutional partners (Casey, 2013). Employing a diverse workforce with different backgrounds or perspectives to solve a problem or achieve a goal also enhances outcomes of collaboration (Wilson, 2013b). Through framing and sense-making activities, building of consensus, and initiating collective action for proposal structure and development, leaders create convergence between work groups (Sullivan et al., 2012).

Change agents. Although LDPs directly affect leaders, they also provide a platform for leaders and followers to become change agents. Change agents implement the adoption of new practices by overcoming resistance from other members within their organization (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). Leaders and change agents guide organizations during times of chaos and culture shifts. Their roles are indispensable to organizational success. Change agents also serve within the community working towards social and health equity (Wiggins et al., 2013). Regardless of the context, change agents play a vital role in the sustainability of their organizations and communities.

Change agents arise at different times within an organization's lifespan. Whether it be proactive leaders working towards accomplishing a goal, promoting government-driven reforms, or serving to improve and respond to change agendas (Wallace et al., 2011), change agents serve in many capacities. While change agents may not be employees of an organization, they serve as external consultants. Moreover, leaders must openly support change agents to ensure the staff can see the way the change agents are acting on the leader's behalf and with the leader's approval (Stonehouse, 2013).

When giving the power, change agents initiate, lead, direct, and take responsibility for creating change within their organization (Wallace et al., 2011). Extra training and support on the leader's behalf are paramount to ensure that employees embrace the change (Stonehouse, 2013). Change means transition, which can cause a rift among employees not psychologically ready for it. Change agents and leaders serve as mentors to help employees during transitions (Kohnke & Gonda, 2013). Successful change agents unify employees to address change and a common goal.

A change in organizational culture is an aspect that change agents seek to address. Through creating new visions and plans, change agents increase collaboration and thinking among employees (Kohnke & Gonda, 2013). Gaps in organizational culture and structure provide change agents with exposure and creative freedom (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). Communication plays a vital role in enhancing morale, as change agents inform employees of ongoing issues or changes (Gaiter, 2013). In turn, change agents play a variety of vital roles in their organizations.

Trust. Trust, within the business world, is an essential characteristic of managers and leaders alike. Leaders gain trust and commitment through high-quality leader-follower exchanges (Whisnant & Khasawneh, 2014). Trust requires open communication that facilitates information flow and synergy during decision-making processes (Pearce, Wassenaar, & Manz, 2014). Leaders are held to high ethical standards that require high levels of trust.

Increased trust via relationships also stimulates a firm's growth (Hansen, Tanuja, Weilbaker, & Guesalage, 2011) and increases revenue via global marketplaces (Koo Moon, Kwon Choi, & Shik Jung, 2012). In contrast, poor interactions between leaders and subordinates or superiors result in low levels of knowledge sharing, which affects innovative behavior (Hu, Tsung-Lin, Haw-Jeng, & Lee-Cheng, 2012). Learning the benefits and consequences of trust gained or lost provides insight into its importance in business and the way it relates to LDPs.

Trust significantly affects the success of a leader, making it paramount to understanding its role, as well as the way it is attained and maintained. Within servant leadership, leaders must embody vision, honesty, trust, appreciation of others, service, and remain servants in any role they obtain (Massey, Sulak, & Sriram, 2013). Sharing of tacit knowledge between leaders and followers also revolves around trust (Whisnant & Khasawneh, 2014). Within relationships, the trusted person would be treated fairly and would benefit from the relationship (Hasel, 2013). Trust plays a role in many relationships and transactions, making it a focal point within LD.

Trust plays a vital role in leadership effectiveness (Hasel, 2013). Leaders gaining individuals' trust foster cooperation necessary for collective actual and increased performance (Drescher, Korsgaard, Welpe, Picot, & Wigand, 2014). As employees trust their leaders, they become more willing to exert extra effort in their work. Leaders must maintain this trust to ensure consistent success and buy-in from employees. Trust provides employees a sense of fairness, integrity, and loyalty towards leaders (Yi-Feng, 2014).

Trust is not only limited to an individual level, but it also affects an entire organization. Organizational trust is a requirement for organizational success. Obtaining organizational trust is achieved through authentic leaders following the organization's positive values and beliefs (Onorato & Zhu, 2014). As followers believe in their leader's ability to perform this task (Klaussner, 2012), trust increases. Increased trust, in turn, results in a positive culture and healthy workplace (Onorato & Zhu, 2014). Trust plays an essential role in organizational and individual success and results from effective leadership.

Leader engagement. Employee engagement, as a result of effective leadership, has other positive side effects. Employee and organizational performance increase as a direct result of positive changes in organizational motives (Kim et al., 2013). Leadership is a critical factor in the formation of collaborative effectiveness and the creation of joint action among employees (Getha-Taylor & Morse, 2013), and the satisfaction employees receive from performance appraisals (Bass, 1990). Therefore, fostering a culture that empowers, engages, and develops employees is key to innovation and sustainability.

Important in many facets of business, engagement is key for leader influence. Employee engagement refers to how employees think, feel, and act toward their organization's outcomes (Kim et al., 2013). Organizations and individuals play a vital role in work engagement. (Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Within society, individuals actively involved in the development process improve human life and are the key to success (Stefanesci & Konrad, 2011). Moreover, engagement leads to followers becoming active participants in community change initiatives (Ahmad & Abu Talib, 2013). Just as leaders play a vital role in engaging employees, the employees play a crucial role in organizational success.

Contrasting Theories

In this section, I present a critical analysis of the supporting and contrasting theories related to TL theory. I first discuss charismatic leadership theory. Then, I present a discussion of transactional leadership theory. Finally, I discuss servant leadership theory.

Charismatic leadership. It has been a popular theory for many years and continues to contribute to organizations worldwide. The focus on increasing follower aspirations via identifying their mission/vision helps depict a desirable future state (Lapierre, Bremner, & McMullan, 2012). Followers tend to admire and rely heavily on charismatic leaders (Wu & Wang, 2012), increasing the likelihood of stakeholder buy-in. Charismatic leadership also influences employees' interpretations about a company's underlying motives, in turn influencing their job satisfaction (Vlachos, Panagopoulos, &

Rapp, 2013). Combining charismatic leadership and a values-based organizational culture increase an organization’s possibility of profit (Espedal, Gooderham, & Stensaker, 2013).

Positive outcomes from charismatic leadership include leadership effectiveness, an increase in followers’ job satisfaction and performance, and an improvement in overall group performance (Hayibor, Agle, Sears, & Sonnenfeld, 2011; Wu & Wang, 2012). Charismatic leaders also reform the status quo, remove environmental constraints for change, project attractive and inspiring visions, create synergy amongst followers towards a cohesive unit, and take personal risks and self-sacrifice (Kwak, 2012). Tuytens and Devos (2012) linked charismatic leadership to improved performance appraisals for teachers, contributing to their development.

Although a popular leadership theory, it does not come without flaws. Charismatic leadership relies heavily on several factors to ensure its success. Leaders are viewed as having gifts from God that followers gravitate towards, making it a mythical trait (Kempster & Parry, 2014). Charisma also requires a leader possessing super-human qualities (Hayibor et al., 2011). Charisma results in powerful influence by linking goals and effort with a follower’s self-concept (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).

A major emphasis within the theory is on the necessity of followers trusting their leader during times of radical change (Wu & Wang, 2012). Approaching the leader-follower relationship through this lens eliminates empowerment of employees, a drawback for professional development. Further research into the process through which charismatic leaders influence their followers indicates that a gap within the existing literature exists (Wu & Wang, 2012). Aspects listed above illustrate flaws researchers encounter within the concept, but do not deny its relevance in the leadership world.

Transactional leadership. As the predecessor to transformational leadership, transactional leadership was a cornerstone within the business field. Described as an autocratic method of leading, transactional leadership emphasizes compliance with rules, policies, and procedures while rewarding followers based on performance (Brown, 2014). Leaders increase influence and motivate employees through exchanges or transactions with followers (Kahai, Jestire, & Rui, 2013). Transactional leadership lacks the emotional connection between leader and follower emphasized in transformational leadership. This form of leadership has become predominant within the business world (Brown, 2014).

Transactional leadership is useful in the business world because of its focus on rewards or incentives based on performance. For example, the emphasis on promoting schemas that achieve operational goals help with goal setting, achieving, and setting clear expectations (Kahai et al., 2013). Sales people meeting or exceeding goals obtain commissions, leading to incentives for optimal performance, demonstrates another example of relevance to business (Brown, 2014). In addition to setting goals and explicit agreements, transactional leaders provide constructive feedback on tasks (Du, Swaen, Lindgreen, & Sen, 2013). Also viewed as a cost/benefit process, transactional leadership utilizes rewards and punishment as incentives for communication of desired outcomes (Kastenmüller et al., 2014). Results achieved came from controlling behaviors and eliminating performance issues via corrective transactions amongst the leader and follower (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).

Transactional leadership provides the basis for the expansion and creation of TL (Schneider & Schröder, 2012). Transformational leaders demonstrate greater success in driving change and transcending the status quo (Du et al., 2014). Limited to managerial and process outcomes, transactional leadership lacks the full attainment of motivation and engagement of followers (Schneider & Schröder, 2012). Infused with utilitarian values and reciprocity norms (Groves & LaRocca, 2011), the bureaucratic nature of transactional leadership limits its usefulness to low stakes and daily operating functions (Schneider & Schröder, 2012; Tömmel, 2013).

Servant leadership. Another popular form of leadership that has a focus different to the other forms of leadership previously discussed is servant leadership. Robert Greenleaf introduced servant leadership in 1970 to explore the relationship between leaders and followers from a different perspective (Jones, 2012). Servant leadership focuses on this leader-follower relationship, where the leader's main focus is to serve, not lead (Berger, 2014). Consequently, motivating followers comes from fulfilling followers' needs, as opposed to leaders satisfying their own (Liden, Wayne, Chenwei, & Meuser, 2014). Outcomes of servant leadership include the development of trust between leaders and followers, resulting in optimal communication and relationships (Whisnant & Khasawneh, 2014). Another faction, radical servant leadership, makes the wellbeing and justice of the followers the leader's number one priority (Letizia, 2014). Researchers continue to search for a definition of this phenomenon.

Engaging in learning opportunities helps servant leaders refine their leadership styles, promotes continuous development, and increases the likelihood of success

(Massey et al., 2013). Measures of the success of a leader relate to individuals instead of organizations. Servant leadership's essence relies heavily on a strong partnership between leaders and followers. Several individuals measure the success achieved by leaders by looking at the growth of the leaders' followers (Massey et al., 2013). Servant leaders understand the importance a follower's continuous development has on organizational success (Latham, 2014). Multiple generations of followers consider servant leadership an effective leadership style (Latham, 2014).

Servant leadership has ties to spiritual values. Because leaders provide service and guidance to others, their followers then help employees, consumers, and society as a whole (Chen et al., 2013). This belief of servanthood continually reinforces the need for servant leaders to guide others towards continuous improvement. Characteristics such as vision, motivation, and intellectual stimulation inspire followers towards shared goals. Servants build societies through encouraging volunteer activities and empowering individuals to grow and succeed (Liden et al., 2014).

Types of LDPs

LDPs take many forms, each with its own unique advantages. In this section, I focused on online LDPs and cross-cultural training. Faculty training is one of the biggest challenges within the higher education field (Herman, 2012). For example, an area of opportunity is faculty learning how to implement and incorporate technology into the classroom and pedagogical practices effectively (Stover & Veres, 2013). E-learning became a leading form of instruction and training within the higher education field. Presented in 3D formats, electronic classrooms help increase collaboration among students (Kahai et al., 2013). Cross-cultural training is another form of LDPs catering to businesses focusing on international relations and growth. The option of completing LDPs via online or in-person provides several benefits to employees. Illustrating the benefits of each form provides greater insight to the reader.

