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Leadership Strategies for Improving Supervisors' Performance

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Leadership Strategies for Improving Supervisors' Performance

by

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MBA, Everest University, 2008

BSBA, University of Central Florida, 2005

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

March 2018

Abstract

Poor employee performance has a negative effect on business profitability. Some telecommunications executives lack strategies to improve supervisors' performance. The purpose of this single case study was to explore the leadership strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. Utilizing the behavior engineering model, data consisted of semistructured interviews with 10 purposefully selected telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten who have successfully improved supervisors' performance. Five themes emerged from the thematic analysis of interview data and business archived performance reports: need for implementing communication and team activities; need for providing bonuses, incentives, and rewards; adopting goal setting and performance appraisals; promoting training; and the required autonomy to work. All the telecommunications executives used communication, meetings, team activities and bonuses, incentives, and rewards as strategies for improving supervisors' performance. Eighty percent of the participants used goal setting and performance appraisal and training while 60% of the respondents used autonomy to do work as strategies for improving supervisors' performance. The findings from this study might contribute to social change by providing telecommunications executives with more knowledge to achieve business sustainability. With improved business performance, telecommunications executives will provide job opportunities to the people in the local community and support community leaders with provision of social amenities. The local community will adopt technology to enhance their quality of life.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my beautiful, loving, and caring daughter Jade. Thank you for being so patient with me all these years. There were times I canceled our planned outings because I wanted to work on my paper, however, you understood the importance of me trying to complete this journey. Thank you for making me tea when I stayed up late hours writing my paper. Some nights you even tried to stay up with me but ended up falling asleep on the couch. All these acts of service meant so much to me, I appreciate you. You are my hero!

You know this was not an easy journey and how unhappy I felt sometimes. However, you know that God does not leave our prayers unanswered; it is all done on His timing. Something you hear me say constantly. Never stop praying! As you will begin your college years next school year, I want you to know that you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength. Keep striving, and you will succeed. Don't forget to keep asking (praying), and you will receive. You are my #1 cheerleader. I love you, sweet girl. WE did it!

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Organizations are human systems, and the success of any organization depends on the efforts of the people who implement changes (Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013). The changes can positively affect the performance of the employees. Human resource (HR) managers use different strategies to improve employees' performance (Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Improved employee performance can have a significant impact on the organizational performance. HR staff uses the available strategies to determine how employees are performing and, as a result, provide recommendations for further training and development, which might increase productivity (Mahmoud & Mehrdad, 2015). Leadership strategies, such as training and development, are beneficial to the employees and might have a positive impact on organizational performance.

Background of the Problem

In different countries, the telecommunication industry is becoming saturated (Izogo, 2017). Unlike other industries, the telecommunication industry is growing and has become more improved over the past years. The telecom industry is engaged in simultaneous collaborative and fierce competition (Gupta, 2015). Telecommunication companies must provide the most advanced technologies and services to maintain a competitive advantage. The telecommunication industry is critical in shaping society, cultures, organizations, and the economy (Coussement, Lessmann, & Verstraeten, 2017). In a fast-growing service industry, exceptional employee performance is the key to organizational performance (Kehoe, Lepak, & Bentley, 2016). Organizational leaders

seek to find employees with exceptional performance. The responsibility of an employee's poor performance is the cause of the employee in question (Hills, 2015). However, HR managers try to provide strategies to improve poor performance in the workplace.

Business executives should inspire employees because poor leadership strategies have adverse effect on employee performance and negative impact on organizational performance (Lindebaum & Raftopoulou, 2014). There is a gap in the literature related to strategies of leadership behavior and skills affecting organizational performance (Bloom, Genakos, Sadun, & van Reenen, 2012). Therefore, it is critical to gain understanding of what strategies executives use to improve supervisors' performance for business success.

Problem Statement

Poor employee performance negatively affects organizational profitability (Ugoani, 2016). Human resource development (HRD) analysts spend on average \$164 billion improving employee performance (Abaci & Pershing, 2017) and lose \$3.7 trillion of profits on human resource related issues (Hess & Cottrell, 2016). The general business problem is that poor employee performance has negative impacts on business outcomes. The specific business problem is that some telecommunications executives lack strategies to improve supervisors' performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The study

population consisted of 10 telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Telecommunications executives may benefit from the findings of this study by delivering consistent training and development initiatives relevant to the needs of employees and focusing on addressing identified skills, knowledge, and capability gaps to enhance supervisors' performance. Application of the findings of this study may improve the lives of people in the local community by promoting the adoption or spread of advanced technology. By adopting technology, individuals could attend virtual meetings, classes, and seminars; book reservations; shop and bank online; and correspond with others by phone, fax, or the Internet, which will enhance the quality of life of the community.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use the qualitative method to explore phenomena from participants' perspectives regarding their experiences (Nelson & Evans, 2014). The qualitative method was the most appropriate method for my study because I explored the leadership strategies from the participants' perspective regarding their experiences. A researcher collects statistical data and tests a hypothesis in quantitative research (Awases, Bezuidenhout, & Roos, 2013). A quantitative method was not appropriate because the focus of the study was not to test a hypothesis but rather to explore the strategies telecommunications executives use to improve the supervisors' performance. Mixed methods researchers use a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches to develop a complete understanding of a phenomenon by exploiting the strengths from one

method to enhance the other (Abro, Khurshid, & Aamir, 2015). A mixed methods approach was not necessary for this study because using a qualitative method was sufficient to answer the research question.

The selected design was the case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a complex situation where the researcher strives to understand and improve a business practice (Seboni & Tutesigensi, 2015). The single case study design was appropriate for this study because the objective was to conduct an in-depth investigation of leadership strategies within an organization. An ethnographic researcher focuses on the behavior and beliefs of a particular cultural group (Zilber, 2014). An ethnographic design was not appropriate for this study because I did not intend to observe the behavior and beliefs of group cultures but to explore successful leadership strategies. Researchers use a phenomenological design to identify individual participants' perceptions (Sorour & Howell, 2013). A phenomenological design was not appropriate because I did not intend to explore lived experiences in this study, but the leadership strategies to improve the supervisors' performance.

Research Question

The overarching research question of this study was: What leadership strategies do telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance?

Interview Questions

Participants answered the following questions:

1. What strategies are you using to ensure improved supervisors' performance?

2. What method do you find work best to improve the supervisors' performance?
3. How do supervisors respond to your different leadership strategies?
4. How do you implement the strategies for improving supervisors' performance?
5. How do you reward supervisors for their work, motivation, or knowledge?
6. How do you measure accomplishments of a supervisor?
7. What is the difference between an ordinary and exemplary supervisor?
8. What additional information can you share that is pertinent to your strategies to improve the supervisors' performance?

Conceptual Framework

The selected conceptual framework for the study was Gilbert's 1978 behavior engineering model (BEM). The tenets of the BEM are the outcomes or consequences of the individual's behavior (Gilbert, 2007). Leaders should not measure the behavior of performance until accomplishments are measured (Fuller, Marler, Hester, & Otondo, 2015). Gilbert (2007) argued that the absence of performance support, rather than a person's lack of skill or knowledge, is the greatest barrier to exemplary performance. Gilbert delineated six components of behavior: three environmental (data, instruments, and incentives) and three within the individual's repertory (knowledge, capacity, and motives). Chevalier (2007) noted that environmental factors could pose a threat to exemplary performance and stressed ensuring enough time to complete assigned tasks, assigning employees to the best-fitted positions, and following proper recruitment

techniques. Employees' performance and accomplishments are identified by the components of the employees' behavior. The environmental factor and the employees' individual's repertory are the two components of the behavior. Organizational leaders must have all the necessary tools available to an employee for efficient performance.

An employee's decision to perform tasks depends in large part on the attractiveness of the desired results (Chou & Pearson, 2012). Employees remain in the workplace and are high-performers when motivated by incentives (Campbell, Ganco, Franco, & Agarwal, 2012). Examples of incentives include salary increases, promotions, time off, or recognition. A practical application of the BEM is executives refraining from behavior assessment until HR managers measure supervisors' accomplishments. The BEM was an appropriate conceptual framework for this study because of the study emphasis on the outcomes of performance.

Operational Definitions

Below are the definitions of some terms used in the study:

Coaching: Coaching is a tool used for contributing to and assisting with strategies for personal and professional development of a manager, which affects subordinates' behavior and performance (Rekalde, Landeta, & Albizu, 2015).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is an employee who talks positively about their workplace, less likely to leave the organization, and performs more effectively every day (Mishra, Boynton, & Mishra, 2014).

Extrinsic motivation: Extrinsic motivation is a person's environment influences are engaging in a particular behavior (Yousaf, Yang, & Sanders, 2015).

Intrinsic motivation: Intrinsic motivation is a person's internal influences for engaging in a particular behavior (Kinnaick, Thøgersen-Ntoumani, & Duda, 2016).

Job embeddedness: Job embeddedness is the component of person-job and person-organization fit, which link colleagues, work activities, and sacrifices together to determine if employees choose to remain in an organization (Peltokorpi, Allen, & Froese, 2015).

Quality of work life: Quality of work life is a subjective assessment of employees' attitudes toward their job (HemaMalini & Washington, 2014).

Valence: Valence is the final requirement for a motivated individual who positively values the outcomes received based on performance (Bertolino, Truxillo, & Fraccaroli, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are speculations about what to analyze, what counts as confirmation, and what counts as knowledge (Chandler, 2013). The first assumption was the sample was a representative of the population of all telecommunications executives under study. The second assumption was that the participants answered the interview questions honestly and comprehensively. Another assumption was interviewees would not base responses on their sense of what the interviewer wanted to hear. The final assumption

was that an exploratory case design was the most appropriate method for addressing the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are the potential weakness affecting the scope of the research findings (Connelly, 2013). The first limitation was my research study was restricted to one telecommunication company in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten and it may not reflect the findings of other industries and geographical locations. The second limitation was that I only used a qualitative single case study. My final limitation was the small sample size hindered the ability to generalize the research findings.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the components that define a study's scope (Pissourios, 2014). The doctoral study consisted of 10 telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. The results might not be generalizable to employees in different industries or geographical locations. I used interview technique as the primary instrument for data collection and excluded other potential useful means of data collection.

Significance of the Study

Typical HR concerns include job performance, performance appraisals, compensation policies, job securities, and career advancements (Shanmugam & Babu, 2016). The ability for telecommunications executives to apply leadership skills might have a direct effect on supervisors' performance improvement. Supervisors' performance

can have a major impact on an organization (Kundu & Mor, 2017). Effective leadership skills and strategies might improve employees' performance.

Contribution to Business Practice

Results of this study might benefit business leaders by identifying practices and competencies that improve supervisors' morale, productivity, and retention. Business leaders could understand how to improve supervisors' performance, which might lead to positive attitudes toward the job. A supervisors' positive attitudes to work could generate motivation, which might lead to greater productivity. Employees who like their job and are motivated are likely to stay with the same company (Baker, 2017). The findings from the study might help to improve business practices that result in the creation of new jobs and new products, which could benefit consumers and employees.

Implications for Social Change

Like other industries, telecommunications are part of a competitive global marketplace. The marketplace thrives when businesses operate efficiently. Effective leadership strategies could result in greater job satisfaction and employee retention, ultimately leading to higher productivity and profitability (Park, Kang, Lee, & Kim, 2017). The results of this study can benefit individual employees, the companies they work for, and the marketplace as a whole.

The use of telecommunication has empowered the community with more choices in every aspect of life (Amponsah-Tawiah & Dartey-Baah, 2016). The result of the study's potential for effecting positive social change is by improving the lives of people

in the local community by promoting the adoption of advanced technology. With advanced technology, individuals could attend virtual meetings, classes, and seminars; book reservations; shop and bank online; and correspond with others by phone, fax, or Internet, thereby enhancing the quality of life for the community.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review includes an exploration of peer-reviewed articles and business books relating to the research problem. The review consists of summaries of the study's conceptual framework, job performance and evaluation, motivation, job satisfaction, retention, organizational commitment, business strategies, and leadership style. The results of the study could contribute to filling the knowledge gap in business practice regarding strategies executives might implement to improve supervisors' performance.

I retrieved articles from the following databases: Business Source Complete, ABI/INFORM Complete, SAGE Premier, Science Direct, Academic Search Complete, and ProQuest Central from Walden University and the University of Central Florida. Keywords included in the literature review are *leadership, leader, improve, employee performance, employee development, job satisfaction, employee motivation, performance appraisals, employee retention, business success, organizational commitment, and organizational performance*. I gathered information from 156 resources for the literature review, of which 153 (98.1%) were peer-reviewed articles and 133 (85.3%) references

were published between 2013 and 2017. In addition, the literature review included two seminal books (1.3%) and three nonpeer reviewed articles (1.9%).

Behavior Engineering Model

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to determine strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The conceptual framework of the study was the BEM. Gilbert was the first researcher to develop the BEM by modifying Binder and Chevalier's model, and then applied the behavioral psychology concepts and research findings to the circumstances of workplace performance (Gilbert, 2007). The basic concept of BEM is performance improvement (Winiecki, 2015). Businesses using BEM seek interventions to eliminate the causes of poor performance with the least cost to the organization (Dean, 2016). The behavioral aspect of the theory allows leaders to measure performance based on the employees' accomplishments. Employees' accomplishments are measured through data, instruments, and incentives along with the employee's knowledge, capacity, and motives.

People are often the largest asset in an organization (Wile, 2014a), and how employees perform is the biggest factor in an organization's success. Motivation and incentives are the key elements of BEM (Gilbert, 2007). Per Gilbert, the best way to engineer human performance is to weight the value of accomplishments. Gilbert described worthy performance (W) as the ratio of valuable accomplishment (A) to harmful behavior (B), expressed as $W = A/B$. Roessger (2015) noted that behavior and accomplishments are not synonyms and are often oppositional; professionals should

consider both when evaluating performance and target only the behavior that improves worthy performance.