In terms of cross-cultural training and LDPs, cross-cultural training serves as a means to increase employees' cultural intelligence (CQ) for international assignments. Globalization changed the landscape of today's business world, requiring collaboration and international ventures to achieve continued growth. Individuals possessing CQ can gain a competitive advantage because they become culturally competent and able to adapt to new cultural environments (Mor, Morris, & Joh, 2013). Individuals adapting to new environments; understanding traditions, values, and norms; and communicating effectively with other cultures bring positive results to their organizations (Hansen et al., 2011). Several other factors affect cross-cultural training outcomes.

In terms of e-LDPs, in 2010, $32.1 billion was spent on global e-learning and was set to increase to $49.9 billion by 2015 (Markovič-Hribernik & Jarc, 2014). Technology today allows business leaders new avenues to train employees online and provide a personal touch. E-learning provides an environment for learners to interact with peers, learning materials, and/or instructors through advanced technology (Kahai et al., 2013). Blogging is a tool used to increase learning through interaction, engagement, and the experiences of others (Raffo, 2012). E-learning helps build health care professionals' capacity and knowledge and bypass learning outcomes to students engaging in face-to-face instruction (Chio, 2012).

Cost Savings of LDPs

Leaders resisting changing environments increase the likelihood of organizational failure. Effective leaders help manage and change the business simultaneously (Latham, 2014), making them valuable assets to organizational success. However, LDPs address changes by enhancing decision-making skills within an organization (Loon et al., 2012). LDPs employed within different contexts yielded positive results. Although limited to a Taiwanese company, leaders who completed effective LDPs received excellent appraisals eight times higher than normal ratings, were 13 times more likely to outperform their competitors in *bottom-line* results, and increased competitive advantage by 60% (Tonvongval, 2013). One study conducted with 300 participants within the industrial distributor field yielded a raise in one MLQ unit that led to a 4.4% annual increase in sales (Flanigan, Stewardson, Dew, Fleig-Palmer, & Reeve, 2013).

CSR is another aspect of business that TL theory can affect. TL theory affects a firm's CSR practices and outcomes (Du et al., 2013). The moral and ethical nature of TL theory allows leaders to promote socially responsible behaviors with followers (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Leaders understand that people and communities are "a means to an end" of organizational outcomes (Latham, 2014). Organizations rely heavily on the leadership for direction during times of change. Leaders also provide comfort during stressful periods (Hasel, 2013). However, implementing LDPs comes at a cost.

Although LDPs are paramount to gaining competitive advantage and fostering innovation, several factors hinder their implementation and success. The recent recession restricted funding for LDPs or eliminated them altogether (Getha-Taylor & Morse, 2013).

In 2008 alone, the U.S. invested over $34 billion in employee learning and development and 20% of that total consisted of LDPs and managerial and supervisor training (Johnson et al., 2012). The cost of LDPs ranges from $150,000 to $400,000 per session (Tonvongval, 2013), making them a financial burden for companies underutilizing them. Moreover, U.S. companies invested $50 billion in LDPs for their employees in hopes of increasing *bottom-line* performance by 30% (Kaufman et al., 2012; Pandit & Jhamtani, 2011). The enormous financial and strategic investment requires proper planning to ensure the setting of expectations, before engaging or investing in LDPs (Kaplan, Porter, & Klobnak, 2012). Recovering the investment in LDPs is possible if employees remain with their companies for a certain amount of time (Yamamoto, 2013). Creating, implementing, and properly using LDPs is a paramount issue for organizational success and viability.

LDPs must create relevance to their target demographics through tailored instruction and topics. For instance, LDPs within the public, not-for-profit, and for-profit sectors require information and skills to help employees lead beyond boundaries upon completion (Getha-Taylor & Morse, 2013). Tailored LDPs are the most effective because they cater to the individuals and organizations, increasing the likelihood of positive outcomes. LDPs must also link to desired outcomes for individuals and organizations.

Transition and Summary

Section 1 included a discussion of the foundation of the study; background of the study; problem statement; purpose statement; nature of the study; research questions; interview questions; conceptual framework; definition of terms; assumption, limitations, and delimitations; significance of the study; and review of the literature. Section 2 includes a discussion of the purpose statement, role of the researcher, research participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis technique, and reliability and validity of the study. Finally, Section 3 includes the presentation of findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendation for action, recommendations for further research, reflections, conclusions, and appendices.

Section 2: The Project

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. I collected data from three HR managers who developed and implemented strategies for leadership development successfully. Corporate documents and interview transcripts served as data collection sources. Implementation of LDPs may result in business owners lowering turnover, increasing organizational performance, innovation, and job satisfaction, and reducing the current leadership gap. This section covers the (a) restatement of the purpose, (b) role of the researcher, (c) research participants, (d) research method and design, (e) population and sampling, (f) ethical research, (g) data collection instruments, (h) data collection techniques, (i) data organization techniques, (j) data analysis technique, and (k) reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. The sample population consisted of HR managers from Silicon Valley who had developed and implemented strategies for leadership development successfully. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders who are empowered to contribute to the betterment of their local communities and economies. For instance, leaders may use the results of this study to improve leadership development practices in their organizations, including recommendations to develop improved strategies for more effective and efficient LDPs in community-based organizations. Finally, leaders may use the results of this study to develop the next generation of local and global leaders to address larger problems, including homelessness, disease, lack of cultural acceptance, and environmental sustainability.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the research instrument (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014) by collecting data from conducting interviews with participants to assist in answering the overarching research question (Boesch, Schwaninger, Weber, & Scholz, 2012). Researchers also play a vital role during the data collection and analysis phases (Yin, 2014). In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary research instrument (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). I became the primary research instrument, conducted semistructured interviews, and analyzed company documents. I engaged in active listening, paraphrasing, probing, and rapport-building activities with participants to encourage meaningful dialogue, as recommended by Rossetto (2014). Moreover, I listened to the words participants use when describing their experiences to help me answer the overarching research question, as recommended by several researchers (Coenen, Stamm, Stucki, & Cieza, 2012).

I obtained leadership experience through heavy involvement in the Latino Business Student Association (LBSA) and the National Hispanic Business Association (NHBA) while attending San Jose State University (SJSU), which sparked my interest in conducting a study related to LDPs. I seek to explore how HR managers develop and implement LDPs successfully. Participants included personal and professional contacts meeting eligibility criteria for my study. Restricting participants to meet set criteria is crucial for valid results (McCormack, 2014).

Conducting an ethical study should be a key concern for any researcher, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the participants (Haahr et al., 2014). As stated in the Belmont Report, the researcher should disclose all relevant information so the participant can make a considered judgment, minimize harm, and maximize the benefit to the participant (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). Researchers must address participant beneficence by respecting participants' wishes and rights throughout the process (Haahr et al., 2014) and securing their well-being (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). I remained sensitive to the well-being of the participants by disclosing all relevant information to the participants, minimizing potential harm caused by participating in the study, mitigating my bias towards the study, asking open-ended questions, and eliminating leading questions during interviews. This was especially important in the interview aspect of the research. Lastly, both the researcher and the participant must treat each other equally to ensure justice (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). I emphasized to participants the equality of power and addressed their concerns regarding equality throughout the research process.

In qualitative research, the researcher must remain unbiased (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Researcher bias can change the direction or result of the case study (Yin, 2014). Because researchers are unable to eliminate researcher bias completely, it is imperative that researchers raise awareness and identify potential bias during documentation review (Tuesner, 2015). Throughout the research process, I did not skew data or impose my interpretations on participant responses, remained neutral to participants and the research topic, and conducted member checking.

Interviewing participants and following an interview protocol are keys to a reliable qualitative case study (Yin, 2014). Interview protocols can include questions for use in future studies or different contexts (Gould et al., 2015). First-time qualitative researchers use interview protocols for collecting data, forming a script to use before, during, and after interviews, delivering the informed consent process, and providing general guidance throughout the interview process (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012). As a first-time researcher, I employed an interview protocol for this multicase study (see Appendix B). I used the interview protocol as a guide to ensure smooth transitions during interviews and data collection. Unstructured interviews are also beneficial and valuable to participants (Bailey, 2014). As such, I employed a semistructured interview approach and asked probing questions.

Participants

The process for identifying and selecting study participants is crucial for a successful study. Participants must possess knowledge and experience about the research topic (Gould et al., 2015). Participant responses to interview questions must provide the researcher with insight into the study (Englander, 2012). Interviewing participants with experience with the same problem generates descriptive validity (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Wolgemuth et al., 2014). To address these concerns, I selected HR managers possessing successful experience in developing and implementing LDPs in their organizations. An additional criterion was that the participants must have lived and worked in Silicon Valley.

Gaining access to participants was the next phase. I contacted participants initially via phone calls. Calling participants is a time-efficient and researcher-friendly task (Trier-Bieniek, 2012), but I did not use the phone for interviews. Although some participants prefer hearing the researcher's questions via phone, others prefer a face-to-face meeting to answer the questions (McDonald, Kidney, & Patka, 2013). A subsequent step requires establishing and maintaining working relationships with participants.

Establishing and maintaining working relationships with participants requires researcher engagement and participation (Wolgemuth et al., 2014). Researcher engagement via consistent check-ins can help build trust (Singh, 2014). I conducted regular check-ins to build rapport and establish a working relationship with participants. Researchers recommend establishing a professional working relationship with study participants by communicating the importance of a study and the usefulness of participant feedback (Dilshad & Latif, 2013). Several authors (Englander, 2012; Nurjannah, Mills, Park, & Usher, 2014) claimed that researchers may build rapport with participants by (a) learning more about them, (b) understanding their business, (c) creating a relaxed environment during the interview, (d) being an effective listener, (e) eliminating any cultural bias, (f) promoting open exchange of dialogue, and (g) showing genuine interest in whatever the participants say. I followed the recommendations to provide some degree of comfort to the participants of this study, allowing them to engage in the interview process and contribute to my study.

Research Method and Design

This section includes a discussion of the research methodology and the design approach used in this study. The proper research method helps the researcher answer the overarching research question (Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that human resource managers use to improve their LDPs.

Research Method

Researchers must be selective when determining the proper research method for their study. Many researchers believe that qualitative research is framed broadly within socially constructed theories, helps researchers identify and describe a phenomenon (Kahlke, 2014), and does not bind itself to a set of philosophical assumptions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Researchers also use qualitative research to interpret meaning and functions of human practice (Cutcliffe & Harder, 2012). These characteristics were consistent with the nature of my study because my focus was on exploring strategies that human resource managers use to improve their LDPs. Consequently, the qualitative research methodology was best suited for this study.

In contrast, quantitative researchers eliminate the human aspect (Parylo, 2012) and use a deductive form of inquiry for decisions requiring economic justification (Thamhain, 2014). In quantitative research, researchers focus on prevalence rates, relationships, and cause-and-effect relationships. Quantitative research studies are confirmatory in nature (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The emphasis on statistics rather than humanistic perspectives makes the quantitative research methodology unsuitable for this study. Moreover, quantitative research was not suitable for this study because the purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that human resource managers use for leadership development.

Mixed-method research methodology combines qualitative and quantitative research methods (Yin, 2014). I did not select mixed-methods research methodology because, as Yin (2014) has noted, without identifiable variables, the quantified portion eliminates the use of a mixed-methods research methodology. The synergy of qualitative and quantitative research within mixed methods results in a comprehensive, balanced, and generalizable study and results (Parylo, 2012). However, a mixed-methods research approach was not appropriate for my study because the quantitative design component did not assist me in answering the exploratory research questions.

Qualitative researchers seek to explain the complex nature of a phenomenon through participant words and experiences (Coenen et al., 2012), which limits misinterpretations (Garcia & Gluessing, 2013). Houghton et al. (2013) also stated the artistic and imaginative nature of qualitative research offers benefits not offered in a quantitative approach. Qualitative research was ideal for this study because it enabled me to explore the strategies that human resource managers used to improve their LDPs.

Research Design

I considered several research design approaches for this study. Phenomenology is a philosophy requiring extensive research on lived experiences (Finlay, 2012) and viewing phenomena as living things (Randles, 2012). However, phenomenology is used for analyzing social reality (Eberle, 2014), which was not the focus of my study. Researchers use an ethnographic focus on a specific cultural population (Caulkins, 2014) for extended periods (Odeyemi, 2013) to determine norms and ways of living (Kozinets, 2012). Because my focus was not a specific cultural population, ethnography was not suitable for this study. Narrative research is grounded in expressing previous experiences in self-narratives or through story-telling activities (McNamara, 2013; Wolgemuth, 2014), while representing the writer's voice and identity (Hunter, 2012). Because the narrative research approach focuses on participants recalling events in clear detail, regardless of the time, it was not suitable for my study.

Last, case study research is grounded in a philosophical foundation (Cronin, 2014), whereby researchers investigate contemporary phenomena in their natural environment (Yin, 2014). I employed a multicase study research design in this study. Researchers using case studies focus and obtain detail regarding a stated phenomenon, include a diverse participant population (Houghton et al., 2013), use multiple sources of data (Yin, 2014), and provide maximization or minimization of differences and similarities of data (Dasgupta, 20145). As such, exploring participants' experiences and perceptions may shed light on ways to improve LDPs in business organizations.

The concept of data saturation exists in every research design (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012) in which the researcher obtains data through in-depth interviews (Dworkin, 2012). Data saturation occurs when the data collected adequately reflect participants' perspectives (Kolb, 2012) and collecting new data does not result in new themes or ideas

(Dworkin, 2012). The saturation point is not a clear concept because researchers are unable to predict when they will encounter the saturation point in their studies (Bernard, 2013), whether the sample size is sufficient (Marshall et al., 2013), and the differences based on research method (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Therefore, the sample size of a study relates more to data saturation than to the number of participants (Bradley, Getrich, & Hannigan, 2015).

I kept the number of participants low because I was conducting a qualitative research study in which the focus was on participants' experiences, as recommended by several authors (Dworkin, 2012). At the same time, interviews should continue until no new additional themes emerge (Finfgeld-Connett, 2014; Gagliardi, 2012). The saturation point is an integral part of the qualitative research methodology (Bradley et al., 2015) and, therefore, I continued interviewing participants until the information repeated itself and no new themes emerged.

Population and Sampling

Selecting the appropriate sampling method is critical for improving the trustworthiness of a study (Elo et al., 2014; Robinson, 2014). Criterion sampling is useful for narrowing participant pools by ensuring participants meet the same set of criteria, providing insight into a phenomenon (Dipeolu, Storlie, Hargrave, & Cook, 2015; Sharp et al., 2012). Criterion sampling involves identifying and selecting participants who meet certain criteria for a study (Dipeolu et al., 2015). Consequently, I selected criterion sampling because it helped me filter the participant pool by identifying only those participants meeting the specified criteria to extract meaningful information.

I collected data from three human resource managers located in Silicon Valley who had developed and implemented an LDP successfully within the past five years. Most participants came from for-profit sectors. Researchers determine sample size by recognizing the exploratory nature of the study, richness of data (Daniel, 2012), and generalizability to a larger population, with a minimum of one case study (Farquhar, 2012). Daniel (2012) suggested that 3 to 5 participants is a sufficient number for a case study and Farquhar (2012) stated that study participants must be knowledgeable on the topic to contribute to prior research. Determining the appropriate sample size is difficult within case study research (Yin, 2011), possibly requiring 30 interviews to reach data saturation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). However, Yin (2014) suggested two or three replications suffice for case study research. If I would not have reached data saturation with three participants, I would have continued conducting interviews until reaching data saturation. Because I reached data saturation after the third interview, further interviewing was not necessary.

Data saturation occurs when a researcher is unable to obtain any new information from the research participants (Shen et al., 2014). Conducting 5-6 semistructured interviews (Emmel, 2013) and providing depth and breadth of information on a given topic (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012) could lead to data saturation. Conducting semistructured interviews, with open-ended questions, allowed me to gain rich insight from my participants, contributing to data saturation. I sent qualified candidates invitation emails or called them to obtain their approval for participation.

Ensuring the interview setting was conducive to open dialogue was critical in this study. Providing convenience to participants helps ease their anxiety (Dilshad & Latif, 2013), and creates an atmosphere of fluid conversation for building rapport (Trier-Bieniek, 2012). However, researchers also suggest conducting interviews that are not loud, public, or would make the participant feel uncomfortable (Cachia & Millward, 2011). For these reasons, I conducted interviews via Skype so participants could interview in the comfort of their home. I reminded the participant that the interview would take approximately 60 minutes. Moreover, I engaged in small talk to ease the participant's anxiety.

Ethical Research

I did not begin data collection until I received approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Ethical research is critical to the validity and reliability of a research study because it allows researchers to demonstrate ethical code and to ensure the protection of participants (Haahr et al., 2014). Selecting participants and sites to conduct the study requires obtaining permission and protecting participants from harm (Yin, 2014).

Festinger et al. (2014) organized the informed consent process into two parts, including creating a consent form and presenting the consent information to research participants. Upon obtaining IRB approval, I arranged a meeting with each participant. Selecting the desired location to meet the interviewee; obtaining a signed consent form; and explaining the purpose of the study, time requirements, and plans for using results from the interview were critical (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, 2015). I required each participant to sign the informed consent form (see Appendix A) before participating in the study. It is vital that the researcher explains to participants any complexities or questions related to the consent process (Agnew & Jorgensen, 2012).

Researchers use the informed consent form to explain the nuances of participating in a study, including (a) participant's right to withdraw from the research study at any time, (b) data collection techniques, (c) data security measurements, (d) nature of the study, (e) expectations from participants, and (f) potential risks and benefits of participation (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). In addition, the consent form must include the researcher’s contact information for any questions that may emerge (Agnew & Jorgensen, 2012) and the participants should not feel coerced to participate in a research study and feel free to withdraw at any time (Sarpel et al., 2013). I clearly explained all nuances described at the beginning of this paragraph to all research participants. The informed consent form (see Appendix A) clearly outlines that participants can withdraw from the study at any time by simply expressing orally or in writing their wish to withdraw from the study, without any negative consequences.

I informed participants that the research was voluntary and did not entail any incentives. While cash or other incentives encourage participation (Austad et al., 2013; Beskow et al., 2012), I excluded monetary incentives to attract individuals to participate in my study. Concerns related to compensation for participation include influence on participant responses; therefore, affecting research findings (London, Borasky, & Bhan, 2012). These concerns deter me from incorporating participant compensation within my research.

Participants' privacy and confidentiality should be at the core of every study (Faden, Beauchamp, & Kass, 2014). Ensuring ethical research requires the researcher disclosing relevant information to participants (Yin, 2014). As discussed in the Belmont Report, protecting the rights and well-being of research study participants is critical and, consequently, researchers must protect participants' rights and well-being by ensuring participants understand their rights, risks, and benefits of participating in a study (Yuan, Bartgis, & Demers, 2014). In addition, researchers must maximize benefits of participating and minimize harm to participants (Mikesell et al., 2013), to ensure that the participants can make an informed decision to participate in the study. Researchers protecting the confidentiality of study participants ensure compliance to the guidelines for ethical research (Beskow et al., 2012). I thoroughly explained to participants of this study the nuances of participating in my study, including answering any questions or concerns and explaining that participant information would be kept private throughout the research process and beyond.

I stored all research-related documentation in a password-protected flash drive and will lock it in a storage cabinet for 5 years after the study is completed. Although the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP) requires storing data for 3 years (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2011), Walden University requires 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred or destroy all documentation. The IRB approval number was 08-02-16-0292039. To ensure confidentiality, I used fictitious names for study participants and their affiliated organizations. Additionally, the study did not include any attributes that led to an indirect discovery of study participants or organizations. I addressed each participant as P1, P2, and P3.

Data Collection Instruments

Researchers are generally the main data collection instrument in qualitative research (Haahr et al., 2014) because they collect, organize, and analyze research data. By engaging with study participants, collecting and analyzing research data, and creating additional knowledge (Cronin, 2014), I become the main research instrument in this study. Data collection can encompass primary and secondary data sources, consisting of new and old data related to the research topic (Farquhar, 2012). Employing primary and secondary data sources assisted me in conducting triangulation procedures, which increased validity and reliability.

For my study, I conducted Skype interviews. Interview questions serve as a data collection instrument (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Business documents (Sarma, 2015) and archival documents provide context to a study (Ralph, Birks & Chapman, 2014). Examples of business and archival documents include memos, emails, posters, company reports, and newsletters regarding the LDPs developed and implemented by the participants. While the benefits of secondary sources include accessibility and convenience, drawbacks consist of quality control issues and potential costs related to retrieval of sources (Farquhar, 2012), and researcher bias (McCurdy & Uldam, 2014).

During interviews with study participants, I collected company reports related to the development and implementation of LDPs.

To begin the research process, I sent invitations to qualified study participants, as shown in the interview protocol (see Appendix B). Once individuals expressed interest in participating in the study, I sent them the informed consent form and asked for their signature, as suggested by several authors (Frankfort-Nachmias et al., 2015). After receiving the signed informed consent form, I contacted participants to confirm the date and time of the interview. Participants' availability and location determined the meeting day and time. In-person interviews are time-intensive (Englander, 2012), but produce richer research data than telephone interviews (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013).

Following the recommendations of several researchers (Shavers & Moore, 2014), I allocated 60 minutes for each interview. In the case of an on-site visit, some authors (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) suggested that researchers should hand-deliver the completed informed consent form to the participant to obtain the participant's signature. Once the participant and I confirmed a location for the interview, I emailed the scanned copy of the completed informed consent form to the participant before our meeting, as recommended by Rubin & Rubin (2011). Audio recording is one of the most popular methods to record the interview conversation (Al-Yateem, 2012; Rabionet, 2011). As suggested by Trier-Bieniek (2012), I obtained each participant's signed informed consent form before recording the interview on my smartphone.

Asking additional probing questions during the interview (Englander, 2012), or after the interview (Moll, 2012), is critical to gaining insight from study participants.

Therefore, I started the interview with introductions, provided a research overview, and asked open-ended questions to ensure participants would answer the interview questions in detail. I asked participants additional probing questions to obtain more specific data, as recommended by several researchers (Moll, 2012; Rabionet, 2011). Cachia and Millward (2011) suggested observing each participant's body language and tone during the interview to continually assess a participant's comfort level.

Researchers suggest conducting member checking during interviews to ensure validity, reliability, and credibility of data (Bradley et al., 2015; Houghton et al., 2013; Nurjannah et al., 2014). The member checking method stipulates that researchers must return the interview data to participants for verification purposes (Reilly, 2013; Winter & Collins, 2015). Member checking takes place when the researchers conduct interviews, interpret what the participants stated, and share this interpretation with the participants for validation (Christensen et al., 2015; Marshall et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). I conducted the interviews, interpreted what the participants stated, and shared this interpretation with the participants for validation. I used member checking to ensure the validity of the research data. This process allowed participants to add, delete, confirm, and/or clarify the interview data I collected, as recommended by Shavers and Moore (2014).