Gilbert (2007) posited that all jobs are measurable per the following performance components: information, instrumentation, motivation, knowledge, capacity, and motives. Wile (2014b) categorized individual performances that are external to the performance based on tangible and intangible factors. Tangible factors affecting performance are tools, environment, incentives, information, and job aids. Intangible factors are management and leadership (Wile, 2014b). According to Dean (2016), leaders responsible for performance improvement must fix the environment before trying to change the employees. Dean advised leaders to create an environment in which employees have the necessary tools for assigned tasks. Measurable jobs enable employees to perform accordingly based on the tangible and intangible factors. HR managers and organizational leaders must ensure that the factors are readily available to the employees.

Gilbert (2007) considered individual motivation a minor component in analyzing employee performance. In contrast, Campbell (2014) recommended opportunities for overtime and increased options for work shifts as two ways to increase motivation for sales associates. Campbell found that, in companies where employees had these options, they felt in control of the work schedule, which led to improved performance. Chevalier (2014) stated leaders, managers, and supervisors usually want to change how employees work, when the real issue is the environment. Chevalier noted that leaders used training

to improve employee performance but argued that per BEM; training efforts will fail if the workplace is not supportive. The support of the organizational leaders is influential to the employees' performance. Leaders must make training and development readily available to the employees who are in need, to have exceptional and improved performance.

Campbell (2014) used BEM to examine what caused Circuit City to fail in 2008. Campbell faulted management's decision to fire 3,400 valuable workers who were not performing well and replaced them with lower-paid, inexperienced workers. Campbell examined employees' knowledge of performance expectations, their capacity to carry out the work expected, and their internal motivation to perform assigned tasks. Clear gaps were evident between management's initiatives and employees' expectations. After management had fired 3,400 employees, the new employees had low motivation because they feared termination (Campbell, 2014). Without internal motivation and external incentives, replacement workers were unable to increase sales and avoid Circuit City's bankruptcy (Campbell, 2014). Organizational leaders look for exceptional performing employees. Both managers and employees must work together to have set goals to be followed and accomplished. Leaders must find alternative strategies to improve employee performance in the workplace when termination is the final option.

Eren (2014) used BEM to study job performance at the Turkish General Consulate, where environmental changes enabled employees to reduce citizens' waiting time from 2 hours to 30 minutes. Eren interviewed 40 employees, using both open and

closed questions. Results showed environmental factors were affecting employees' motivation: a small building, inadequate staff, lack of necessary materials, and inefficient work designs (Eren, 2014). Eeren concluded that the working environment was the leading cause of low performance, although employees' expectations of their supervisors were also a factor. Based on BEM, environmental factors play a role in job performance. Supervisors, leaders, and managers must be aware of the environmental factors affecting the employees' performance and make the necessary changes needed for improved performance.

Expectancy Theory

A closely related framework to BEM is Vroom's expectancy theory (Viera, 2015), which was developed in 1964. According to Purvis, Zagenczyk, and McCray (2015), expectancy is anticipated accomplishment that leads to improved performance. Purvis et al. argued that both individual (psychological climate) and social (organizational climate) factors influence expectancy. Expectancy, in turn, influences individuals' willingness to participate in a project. Based on expectancy theory, employees will perform better based on an assured expectation (Renko, Kroeck, & Bullough, 2012). According to Suciu, Mortan, and Lazar (2013), the main reason work behavior differs is because of differences in the results employees expect. Factors influencing expectancy are a perceived sense of others' esteem, colleagues' or superiors' support, clarity of performance goals, and availability of resources (Renko et al., 2012). Organizational leaders should inform employees what the perceived expectations are for

improved performance. Supervisors, leaders, and managers should be aware of any differences in employee expectation and perceived performance.

The basic tenet of Vroom's (1967) expectancy theory is that employees are motivated by and will behave in a particular way based on anticipated rewards. The more valuable the reward gets, the greater the employee's effort (Vroom, 1967). Nimri, Bdair, and Al Bitar (2015) used expectancy theory to study employee motivation among 258 public-sector employees in Jordan and found that expectancy is not significant. Employees perform based on motivational factors. The motivated an employee becomes the better that employee will perform and not much on what the employee expects to get at the end. Leaders should make sure that employees are motivated to perform efficiently.

Holland and Garrett (2015) used expectancy theory to analyze the decisions of 135 entrepreneurs and found that entrepreneurs in larger firms are more likely to view future opportunities optimistically. Similarly, Nasri and Charfeddine (2012) recommended managers take steps to increase supervisees' expectancies, which involves creating a facilitative work environment and providing relevant training and equipment. Macik-Freyn (2013) found that older workers pursued ongoing training, acquired new skills in current technology, applied for new job assignments or promotions, or made career changes, all to the extent that they expected to succeed. Macik-Freyn made several recommendations to increase expectancy and, hence, performance in older workers:

- Increase opportunities for life-long learning.
- Challenge age-related myths.

- Create customized plans for helping older employees upgrade their skills.
- Harness older workers' experience to provide benefits for younger employees.
- Be proactive rather than reactive in dealing with age discrimination. In order to increase expectancy, supervisors, leaders, and managers must have readily available different strategies which can improve employee performance.

General Systems Theory

Expectancy theory and BEM emphasize how the environment influences individual behavior. General systems theory provides different emphasis, with a focus on the connections between elements in a system rather than on individual patterns (Rousseau, 2015). Von Bertalanffy developed the systems theory in 1937, refined it in 1949 and again in 1971 (Drack & Pouvreau, 2015). In applying systems theory in a business context, the emphasis is on how recurring events influence organizational functions (Miller & Rice, 2013). A researcher using systems theory would ask how leaders, supervisees, and the work environment interrelate, and how those relationships affect organizational performance (Vessey, Barrett, Mumford, Johnson, & Litwiller, 2014). Different occurrences in the work environment can affect employees' performance.

Using general systems theory, Montgomery and Oladapo (2014) studied the impact of three talent management activities: talent acquisition, retention, and replacement of consumer value in a global health-care chain. The assumption of Montgomery and Oladapo was that, in the absence of supervisory influence, there is no

explanation for the complex behavior of specific employees. Frontline managers have the most important role in managing and empowering employees performances.

Using a quantitative design and a sample of 380 hairstylists and 3,550 customers from 118 salons, Dong, Liao, Chuang, and Zhou (2015) explored how and when customer-empowering behavior motivates employees' creativity during service encounters and influences customer satisfaction. Dong et al. tested employee-perceived, customer-empowering behavior, employee state promotion, employee creativity, customer satisfaction, and empowering supervisory. The most influential factors were employee creativity and customer satisfaction (Dong et al., 2015). In addition, employee creativity was stronger in the presence of an empowering supervisor (Dong et al., 2015). Supervisors must communicate to employees on the importance of achieving organizational goals. Improved performance of employees affects the customer-organization relationship.

Combining BEM and general systems theory, Wooderson, Cuskelly, and Meyer (2016) studied the practices managers preferred to use to improve employee performance compared to what previous researchers have shown to be effective. With good content validity, concurrent validity, and test-retest reliability, Wooderson et al. demonstrated the managers believed strategies for changing individual employees' characteristics are more effective than trying to improve environmental factors. Wooderson et al.'s study provided evidence the BEM is a better theory for explaining employee performance than the general systems theory.

Environmental Supports

The BEM includes the following environmental components: data, instrument, and incentives (Gilbert, 2007). Each component is dependent on the other.

Data. The environmental aspect of data is the behavioral component when an employee gets a task to complete, the employee responds in a particular way with the instrument, and the action in response to stimulus becomes reinforced through incentives (Gilbert, 2007). The data factor of the engineering model is expectations and feedback (Winiecki, 2015). Employees' distinctive characteristics on the expectations from experiences are available through learning, career and self-development, work orientation, and employee engagement (Ozcelik, 2015). An important aspect of employee engagement is the expectation (Abdullah, Boyle, & Joham, 2013). People come to work with new and different expectations; engaging in meaningful and purposeful work and the ability to have a say in the daily operation (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016). Employees expect to receive feedback from superiors on their performance; to be aware of improvements.

Organizational leaders who meet employees' expectations by providing job security, training, and development are likely to be more competitive than organizational leaders who neglect the employees' concerns (Turyakira, Venter, & Smith, 2014). The expectation and feedback an employee receives from the executives determine the performance carried out. When organizational leaders value employee empowerment, they create expectations that will encourage workers' productivity (Cording, Harrison,

Hoskisson, & Jonsen, 2014). Employees who are encouraged by their leaders might likely perform better because they know and understand what the superiors expect them to accomplish.

Instrument. The second environmental component of BEM is the instrument. A person receives the data (experiences or feedback) and then decides what to do with the feedback based on the instruments provided in the environment (Winiecki, 2015). At this stage, the person can determine to agree or disagree with the data provided. In most instances, the person discusses with a leader for advice. Winiecki (2015) stated instruments are the responses given in environmental support. HR managers provide employees with the necessary training and development to acquire and improve required skills and abilities (Al-Shuaibi, Subramanian, & Shamsudin, 2014).

Incentives. The last environmental support is incentives. Employees are motivated to perform better when given incentives and rewards (citation). Incentives are important for employee retention and improved performance because employees who are productive but do not receive proper rewards may become dissatisfied and ultimately leave the company (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Business leaders and supervisors should provide incentives to inspire employees to perform better (Nguyen, Dang, & Nguyen, 2015). There are different kinds of incentives available to employees in the workplace.

Salary is a fundamental component in how employees describe their quality of work life (Rehman & Ali, 2013), and is a common incentive and reward for employees. Rehman and Ali studied the effects of merit pay as an incentive for improved job

performance. Advantages of merit or performance-related pay include (a) merit pay is effective at lower levels of an organization, where job responsibilities are clear; (b) merit pay facilitates self-determination; (c) employees decide for themselves where to expand their efforts; and (d) merit pay creates healthy competition (Rehman & Ali, 2013).

Rehman and Ali also listed disadvantages of merit pay: (a) merit pay follows performance evaluation, but some jobs are difficult to evaluate objectively, and comparing employees with differing job descriptions is difficult; (b) instead of promoting healthy competition, merit pay can create conflicts and resentment among employees; (c) merit pay relates to individual performance and thus ignores team-based efforts. As the most common incentives, compensation on a salary is an attractive incentive when given to employees who performed exceptionally well throughout the year. An increased salary is a motivational factor for low performing employees. Leaders should find necessary strategies that will improve employee performance.

Tomohara and Ohno (2013) found that in some settings, monetary incentives yielded productivity increases among 57 Japanese manufacturing employees while in other settings, appraisals are more important than financial remuneration. Not all incentives that employers use are monetary; they also use nonmonetary incentives to improve job performance (Abdullah & Wan, 2013; Alarifi & Alamri, 2014; Khan, Shahid, Nawab, & Wali, 2013). Graves (2015) recommended that employers ask the following questions about an incentive program:

- Are there monetary and nonmonetary incentives?

- Will the measurement and reward system improve performance?
- Do tasks allow the enrichment of employee needs?
- Is there a positive work environment?
- Can the employee be successful in the current work environment?
 - Are there career development opportunities? Employees who are aware of the incentive programs beforehand might be more motivated to perform based on what they are expected to receive.

Employees respond to incentives differently. Bracha and Fershtman (2012) indicated competitive incentives may induce agents to work harder and not necessarily smarter, this effect was stronger among women than men. Other motivational factors also differ by gender. For example, Bracha and Fershtman (2012) demonstrated women's productivity increased when they had to complete a competitive task. Incentives are important for employees' performance. Employees knowingly will perform better because they will be rewarded.

Tomohara and Ohno (2013) posited that more male employees made an extra effort when given incentives than female workers, and older workers responded to incentives more dramatically than their younger counterparts. Ahiabor (2013) noted that inconsistent salaries and promotion policies, along with a lack of recognition for employees' achievements, are disincentives for improved performance among all genders. Ahiabor argued that incentives should be the driving force behind performance; without them, workers are less likely to perform efficiently.

Incentives and rewards differ by organization. Chomal and Baruah (2014) studied the relationship among performance, reward compensations, and job satisfaction for 117 bank employees at 273 branches representing various job descriptions: HR managers, assistant general managers, branch managers, cashiers, accountants, senior and junior assistants, and clerical staff. By using a quantitative method, Chomal and Baruah revealed a significant difference between the managerial and administrative staff regarding rewards and job satisfaction. The reason is managers have more privilege when dealing with business performance. A manager's performance will likely yield greater reward than a clerical staff. Chomal and Baruah concluded that bank leaders should have incentives and rewards made specifically to retain good clerical workers because of their contribution in accomplishing organizational goals.

Although the relationship among monetary incentives, feedback, and recognition has been extensively studied (Ashraf, Bandiera, & Jack, 2014; Handgraaf, van Lidth de Jeude, & Appelt, 2013; Presslee, Vance, & Webb, 2013), some factors have not been tested. To examine the relationships, Lourenco (2016) conducted a field experiment consisting of 8 experimental groups at a U.S. retail service company to investigate the performance effect using monetary incentives, feedback, and recognition. Lourenco found monetary incentives and recognition improved performance, resulting in no change in performance when supervisors provided feedback only. Monetary incentives are one of the environmental factors affecting employees' performance.

Cerasoli, Nicklin, and Ford (2014) reviewed 40 years of primary data focusing on the interrelationships among intrinsic motivation, extrinsic incentives, and performance. The results showed that organizational leaders should take a balanced approach to any motivational activities. Cerasoli et al. recommended that leaders help employees find meaningful tasks, and stated that rewards and incentives could play an important role in improving performance. Christ, Emmett, Taylor, and Wood (2016) evaluated the benefits of incentive pay with feedback to determine whether compensation and feedback could improve employee performance more than compensation alone. Christ et al. demonstrated that HR staffs use of compensation controls on multiple tasks dimensions could divide employees' attention and effort between tasks, resulting in lower performance. However, when HR staffs compensated employees on only one dimension of a task along with feedback, employees' performance improved (Christ et al., 2016). Business leaders use compensation as a strategy for improving employees' performance.