Data Collection Technique

Case study research requires documentation, archival records, observations, semistructured interviews, or physical artifacts as sources of evidence (Farquhar, 2012). Interviews must be in-depth and employ active listening (Rossetto, 2014), paraphrasing, and rapport-building techniques, which lead to theme-building activities (Fakis et al., 2014). I interviewed participants and conducted document analyzes.

Semistructured interviews offer advantages and disadvantages within qualitative inquiry. Advantages include building themes (Fakis et al., 2014), ensuring high validity and credibility during data collection, and empowering participants (Wolgemuth et al., 2014) by allowing them to become spokespersons for a larger audience (Affleck et al., 2012). In contrast, semistructured interviews may also draw feelings of intense emotion (Wolgemuth et al., 2014), distress (Rossetto, 2014), or pain from participants depending on the topic (Haahr et al., 2014). However, interviews were a key component of my study to engage in open dialogue and obtain rich data. In terms of a pilot test, it requires long time commitments, serving as pre-work to data collection and determining theoretical propositions (Benn, Edwards, & Angus-Leppan, 2013). Due to time constraints, I did not conduct a pilot test.

I used document analysis as a data collection technique in this study because several researchers (Street & Ward, 2012) claimed that researchers use document analysis as a data collection technique because document analysis allows researchers to find information related to the case study. Researchers use document analysis to establish the beginning and ending of events or important characteristics (Street & Ward, 2012) and to synthesize and make sense of data (Kutsyuruba & Tregunna, 2014). Researchers skim, thoroughly read, and interpret selected documents during this phase (Wong et al., 2015). However, drawbacks occur because researchers may interpret data differently (Houghton et al., 2013). Because the benefits outweigh the drawbacks, I used document analysis in this study as a data collection technique. I analyzed company reports, business and archival documents, and memos related to the development and implementation of LDPs.

Member checking allows researchers to minimize errors (Houghton et al., 2013), promote model generation, and illustrate a big-picture snapshot (Randles, 2012), but also ensure reliability, validity, and accuracy of data (Harper & Cole, 2012). Upon transcribing interview data, researchers must verify responses with participants for accuracy (Shavers & Moore, 2014). This process allows participants to reflect on their responses and potentially add information. Researchers use member checking as a tool to ensure validity, reliability, and credibility of data (Houghton et al., 2013). I conducted the interviews, interpreted what the participants stated, and shared this interpretation with the participants for validation purposes.

Data Organization Techniques

I used reflective journals to identify emerging themes within my study. Researchers' reflectiveness has links to qualitative research (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). Using reflective journals and research logs during research provide transparency to data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation methods (Teusner, 2015; Walker et al., 2013). Maintaining a reflective journal is a frequently used process that involves keeping a journal with a list of personal experiences and observations (Houghton, et al., 2013). Researchers use reflective journals to document the steps they use to make decisions about the study (Houghton et al., 2013) and to develop the themes that emerged (Bryman, 2012). In addition, researchers use reflective journals to summarize meetings, experiences (Lamb, 2013), and challenge participants' way of thinking (Boniface, Seymour, Polglase, Lawrie, & Clarke, 2012). I used a reflective journal to describe my experiences related to the semistructured interviews, potential challenges, and overall research process.

While the reflective diary contains data that are subject to interpretation (Walker et al., 2013), a research log contains structured and factual information (Bryman, 2012). Researchers use research logs to document questions, activities, and problems, allowing them to organize everything and to reflect upon research activities (Sharon, 2012). I maintained a research log to document questions and activities, allowing me to organize everything and to reflect upon all research activities. Moreover, I used research logs as a reminder to follow up with questions I did not ask during interviews.

Storing data in computer files and utilizing proper data management increases trustworthiness, credibility, and authenticity of data (White, Oelke, & Friesen, 2012), and contributes to efficient data retrieval (Gläser & Laudel, 2013). In contrast, storing data using a cloud service provider raises concerns of lost data due to dishonest service providers discarding unfrequented data (Ren, Shen, Wang, Xu, & Fang, 2014). I stored interview invitations, signed informed consent forms, audio recordings of interviews, interview transcripts, and other study-related documents in a password-protected folder on my personal computer’s hard drive and will keep these data for five years. Anonymity is another crucial part of the privacy process (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2012) and, consequently, I replaced each participant’s name with pre-determined numeric codes (e.g., *P1*) before storing participants’ data. I used the same generic codes for all research-related data, including audio recordings, signed informed consent forms, and interview transcripts.

Data Analysis

Researchers (Jacob & Ferguson, 2012; Palinkas et al., 2013) highly recommended to other researchers to use member checking (Yin, 2014) and methodological triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) as data analysis methods. In addition, Castleberry (2014) recommended the use of a graphical query and visualization tool, such as NVivo 10 for Windows, to analyze the data collected. I used methodological triangulation methods to analyze the data collected. I also used NVivo 10 for Windows software to analyze data collected. Researchers triangulate data to explore a phenomenon from different perspectives and levels, using data collected from various sources such as interviews and review of documentation (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

There are four types of triangulation methods, including data, investigator, theoretical, and methodological (Flick, 2015). Researchers use data triangulation when integrating qualitative and quantitative data sources and providing a holistic perspective of findings (Kao & Salerno, 2014). In contrast, investigator triangulation entails a second and third author to review the primary author’s analysis to validate research conclusions (Coy, Lambert, & Miller, 2016). Theoretical triangulation involves researchers analyzing data from two separate theories (Beltramo, 2014). Lastly, methodological triangulation increases validity by combining data collection procedures to determine cause and effect (Bjurulf, Vedung, & Larsson, 2012) during data-gathering procedures (Archbold, Dahle, & Jordan, 2014). Because I did not employ quantitative data, a second and third author, or multiple theories in my study, I used methodological triangulation to analyze collected data in this study. Researchers use methodological triangulation to reveal the richness and depth of data collected (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Using methodological triangulation allowed me to reveal the richness and depth of data collected from various sources.

I used three phases to conduct data analysis in this study. In Phase 1, I followed researchers' recommendations, as described in the next sentences. Researchers transcribe interviews to generate meaning and realities from within the natural environment (Nordstrom, 2015), while contributing to efficient coding procedures (Gibbs, Eisenberg, Rozaidi, & Gryaznova, 2015). Researchers also use interview transcripts for pattern coding (Beltramo, 2014). In Phase 1 of the data analysis phase for this study, I transcribed participant interviews into a Microsoft Word file and generated meaning from the natural environment. Transcribing participant interviews allowed me to code patterns. I converted the Word transcriptions into PDF files and uploaded them to NVivo 10 for Phase 2 of data analysis.

In Phase 2 of data analysis, I also followed researchers' recommendations, as described in the next sentences. Researchers use graphical query visualization software tools, such as NVivo 10, to code data (Castleberry, 2014); retrieve text segments efficiently (Gläser & Laudel, 2013); identify and organize themes (Franzosi, Doyle, McClelland, Putnam Rankin, Vicari, 2013); relate codes and subcodes; and cluster, organize, and identify emerging themes (Folta, Seguin, Acerkman, & Nelson, 2012). However, researchers must learn the software functionality (Hazes, 2014). I used NVivo 10 to code data and retrieve text segments efficiently. After I cataloged and organized the data, I began identifying themes that emerged. I used NVivo 10 to prepare, organize, and report my findings. I located key words from interview transcripts for efficient coding and theme generation. After comparing codes from all transcribed interviews, I narrowed results to three common themes.

Phase 3 involved using document analysis as a data analysis approach. Yin (2014) argued that the content analysis approach to analyze data consists of three stages, including preparation, organization, and reporting. I reviewed business and archived documents. Business and archival documents are paper trails of past events and include organizational procedures (Gross, Blue-Banning, Turnbull III, & Francis, 2015), beliefs, and experiences, resulting in theme building (Storlie, Moreno, & Portman, 2014). Participants provided me with company reports that contained data compiled pre- and post-LDP training to determine participants' evolution through the process. These documents allowed me to uncover trends based on participants' responses and experiences. My focus was on key terms, phrases, feelings, and outcomes expressed by participants to determine trends, as several researchers have made this recommendation (Farquhar, 2012; Yin, 2014).

Researchers conducting a case study often keep a reflective journal during participant interviews to record thoughts, reflections, and additional information that could assist researchers in identifying key themes, by grouping similar labels together; words; and experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; McDermott & Lanahan, 2012). Researchers (Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014) suggested assigning labels to key parts of interview transcripts. I kept a reflective journal to record my thoughts, reflections, and additional information during the interviews, which helped me identify key themes, by grouping similar labels together; words; and experiences. I also assigned labels to key parts of interview transcripts.

Researchers (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2014) recommended the use of concept and mind mapping to help researchers analyze and interpret data collected. I used concept and mind mapping to help me analyze and interpret data collected. I used concept and mind mapping to help me identify themes and reveal linkages between themes and both, related literature and TL. The literature, methodology, and study outcomes are the three aspects of a sound conceptual framework (Bernard, 2013). Encompassed in TL theory is idealized influence, including attributes and behaviors, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Abrell et al., 2011; Bass, 1985).

Reliability and Validity

In this section, I discuss the reliability and validity of my study from the perspective of qualitative research. I address the four criteria that qualitative researchers used in addressing reliability and validity, including creditability (Houghton et al., 2013), dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Boesch et al., 2012). Finally, I discuss the way I achieved data saturation.

Reliability

Reliability is a concern in qualitative research, in general, and case study research design, in particular. Achieving reliability results requires the researcher use reliable instruments and measurements (Cope, 2014). I incorporated various sources of evidence within my case study, including company documentation and interviews, as suggested by several researchers (Marshall et al., 2013). The inclusion of various complimentary sources, rather than a single source, enhances case study research (Yin, 2014).

Dependability refers to the consistency of outcomes under similar conditions (Cope, 2014). Enhancing dependability requires administering each interview using the same list of questions (Al-Yateem, 2012), and the same follow-up questions (Trier-Bieniek, 2012), to generate dependable answers (Bryman, 2012). I followed each step to ensure outside groups or other researchers could mirror my research procedures and findings, which is another way of increasing dependability (Moretti et al., 2011). Finally, I employed *member checking* to confirm data dependability by comparing data captured during and after the interview, as recommended by researchers (Winter & Collins, 2015). *Member checking* is the process of verifying the accuracy of participants' responses to interview questions to increase accuracy of results (Houghton et al., 2013). Moreover, *member checking* is a tool researchers use to increase dependability by ensuring their biases are excluded from results (Kolb, 2012).

Recording the interview session allows researchers to review and reflect upon interviewees' answers, producing reliable transcripts and themes (Al-Yateem, 2012). I asked participants to elaborate on their answers if answers lacked depth or relevance. Asking interviewees to explain their answers in sufficient detail reduces opportunities for researchers to add their biases and provides clarity to people outside the organization (Teusner, 2015). To avoid tainting participants' perspectives, I did not discuss with participants any details about the nature of the study before the interview. I followed the interview protocol and did not introduce any new questions to maintain consistency and increase reliability, as recommended by several scholars (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012).