Behavior Repertoires

Knowledge. Human capital training is essential to organizations. Both executives and supervisors should have the necessary training to be able to accomplish organizational goals. Training and development is a critical element of an organization's strategy because it is the most important HR practice for economic and organizational growth (Hooi & Ngui, 2014). The knowledge of supervisors depend on the additional designed training received through the organization. Internal and external supervisory training are less extent in many organizations (Landeta, Barrutia, Hoyos, & Araujo,

2015). Business executives have accepted the positive relationship between supervisors' skill level, the contribution to the organization success, and the need for training for permanent development (Rekalde et al., 2015). Training employees when necessary can result in improved performance. HR managers must have training and development readily available to the employees who are in need.

In order to develop, train, apply, and retain supervisors, training is necessary (Landeta et al., 2015). Training for supervisors becomes an investment to the organization by taking into consideration the supervisors' behavior: wanting to leave the company or failing to share the knowledge learned (Landeta et al., 2015). While training is available, some companies devote more resources and attention to coaching (Rekalde et al., 2015). Sabella and Analoui (2015) explored the current nature of training at a telecommunication company in Palestine, and showed the telecommunication company was lacking assessment, training development, and evaluation particularly in-house training (coaching) for the managers. Executives, managers, and supervisors who participate in management development programs have experienced several benefits: (a) increased productivity; (b) improved ability in response to change; and (c) better communication skills (Sharma, 2014). The benefits of the development programs help the business leaders lead more efficiently.

Capacity. Business executives must have the flexibility of job scheduling and the ability to select the best individuals to fulfill the required task. The recruitment of employees is an important task for the HR department and the current executive,

manager, or supervisor of the department (Ekwoaba, Ikeije, & Ufoma, 2015). Recruiting is soliciting an adequate number of qualified candidates from which an executive, manager, or supervisor can choose (Oke, 2015). The selection process may involve internal or external hiring of employees (Oke, 2015). The success of the recruitment and selection process depends on having the best employees in the rightful position.

Motives. The motives are the assessment for an employee to work and the recruitment of the right people in the correct position. Supervisors' motives may differ from their executives' expectation. The influence of executives' expectation may determine the overall behavior of the supervisor. Researchers have reported that several behavioral characteristics could influence employees performances. De Waal and Oudshoorn (2015) studied the profile of ideal employees based on behavioral characteristics. The population consisted of approximately 3000 managers and employees from two Dutch companies in the Netherlands. The participants answered survey questions with 98 behavioral characteristics describing high-performing employees. A total of 275 managers and 145 employees completed the questionnaires. Results showed a difference in opinion between managers and employees regarding the profile of an excellent employee (de Waal & Oudshoorn, 2015). HR managers along with organizational leaders must know which employees are best fitting for a particular position. Having employees placed in the correct position is necessary for improved performance.

Per the managers, employees achieve excellence by taking on new challenges, working hard to achieve results, and inspiring others through word and deed to achieve goals (de Waal & Oudshoorn, 2015). Several studies have shown that organizational performance improvement is related to employee motivation (Ashutosh, Sunita, & Saroj, 2016; Palma, 2016; Patricia & Leonina-Emilia, 2013). Motivation is a key factor influencing people to work better, which results in greater productivity and profit for an organization (Nasri & Charfeddine, 2012). Enhancing motivation involves training and involving employees in decision-making (Pillay & Cardenas, 2015). Employee motivation depends on anticipated reward based on performance (HemaMalini & Washington, 2014). Motivated employees work on an assigned task using all available resources and are accountable for their performance (Liu, Kwan, Fu, & Mao, 2013). Suciu et al. (2013) studied the effect of performance appraisals on motivation and found that 39% of respondents said a positive evaluation motivates them to do better, while 21% said a negative evaluation demotivates them. The performance appraisal evaluation can have either positive or a negative impact on employee performance. Employees who achieve a good review may be more likely to value the importance of a performance appraisal than those employees who do not.

Rebrov (2012) studied several Russian organizations and found a variety of factors besides wages affected employees' motivation, including one's place in the company, working environment, and career stage. Qayyum and Sukirino (2012) investigated differences in the importance and availability of various motivational factors

among 165 bank employees in Pakistan. Results indicated that the six most important motivational factors were high salary, seniority-based promotion, balanced work and family life, personal development, job security, and employment benefits. An employee's age, work experience, education level, and gender had a significant influence on ranking the importance of various motivational factors (Qayyum & Sukirino, 2012). Motivational factors play an important role in employee performance. The employee gets motivated to perform better because of the expected reward.

Job Performance

According to a Gallup (2013) poll, 70% of frontline employees do not work at full capacity. Korschun, Bhattacharya, and Swain (2014) developed a conceptual model explaining how corporate social responsibility (CSR) is related to frontline employee job performance. Korschun et al. administered a survey to 236 noncommissioned employees at a financial services company and matched survey responses with supervisors' ratings of job performance for each participant. Results showed that the model confirmed employee-customer identification as the central connection between frontline employee customer orientation and job performance (Korschun et al., 2014). Frontline employees should have good customer skills. Poor employee performance can negatively affect customer relationship. Therefore, making customers dissatisfied and employees lacking motivation.

Job Satisfaction

An important component of work performance is satisfaction; an emotion involving a person's overall evaluation on the work environment (Alegre, Mas-Machuca, & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). Several researchers have focused on measuring and assessing job satisfaction (Chang & Cheng, 2014; Fila, Paik, Griffeth, & Allen, 2014; Macintosh & Krush, 2014). The three most important relationships affecting employee job satisfaction are employee-organization, employee-supervisor, and employee-coworker (Tang, Siu, & Cheung, 2014). A key factor influencing job satisfaction is the employee-supervisor relationship (Fila et al., 2014). Supervisors must ensure that there is a good relationship with the employees. Employees might feel more satisfied on the job if they have a good relationship with their superiors and other co-workers.

Researchers from various fields have analyzed the relationship between job satisfaction and other conditions, including working environment, and posited that employees often leave their job if they are not satisfied. Bakotic (2014) listed several components of job satisfaction: promotion, salary, work environment, and hours. Cogburn, Battaglio, and Bradbury (2014) studied how workplace conflict relates to employee satisfaction and organizational performance among 37,000 federal public servants. Results showed leaders with serious conflict problems had lower job satisfaction rates and less favorable views on organizational performance (Cogburn et al., 2014). Fu (2014) found a significant impact on ethical behavior by coworkers and supervisors when job satisfaction was the primary indicator of promotion and employee

retention. Job satisfaction can be different for each employee. Leaders must make sure that employees are satisfied on the job.

Vlachos, Panagopoulos, and Rapp (2013) studied factors influencing job satisfaction and found (a) the older people get, the more satisfied and happier they are, (b) some older employees have better jobs and higher salaries than younger colleagues, and (c) older employees tend to lower their expectations and become more realistic about the work environment. One component of the workplace satisfaction is the organization's size (Bakotic, 2014). As Bakotic noted, in large organizations leaders might not have close contact with subordinates.

One of the challenges many business leaders have is how to satisfy employees based on a changing environment, achieve business success, and remain in competition (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). The work environment is one factor influencing employee job satisfaction. Using simple random sampling, Raziq and Maulabakhsh collected data from 210 employees from educational institutes, banks, and telecommunication companies operating in Quetta, Pakistan to analyze the impact of the work environment and job satisfaction. Based on self-administered questionnaires, results showed a positive relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. Raziq and Maulabakhsh concluded business leaders must know the importance of a good working environment to maximize job satisfaction.

Bakotic and Babic (2013) stated that employees who work in an unsatisfactory environment are dissatisfied. The results from an improved working environment are

satisfied employees and an increase in job performance (Bakotic & Babic, 2013). Other factors influencing job satisfaction are workload, salary, stress in the workplace, and conflicts with family due to the job (Tariq, Ramzan, & Riaz, 2013). Employees who are dissatisfied might not perform well; HR staff and business leaders must ensure that employees are satisfied in the workplace.

AbuAlRub, El-Jardali, Jamal, and Al-Rub (2016) examined the relationship between work environment, job satisfaction, and the intention to stay at work with the predicting factors of intention to stay at work. The study consisted of 330 hospital nurses. The predicting variables of intent to stay at work were receiving housing, job satisfaction, and work environment. The results showed a positive relationship between work environment and job satisfaction. AbuAlRub et al. concluded that nurse administrators and policy makers must find strategies focusing on redesigning the structure of the work environment to enhance working conditions and job satisfaction. The redesigning of the work environment will enable employees to be satisfied; which will improve the work performance.

Evaluation

Performance evaluation is a tool for executives to provide feedback regarding targeted work goals, promotions, salary increases, and employee career ambitions (Jacobs, Belschak, & Den Hartog, 2014). An essential component of performance systems is a performance appraisal for evaluating employees on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis (Trotter, Laurila, Alberts, & Huenneke, 2015). Organizational leaders use

performance appraisals as a tool to implement goals and increase employee performance (Ayers, 2015). Employees want to receive feedback after completing an assigned task. An evaluation either prompts an employee to continue performing accordingly or to make changes (Araki, Kawaguchi, & Onozuka, 2016). Business leaders also seek performance feedback and often distribute peer performance evaluations to their employees (Kramer, Maas, & van Rinsum, 2016). The most common assessment method for providing performance feedback is the performance appraisal (Wang, Burlacu, Truxillo, James, & Yao, 2015). The performance appraisals help business leaders understand what areas are working well and what needs improvements.

Leaders use a performance evaluation system to determine the success or failure of an organizational work performance (Deepa, Palaniswamy, & Kuppusamy, 2014). Singh and Rana (2015) used a 34-item questionnaire to examine the impact of performance appraisals on the commitment of 172 bank employees. After analyzing the data, Singh and Rana revealed that performance appraisals had a significant impact on the organizational commitment of the bank employees. Because performance-based practices had a positive impact on organizational commitment, bank leaders should connect performance appraisals with compensation and rewards to enhance employee commitment (Singh & Rana, 2015). Business leaders use the performance appraisal systems to improve the distribution of promotions, rewards, bonuses, and salary increases among employees (Femi, 2013). Not all employees agree with the evaluation of the performance appraisal system.

Employees perceive performance appraisals as reward or punishment (Dusterhoff, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2014). An employee's perception regarding performance evaluations to be fair or unfair depends on a large extent how management presents the results (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Although performance appraisals are commonly used in many industries, little information exists on how it affects employee performance (Luft, 2016; Mahlendorf, Kleinschmit, & Perego, 2014; Newman & Tafkov, 2014).

The ability to measure employee performance leads to employee satisfaction and achieving organizational goals (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). Business leaders need to understand the different ways to evaluate subordinates' performance (Kim, Eisenberger, & Balk, 2016). Leaders must find a technique that works best for them and the employees based on the organizational environment. Buller and McEvoy (2012) noted that undertaking performance appraisals do not necessarily result in better performance. The challenge for supervisors is how to use the appraisal to increase motivation (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). The key to increasing motivation is effective communication of the details of the appraisal (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). After reviewing the appraisal, business leaders must explain the results of the performance appraisals to employees, so they understand how to make the needed changes necessary for improvement.

Leaders should use the evaluation as the beginning of a conversation between supervisor and employee (Balcioglu & Nihinlola, 2014). The conversation should focus on how to use the best aspects of an employee's performance to inspire him or her

towards improved productivity or performance. Choi (2014) stated an effective implementation of performance appraisal is a valid tool for making salary adjustments, which could be a motivating factor for employees to perform better. The quality of work life for employees includes receiving adequate financial compensation for job performance (Rehman & Ali, 2013). Employees who receive a positive evaluation are compensated. Compensating employees financially is a well-known motivational factor for improved performance. However, some employees have a negative outlook on the performance appraisal system.

Balcioglu and Nihinlola (2014) surveyed employees of the National Horticultural Research Institute in Nigeria to determine their attitudes toward performance appraisals. Participants had negative perceptions of the process, claiming it was subjective and biased. For example, half of the 110 respondents said superiors gave better ratings to subordinates who were similar to them in background, personality, or behavior (Balcioglu & Nihinlola, 2014). Business leaders must review employees' evaluation without any bias.

Managers must develop strategies that will have a positive effect on employee performance and the appraisal process. Some employees rely on managers for guidance in performing efficiently (Rehman & Ali, 2013). Managers need to understand employees might have a variety of reasons for poor performance, such as lack of resources, skills, lack of motivation, or burnout. In addition, employees need the proper work atmosphere

and facilities to perform efficiently in the organization (Bragard, Dupuis, & Fleet, 2015).

A proper working environment is necessary for employee job satisfaction.

In contrast, employees need to work at a performance level acceptable to department managers (Camps, Oltra, Aldas-Manzano, Buenaventura-Vera, & Torres-Carballo, 2016). Once at that level, employees can change the value they create for the company over time, based on increased productivity level (Obloj & Sengul, 2012). Employees' productivity levels increase, for example, when receiving monetary incentives (Tomohara & Ohno, 2013). Conversely, after studying 57 Japanese workers from a manufacturing firm, Tomohara and Ohno (2013) found the motive for creative works was less likely to be money than such factors as appraisal and curiosity. Leaders' appraisals of employees can be very useful because of the resulting increase in confidence (Tomohara & Ohno, 2013). Employees might feel more relaxed in knowing that they are doing a good job and ways for improvement.