Validity

Validity refers to extent that data findings accurately reflect the phenomena being studied and is truthful (Tuesner, 2015). Credibility, transferability, and confirmability are elements to research validity (Teusner, 2015). Credibility occurs when researchers' data address the intended focus; participants provide rich responses (Boesch et al., 2012); and readers experience similar emotions (Polit & Beck, 2012), thoughts, or feelings evoked in the literature (Cope, 2014). I reminded participants to answer the questions truthfully and completely, to meet established criteria.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) claimed that researchers establish the credibility of qualitative research when researchers conduct data analyses and interpretations accurately and honestly. To enhance credibility, researchers invest much time with participants during the research study, make accurate observations, reflect on everything during the research process, and records the results of the reflection exercises (Boesch et al. 2012). Establishing credibility begins with the integral process of selection, recruitment, identification, and description of study participants (Cope, 2014). Researchers establish credibility by conducting member checking (Yin, 2014). In addition, researchers align interview questions with the overarching research question to establish credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I established credibility of this study by ensuring the integrity of the process of selection, recruitment, identification, and description of study participants. I ensured my interview questions aligned with the overarching research question by asking a panel of experts to verify that the possible answers to my interview questions would help me answer the overarching research question for this study. The panel of experts provided recommendations for change that I incorporated into the interview questions. Lastly, I conducted member checking in this study, as I transcribed interview data that I had recorded into a Microsoft Word document, using my own words. I then gave transcribed interview data to study participants and asked participants to add, delete, confirm, and either add or clarify the data I collected.

Transferability is one key criterion for reliability and validity. Researchers believe transferability occurs when findings could transfer to other settings or groups (Elo et al., 2014), require participants meet a set of criteria (Moretti et al., 2011), which are at the discretion of the researcher (Polit & Beck, 2012). Transferability refers to whether or not findings of a study are applicable to other studies or scenarios (Elo et al., 2014). Researchers use various sources of data from several perspectives of a phenomenon to strengthen the findings of the study (Yin, 2014). Researchers should provide as much detail as possible (i.e., study context and environment) about their research studies to allow other researchers to be able to replicate a given study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I used various sources of data, including semistructured interviews and document analyses, to provide several perspectives and overall context to the findings of this study, allowing me to strengthen the findings of this study. I described in detail the data analysis process, study participants, and research context in this study to increase transferability.

Confirmability refers to researchers' ability to show that the research data are the actual interpretation of study participants' views without the researchers' biases. Researchers establish confirmability by providing rich descriptions of the data analysis and interpretation process (Bryman, 2012). Researchers argue that confirmability requires data to represent the participants' viewpoints, and not the researchers' views. In fact, researchers often provide study participants' direct quotations to support study findings (Cope, 2014). Researchers also use member checking for accuracy (Houghton et al., 2013). Integration of views, availability of data for reanalysis, and reasonability of conclusions enhance confirmability (Boesch et al., 2012). Researchers establish confirmability using a process similar to processes researchers use to establish dependability, including the use of reflection during the research process (Cope, 2014). The information I presented informs the reader of my biases, decreasing interference with data interpretation. I provided rich descriptions of the data analyses and interpretation I conducted in this study. I included in this study participants' direct quotations to support the findings of this study. After I finished conducting semistructured interviews with study participants, I conducted member checking with study participants to ensure the validity of the research data by interpreting what the study participants stated and sharing this interpretation with the participants for data validation. Researchers use member checking as a method to ensure confirmability (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

I analyzed data until I reached data saturation, as Kolb (2012) claimed that data saturation is the point where additional data collection and analysis can no longer provide any new, meaningful information and data are replicated or redundant (Marshall et al., 2013). Without data saturation, researchers are unable to derive conclusive findings (Elo et al., 2014). Data saturation can arise from a single case study employing methodological triangulation, conducting 5 – 6 interviews (Emmel, 2013), or providing depth and breadth of information. Reaching data saturation increases the quality of a qualitative study (O’Reilly & Parker, 2012). I conducted three semistructured, in-depth interviews with human resource managers to obtain rich and insightful data. I reached data saturation when no new themes emerge from new data. If I would not have reached data saturation with three participants, I would have continued conducting interviews until reaching data saturation. Because I reached data saturation after the third interview, further interviewing was not necessary.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included a discussion on the role of the researcher, criteria for selecting participants, research methods and designs employed, the population and sampling size, conducting ethical research, data collection instruments and techniques, data organization techniques, data analysis, and ensuring the validity and reliability of the study. Section 3 of this study includes identification of new themes based on participant responses and data analysis. Presenting the findings should confirm, disconfirm, or extend knowledge about the benefits of LDPs and its use of TL. Other business owners may apply the knowledge and results presented in this study in their professions or in the promotion of social change. Recommendations for action and further research followed. Finally, I provided reflections on my experience in the DBA program and provided the reader with a message of encouragement.

Section 3: Application for Professional Practice and Implications for Social Change

This section includes a presentation of the findings from data I collected from HR managers located in Silicon Valley. I used literature presented in prior sections to guide me through my data collection and analyses. I present study findings, explain the application of the results to professional practice, discuss the implications for social change, provide recommendations for action and further research, reflect on the entire study process, and provide a concluding statement.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore the strategies that HR managers use to improve their LDPs. The sample consisted of three HR managers from Silicon Valley who had successfully developed and implemented LDPs within their organizations within the past 5 years. I conducted semistructured interviews with each participant and reviewed company documentation. Data I used for analysis included participants’ responses to interview questions and company reports. Company reports included pre- and post-LDP training reports to determine participants’ evolution through the LDP process. The reports included evaluations and feedback from 13 LDP participants about their experiences during the LDP. Participants revealed positive results upon completion of the LDP in a series format, with average ratings of 90% satisfaction throughout each session. LDP participants’ feedback included the need for stronger leadership, implementing a learning organization, and responding to several challenges related to the lack of TL within their organization. My review of company reports and analyses of participants’ interview responses led to the emergence of three themes.

Presentation of Findings

The overarching research question for this qualitative multicase study was:

RQ: What strategies do HR managers use to improve their LDPs?

My approach to answering this overarching research question involved conducting semistructured interviews with three HR managers from Silicon Valley to obtain detailed information regarding effective strategies HR managers used to improve their LDPs in their organizations. I reviewed company reports detailing strategies for the improvement of LDPs. I triangulated data obtained from semistructured interviews and company reports. Before proceeding with interviews, study participants signed informed consent forms. Participant interviews occurred via Skype and lasted between 40 and 60 minutes.

To ensure the confidentiality of study participants, I addressed each participant as P1, P2, or P3. After conducting semistructured interviews with each participant, I performed member checking with them to ensure the validity of the research data collected. I interpreted what the participants stated during the interviews and shared this interpretation with them to validate responses and mitigate bias. I used NVivo 10 software to code data via word frequency searches and identify recurring themes, allowing me to concentrate on themes related to the overarching research question and the conceptual framework of this study. After I analyzed the data, the following three themes emerged: (a) CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success; (b) fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust; and (c) LDP training was successful when completed in a series. Below is a discussion of the three themes and their relationships to the literature and the conceptual framework used in this study.

Theme 1: CEO Involvement Was Paramount to LDP Success

The first theme that emerged from a thorough analysis of the participants' responses to interview questions and a review of company reports is that CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success. All three participants claimed that CEO involvement is essential to LDP success and shared that their CEOs were very involved in the development of the LDP, which increased the CEOs' buy-in. P1 had two different CEOs during P1's tenure at the participating organization. P1 claimed that while the first CEO was an outstanding leader, the second CEO lacked effective leadership skills. When describing the involvement of the first CEO of the organization in LDPs, P1 stated:

> He had a general idea what that would look like and, then, also very specific ideas including metaphors that he specifically wanted us to use in class. So, he had very, very deep engagement in the development of the course content.

P1 also stated that the first CEO encouraged and motivated the entire group of employees to move forward with the implementation of a new LDP within the organization. P1 described the first CEO as:

> Revolution positive, values aligned, we're onboard, we're going to make a difference in the organization, in the world, we can take on anything. It was really impressive. That leadership training really got people aligned. And the Top Talent training also did in the sense of, wow, we're really important, we contribute, we top echelon of the employees here really contribute to the future of this organization. It's incumbent upon us to do something with our abilities for the organization.

P1's account concerning the change of CEOs experienced in the company demonstrates the important effect that CEOs have on various organizational outcomes. P1 described the situation in which P1's organization changed CEOs, resulting in a change in organizational culture that ultimately had a negative effect on the organization. When discussing the transition from the first to the second CEO, P1 described the transition as,

> It was like working, it was like steps backwards. It was like being demoted. It was like life went from color to black and white. I'm telling you my personal experiences, but it was how the organization felt. Lots of, "I'm just going to keep my head down and do what's required of me in my job."

The second CEO in P1's organization changed the focus of the company, making it less focused on employee development than previously established by the first CEO. P1 further claimed that the second CEO lacked TL traits. The change in focus by the second CEO in P1's organization resulted in negative outcomes, including a loss of employee motivation and lack of shared vision between the employees and the CEO. This exemplified how CEOs lacking TL traits can negatively affect a leadership transition.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with CEO involvement in LDPs, drawbacks exist with heavy CEO involvement in LDPs (P1, P2, and P3). P1 explained that a drawback resulting from having excessive CEO involvement is that "when your CEO is that engaged, you don't get leeway." Nevertheless, P1 recognized that the first CEO demonstrated shared vision and goals, which are tenets of Bass' TL theory, which permeated throughout the organization. When discussing CEO involvement, P3 added, "If the CEO doesn't care about [LDPs], it's a rock uphill." P2 also stated, "Top-level management has to not only be supportive, but participate in a meaningful way and be a driver." The three study participants stated that CEO involvement was critical to the success of LDPs. Yin et al. (2011) asserted that successful leaders use TL skills to encourage, motivate, and challenge followers to work toward a shared goal. Kang, Solomon, and Choi (2015) and Prasad and Junni, (2016) recently linked CEOs demonstrating TL skills to employees' innovative behavior and motivation, allowing top management to reach desired organizational outcomes.

The three study participants concurred that CEO involvement is vital to LPD success and overall organizational success. While Selcer et al., (2012) asserted that transformational leaders develop healthy relationships by providing support to subordinates that leads to organizational success; Shih et al., 2012 believed effective leaders are active listeners, which allows leaders to meet followers' needs and to achieve organizational success (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). Building healthy relationships and exercising active listening are vital to organizational success and building trust between leaders and followers (Selcer et al., 2012).

Employing TL within LDPs has many positive outcomes. Leaders employing TL skills strive to meet employees' needs and encourage employee development (Bass, 1990). Employees perceiving CEOs as trustworthy and honest, which are TL characteristics, perceive their organization positively and become more engaged (Men, 2012). CEOs displaying TL behaviors during LDPs act as change agents to promote meaningful change within their organizations.

P3 added that employees support the idea of having CEOs engage in LDP training and post-training sessions because CEO involvement has a positive effect on business. Stonehouse (2013) asserted that change agents must be supportive leaders possessing expertise in change management and committed to driving change to its successful completion. Change agents exhibit TL traits by promoting positive change and supporting others, which exemplifies the relationship between TL and LDPs and the need for CEO support for successful LDP development, implementation, and improvement.

P2 believed CEOs must champion change initiatives, including CEO support of LDP training initiatives, in order for meaningful and positive change to occur. P2 also believed that CEOs risk losing the interest of, and commitment from, their employees if CEOs do not champion the change or support LDP training initiatives. P2's consulting experience with several companies allowed P2 to witness the struggle leaders face with promoting change and new concepts when the CEO does not champion or support a change, including LDP training initiatives. P2 realized the important role CEOs play in championing change initiatives and supporting LDP training initiatives.

P3, possessing consulting experience, added that CEOs understand the risk of "training employees and then these employees leave," or "not training employees and these employees stay." P3 shared similar experiences as those provided by P2, as P3 realized the importance of CEO involvement in promoting LDPs. For instance, P3 stated that CEOs play an important role in any organizational change. Whenever P3's CEO supported training initiatives, including LDPs, the success of these training initiatives was evident. When CEOs invest in their employees, CEOs are also investing in the relationship and partnership with employees, which ideally reduces employee turnover (Long & Perumal, 2014). Experiences from P2 and P3 highlight the importance of CEO involvement in the development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs within organizations.