Employee evaluation also contributes to improving performance (Balcioglu & Nihinlola, 2014). Van de Voorde, Paauwe, and van Veldhoven (2012) examined the relationship between employee well-being and HR organizational performance, and demonstrated that leaders dealt with financial and operational performance outcomes. The financial outcomes consisted of returns on invested capital and shareholders' return while operational outcomes included productivity and quality.

Ethical tension often exists between business leaders and employees during performance appraisals (Almatrooshi, Singh, & Fraouk, 2016). Employees might not feel

that a supervisor or manager is behaving ethically in the decision made during a performance evaluation process. Fu (2014) showed employees might be unhappy with the decision achieved in performance appraisals and might lose the opportunity for a long-awaited promotion. Because the managers' responsibility is to retain as many good employees as possible for the success of the business, senior managers should know the various ways to handle situations when subordinates feel unethically treated (Wong & Li, 2015). Leaders are the ones who stimulate, motivate, and recognize their employees in an organization (Andersen, 2016). Employees who are motivated and recognized by their leaders, might likely be more satisfied on the job.

Organizations could benefit by implementing measures to increase employee work engagement because it improves workers' performance. Suciu et al. (2013) focused on evaluating job performance as an influence on expectancy and work motivation of the civil servants in a public agency. Using a quantitative survey-based approach, Suciu et al. evaluated more than 95% of the agency's employees, and reported that 6% of participants were unmotivated while the motivation of more than 80% of respondents ranged from a slight to a considerable. The responsibility is of the leaders to keep the employees motivated on the job so they can perform well.

Employees with a strong work ethic perform better on the job than employees with weak work ethics (Osibanjo, Akinbode, Falola, & Oludayo, 2015). Organizational performance is dependent on committed employees (de Waal & Oudshoorn, 2015). Employees can make a positive change in an organization by coping well under pressure,

showing self-control, maintaining a positive outlook, having can-do attitudes, and being flexible when negotiating with others (Jung & Yoon, 2015). Employees who are motivated and have strong work ethics will likely perform better. HR staff should have leadership strategies available to employees so they remain in the workplace.

Retention

Retention is the effort by employers to create and maintain a work environment that encourages employees to remain with the organization (Sandhya & Kumar, 2014). Organizational leaders encounter challenges in attracting and retaining valuable employees (Rathi & Lee, 2015). Employees are the most valuable asset in an organization (Bello, 2012). Employee retention has become the key component to improved organizational performance (Mandhanya, 2015). Managers should use an array of tactics to encourage employee retention (Gharibvand, Mazumder, Mohiuddin, & Su, 2013), including opportunities for employee training and development (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015). HR staffs should find different strategies to retain employees who have become an asset to the organization.

Job embeddedness is another factor in preventing an employee from leaving an organization (Ferreira & Coetzee, 2013). By matching employees' expectations and needs with the corporate culture, business leaders can improve employee retention (Frenking, 2016). According to Azanza, Moriano, Molero, and Mangin (2014), employees with more time in a position of responsibility have a lower level of turnover intention. Kwenin, Muathe, and Nzulwa (2013) demonstrated that adequate HR reward

strategies did not lead to equity while job satisfaction and HR strategies had a positive link with employee retention. HR staffs should find proper strategies

Sánchez-Manjavacas, Saorín-Iborra, and Willoughby (2014) studied the impact of certain HR policies designed to increase internal employability and retain valuable employees and promote job flexibility. Employability comprises starting work, remaining on the job, and possibly advancing (Nickson, Warhurst, Commander, Hurrell, & Cullen, 2012). Using a quantitative method, Sánchez-Manjavacas et al. selected 238 from a population of 687,700 professionals from a private organization in Spain to study the factors affecting internal employability. Sánchez-Manjavacas et al. found employees with high-perceived employability participated more actively in the organization's learning process, leading to enhance employment opportunities, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the trust and labor employees put towards achieving organizational goals and their desire to remain with the organization (Sani, 2013). According to Chou and Pearson (2012), organizational commitment is performing according to the organization's vision and mission. Most business leaders consider organizational commitment an important component of employee retention. Work commitment is associated with a desire to improve the quality of a company's products and to enhance customer loyalty, resulting in lower costs due to decreased employee turnover (Deepa et al., 2014). Tomohara and Ohno (2013) evaluated the effect of three

work incentive models on organizational commitment: shirking, gift exchange, and reciprocity. Tomohara and Ohno found that nonpecuniary factors are effective in motivating employees to increase their organizational commitments. Imran, Arif, Cheema, and Azeem (2014) indicated a weak correlation between work performance and job satisfaction, and a strong relationship between organizational commitment and attitudes toward work and job satisfaction.

Most researchers have explored what supervisors can do to increase organizational commitments among their workforce. Tabancali and Korumaz (2015) studied the organization commitment among 123 supervisors at the Istanbul Guidance and Supervisory Board and found that loneliness predicted commitment while administrative duties and higher educational levels have a negative correlation with commitment. Liu and Wang (2013) studied the effects of risk in employment and organizational trust on organizational commitment and indicated that perceived risk in employment had an adverse correlation with organizational trust. Liu and Wang demonstrated that a significant positive correlation exist between trust and organizational commitment, and organizational trust acted as a partial mediator between work satisfaction and commitment.

Chou and Pearson (2012) surveyed 85 information technology professionals at a large Midwestern university to determine how job stress, trust, and commitment affected job satisfaction and showed a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. Sani (2013) studied how organizational commitment,

procedural justice, and job satisfaction affect work performance among 70 employees in 15 branches of a bank in Malang. Sani found both organizational commitment and procedural justice had a positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior and job performance.

Brockner, Senior, and Welch (2014) examined the relationship between participation in company-sponsored volunteer activities and organizational commitment among 266 employees at a New York City pharmaceutical company. Employees are motivated to volunteer to express their personal meaningful values, also known as the values function of volunteerism. Brockner et al. indicated that employees' motivations to volunteer has a positive relationship with their organizational commitment with the workers' perceived sense of self-integrity mediating the relationship.

Telecommunication Leadership

The telecommunication industry comprising of telephone and internet service providers plays a crucial role in society. The use of communication is important to the society and a critical aspect of small and large organizations. Telecommunications executives perform many functions daily. Business executives are responsible for making decisions, providing feedback, and identifying needs, framing ideas, and planning actions (Carter, 2013). Managers require skills to improve employee performance. Nikpeyma, Abed-Saeedi, Azargashb, and Alavi-Majd (2014) noted that managers who rise to higher positions over an extended period of service may lack the skills needed to improve employee's performance.

Leaders help an organization clarify and confirm values, set goals, define visions, and achieve the vision (Bloom & Abel, 2015). Konorti (2012) posited that the primary components of leadership are structure, power, and influence. Burns (2014) defined leadership as a democratic process in which individuals act with power and authority. According to Syafi, Thoyib, and Nimran (2015), leadership is the process of getting others to do voluntarily what the leader wants. Strategic leadership is the ability to manage complex personal characteristics, thinking patterns, and efficient management (Agyapong & Boamah, 2013). Malewska and Sajdak (2014) defined strategic leadership as the ability to combine visionary management with the company operations.

Although an effective leader is not necessarily an active leader, an active leader monitors, directs, evaluates, and reward employees (Carter, 2013). Marath (2012) noted that despite the extensive studies on business leadership, the factors that influence employee performance remain obscure. One question about leadership is if it is an innate capacity or whether someone can learn leadership skills (Silva, 2014). The skills necessary to lead employees is important to the leader and the organization.

With increasing competition, business leaders have become aware of the need to improve employee's performance (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Hatane, 2015). The major challenge for leaders is dealing with individual differences among employees' temperament, background, capability, and motivation (Hernandez-Barros & Lopez-Dominguez, 2013). A successful leader spends time getting to know what interests, motivates, and brings out the best performance of each employee. Sparrow (2013) noted

that leaders who understand their employees' needs can coordinate their specific objectives and reward staffs in the most meaningful ways.

Pastor (2014) studied the effect of emotional intelligence on leadership performance and found that a positive correlation exists between emotional intelligence and leadership. Pastor concluded that when leaders know and control their emotions, they can address the problems in a more flexible way, consider alternative scenarios, and avoid the effects of rigidity in decision-making. Among subordinates, Pastor indicated that emotional intelligence facilitates constructive thinking, problem-solving, and conflict resolution.

Leadership Concept

Researchers and scholars have different meaning of leadership. Marath (2012) defined leadership as a theory. Konorti (2012) added structure, power, and influence as key components of leadership. Thomas and Rowland (2014) defined leadership as an activity involving a group consisting of a leader and followers. However, Burns (2014) defined leadership as a democratic process in which individuals act with power and authority. According to Flynn, Smither, and Walker (2015), effective leaders are skilled at evaluating job performance. Effective leaders focus on employees' improvement and job performance.

A person can develop leadership skills through training and following standards and procedures while some people are born leaders (Silva, 2014). Leaders know the goals, mission, and vision of the organization and can fulfill organizational objectives

efficiently and effectively. Beiko, Barling, Houle, Davies, and Oake (2016) posited that leadership is not an easy task but requires a high level of stamina, flexibility, and consistency, and principals.

Business leaders are the key drivers for the success of an organization. Leadership functions relate to helping an organization clarify and confirm values, set goals, define a vision, and achieve the goals (Bloom & Abel, 2015). A leader's task is not only to accomplish the given objectives but also to improve the organizational performance (Moccia, 2012). According to Goodall and Pogrebna (2015), a leader should influence others in a decisive manner to have a direct impact on the followers, who are the employees assigned to help the leader accomplish the task.

Several factors contribute to achieving organizational objectives. Employees need to perform well to accomplish organizational goals (Dhar, 2015). Leaders need to determine ways to improve employee's performance with the help of HR policies and procedures. Samad (2012) noted that few researchers have focused on leadership and organizational performance, notwithstanding that leaders are the drivers of an organization's destiny. According to Marath (2012), an array of information is available on business leadership but the rationale to explain what improves employee's performance remains obscure.

Leadership as a concept has become a popular topic for many organizational researchers (Dorczak, 2012). The central element of leadership involves the interaction between leaders and followers (Pastor, 2014). Successful leaders exercise control,

communicate effectively, facilitate collaboration, and require accountability (Marath, 2012). Organizational success depends on effective leadership and satisfied employees (Carter & Baghurst, 2014). The most important factor in organizational sustainability is leader effectiveness. Organizational leaders encounter a range of challenges, including communications, productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention.

The two common types of leadership style are intuitive and strategic (Malewska & Sajdak, 2014). An intuitive leader helps gain and maintain a competitive advantage in the industry while a strategic leader oversees daily operation (Malewska & Sajdak, 2014). A leader's responsibility is ensuring a good working relationship with satisfied subordinates. According to Burian, Burian, Maffei, and Pieffer (2014), the five disciplines of leadership are decision-making, people, strategy, productivity, and self-improvement.

Ethical leadership is becoming of increased importance because of widespread corruption scandals around the world in both undeveloped and developing countries (Bello, 2012). Bello argued that leaders to be ethically silent by espousing ethical principles in their private lives and not letting the concern for profits override their moral beliefs and values. Bello posited that several studies have demonstrated the positive effect of ethical leadership on employee's performance. Bello concluded that effective, ethical leadership results from the following principles and practices:

- A company's CEO should present himself or herself as the organization's chief ethics officer.

- A leader must establish and maintain a strong ethical culture throughout the organization.
- Hiring practices should include an effort to determine prospective employees' ethical values.
- Training programs in ethical behavior should be mandatory for all employees.
- Leaders should visibly reward ethical behavior and punish unethical behavior.

Azanza et al. (2014) studied the effect of authentic leadership on employees' turnover intention, work engagement, and work group identification. Azanza et al. found that authentic leadership had a positive influence on work group identification and work engagement, and a negative effect on turnover intention.

Leadership Styles

The three leadership styles researchers have studied extensively are transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire (Khan, Nawaz, & Khan, 2016). A transactional leader rewards followers based on the transaction, which is their performance (Garcia-Rivera, Mendoza-Martinez, & Ramirez-Baron, 2013). Transactional leaders focus on maintaining organizational development while paying attention to efficiency and constraints. Du, Swaen, Lidgreen, and Sen (2013) posited that transactional leaders provide rewards and punishments.

Whereas transactional leaders offer rewards in exchange for performance, a transformational leader uses personality and focuses on creating a distinct vision for followers (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). The transactional leaders emphasize performance

while transformational leaders focus on bringing about positive change in followers (Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014). Transformational leadership is dependent on the relationship between leader and follower (Sakiru, D'Silva, Othman, DaudSilong, & Busayo, 2013). Du et al. (2013) observed that a transactional leader's emphasis on compliance could lead to a lack of commitment and enthusiasm on the part of the subordinates.

Kovjanic, Schuh, and Jonas (2013) studied 190 people who worked on group brainstorming tasks under either a transactional or transformational leader and evaluated participants for the quality and quantity of their ideas, and persistence in staying on the task. Results revealed satisfaction of the needs for competence and relatedness affected the relationship between transformational leadership and work engagement, which, in turn, was positively related to quality, quantity, and persistence (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Kovjanic et al. concluded that a primary component of transformational leadership is satisfaction of needs.

Randeree and Chaudhry (2012) surveyed 251 employees at construction companies in the United Arab Emirates and indicated that consensus and consultative leadership styles predominated, and most participants said leaders influence their job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Samad (2012) studied the effect of innovation and transformational leadership on organizational performance among 150 managers at Malaysian logistics companies and found a positive correlation among the variables. Samad concluded the most important component of transformational leadership

is charisma. Samad posited that both products and services related innovation affected organizational performance.

Transition

Section 1 included the foundation of the study, background of the problem, problem and purpose statements, nature of the study, and the research and interview questions. Other elements of Section 1 were Gilbert's 1978 BEM conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations and delimitations of the study, and the significance of the study. Section 1 ended with a review of the academic and professional literature.