The three study participants underscored the importance of a CEO's involvement and continued support during the LDP development and implementation process to improve LDPs. All three participants agreed that one critical aspect of CEO involvement is having the CEO's input and support during the development phase of the LDP. Upon the development and implementation of LDPs, all study participants agreed that CEOs should reinforce lessons learned during the LDPs. Lastly, all participants stated that continued CEO support post-LDP is very important to carry on the momentum and to allow "stickiness" to set in for employees.

The purpose of LDP training in the three participating organizations was to develop participants' leadership skills to assume leadership positions within their organizations. LDP participants completed several courses that focused on building leadership capacities, engaging employees, building positive team cultures, managing conflict, and employing effective communication skills. All study participants stated that at the conclusion of each course and the completion of the LDP training, participants completed the *L2L Feedback Company X Report* to provide feedback to the top leadership team regarding LDP training outcomes. Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was the lowest level of importance and 5 was the highest level of importance, participants rated each course and the overall effectiveness of the entire LDP training. The 13 LDP participants ranked *CEO involvement* at an average of 4.2 out of 5, reinforcing the importance of CEO involvement to the success of LDPs. Data from the *L2L Feedback Company X Report* aligned with findings obtained from conducting interviews with the three study participants. Both indicated that CEO involvement is paramount to LDP success because CEO involvement engages employees in the LDP and brings out the best in the employees.

Correlation to the literature. This study's Theme 1, that CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success, aligns with findings from other research studies (Kang, Solomon, & Choi, 2015; Men, 2012). Kang et al. (2015) found that CEOs involved during the development and implementation phases of LDPs led employees effectively, resulting in successful business outcomes. Men (2012) found that employees perceiving CEOs as trustworthy and honest also perceived their organization positively and were more engaged in LDP training. Lastly, leaders involved during LDP implementation serve as change agents that champion change (Wallace et al., 2011), increase follower engagement and motivation (Brown, 2014), encourage followers to work outside of their comfort zones (Tonvongval, 2013), and increase employee empowerment (Abrell et al., 2011).

Correlation to the conceptual framework. This study's Theme 1, that CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success, aligns with TL, which is the conceptual framework used in this study. All study participants' responses alluded to the elements related to the concept of idealized influence, a key tenant of TL. Key words used in participant responses included *motivation*, *employee engagement*, *organizational culture*, *transformational*, *admiration*, and *leadership potential*. Each key word that study participants mentioned relates to the concept of idealized influence, which Shih et al. (2012) claimed is a tenant of TL. Idealized influence occurs when followers identify themselves with their leaders and organizations (Shih et al., 2012). Stiehl et al. (2015) asserted that researchers use motivation to lead to identify participants with leadership potential to entice them to participate in LDPs. Leaders use LDPs to enhance participants' awareness of their own leadership potential and to prepare participants for leadership roles upon completion of the LDPs (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). Once LDP participants view themselves as capable leaders, idealized influence allows them to continue towards leadership roles, which was a common theme that emerged from participants' responses in this study.

Idealized influence is one of four components of TL and has a major role in follower outcomes. Idealized influence occurs when employees have the support of their leader, which leads to increased employee engagement and motivation (Brown, 2014). Leaders using idealized influence to create a work environment in which employees display high moral judgement and self-responsibility (Sosik et al., 2014) and realize their leadership potential (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). At the organizational level, CEOs displaying idealized influence behaviors, such as valuing and rewarding their employees, lead their organizations to success (Shanker et al., 2012). P2 stated, "By giving (participants) the tools they need to be effective leaders . . . I think their potential does increase . . . infinitely on what they're capable of doing . . . as they grow their career." P3 stated,

> All I'm trying to do as a coach is, is light up inside of you something that makes you want to be better. Change your stride, change your working routine, change your dial, whatever it is, that makes you a better leader.

In both instances, the HR manager played the role of the advocate and change agent for the follower. Change agents positively affect their followers' lives, communities, and workplaces (Wiggins et al., 2013), increasing followers' innovation, process improvement, and collaboration towards a shared goal (Gaiter, 2013). As several researchers (Ilies et al., 2013) suggested, leader expressiveness relates to idealized influence, affects followers' perceptions of leadership effectiveness of organizational leaders, and leads to a higher follower effort. Other researchers (Sosik et al., 2014) stated that leaders achieve idealized influence when their followers display high moral judgement and self-responsibility. Responses from this study's participants addressed several of these concepts.

As leaders, this study's participants empowered their LDP participants to achieve goals by providing LDP participants with the necessary tools and skills. Burns (1978) stated that leaders possessing TL skills empower followers to force change casually. In addition, Bass (1985) added that leaders possessing TL skills inspire followers to look past their self-interests for the benefit of the group. Once HR managers understand their role in empowering employees, HR managers could change the organizational culture and, ultimately, enhance organizational performance.

P1 stated that when leaders hand-selected employees to participate in an exclusive LDP, employees felt respected and valued for their contributions. During one of the

LDPs that P1 developed, P1 recalled participants saying, “Wow, we’re really important, we contribute, we top echelon of the employees here really contribute to the future of this organization. It’s incumbent upon us to do something with our abilities for the organization.” Employees felt that they were contributing to something greater than themselves, which motivated and engaged them. P1’s example mirrors outcomes of leaders exhibiting idealized influence behaviors to their followers.

In summary, Theme 1 relates to Burns’ (1978) and Bass’ (1985) TL framework. Burns (1978) asserted that individuals using TL theory become empowered to casually force change that inspires others. Bass (1985) added that leaders using TL theory inspire employees to look past their self-interests for the benefit of the group by meeting their emotional needs or through intellectual stimulation. Demonstrating TL skills results in innovative behavior and follower motivation (Kang et al., 2015; Prasad & Junni, 2016). CEOs promoting TL increase followers’ intellectual stimulation to work towards a shared goal (Chent et al., 2013).

Theme 2: **Fostering a Culture of Learning Promoted Innovation, Engagement, and Trust**

Fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust was the second theme that emerged from a thorough analysis of the participants’ responses to interview questions and a review of company reports. All three study participants claimed that the promotion of a learning organization contributed to organizational *innovation*, *employee engagement*, and the *building of trust*. Innovation, an essential part of this study’s Theme 2, is the result of CEOs promotion of, and engagement in, shared leadership (Hoch, 2013) or TL (Kang et al., 2015). CEOs empower employees to be innovative (Prasad & Junni, 2016) by promoting a culture in which leaders value and reward innovation (Shanker et al., 2012). CEOs must reward employees when exhibiting behaviors acquired during LDPs.

All three participants claimed that developing and promoting learning organizations has a positive impact on employee innovation and engagement. Learning organizations contain continuous learning processes within their structure, allowing business leaders to collect, manage, and use knowledge for organizational success (Rana, Ardichvili, & Polsello, 2016). P2 mentioned that leaders of learning organizations provide a foundation for developing employees into leaders, acquiring people-managing skills, and driving organizational results through investment in employee development. P3 stated that leaders must encourage employees to try new things, confirm that employees complete the task, and encourage employees to attempt new challenges to reinforce continuous learning. P1 mentioned the importance of recognizing an organization in which leaders support employee learning and development to attract talent to the organization. All three participants mentioned the need to create an environment in which mentoring and coaching are an essential part of employee development.

The comprehensive review of company reports on LDP participants' experiences support the claim that engaging employees and building a positive team culture is important to employees. P1 described LDP participants as students because, "we are a *learning organization*." In addition, P1 stated, "when you can point to something like that and say, ‘this organization supports learning and development for their employees,’ there again you got another good recruitment point that helps people want to come work for the company.” P2 stated, “I believe we should always be *learning*” and claimed that most millennial managers are interested in learning and growing within their careers. P3 added, “we’re human capital, it’s a human capital-intensive knowledge business.” Participants 2 and 3 claimed that human capital is one aspect of learning organizations and a driver for professional development in successful organizations. Clarke and Higgs (2016) asserted that investing in human capital enables organizations to succeed over competitors, increase organizational effectiveness, and protect trade secrets. P1’s perspectives resembled those held by Participants 2 and 3, but used the concept of learning organization as a recruitment tactic to increase the interest of prospective employees.

Correlation to the literature. This study’s Theme 2, fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust, aligns with findings from other research studies (Alsalami et al., 2014; Hannachi, 2016; Ilies et al., 2013; Loon et al. 2012). Researchers (Alsalami et al., 2014; Hannachi, 2016) stated that organizational learning is crucial to facilitate employees’ adaptation to new cultural norms and increases organizational performance, innovation, and effectiveness. Similarly, all three study participants believed in promoting the concepts of a learning organization, resulting from TL, with LDP participants during and post the LDP. Ilies et al. (2013) stated that leaders build followers’ *trust* via TL, especially when incorporating TL theory’s qualities into job-related learning (Loon et al., 2012). Kehan, Weipeng, Jenny, and Lei (2016) suggested that organizational leaders should educate management teams on demonstrating more positive emotions, which contributes to the development of a positive organizational culture.

CEOs investing in the creation and promotion of the concept of *learning organization* experience cost savings through higher employee retention (Kwon & Rupp, 2013); lower turnover, which leads to lower training costs; and lower recruitment costs because potential employees witness the company's investment in employees. P2 stated, "75% of people will leave a company if their manager sucks… it can be anywhere from $12,000 - $30,000 to hire somebody." P1 noted,

> I think the most significant finding was that when we looked at those top percent of people who participated versus the top percent people who we didn't invite to participate . . . we found that we had increased retention rates. That our people were something like 75% more likely to stay at the company.

In regards to employee engagement, P2 stated, "I think most employees are motivated by what they can continue to *learn* and how they can continue to grow their career." P1 added, "as with any training, having more tools in your toolbox is going to contribute to your leadership potential." CEOs foster innovative thinking by promoting the development of learning organizations and valuing and rewarding innovation (Shanker et al., 2012). While leaders investing in employees through training achieve short-term goals, leaders promoting the development of a learning organization make learning and innovation a long-lasting organizational norm and value.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. This study's Theme 2, fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust, aligns with TL. Although not one of the 4 I's of TL, *trust* is another key factor in successful leadership. Leaders demonstrating idealized influence build followers' *trust* (Ilies et al., 2013), especially when incorporating TL theory's qualities into job-related learning (Loon et al., 2012). Leaders building *trust* also influence the leadership-efficacy beliefs of their protégés (Smith, 2013). P3 emphasized that encouraging and developing trust among LDP participants is paramount during LDP implementation. In an overarching statement, P3 stated, "my job is to create *trust* when teaching LDP courses." P2 added, "you need to respect the person you work for and you need to *trust* that person," when referencing employees' relationships with leaders. Participants 2 and 3 mentioned the need that exists to have leaders establish *trust* with their employees.

P2 provided the company report, titled *L2L Feedback Company X Report*, that included 13 LDP participants' feedback, challenges, and outcomes of participating in a week-long LDP. In addition, LDP participants expressed their desire to foster *trust* within their teams and for managers to earn LDP participants' *trust*. P2 added that part of developing *trust* is having leaders demonstrating that they are ultimately accountable for, and respectful of, each LDP participant. Bahn (2013) highlighted the importance of supervisors building trust with their teams. Coaching, an outcome of TL, requires high levels of trust and honesty for building successful relationships with clients (Van Genderen, 2014). When asked to describe the top three qualities employees look for in a leader, P2 stated,

> Someone you can trust. So whether that is because they have high integrity, or … they've demonstrated that they're . . . always going to be forthcoming with what

> they think and they follow through with what they say they're going to do. Whatever it is that they built, they built a foundation of trust.

Participants 2 and 3 gave examples related to leaders building trust with followers. Participants 2 and 3 claimed that fostering a culture of learning promotes trust. Leaders build trust with followers in many ways, including creating emotional connections with employees, striving to meet their needs, and encouraging employee development (Bass 1990). P2 emphasized the importance of leaders building trust with their teams. However, this study's participants did not mention appealing to the emotional needs of their followers. Similar to TL, when leaders meet followers' emotional needs, followers increase their efforts (Bass, 1990). As such, trust is a key element within TL for building and developing successful LDPs. However, leaders must build trust with followers by establishing emotional connections because building trust leads to strong leader-follower connections, developing successful teams.

Theme 3: LDP Training Was Successful When Completed In A Series

LDP training was successful when completed in a series was the third theme that emerged from a thorough analysis of the participants' responses to interview questions and a review of company reports. The three participants claimed that delivering LDPs in a series-based format allowed LDP participants to build on lessons taught in the previous class. Moreover, all three study participants' responses generated a resounding theme: do not rush the process, conduct post-training and follow-up activities, and deliver LDPs in a series-based format. Below are responses from each study participant pertaining to LDP outcomes when completing LDPs in a series format.

The amount of time allocated for leaders to develop, implement, and improve LDPs has an effect on LDP effectiveness. P3 believed that holding "one-time events" is the least effective form of LDPs. Getha et al. (2015) stated that information decay occurs when individuals receive training but are unable to immediately and repeatedly apply newly acquired knowledge. Abrell et al. (2011) stated that the development of TL behaviors occurred after receiving 6 months of training because the complexity of developing TL behaviors makes it difficult for TL behaviors to occur in a shorter timeframe. Study participants' responses aligned with Abrell et al.'s claims.

When discussing the format of the LDP participants developed and implemented, P1 described the LDP as, "not lecture-based. It was . . . teach something, get hands on, make people practice it, small groupwork, group discussions, homework if it was a multi-day class, very interactive, lots of good adult learning theory being adhered to, lots of retention." P2 experienced something similar. P2 stated,

> We did . . . a huge series of leadership trainings and it was really great that almost immediately afterwards . . . the language that gets built out of leadership trainings . . . there's certain language that every training brings out, and to hear people in this one case . . . it doesn't even matter what 'the funnel' means, but there was this concept of 'the funnel' . . . Hearing everybody talk about a 'funnel' after that . . . just in normal day-to-day conversation was actually . . . really compelling for me . . . They really absorbed . . . what was given to them and then they put it in practice immediately.

P3 added,

> . . . the first thing you see as a result of either preparing the trainer or delivering the training is . . . people using the language you use for the next couple of weeks, right? . . . that's not new and innovative things, that's, 'I've incorporated what you've taught me', and people start to use it in everyday world to, to sort of explain that phenomenon of leadership.

While P1 focused on delivering LDPs in a series-based format, P2 and P3 mentioned that they incorporated specific terminology into LDP during and post-LDP training. P2 and P3 agreed that incorporating unique terms within LDP training increases "stickiness" and LDP effectiveness. Proper follow-up activities ensure longevity of learning (Hannachi, 2016). Learning communities result from exceptional training and promote the application of lessons taught during LDPs to the workplace (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). P3 stated,

> If you run a proper training section . . . and you have them get back together and talk about what they learned, that's where . . . incorporation, expansion, adaptation seems to happen the most. And I think that's where a typical classroom application falls down, right?

P3's statement supports the idea that series-based LDPs build on lessons acquired in previous training courses, resulting in "stickiness" and overall effectiveness of the LDP. Data from the *L2L Feedback Company X Report* supported my finding that group sessions provide positive contributions to learning. The *L2L Feedback Company X Report* included data collected from 13 employees participating in a series-based LDP. On a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 was the lowest level of importance and 5 was the highest level of importance, LDP participants rated the overall LDP outcomes at 4.4. Feedback was positive but recommendations included, "would've loved more practice sessions," "more role playing . . .," "have follow up homework holding people responsible for the proper use of techniques," and "I felt I heard so much great material but not enough of a change to internalize or practice it." The need of continuity and hands-on practice for LDP participants is consistent with findings from Kahn and Gardin's (2016) study revealing that 90% of resident and fellowship programs employ continuous quality improvement training.

P1 mentioned 360-degree feedback; however, all three study participants mentioned the importance of group meetings post-LDP training and of delivering training in a series format. Similarly, P1 witnessed LDP participants meeting outside of class to practice their newly acquired skills with their peers and supervisors and setting monthly check-ins for ongoing learning. P3 added that communities naturally form post-LDP training to practice newly acquired knowledge and skills.

Correlation to the literature. This study's Theme 3, that LDP training was successful when completed in a series, aligns with findings from other research studies. For instance, Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015) found that LDP training completed in a series, such as workshops, 360-degree feedback, group reflections, and coaching enhances participants' leadership and leadership profiles. In a separate study, other researchers (Mason et al., 2014) found LDP success when middle- to senior-level managers participated in LDP training delivered in a series that included workshops, executive coaching sessions, external training, and 360-degree feedback. Moreover, Wilke et al. (2015) found that leaders delivering group seminars in a series format improve workplace knowledge and skills. Overlaps exist between my findings, prior literature, and company reports on the topic of optimal training delivery.

Technology has a role in the delivery of training. Chio (2012) asserted that e-learning is a promising approach for continuing education because e-learning increases participants' engagement. Learners use advanced technologies to interact with peers, access learning materials, and communicate with instructors (Kahai et al., 2013). P1's LDP encompassed a blend of online learning and face-to-face instruction. P2 and P3 explained the manner in which their company leaders use a proprietary training software but also deliver face-to-face training sessions. P3's responses neither confirmed nor denied the importance of e-learning, but it was evident that technology had an important role in the delivery of LDPs at P1's and P2's organizations.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. This study's Theme 3, that LDP training was successful when completed in a series, aligns with TL. Delivering training in a series allows participants to build knowledge from previous knowledge acquired in training courses, creating consistency, stickiness, and overall effectiveness of the LDP (Packard & Jones, 2015). Creating a community where LDP participants immediately implement newly acquired knowledge and skills also contributes to "stickiness" (Getha-Taylor, Fowles, Silvia, & Merritt, 2015; Packard & Jones, 2015). Stickiness relates to intellectual stimulation, a key tenant of TL. Intellectual stimulation occurs when employees look at old problems in new ways, view obstacles as challenges, and emphasize rational solutions (Bass, 1990), resulting in *innovation*, creativity, and critical thinking (Groves & LaRocca, 2011). In a recent study, Kahn & Gardin (2016) found that 90% of resident and fellowship LDPs had continuous quality improvement training as a core belief to achieve success in the healthcare field. Continuous quality improvement training relates to intellectual stimulation, a key tenant of TL. Participants receiving adequate support post-LDP increased their employability (McLean, Anthony, & Dahlgaard, 2017).

Application to Professional Practice

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that human resource managers use to improve their LDPs. I conducted semistructured interviews with human resource managers and reviewed organizational documentation related to LDPs. After analyzing the data, three themes emerged: (a) CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success; (b) fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust; and (c) LDP training was successful when completed in a series.

Effective leadership skills are paramount to the success of an organization (Tonvongval, 2013) and to the development of personnel through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and achievement of shared goals (Bass, 1990). The findings of this study could be valuable to HR managers in all industries. HR managers could use the findings from this study to address the lack of skilled and trained employees (Bahn, 2013), decrease business owners' understanding of leadership development and LDPs (Packard & Jones, 2015), and the shortage of leaders in all facets of society (Virakul & McLean, 2012). HR managers reading this study may gain an improved understanding of ways to engage employees, reduce turnover, and promote a learning organization with the successful development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs within their organizations.

CEO involvement is paramount to the successful development and implementation of LDPs. CEO involvement in LDPs positively affects employee engagement, as employees perceive the CEO as trustworthy and honest (Men, 2012). In turn, employee engagement affects organizational commitment, which is the willingness of employees to work outside of their comfort zone (Tonvongval, 2014). Leaders create a positive and fulfilling state-of-employee wellbeing (Kim et al., 2013), leading to increased organizational and personal performance (Kim et al., 2013). CEOs well versed in change management lead companies to successful change (Stonehouse, 2013). It is paramount that CEOs understand their role in LDP training to maximize LDP outcomes.

HR managers wishing to remain relevant in the existing business environment must create a competitive advantage in their organizations (Ozorhon et al., 2014) because, as Tonvongval (2013) explained, implementing LDPs increased competitive advantage by as much as 60%. CEOs gain a competitive advantage for their organizations by becoming innovative and adaptive to change (Hoch, 2013). CEOs and HR managers implementing learning organizations provide the foundation for achieving innovation, effectiveness, and overall success (Alsalami et al., 2014). CEOs and HR managers promoting learning organizations increase knowledge transfer, which increases organizational learning, performance, and innovation, and the firm's capabilities and likelihood of organizational success (Hannachi, 2016). However, the manner HR managers conduct training also affects organizational and employee success.

All three participants agreed that delivering LDPs in a series-based format allowed LDP participants to build on lessons taught in the previous class, resulting in stickiness and an increase in intellectual stimulation, which is a key tenant of TL. Stickiness of information taught during LDPs results from repetition. While Chaimongkonrojna and Steane (2015) recommended group reflections, Wilke et al. (2015) asserted that leaders use group seminars to increase workplace knowledge, resulting in stickiness. HR managers and CEOs should reinforce post-LDP learning by using LDP vocabulary and by immediately applying new knowledge taught during LDPs. Repetition leads to change, which leads to success.

Successful development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs within an organization is a daunting task. Improper guidance increases the likelihood of failure. When HR managers understand the importance of LDPs, the need for CEO support, and implementing the proper support systems for lessons taught during LDPs, the likelihood of success increases. Participants provided company reports and responded to interview questions, which may properly guide other HR managers looking to invest in LDPs. As leaders retire and the need increases to develop new leaders (Levanon et al., 2014), HR managers and CEOs could use this study's findings to learn strategies to develop leaders. The lack of time (The Bureau of National Affairs, 2012) and insufficient budgets (Estrada & Connely, 2015) hinder the successful development and implementation of LDPs, also noted by this study's participants. Implementing the proper remedies are necessary for LDP success.

HR managers should involve their CEOs in the development and implementation of LDPs. P1 claimed that CEO's involvement provided a great context for LDP success. Although at times difficult to convince, the CEO played a major role in changing the company culture and promoting new terminology taught during LDPs. These findings support Gillet and Vandenberge's (2014) belief that leaders stimulate innovative efforts and develop team creativity. HR managers must promote learning organizations. In addition, learning organizations assist employees in adapting to new concepts and increasing organizational performance, innovation, and effectiveness (Alsalami et al., 2014). Lastly, employees should complete LDPs in a series-based format. Lessons taught in a sequential order are more effective than one-time workshops or courses. Following the guidelines discussed above could assist HR managers and CEOs in developing employees into leaders; therefore, helping propel their companies forward. Findings from this study align with other researchers' claims that followers identify themselves with organizational leaders (Shih et al., 2012), leaders appeal to followers' emotional needs (Bass, 1990), and leaders promote innovation and critical thinking among followers (Groves & LaRocca, 2011).

Implications for Social Change

Investing in the development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs is critical for meeting the demands of a complex workforce (Seidle, Fernandez, & Perry, 2016). Employees developing leadership skills may use these skills in all aspects of their daily lives. On a larger scale, individuals use leadership skills to influence their communities positively and address local and global societal problems, epidemics, and other community-based issues. Examples include employing LDPs in local schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, and other organizations to develop individuals into leaders empowered to address larger community problems, including homelessness, environmental sustainability, or cultural acceptance. My hope is that this study's findings may raise awareness of the need for LDP investment. Understanding LDP outcomes, such as inclusion, collaboration, and building strong relationships allows individuals to create inclusive societies, cultures, and communities.