In Section 2, I will restate the purpose statement and present the research plan. The research plan contain a discussion on the role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instrument and techniques, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. In Section 3, I will present the study findings, applications to professional practice, social change implications, recommendations for action and further research, reflections, and a concluding statement.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 of this study includes the purpose statement, my role as the researcher, the selection of participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling, and ethical protection measures. Some other elements I discuss in Section 2 include the data collection process, data organization techniques, data analysis methods, and the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The study population consisted of 10 telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Telecommunications executives may benefit from the findings of this study by delivering consistent training and development initiatives relevant to the needs of employees and focusing on addressing identified skills, knowledge, and capability gaps to enhance supervisors' performance. Application of the findings of this study may improve the lives of people in the local community by promoting the adoption or spread of advanced technology. By adopting technology, individuals could attend virtual meetings, classes, and seminars; book reservations; shop and bank online; and correspond with others by phone, fax, or the Internet which will enhance the quality of life of the community.

Role of the Researcher

A qualitative researcher participates in all stages of the data collection process, from defining the concept to designing the study, conducting and transcribing interviews, analyzing data, verifying findings, and reporting results (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). The primary instrument in the qualitative research process is the researcher (Haahr, Norlyk, & Hall, 2014). A good researcher assures the quality of the findings, shows commitment to a code of conduct, and guarantees the integrity of the results (Cooper et al., 2014). Per Kelly et al. (2013), a researcher should approach a study with an open mind. My role in this study included interviewing participants, analyzing data, and managing the interview process.

A researcher must know the scope of the study and understand the central concepts and issues relevant to the research (Baskarada, 2014). I am familiar with the study topic because of my role as an executive leader in the telecommunications industry. My core competencies are in leadership, team building, performance improvement, and strategic business planning. I have extensive experience in employee training and interviewing. At the time of this study, I did not have prior knowledge of or relationship with any of the participants or research area.

The main ethical consideration in the study was protecting the privacy and confidentiality of research participants because I asked respondents to disclose sensitive information. Mealer and Jones (2014) noted that the importance of preventing harm to participants and researchers. I reviewed the Belmont Protocol Report (U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services, 1979) to familiarize myself with legal and ethical standards in research, and I have incorporated these principles in designing this study. I have completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) web-based training course (Appendix A) on compliance with ethical standards and protection of human research participants. A research ethics review process exists to ensure that researchers respect participants' autonomy and well-being at every stage of the research process (Stockley & Balkwill, 2013). I conducted the research after receiving the study review and approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) with approval number 08-30-17-0291002.

Qualitative researchers must be aware of potential bias when conducting research and interpreting results (Bowden & Galindo-Gonzalez, 2015). *Bracketing* is a process that researchers use to minimize personal bias and influence during research (Sorsa, Kiikkala, & Astedt-Kurki, 2015). Acknowledging personal bias helps qualitative researchers better understand others' viewpoints (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I mitigated bias and avoided viewing data through a personal lens by taking interview notes, audiotaping interviews, and developing summaries of the interviews.

Interview protocols enable researchers to obtain the best possible information from participants in a consistent manner (Foley & O'Conner, 2013). A protocol can serve as a procedural guideline directing new qualitative researchers through the interview process (Leung, 2015). I developed an interview protocol, a step-by-step instruction guide for the interview process (Appendix B). The interview protocol contains the scripts

of letters and emails to corporation representatives and participants; what I said before, during, and at the conclusion of interviews; and the interview questions.

Participants

The selection of participants is the first phase of the data gathering process (Sanjari et al., 2014). Eligibility criteria are the basis for participant selection (Nathan, Braithwaite, & Stephenson, 2014). Researchers should select eligible participants from individuals who can provide the best information regarding the research question to enhance understanding of the phenomena under study (Scott, Cavana, & Cameron, 2014). Individuals who are eligible to participate in a study have experiences relevant to the research topic (Hayes, Bonner, & Douglas, 2013). The eligibility criteria for participation in this study included telecommunications executives with a minimum of 4 years of work experience, at least 2 years of experience in leading supervisors, and who were proficient in English. Only individuals who met the outlined criteria received consideration for inclusion in the study.

According to Peticca-Harris, deGama, and Elias (2016), gaining access to participants involves finding and securing participants for a research study. Gaining access to participants typically requires speaking formally and informally in various settings (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). Effective strategies for gaining access to elite group for participation include (a) reviewing organizational databases, business listings, and directories to identify potential participants, (b) contacting authorized agents to inform them about the purpose of the research and (c) communicating with the chosen

elites (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). I adopted the strategy to gain access to the elites in this study.

The first step in finding participants for this study was conducting an Internet search to identify all the telecommunications companies in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. After gathering this information, I contacted authorized representatives of the telecommunications companies via e-mail (Appendix C) to explain the purpose of the study. Upon receipt of the first authorized representative's response to my e-mail granting me written permission to conduct the study by signing the letter of cooperation (Appendix D) I selected the representative's company for my study. I sent the authorized representative a letter for the telecommunications executives (Appendix E) via email and requested the authorized representative to send an email to all departments inviting the executives to participate in the study. The authorized representative included my contact information in the email and interested participants initiated a direct communication with me. I sent the informed consent forms via e-mail to telecommunications executives who responded to my email and met the research criteria. Telecommunications executives who signed and returned the informed consent forms participated in the study.

Establishing a working relationship with participants is critical to the success of research (Gibson, Benson, & Brand, 2013) and is essential for a qualitative researcher (van Antwerpen & Curtis, 2016). Researchers should establish honesty and trust with participants to achieve a study's intended purpose and outcomes (Anyan, 2013). In the effort to establish credibility with participants, building trust with participants matters

(Petrova, Dewing, & Camilleri, 2016). Musoba, Jacob, and Robinson (2014) stated that reporting different perspectives while demonstrating excellent communication and organizational skills could ensure a good working relationship between a researcher and participants. A researcher must be courteous and respect the decisions of participants (Jarvik et al., 2014). I established a strong working relationship with participants by maintaining open communication to build trust and confidence, reported different perspectives, demonstrated excellent communication and organizational skills, and was courteous and respectful.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Research methods can be quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods (Bowers, 2016; Maxwell, 2016). The selection of a research method is dependent on the research question or questions (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013). The qualitative method is the most appropriate option for this study based on the problem and purpose statements, and the research question: What strategies do telecommunications executives use to improve the supervisors' performance? The qualitative method facilitates in-depth investigation of a phenomenon that people experience, with deep understanding achieved through interviews or observations in a natural setting (Houston & McGill, 2013). A qualitative researcher may make use of terminology, peer-reviewed articles, websites, and seminal sources to obtain a detailed explanation of complex behaviors, relationships, or procedures to understand a business problem (Macfarlane et al., 2015). A qualitative

researcher requires direct conversation to form results (Helin, 2013). According to Kaczynski, Salmona, and Smith (2014), qualitative researchers seek to explore and recognize social science issues at a deeper level. Add summary to fully conclude the paragraph.

Quantitative research requires testing a hypothesis (Bennett et al., 2013). A quantitative researcher collects statistical data to test hypotheses (Lunde, Heggen, & Strand, 2013). Quantitative researchers use numerical data to prove or disprove hypotheses under study (Hoare & Hoe, 2013). A quantitative methodologist examines relationships and differences between variables (Runhaar, ten Brinke, Kuijpers, Wesselink, & Mulder, 2013). The quantitative method was not suitable for this study because I neither intended to establish the existence of relationships or differences between variables nor test a hypothesis to answer the research question.

Researchers using mixed methods seek to combine the qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously to understand a phenomenon of interest (Kaczynski et al., 2014; Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Researchers use mixed methods when either the qualitative or the quantitative approach would be insufficient alone to understand the research topic (Buckley, 2015). Mixed methods researchers use a combination of the quantitative and qualitative approaches (Morse & Cheek, 2014) to develop a complete understanding of a phenomenon by exploiting the strengths of one method to enhance the other (Abro et al., 2015). The mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study

because the qualitative method was adequate to answer the research question and I collected data from several related sources instead of using statistical inferences.

Research Design

The most common research designs in qualitative studies are case study, ethnography, and phenomenology (Lewis, 2015; Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). The selection of a research design is critical in answering the research question (Venkatesh et al., 2013). I chose case study for the research design. Case study design was most suitable for the study because I learned from the telecommunications executives' lived experiences within a real-life context concerning strategies to improve the supervisors' performance. Researchers use the case study design to explore participants' lived experiences (Gillespie, Dietz, & Lockey, 2014). Qualitative researchers use case study to explore research phenomena within a real-life context (Henry & Foss, 2015). Mohlala, Golman, and Goosen (2012) used case study design to explore retention strategies and HR practices. According to Cronin (2014), case study researchers conduct interviews using *how* and *why* questions to understand a phenomenon. Add summary to fully conclude the paragraph.

A phenomenological design helps a researcher explore and understand everyday experiences presented during an event (Hou, Ko, & Shu, 2013). A phenomenological researcher achieves an in-depth perception of the lived experiences of participants (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). The phenomenological design consists of individual experiences that, when combined, constitute a narrative (Tomkins & Eatough, 2013). Researchers use

phenomenological design to identify individual participants' perceptions (Sorour & Howell, 2013). The phenomenological design was not the best-suited design for the study because I was interested in exploring strategies executives use to improve supervisors' performance and not developing a story or understanding their everyday experiences.

Ethnography is a research design based on an understanding of social meanings and activities of people in a particular field or setting (Simpson, Slutskaya, Hughes, & Simpson, 2014). An ethnographic researcher focuses on the behavior and beliefs of a particular cultural group (Zilber, 2014). Ethnographic researchers spend a significant amount of time with participants to gain a comprehensive understanding of their culture (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). Ethnographic researchers assess and explore cross-cultural differences (Andriopoulous & Slater, 2013). An ethnography research design was not appropriate for the study because the purpose of the research was not to assess and explore cross-cultural differences but to explore the strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance.

Data saturation is the point in data collection and analysis at which additional data reveals no new information (Morse, 2015a). A researcher achieves data saturation when no new emerging themes are present and there is enough information to duplicate the study (Kalla, 2016). Bristowe et al. (2014) advised researchers to continue interviews with participants until data saturation has been reached. To ensure data saturation, I continued to conduct interviews to the point that additional participant interviews did not provide new information. My sample size consisted of 10 participants. After interviewing

Participant A7, no new themes or information emerged (data saturation) from Participant A8 to Participant A10.

Population and Sampling

Purposeful sampling is the most common means of sampling in case study research (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbin, 2015). Qualitative researchers use purposeful sampling to identify and select individuals with information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants based on the relevance of their experience to the study's focus (van der Velden & El Emam, 2013). The purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study because I was interested in talking only to telecommunications executives who had relevant experiences that would help in addressing the research question.

In case study research, interviews with no more than 10 participants may be sufficient to answer the research question (Hart & Warren, 2013). The sample of participants should provide the unique characteristics of the phenomena under study (Lucas, 2013). A sample of at least 10 participants is practical because sample sizes are typically small in qualitative research (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Samnani and Singh (2013) recommended that researchers should use a sample size of fewer than 20 participants. I selected a sample size of 10 participants for this qualitative study. After interviewing Participant A7, no new themes or information emerged (data saturation) from Participant A8 to Participant A10.

Data saturation is necessary to ensure a researcher collects sufficient information from participants (Yu, Abdullah, & Saat, 2014). At data saturation, adding more participants will not change the information but will provide the same information (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In a qualitative study, purposeful sampling and data saturation enable researchers to identify themes during data analysis (Kornbluh, 2015). A researcher achieves data saturation when there are no new emerging themes or codes from data collection and triangulation, and obtainable information is enough to duplicate the study (Morse, 2015b). I selected a sample size of 10 participants for this qualitative study. After interviewing Participant A7, no new themes or information emerged (data saturation) from Participant A8 to Participant A10. I ensured data saturation by interviewing participants until no new information can be collected and enough information is available to duplicate the study.

To select participants, I conducted an Internet search on all the telecommunication companies in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Afterward, I contacted the authorized representatives of all the telecommunication companies via e-mail (Appendix C) and explained the purpose of the study. I selected the first authorized representative to respond to the e-mail granting permission to conduct the study. The authorized representative signed the letter of corporation (Appendix D) to indicate written permission to conduct the study in the telecommunication company. Upon receipt of letter of corporation, I asked the company agent to send invitation e-mail to all departmental executives and informed leaders who are interested in the study to contact

me (Appendix E). The telecommunications executives who were interested in participating and met the criteria contacted me directly.

Researchers should contact the potential participants directly to receive quicker responses (Cunliffe & Alcadipani, 2016). The authorized representative included my contact information in the invitation emails to departmental executives, and interested participants communicated with me directly. Researchers should establish a vigorous participant selection criteria procedure for the research study (Crocker et al., 2015). The inclusion criteria for selecting participants are the attributes that participants must have to qualify for the study (Robinson, 2014). To qualify for participation in this study, the telecommunications executives must have a minimum of four years' experience in the telecommunication industry, at least two years experience in leading supervisors, and proficient in English.

Executive officers, managing directors, and senior personnel are in strategic decision-making roles and have significant influence on the behaviors and actions of others in an organization (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). Researchers select participants who can provide important information on aspects and perspectives related to the phenomenon under study (Palinkas et al., 2015). The first 15 telecommunications executives who contacted me to participate in the study and signed the informed consent form made the list of participants. From the list of participants, I chose 10 telecommunications executives for the interviews; the remaining participants were alternates in the event that data saturation was not met or an individual withdrew before

the final write-up. After interviewing Participant A7, no new themes or information emerged (data saturation) from Participant A8 to Participant A10. None of the 10 selected participants withdrew from the study.

To enhance the success of the interview process, interviewees and researchers must agree on a time and location for convenience and accessibility (Yoshida, Cousens, Wazny, & Chan, 2016). However, establishing a research setting where the participants can share thoughts and experiences in confidence can be challenging (Haahr et al., 2014). An appropriate interview setting is also crucial for obtaining honest replies from the research participants (Herring, 2013). I conducted telephone interviews, scheduled at the most convenient time for the telecommunications executives.

Ethical Research

The informed consent is a process that a researcher uses to obtain permission from an individual for inclusion in a research study (Schrems, 2014). Ethical research practices are essential to creating cooperation, trust, and collaboration between a researcher and participants to maintain a study's integrity (Nicolaidis, 2016). To ensure ethical practices, researchers obtain signed consent forms from the participants to acknowledge they understand their rights and protection during data collection process (Branthwaite & Patterson, 2012). Participants must be aware of the consent form, which consists of the research purpose, procedures, risks, benefits, confidentiality, contact information, and withdrawal process (Tam et al., 2015). Participants must sign the

consent form before being interviewed (Newington & Metcalfe, 2014). To meet these requirements, I provided the informed consent forms to participants.

Participants have the opportunity to withdraw from the study and may notify the researcher in person, by telephone, or by email of their decision to do so (Gibson et al., 2013). For assurance, I informed telecommunications executives that participating in the study is voluntary, and they were allowed to withdraw from the study before the final write-up. Researchers decide if participants will receive compensation (Wang, Noe, & Wang, 2014). Scholars have argued that using incentives to increase the number of participants in research can quickly undermine their autonomy (Bernstein & Feldman, 2015). Researchers often refrain from offering incentives to participants because incentives can compromise the voluntary nature of consent (Zutlevics, 2016). For these reasons, participants did not receive an incentive for participating in the research study.

Researchers should use unique identifiers to protect the anonymity of participants (Welsh, Nelson, Walsh, Palmer, & Vos, 2014). I assured the ethical protection of the participants was adequate by using unique identifiers for each participant in the organization. Considering the ethics requirement when conducting a field study, Wahyuni (2012) recommended that researchers store hard copies of collected data in a bank safe and electronic files on the researcher's password-protected computer. For the protection of participants in this study, I stored electronic data on a password-protected computer and an external hard drive as the backup, and kept the interpreted interview summaries, reflective journal, and notes secured in a fireproof safe. I will keep the information

protected for a minimum of 5 years before permanently deleting all electronic and digital files from the computer and shredding all hard copies. I collected data for the study after receiving approval from Walden University's IRB and the issuance of an approval number is 08-30-17-0291002.

To ensure confidentiality and protect the rights of the participants and organization, researchers should ensure that names of respondents and their firms remain anonymous (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Poh et al. (2016) advised researchers to use pseudonyms instead of actual names to protect the participants' privacy. To protect the names of individuals and to safeguard the confidentiality of participants, I assigned the following pseudonyms: Participant A1, Participant A2, Participant A3, and continued to Participant A10.

Data Collection Instruments

The first stage in the research process is data collection (Rimando et al., 2015). Researchers use the data collection process to address the research question (Anjum, Durgawale, & Shinde, 2014). In qualitative studies, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Noble & Smith, 2015). In fulfilling the role of the data collection instrument, a researcher collects and analyzes the data to establish patterns and themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers are the major data-collecting instruments, often using interviews to gather information (Hedlund, Börjesson, & Österberg, 2015). For these reasons and because of my role of the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument.

Qualitative researchers rely on interviews to obtain the necessary information needed to answer the research question. The most used qualitative data collection method is interviewing (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Well-planned interviews can provide a vast amount of information necessary for a study (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). Sakulkijkarn (2012) conducted semistructured interviews as part of a case study on the effectiveness team building among business executives. Besides interviews, case study researchers use validation and cross-referencing with archived documents to ensure triangulation (Yin, 2013). I conducted semistructured interviews using an open-ended format via telephone and reviewed archived performance records.

In a qualitative research study, interviews involve interactive communication and researchers conduct interviews with participants to learn about the phenomenon under study (Mojtahed, Baptista-Nunes, Tiago-Martins, & Peng, 2014). A researcher must create interview questions with the purpose of gaining insight into participants' experiences (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Asking the same interview questions to different participants allows the researcher to receive a diverse range of answers and interpretation (Yin, 2013). For these reasons, I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) as a guide during the interviews.

Determining reliability and validity of the data collection instrument is necessary to establish credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability of the data (Mangioni & Mckerchar, 2013). Qualitative researchers use member checking to help ensure trustworthiness of the analysis of the collected data (Moss, Gibson, & Dollarhide, 2014).

Member checking is a technique qualitative researchers use to improve the credibility of their results (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). To enhance the validity of the data collection process, all participants answered the same interview questions in the same sequence. The initial phase was telephone interviews. After each interview, I wrote a summary of the results based on notes and the audio-recorded interviews. Once completed, all participants received their interpreted interview summary by email to check for accuracy, credibility, and validity. By conducting member-checking and follow-up telephone interviews, I confirmed what was said by the participants. The data analysis involved the use of interpreted interview summaries and archived performance records to reach data saturation and obtain in-depth information to enhance the academic rigor of the study.

Qualitative researchers use interview protocol, which includes rules and guidelines to conduct the interview and to ensure each interview follows the same data collection procedure (Dikko, 2016). Researchers develop interview protocols to obtain consistency with all interviews (Wilson & Post, 2013). A researcher uses interview protocol to guide the interview process; therefore, the interview protocol has a key role in the research study (Padilla & Benitez, 2014). I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) to guide the interviews and follow the same procedure with each participant.

Data Collection Technique

Qualitative researchers use observations, interviews, archival business documents, or focus groups as the data collection techniques during a research study (Kornbluh,

2015). Interviews are the primary data collection technique for qualitative research (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2013). Interviewing is the preferred form of collecting qualitative data (Garcia & Gluesing, 2013). Researchers employing a case study should incorporate archival documents to address the research problem (Gawer & Phillips, 2013).

The three forms of interviews are structured, unstructured, and semistructured (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The data collection techniques for this study were semistructured interviews involving the use of an open-ended format via telephone and archived performance records. Qualitative researchers typically use semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data (Chan et al., 2013). The interviews consisted of eight semistructured open-ended questions. Researchers use semistructured interviews to receive in-depth responses to the questions and an understanding of the subject (Doody & Noonan, 2013). I based the interview questions on the research question, conceptual framework, and the information from the literature review. During the interviews, telecommunications executives shared experiences on the leadership strategies to improve the supervisors' performance.

The interview protocol is a guide that qualitative researchers use to ensure consistency, reliability, and validity of the semistructured interviews (Yin, 2014). Qualitative researchers use interview protocols to provide consistency and reliability of the research data (Treloar, Stone, McMillan, & Flakus, 2015). Researchers use interview protocol to enhance the quality of the data obtained from the interviews (Castillo-

Montoya, 2016). I used the same interview protocol (Appendix B) with all participants to ensure consistency, reliability, and validity of the semistructured interviews.

Interviews should last between 20 and 45 minutes (Barrington & Shakespeare-Finch, 2014). A single interview session should not last longer than 45 minutes (Gold, Petrilli, Hayes, & Murphy, 2014). A qualitative researcher should not extend the length of the interview beyond an hour, when possible to ensure that the participant remains engaged (Dubé, Schinke, Strasser, & Lightfoot, 2014). My telephone interviews with telecommunications executives lasted between 40 and 45 minutes.

Researchers use audio-recorded interviews for accuracy and revisiting responses to interview questions (Heale & Forbes, 2013). I audio-recorded the interviews and took notes. A researcher must audio-record an interview because recorded speech is more accurate than written notes (Yin, 2014). The ability to conduct face-to-face interviews can be difficult to coordinate because of the interviewee's location or schedule; nevertheless researchers can carry out phone or Skype interviews (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013). I offered participants the following interview options: phone or Skype in order to accommodate the participants' need for preference and convenience. I relied on the research participants' availability to conduct the interviews.

The advantage of interviews is that participants can share valuable information that will help increase an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Drew, 2014). Semistructured interviews enable researchers to collect information efficiently and cheaply, in an unobtrusive and open manner (O'Keeffe, Buytaert, Mijic, Brozovic, &

Sinha, 2015). Telephone interviews are a researcher friendly tool that offers time efficiency, cost savings, and quick turnaround for participants (Irvine et al., 2013). Participants can control the privacy of the conversation more effectively through telephone interviews than face-to-face meetings (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). I conducted telephone interviews with 10 participants.

The disadvantages of interviews are the time limitation and potential lack of interest in the topic by the participant (Drew, 2014). During interviews, researchers can inject bias into the research process (Bernard, 2013). Qualitative researchers using face-to-face interviews find it difficult to obtain a geographical spread because participants are usually not clustered in the same area (Farizo, Joyce, & Solino, 2014). The major disadvantage of conducting telephone interviews is the absence of observable nonverbal cues (Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014). I conducted telephone interviews with participants from four different geographical areas in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten.

Qualitative researchers use member checking to give participants an opportunity to review collected data for accuracy and suggests any necessary corrections, which strengthens the credibility of the research (Faseleh-Jahromi, Moattari, & Peyrovi, 2013). Member checking of interview data enhances a study's reliability and validity (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). Using member checking enriches the truthfulness of the research data (Roche, Vaterlaus, & Young, 2015). After transcribing the interviews, I sent the

interpreted summarized notes to the participants via email to verify the information is a correct representation of their interview responses.

Data Organization Technique

Data organization techniques help researchers manage the data and therefore increase the reliability and validity of the study (Martins & Meyer, 2012). Researchers use reflective journals to expand the comprehension of the literature and research topic (Wyatt & Márquez, 2016). I used a reflective journal to keep track of data, reflect on and examine the experiences, and collect valuable research data. Researchers should protect identifiable information about participants and organizations in a research study (Killawi et al., 2014). Assigning participants with an alphanumeric representation ensures confidentiality (Sandelowski, 2014). To protect the identity of participants, researchers use a unique letter to identify each participant instead of using actual names (Miller & Dorman, 2014). I did not use the participants' names in this study. For each participant, I labeled a folder with the participant's unique code; Participant A1, Participant A2, Participant A3, up to Participant A10 and the date of the interview. Included in the folder are the participant's interpreted summary, interview notes, and the signed consent form.

During data organization process, enforcing privacy policy procedures is necessary to protect participants (Landwehr, 2016). Collected data from a research study must remain secure (Tsai et al., 2016). Researchers must use great caution when storing identifying documents to maintain the confidentiality of the participants (Ellard-Gray, Jeffrey, Choubak, & Crann, 2015). I stored electronic data on a password-protected

computer and an external hard drive as the backup, and kept interpreted interview summaries, reflective journal, and notes secured in a fireproof safe. After 5 years of completing my doctoral study, I will shred all paper copies and permanently delete all electronic files.

Data Analysis

Performing data analysis helps researchers filter the collected data (Chan et al., 2013). Methodological triangulation involves using more than one approach to gather data (Archbold, Dahle, & Jordan, 2014). Researchers use the information collected from interviews and archival records to demonstrate methodological triangulation (Poghosyan et al., 2013). Methodological triangulation reveals differences and similarities between results, suggesting new perspectives (Durif-Bruckert et al., 2015). The methodological triangulation for this study consisted of archived performance records and interview summaries. I concentrated on the central issues of leadership strategies to identify themes from the interviews and the archived performance reports.

Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested transcribing and interpreting the interviews and conducting member checking as soon as possible. By asking the same interview questions to participants, researchers could identify themes, create an efficient data analysis, and compare responses (Brédart, Marrel, Abetz-Webb, Lasch, & Acquadro, 2014). Data analysis consists of seven steps: (a) review the original documented interview, (b) transcribe data in a summary, (c) identify themes, (d) perform member checking, (e) compare themes, (f) create codes based on the comparison, and (g)

determine the reliability of the codes by reviewing selectively for cases and examples (Fusch & Ness, 2015). After each interview, I transcribed the audio-taped interviews within 48 hours and summarized the interpreted responses to the interview questions. Next, I conducted member checking by sending the summary to the participants via email to validate the accuracy of the information. Participants can approve, comment, or validate the accuracy of the interview summary during the member checking process (Milosevic, Bass, & Combs, 2015). Participants can acknowledge and verify the interview summary, which increases the credibility of the interaction between the participant and researcher (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). During member checking, the participants can make changes and email the interview summary back to me. Researchers use member checking to validate derived themes (Hagemeyer et al., 2015). Member checking involves testing the data, examining the categories and themes, and evaluating the interpretations and conclusions with participants to ensure truthfulness and authenticity (Reilly, 2013). I conducted member checking with each participant to enhance truthfulness and authenticity of the study findings.

Data analysis in qualitative research consists of a comprehensive preparation and organization of raw data, converted to codes and later into themes (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, & Kyngas, 2014). Coding helps a researcher understand and analyze the content of interviews based on themes and patterns of interest (Thomas, 2015).

Researchers use a coding system for the participants when beginning data analysis process (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). Microsoft Excel® is an application software

suite used for organizing, coding, and classifying data by using colors and sorting, which does not require an advanced knowledge of the software (Bree & Gallagher, 2016). An advantage of using Microsoft Excel® is the program is part software package Microsoft Office® and thus entails no additional expense (Neyelof, Fuchs, & Moreira, 2012). Brown et al. (2014) stated using Microsoft Excel® software allows researchers to use known software, with add-ons, if needed. In addition, Microsoft Excel® allows for easy integration of data and interpretation (Brown et al., 2014). I used Microsoft Excel® to assist in identifying themes from the collected data.