Based on this study’s findings, I am able to demonstrate the importance of LDP training delivered in a series format, which HR managers and CEOs should promote and enforce, leading to the development of learning organizations within the company culture. HR managers could use this study’s findings to gain a proper understanding of the effective development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs within their organizations. HR managers and CEOs could use the results from this study to become aware of the lack of effective leadership in the workplace and the need for HR managers and CEOs to develop, implement, and improve LDPs within their organizations (Ross, Venezuela, Intindola, & Flinchbaugh, 2017). Finally, members of society may use this study’s findings to develop local and global individuals into leaders to assume important leadership roles in their communities, as several scholars (Virakul & McLean, 2012) recommended, and in all levels of government, as Abolina (2016) suggested.

Recommendations for Action

HR managers play a valuable role in all organizations and, as such, I am providing results of this study as a roadmap to help HR managers successfully develop, implement, and improve LDPs within their organizations. Three themes emerged from conducting a thorough analysis of the data in this study: (a) CEO involvement was paramount to LDP success; (b) fostering a culture of learning promoted innovation, engagement, and trust; and (c) LDP training was successful when completed in a series. Based upon these three themes that emerged from this study, I offer the following recommendations: (a) the CEO serves as the LDP champion by promoting and rewarding employees on adapted behaviors post-LDP training; (b) CEOs and HR managers must promote values found in learning organizations, resulting in innovative behavior; and (c) HR managers should deliver LDPs in a series format and later establish support groups to allow employees to practice their newly acquired knowledge.

My first recommendation is that CEOs serve as LDP champions by promoting and rewarding employees on adapted behaviors post-LDP training. CEOs promoting and rewarding newly acquired behaviors taught in LDPs demonstrate the CEOs' commitment to change. Researchers (Shaari, Areni, Grant, & Miller, 2014) suggested that CEOs have a profound impact on employees, leading to enhanced organizational performance. However, CEOs must reward LDP participants when participants adopt and adapt lessons, behaviors, or values taught during LDPs. CEOs giving rewards to LDP participants translates into positive reinforcement, which leads to positive change.

The second recommendation from this study is that HR managers and CEOs should promote values found in learning organizations. All three study participants claimed that the promotion of a learning organization contributed to organizational innovation, *employee engagement*, and the building of trust. The comprehensive review of company reports regarding LDP participants' experiences supported the claim that engaging employees and building a positive team culture is important to employees. Fostering learning organizations results in optimal business performance (Benn et al., 2013). Implementing learning organizations promotes innovation and collaboration (Hannachi, 2016). Within learning organizations, leaders create an environment in which employees exchange ideas, work across departments, and build cohesion towards achieving a shared purpose (Rana et al., 2016). HR managers and CEOs promoting learning organizations increase the likelihood of organizational health, performance, and sustainability (Hannachi, 2016).

The third and final recommendation is that HR managers should deliver LDPs in a series format and later establish support groups to allow employees to practice their newly acquired knowledge. Conducting a thorough analysis of the participants' responses to interview questions and a comprehensive review of the *L2L Feedback Company X Report* generated a resounding theme: do not rush the LDP process, conduct post-training and follow-up activities, and deliver the LDP training in a series format. Participants 1, 2, and 3 claimed that delivering LDPs in a series format allowed LDP participants to build on lessons taught in the previous class.

Researchers (Stiehl et al., 2015) suggested that LDP participants should have time to practice the knowledge and skills acquired in the previous class, building on previous lessons to acquire additional leadership competencies. When HR managers do not deliver LDPs in a series format, LDP participants are unable to practice effective leadership behaviors and to develop leadership skills (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). HR managers should promote series-based LDP learning because time has a profound effect on the retention of information. In addition, series-based learning compound lessons previously taught to allow LDP participants to integrate knowledge into their workplace. However, HR managers must provide proper support groups or networks post-LDP training to allow participants to practice their newly acquired knowledge. When HR managers and CEOs champion change, reward change, and promote a learning organization, the results have a positive effect on the organization.

I intend to share the results of my study with the larger population, including CEOs and HR managers, through publications in academic research journals and presentations at professional conferences. Possible research journals include, but are not limited to, *Human Resource Development International*, *International Journal of Training and Development*, *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, and *The Leadership Quarterly*. I may present my research study at annual conferences, such as The Learning and Leadership Development Conference and The Global Leadership Summit.

Individuals could implement LDPs in all facets of society. Leaders interested in developing their followers into leaders should read this study. Developing, implementing, and improving LDPs within an organization is a daunting task. A high chance of LDP failure without guidance exists. Leaders could use the findings from this study as a guide to develop, implement, and improve LDPs successfully. Individuals in communities, organizations, and society participating in LDPs may experience positive changes.

Recommendations for Further Research

Literature on the successful development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs is limited (Seidle et al., 2016), making this study the building block for a larger foundation of research. The sample size within this study included HR managers of three organizations. While I achieved data saturation, I recommend that other researchers further investigate this phenomenon. Determining the manner in which LDP development, implementation, and improvement varies across industries might provide a different perspective. While extensive research on TL, leadership, personnel management, and training exists, limited research exists on the relationship between TL and LDPs and the process used to develop, implement, and improve LDPs in organizations successfully. An opportunity to expand research on LDPs exists.

Approaching this study from a qualitative multicase approach limited the scope of my research. The limited geographic area of Silicon Valley did not allow me to generalize this study's findings to other geographical locations. The opportunity exists to conduct extensive research on LDPs. Another important recommendation is for researchers to conduct a quantitative study.

Research involving feelings, emotions, or biases hinder the reliability and validity of a study (Marshall et al., 2014). Researchers conducting semistructured interviews increase the likelihood of biases interfering with results (Wolgemuth et al., 2014). I trusted that participants answered questions truthfully and completely. Employing another research design may help other researchers either support or fail to confirm my findings. Overall, my topic requires extensive research before drawing any definitive conclusions.

Reflections

Leadership has been a passion of mine for over 10 years. From my involvement in undergraduate-level, campus-based organizations to my post-graduate community activism, I learned the knowledge and skills required of an effective leader. However, I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge through the completion of this study. I learned to keep eliminating emotions and preconceived notions throughout the research process. I kept an open mind to learn through others, which contributed to the validity of my study. This practice also stopped me from asking leading questions for personal gain.

During the interviews, I did not disclose my passion for leadership. I remained neutral and unbiased throughout the process to avoid influencing participants' responses in this study. I learned that experiences differed from each participant. Allowing participants to express themselves openly, without judgement or bias, provided me with genuine data that would not skew my results. Outcomes could have changed if I would have provided my own perspective to their responses. Upon completing the interviews, interpretation, and data analyses, I learned that different approaches to leadership training and styles of leadership exist, allowing HR managers and CEOs to succeed. This experience supported my belief that leadership is not a *one-size-fits-all* concept.

Upon reflecting on the doctoral study process, I learned about my role as the researcher. I established relationships with study participants and learned about their organizations. However, conducting research presented obstacles, such as potential bias and the inability to withdraw leading questions. Following the interview protocol, practicing active listening, upholding ethical standards, and avoiding sharing my views during interviews helped me overcome these obstacles. In addition, the relationships I established with study participants fostered a free flow of ideas and an open dialogue, resulting in the collection of rich data.

Through the interview process, I obtained new ideas, information, and thoughts regarding the successful development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs. Conducting interviews via Skype provided an engaging, relaxing, and comfortable atmosphere because participants responded to interview questions from the covenience of their own homes. This relaxed interview atmosphere also helped me facilitate candid and open conversations that allowed paticipants to reflect deeply on their experiences related to effective strategies used to improve LDPs and the causes of unsuccessful LDP implementation. Study participants' experiences broadened my understanding of LDP implementation and the process of facilitating, promoting, tracking, analyzing, and supporting LDP functions within organizations. Responses from study participants reinforced the importance of developing and implementing LDPs in organizations, gaining CEO support, delivering LDPs in a series format, and promoting a learning organization. Participants successfully maneuvered through the technology component of the interview allowing for a seamless dialogue. After the interview, study participants reflected on their accomplishments, challenges, and experiences developing and implementing LDPs with a sense of pride.

The doctoral study process changed my perception of LDPs in profound ways. Study participants' responses provided me with an increased understanding of the complexities of LDPs, effective LDP management, and post-LDP activities. HR managers and CEOs interested in successfully developing, implementing, and improving LDPs within their organizations should take into consideration the findings presented in this study. While CEOs play a vital role in the promotion of LDPs, delivering series-based training allows LDP participants to build upon prior lessons. Promoting learning organizations during and post-LDPs reinforced lessons taught during LDPs. The success of LDP development, implementation, and improvement resulted from HR managers and

CEOs working to ensure LDP participants' learning was supported during and after LDPs, resulting in organizational success.

Conclusions

Regardless of the sector or organization, LDPs have an invaluable role in organizational success. CEOs and HR managers could leverage LDPs to lead their teams to fulfill a shared vision. Workplace complexity requires the development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs to promote team innovation and continuous improvement (Seidle et al., 2016). Employees participating in LDPs contribute to effective leadership, leading to the establishment of increased trust and the implementation of knowledge management processes, which allow employees to enhance organizational performance (Koohang, Paliszkiewicz, & Goluchowski, 2017).

Based on the findings from this study, I confirm that HR managers and CEOs play a vital role in promoting LDPs. Additionally, creating and fostering a learning organization within a firm helps employees retain lessons taught during LDPs, creating a culture around innovation and collaboration. Effective leadership allows people to have infinite possibilities. Within society, effective leaders could achieve social justice, address racial inequalities, and bring people together. Within the business world, business leaders possessing effective leadership skills increase collaboration among stakeholders to work towards a common goal successfully. At the helm of developing leaders is the successful development, implementation, and improvement of LDPs to achieve personal and organizational goals.

Based on the findings from this study, I support the claims that training increases employee satisfaction (Cenkci & Özçelik, 2015), effort, and perceived effectiveness of leaders (MacKie, 2014); expands employees' skill base and knowledge (Mirocha et al., 2013); and leads to increased sustainability via innovative thinking, problem-solving skills, adaptability, and risk-taking dispositions (Juanmei et al., 2014; Mirocha et al., 2013). Business leaders incorporating TL into LDPs increase employees' job performance, organizational performance and effectiveness, creativity (Alsalami et al., 2014), trust (Drescher et al., 2014), and firm capabilities (Hannachi, 2016). Undoubtedly, properly developed and implemented LDPs have a paramount effect on organizational performance because leaders may address societal problems. HR managers and CEOs could use LDPs to gain an improved understanding of the development of employees' skills and of the importance of investing in LDPs to develop employees' leadership potential.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Effect of Leadership Development Programs in the Workplace: Strategies for Business Owners

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study is to explore the strategies that human resource managers use for leadership development. The sample population will consist of human resource managers from Silicon Valley who had successfully developed and implemented LDPs. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to contribute to the betterment of their local communities and economies.

Interviewee: ___________________________ Location: ___________________

Date: ______________________ Time: _______________________

Notes:

1. Greet the interviewee and introduce yourself.
2. Provide an overview of the study and indicate the usefulness of the outcome.
3. Obtain a signed consent form. Offer to answer any questions that interviewee may have.
4. Remind interviewee about their volunteer efforts to participate in the study.
5. Remind interviewee about recording the interview and start the recording.
6. Start the interview by recording interviewee's pre-assigned coded name, date, time and location.

7. Start asking interview questions and allow the participant enough time to answer them.
8. Listen carefully to the interviewee. Ask probing and follow-up questions, if needed.
9. At the end of the interview, thank interviewee for their participation and time.
10. Provide participant your contact information if they have any questions.