The analysis process for identifying key themes requires the interpretation of the data, member checking, the organization of datasets, classifying information, and coding (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). According to Nelson (2016), categorizing responses into themes is necessary to reflect on the conceptual framework and emerging patterns in response to the research question(s). The completion of a literature review supplements the conceptual framework in the development of key themes (Joo, McLean, & Yang, 2013). Using the conceptual framework to guide the data collection and analysis will result in the emergence of key themes (Cameron, Naglie, Silver, & Gignac, 2013). On completion of member checking, my focus was to categorize the responses in the relevant themes to reflect the conceptual framework and the emerging patterns in response to the research question. I correlated the themes to the central research question, the literature (including new studies published since writing the proposal), and the conceptual framework.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

A fundamental goal in qualitative study is ensuring that collected data are reasonable and consistent. Reliability is following procedures resulting in the same or similar findings by other researchers (Barry, Chaney, Piazza-Gardner, & Chavarria, 2014). Researchers' reliability is relevant for the replication of the study (Morse, 2015a). Qualitative researchers can improve reliability of their study by providing detailed description of data collection procedure, coding techniques, and data analysis (Mangioni & McKerchar, 2013). I used the interview protocol (Appendix A) and provided a detailed narration on data collection instruments and techniques, and data analysis to enhance the reliability of the study.

Dependability. The uniformity of the research data in comparable conditions is dependability (Houghton et al., 2013). Dependability happens when the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). If another researcher replicates the study with similar participants and conditions and receives similar results then, the study has dependability (Cope, 2014). Dependability is enhanced by member checking: conducting and transcribing the initial interviews; classifying transcribed data into emerging themes and codes through data analysis; and sharing the interpreted data with the participants, who then read for accuracy (Loh, 2013). Participants can confirm, clarify, or improve the accuracy of the interpreted data during member checking (Caretta, 2015). Audio recording interviews

ensure accuracy and allow for complete data transcriptions compared to relying on memory or notes (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Interviewees reviewed the summarized notes for accuracy, credibility, and validity. To address dependability, I audio-recorded interviews, reviewed the interpreted interview summaries, and conducted member checking with each participant.

Validity

Validity involves having clear evidence for data interpretation (McClarty, 2013). Validity relies on the most relevant and important concepts of a given topic under study (Keely, Al-Janabi, Lorgelly, & Coast, 2013). A qualitative researcher is primarily concerned with content validity based on credibility, trustworthiness, and dependability (Ghorbanibirgani, Fallahi-Khoshknab, Zarea, & Abedi, 2016). Mero-Jaffe (2011) recommended maintaining maximum reliability and validity of data by avoiding treating the participants like automatons, safeguarding the well-being of the interviewees, relying on the researcher's integrity, and reflecting on the principles of free consent. Researchers should ethically commit to avoiding harm to people during the study and enforce the principles of privacy and confidentiality (Mero-Jaffe, 2011). I used methodological triangulation to ensure validity by utilizing interviews with telecommunications executives and reviewing relating to performance records.

Credibility. Credibility involves conducting the research in a believable manner and demonstrating the findings persuasively (Houghton et al., 2013). In addition to the consistency of data collection, researchers need to ensure the credibility of research

results (Harvey, 2015). The credibility of a qualitative study includes describing the relationship with the group, cross-referencing, annotating all field documentation, and using consistent methods during the interviews (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Researchers use member checking to enable research participants review the summary of the interpreted interviews to assure an accurate representation (Forber-Pratt, 2015). Methodological triangulation involves using multiple resources on the same phenomenon to produce a better understanding of the richness and depth of the findings (Walsh, 2013). To ensure credibility, I presented the interpreted interview summary to participants and solicit their views on the accuracy, credibility, and validity. In addition, I used methodological triangulation by cross-reference the interpreted results with archived performance records to enhance the credibility of this study.

Transferability. Transferability is the extent to which other researchers using the same method will achieve the same results as the original study (Elo et al., 2014). Gau and James (2013) stated transferability adds an element of rigor to a qualitative study. Researchers can achieve transferability by maintaining the same framework for all interviews, comparing results between cases, and abstracting the framework to a general flow chart for future researchers (Patterson & Ambrosini, 2015). I addressed transferability by providing a detailed description of the research process, including in the use of interview protocol (Appendix B), whereby the process is similar for all the participants.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the researcher's ability to prove that findings are a representation of the participants and not of researcher bias (Tong & Dew, 2015). A qualitative researcher can exhibit confirmability by providing rich quotes from the participants depicting each emerging theme (Cope, 2014). Confirmability is a record of all the sources of data sampling, decisions, the analytical procedures, and implementation of the collected data during a research study (Hussein, Jakubec, & Osuji, 2015). To address conformability, I used member checking and methodical triangulation at the end of the data collection and analysis process.

Data Saturation. The stage at which the data collection process no longer offers any new or relevant data is data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation takes place when there is no new information from interviews, no new themes, and no additional codes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). The point when the essential information repeats continuously, exploring the phenomenon with additional participants is useless (Biran, Liu, Li, & Eichhorn, 2014). Morse (2015b) advised researchers to continue interviews until no new information is available to ensure data saturation. To ensure data saturation, I continued to interview new participants until no new information was forthcoming. I reached data saturation at Participant A7; Participant A8 to Participant A10 interviews did not provide new themes or information.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, participants, the research method and design, the population and sample size. Other elements of

Section 2 were ethical protection measures, data collection instruments and technique, data organization technique, data analysis, and reliability and validity. In Sections 3, I will present the findings and explain the study's relevance for improving business practice, discuss the implication for social change, and provide recommendations for action and further research. To complete Section 3, I will include a discussion on my reflections within the doctoral process and conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten use to improve supervisors' performance. Ten telecommunications executives participated in this study and provided me with the data to answer my research question. I used interview responses and archived performance records to address the research problem. Based on the participants' responses to the interview questions, I identified five themes: (a) need for implementing communication and team activities, (b) need for providing bonuses, incentives, and rewards, (c) organizational commitment adopting goal setting and performance appraisal, (d) organizational culture promoting training, and (e) required autonomy to work. The study findings confirmed that telecommunications executives used different strategies to improve the performance of supervisors. Section 3 is comprised of a presentation of the findings, applications to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further research, my reflections, and a conclusion.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question of this study is: What leadership strategies do telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance? For this study, I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions (Appendix B) to collect data from 10 executives and reviewed archived performance records. After interviewing

Participant A7, no new themes or information emerged (data saturation) from Participant A8 to Participant A10. Researchers have demonstrated that managers use different strategies to improve employee performance (Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Exceptional employee performance is critical to organizational performance in the service industry (Kehoe et al., 2016). Poor employee performance has negative effects on organizational profitability (Ugoani, 2016). Some business executives lack the leadership skills needed to improve supervisors performance (Nikpeyma et al., 2014). Many business leaders are aware of the need to improve employees' performance (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Hatane, 2015). Business executives need to understand the different ways to evaluate supervisors' performance (Kim et al., 2016). Researchers have demonstrated that business leaders use various strategies to improve employees' performance (Al-Shuaibi et al., 2014; Ayers, 2015; Cording et al., 2014; Kramer et al., 2016; Turyakira et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2015). In Table 1, I present the identification of themes and use the following subsections to discuss the five themes that emerged from my thematic analysis of the participants' responses to the interview questions.

Table 1

The Identification of Themes

Theme	Interview Question Numbers	Participants	Participants Response Rate
Implementing communication and team activities	1-6	A1-A10	100%
Providing bonuses, incentives, and rewards	2, 4, 5	A1- A10	100%
Organizational commitment adopting goal setting and performance appraisal	1, 4, 6	A1-A7, A9	80%
Organizational culture promoting training	1-4, 8	A1, A2, A4-A6, A8-A10	80%
Required autonomy to work	1, 2, 4	A1, A3, A6, A8-A10	60%

Theme 1: Need for Implementing Communication and Team Activities

The first theme that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interpreted interview summaries is the need for implementing communication and team activities. Regular communication between managers and supervisors is critical for organizational performance (Steele & Plenty, 2015). Effective communication is critical to improving employee's performance (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Researchers have demonstrated the positive relationship between managerial communication and subordinate job performance (Michael, 2014). All the research participants (100%) echoed Michael's (2014) and Sandhya and Kumar's (2014) opinion, attesting that they used communication

to improve supervisors' performance. In response to Interview Questions 1-6, all (100%) executives indicated the use of communication and team activities to improve the performance of supervisors. Responding to Interview Question 1, all (100%) executives stated that there should be good communication between executives and supervisors, weekly department meetings or departmental progress updates. Employees who participate in office meetings are influenced by the discussions; which can have a major impact on performance (Lehmann-Willenbrock, Allen, & Belvue, 2016). There should be a good communication between executives and supervisors to ensure that updates or changes are conveyed in a timely fashion.

In response to Interview Question 2, all the telecommunications executives (100%) stressed the importance of meetings: weekly, biweekly or monthly. Many organizational leaders conducted meetings and most employees participated. Meetings provide a psychological resource to employees because problems are solved, and plans are made (Allen, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Sands, 2016). One of the executives (10%) stated that the monthly meetings are necessary to evaluate the progress reports and the execution of plans proposed by or agreed to by the supervisors. However, all the meetings are not always done at the job; on the contrary, another participant stated that basically, meetings are done in a restaurant setting rather than at the office to make it a more comfortable environment. Eventhough, all the meetings were not conducted in the same manner the need of conducting meetings were important to all the supervisors,

Responding to Interview Question 4, Participant A3 stated “I keep in constant communication with my team, this way everyone can contribute. We discuss our strategic goals in our weekly meetings.” Business leaders view meetings as an opportunity to demonstrate the supportive nature of the organization and to develop high-quality relationships with their supervisors (Mroz & Allen, 2015). Participant A7 noted “the implementation is most effective before establishing the strategies consultations are undertaken with the supervisors; this makes them feel part of the process.” Executives should have good communication skills which might be beneficial in their leadership role.

In response to Interview Question 5, one of telecommunications executives (10%) stated that communication is the key; he believes that without an open communication between the supervisors and himself performance would not be as great as it is. Responding to Interview Question 6, the participants noted the need to hold “periodic meetings” to discuss accomplishments, thereby improving the performance of supervisors. All the participants’ statements (100%) are consistent with the findings of Michael (2014) and Sandhya and Kumar (2011) that business leaders use communication to improve employee performance. Communication is relevant because the shared information can help improved performance.

Archival document analysis. Performance appraisal is a crucial element in human resource management (HRM) and is an important responsibility of business leaders and supervisors (Javidmehr & Ebrahimpour, 2015). A review of the performance

reports indicated that executives are requesting HRM to allow more communications flow with open door policy to supervisors. One of the key components on the reviewed performance reports were communication. A well-functioning performance report should contribute to communicating management goals and objectives to employees by motivating employees to improve performance (Rolle & Klingner, 2012). A quality performance report consists of communication between employee and supervisor (Ciobanu & Ristea, 2015). The communication component of the performance report represented an opportunity to receive feedback from the leaders regarding the results achieved during the previous year and to set, together with the leaders and supervisors, the objectives for the following year. The quality of interaction between the leader and subordinates during the performance review also influences the process (Arogundade, Olasunkanmi-Alimi, & Arogundade, 2015). All telecommunications executives agreed that communication is needed to improve supervisors' performance, which aligns with the performance reports. All (100%) telecommunications executives held weekly or monthly meetings with their supervisors. "I keep in constant communication with my team, this way everyone can contribute. We discuss our strategic goals in our weekly meetings" (A3). Communicating with the supervisors is important to the executives because everyone is able to participate in the discussions. Supervisors can voice their opinion on changes they would like to see in work environment.

Theme 2: Need for Providing Bonuses, Incentives, and Rewards

Incentives are important for improved performance because employees who are productive but do not receive proper rewards may become dissatisfied and reduce productivity (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). Ahiabor (2013) argued that incentives are the driving force for employee performance and posited that without incentives, workers are less likely to perform efficiently. Lourenco (2016) demonstrated that monetary incentives and recognition improved performance. Choi (2014) stated an effective implementation of performance appraisal is a valid tool for making salary adjustments, which could be a motivating factor for employees to perform better. Rehman and Ali (2013) opined that employees receive financial compensation for job performance. Nguyen et al. (2015) advised business leaders and supervisors to provide incentives to inspire employees to perform better. Business leaders use both monetary and nonmonetary incentives to improve job performance (Abdullah & Wan, 2013; Alarifi & Alamri, 2014; Khan et al., 2013). Tomohara and Ohno (2013) demonstrated the use of monetary incentives to improve productivity among employers. According to Chomal and Baruah (2014), the incentives and rewards programs for employees differ among employees.

The theme of the need of providing bonuses, incentives, and rewards emerged from Interview Questions 2, 4, and 5. All (100%) participants attested using bonuses, incentives, and rewards to improve performance of their supervisors. One of the participants said that they give bonuses or incentives to the supervisor who is most improved in the department. Some of the incentives they receive are extra vacation days,

gift cards to restaurants, or tickets to sporting events. The effectiveness of rewards and incentives influences the employee performance, which is critical because it affects the achievement of organizational goals (Malik, Butt, & Choi, 2015). One of the participants stated that the best method to improve my supervisors' performance is the combination of a performance agreement with an incentive program. Another telecommunications executive responded by saying the most important thing to do is to remember to link employee incentives to the strategy.

Archival document analysis. Employees work harder if they know they will be compensated; for this reason, HR managers of the telecommunication company prepare yearly performance appraisals to evaluate the performance of the employees. I reviewed the past 3 years of performance appraisal forms (archived documents) and realized that each year there were more employees on the incentive lists. All telecommunications executives (100%) rewarded their supervisors by giving additional sick or vacation days, sporting events tickets, wage scale increases, paid restaurants outings, an end of the year bonuses or extra vacation days, and even cruise retreats. One of the executives stated having the incentives readily available to the supervisors will enable them to perform better and make the department be ahead of other departments. The performance records indicated that supervisors get monetary incentives in the form of end of the year bonuses. The supervisors are rewarded for their work, motivation, or knowledge by monetary and nonmonetary incentives. Supervisors are rewarded through incentive programs, acknowledgments, awards, and bonuses. All (100%) executives attested that use of

bonuses, incentives, and rewards is an essential strategy for improving the performance of their supervisors. The telecommunications executives highlighted the importance of rewarding supervisors to improve their performance. The executives' responses to Interview Questions 2, 4, and 5 echoed the study of Abdullah and Wan (2013), Alarifi and Alamri (2014), Khan et al. (2013), and Lourenco (2016), who reported incentives as a good strategy for improving employee performance.

Theme 3: Organizational Commitment Adopting Goals Setting and Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal is a formal, structured system for measuring, evaluating, and influencing an employee's job-related attributes, behaviors, and outcomes (Swanepoel, Botha, & Mangonyane, 2014). Employee evaluation contributes to improving worker performance (Balcioglu & Nihinlola, 2014). Business leaders use performance appraisals as a tool to implement goals and increase employee performance (Ayers, 2015). Business leaders who implement effective performance appraisal system improve employee productivity, efficiency, motivation, and performance (Swanepoel et al., 2014). The ability of business leaders to measure employee performance leads to employee satisfaction and achievement of organizational goals (Alagaraja & Shuck, 2015). A performance evaluation either prompts an employee to continue performing accordingly or to make changes (Araki et al., 2016). Business leaders use performance evaluation system to determine the success or failure of their organizational work performance (Deepa et al., 2014). Performance evaluation is a tool executives use to

provide feedback regarding targeted work goals, promotions, salary increases, and employee career ambitions (Jacobs et al., 2014). The overall purpose of performance appraisal is to provide clear, performance-based feedback to employees (Swanepoel et al., 2014). Employees are rewarded based on the results of the performance appraisals.

The theme of organizational commitment adopting goal setting and performance appraisal emerged from Interview Questions 1, 4, and 6. Eighty percent of the participants recognized the significance of setting goals and appraising performance to improve the performance of their supervisors. The participants said that they let their supervisors know what the goal or results are and the plan or path that will get us to accomplish the goal. Other participants said that annual goal setting linked to the company objectives, midyear, and end of year performance reviews and supervisors' performance is best structured through a performance agreement, which outlines the annual targets to be achieved.

Responding to Interview Question 4, participant A5 stated that they set clear expectations at the commencement of the year and have interim reviews to provide feedback and coaching. In response to Interview Question 4, participant A9 said, "The implementation of strategies is based on performance appraisals." Participants A1 to A7's responses (70%) to Interview Question 6 indicated that business executives use goal setting and performance appraisal as a strategy to improve supervisors' performance. The participants said in order to know if a supervisors are making any accomplishments they (a) look to see how they are executing the goals that are set for them, (b) measure the

accomplishment of a tasks; it is that supervisor's ability to finish the assigned task on time, (c) look at performance based on set goals and competencies and effort to make things happen efficiently, (d) measure the accomplishments of the supervisors by SMART goals and a performance dashboard and the targets formulated in the performance agreement. Supervisors must know and understand the telecommunication company goals, visions, and mission.

The participants' responses to Interview Questions 1, 4, and 6 indicated the importance of goal setting and performance appraisal and how the strategy contributed to improving supervisors' performance. Eighty percent of the telecommunications executives confirmed using goal setting and performance appraisal as a strategy to improve the performance of their supervisors. As applied to this study, participants' responses echoed Ayers' (2015), Flynn et al.'s (2015) and Swanepoel et al.'s (2014) statements on the importance of goal setting and performance appraisal in improving employee performance.

Archival document analysis. The archived documents I reviewed were performance reports and appraisals forms over the past 3 years. The archived documents provided me with the information on how the employees are evaluated, the evaluation procedures, and the results of the evaluation. One of the performance reports was the performance bonus application. This document provided the performance score and the variable performance bonus in percentage. The highest performance score that can be achieved is a 5.0 which is 100% bonus incentives. The lowest performance score is 2.0

resulting to 0% bonus incentives. The average 50% bonus incentives score is 2.9. The performance application is used along with the appraisal report to determine the employees' incentives. The performance appraisals are referred to as pay-for-performance appraisals; these evaluation systems are used to measure each employee's performance and link those results to the number of pay increases or bonuses given to the employee (Cascio, 2015). Performance appraisal results should be discussed with employees (Gupta & Kumar, 2013). Participant A4 stated

The implementation of strategies is based on evaluation of the performance appraisals. If a supervisor performance appraisal is lacking or low in a particular area that will be handled on ways to improve some ways to improve on a performance appraisal is by training and development.

Fifty percent of the participants noted the feedback received from supervisors' appraisal forms were the way they measured the supervisors' accomplishments. The organizational commitment to adopt goals and performance appraisal played a major role in the evaluating process of the supervisors.

Theme 4: Organizational Culture Promoting Training

Organizational leaders who meet employees' expectations by providing job security, training, and development are likely to be more competitive than organizational leaders who neglect the employees' concerns (Turyakira et al., 2014). HR managers provide employees with the necessary training and development to acquire and improve required skills and abilities (Al-Shuaibi et al., 2014). Business leaders understand the

importance of employee training for organizational sustainability (Hooi & Ngui, 2014). Business executives have recognized the need for training to improve supervisors' skill level and performance (Rekalde et al., 2015). Durgin, Mahoney, Cox, Weetjens, and Poling (2014) demonstrated that management could use training to improve supervisors' performance.

The theme of training emerged from Interview Questions 1-4, and 8. Eight of the participants (80%) indicated they used training to improve the performance of their supervisors. The objective of training is to help the organization to achieve its purpose by adding value to its key resource; which are the employees (Jha, 2016). In response to Interview Question 1, the telecommunications executives said supervisors must be trained to execute the tasks to get them to their set goals. Training is important; it makes the department team better. Training has improved the supervisors' performance. Another telecommunication executive responded by saying one of the goals is trying to provide effective training in the field of work where possible. While another executive remarked that when deemed necessary monthly training sessions are held." In response to Interview Question 2, an executive to improve any performance training is necessary. Supervisors are sent on training as needed. Responding to Interview Question 3, the answer was guiding the supervisors with training and information if necessary and that usually works for them.

Promoting training in an organization is vital to the productivity of organization's workforce (Jha, 2016). Responding to Interview Question 4, Eighty percent of

participants attested using training to improve supervisors' performance. Employees are the resources of the organization, and the success or failure of the organization relies on employees' performance (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013). Highlighting the importance of training, the telecommunications executives said; (a) constant training with supervisors, (b) periodic training to ensure supervisors focus on the assigned tasks and (c) each person is responsible for their team and are trained to be able to handle their positions and tasks. Another participant stated that they have conferences, training seminars, and workshops that supervisors attend. These training, conferences, seminars, and workshops help the supervisors with ideas to improve the performance of their team and the company as a whole. The supervisors are encouraged to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops.

The participants' responses aligned with the statements of Rekalde et al. (2015) and Durgin et al. (2014) who stated that business leaders could use training to improve employee performance. The study findings indicated that telecommunications executives used training as a strategy to improve the performance of supervisors. As applied to this study, 80% of the participants attested to the use of training to improve the performance of supervisors. The training available to the supervisors will help them in the areas where were documented in the performance appraisal evaluation as needs improvement.

Archival document analysis. Besides communication as noted as a major factor on the performance reports; training was mentioned. A review of the performance reports indicated that based on the results of the performance appraisals the need for training is relevant. Bercu (2017) noted that specific training of employees can have a greater

impact on wages and productivity, a strong effect on the employment growth of small firms and a direct correlation between training intensity and profitability for large firms. To ensure employees are equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and abilities to perform their tasks, training and development plays a crucial role towards the success of an organization (Ibrahim & Dahie, 2016). One of the questions included in the telecommunications company performance appraisal was if the employee was interested in advanced training. After reviewing the evaluation results almost 100% of all employees found training beneficial to their personal development. Training and development are the backbone of human resource management, because performance at individual and group levels can increase thereby achieving organizational goals (Mozael, 2015). The beneficial effects of training programs from the perspective of being employees in an organization are; a) the increase of the quality process of communication with superiors and subordinates, b) assuming new responsibilities on the job, c) improving teamwork ability, d) efficiency of time management, e) improving the quality of workplace results, e) increase the chances of promotion, and f) development of workplace initiative (Niazi, 2011). With the exception of two telecommunications executives, all other participants found training to be the best way to improve supervisors' performance. Participant A6 noted "Periodic training and meetings help insure they are focus on the assigned tasks." Participant A8 stated "Training and accountability. Each person is responsibility for their own team and they are trained to be able to handle their positions and tasks. They should perform based on the training

received. If the training did not work then we come back to the drawing board, we look to see why it does not work and how to make it work.” HR staff responsibility is to ensure training and development is readily available to all employees. Supervisors who attend the training and development seminars will better equip to perform the duties assigned by the executives.

Theme 5: Required Autonomy to do Work

When organizational leaders value employee empowerment, they create expectations that will encourage workers’ productivity (Cording et al., 2014). Business leaders should make employees feel a sense of belonging and autonomy to do work (Kovjanic et al., 2013). Six of the research participants (60%) echoed Cording et al.’s and Kovjanic et al.’s opinion, attesting that granting autonomy to do work improved supervisors’ performance.

The theme of the required autonomy to do work emerged from Interview Questions 1, 2, and 4. In response to Interview Question 1, participant A1 said, “Allow them the autonomy of thought and action and everything else falls perfectly in place.” Responding to Interview Question 4, the participant said the best way to implement a strategy is having (a) supervisors have ownership of the new strategy presented, (b) supervisor are in full control of their department, as executives there are enough on our plate so we should let the supervisors take the responsibility like they should, (c) supervisors must be held more accountable for their department and (d) given full authority over their department. The statements of six participants are consistent with the

findings of Cording et al. (2014) and Kovjanic et al. (2013), who reported that business executives grant autonomy to do work to improve the performance of supervisors. As applied to this study, 60% of the executives attested that granting autonomy to do work improved supervisors' performance.

Archival document analysis. After my review and analysis of the performance records from the telecommunication company; the evaluations feedback from the supervisors indicated that they were given authority over their department, which was noted as a positive feedback for the executives. Autonomy takes place at multiple levels in organizations; the lower levels of organization supervisors take on leadership functions to ensure that organizations translate plans into actions, achieve goals, and complete tasks (Reb, Narayanan, & Chaturvedi, 2014). In order to achieve organizational goals, supervisory leadership provides direction, support, motivation, and feedback to subordinates (Reb et al., 2014). Only 40% of the participants felt granting autonomy of work to the supervisors would not improve performance. Supervisors are representatives of the organization; his or her support usually reflects the ability of the leaders to provide subordinates with development opportunities which will lead to organizational growth (Zhang, Liao, Yan, & Guo, 2014). With guidelines forthcoming Participant A9 echoed "Each new supervisor should have workers having the qualities of a specific strength in order to form the best team available; with the variety of different strengths this can improve the performance as a team. The strengths of each supervisor can come together and improve the department as a whole." While Participant A3 stated: "Supervisors play

an important role in our company. Making sure they perform at their best is my goal.”

Based on the positive feedback from the supervisors on the evaluation; it is clear that the supervisors were given the autonomy and were pleased with the decisions made by the executives.

Findings Related to BEM

The BEM, postulated by Gilbert in 1978 was the conceptual framework for this study. Gilbert posited that performance support is more important to exemplary performance than a person’s lack of skill or knowledge. Winiecki (2015) identified performance improvement as the basic concept of BEM. The findings indicated that telecommunications executives could improve supervisors’ performance through performance appraisal. Fuller et al. (2015) opined that business leaders should not measure the behavior of performance until accomplishments are measured. The data factor of BEM is expectations and feedback (Winiecki, 2015). As applied in this study, telecommunications executives should measure accomplishments to establish performance. All (100%) participants confirmed the BEM relating to performance appraisal to improve supervisors’ performance.

The components of environmental support of BEM are data, instrument, and incentives (Gilbert, 2007). Campbell et al. (2012) posited that employees are high-performers when motivated by incentives. Examples of incentives include salary increases, promotions, time off, or recognition. Wile (2014a) categorized individual performances that are external to the performance based on tangible and intangible

factors. Tangible factors affecting performance include tools, environment, incentives, information, and job aids while intangible factors are management and leadership. Campbell (2014) opined that lack of internal motivation and external incentives could result in poor performance. Kehoe and Wright (2013) noted that incentives are important for improved performance because employees who are productive but do not receive proper rewards may become dissatisfied and reduce productivity. Nguyen, Dang, and Nguyen (2015) advised business leaders to use incentives to inspire employees to perform better. As applied to this study, all (100%) executives responses echoed Campbell, Ganco, Franco, and Agarwal (2012), Kehoe and Wright's, and Nguyen et al.'s assertions on the need to use incentives to improve supervisors' performance.

Dean (2016) opined that business leaders use BEM to find interventions which will eliminate the causes of poor performance with the least cost to the organization. Wooderson et al. (2016) posited that strategies for changing individual employees' characteristics are more effective than trying to improve environmental factors. Training and development is a critical element of an organization's strategy for the sustainability of the company (Hooi & Ngui, 2014). Rekalde et al. (2015) posited that business executives recognized the use of training to improve supervisors' skills and performance. Landeta et al. (2015) opined that training for supervisors is necessary for improved performance. As applied in this study, 80% of the executives attested to the use of training to improve supervisors' performance.

Employees come to work with new and different expectations; individuals should

be engaged in meaningful and purposeful work and involved in decisions relating to their daily operation (Higgs & Dulewicz, 2016). Cording et al. (2014) posited that organizational leaders who value employee empowerment, create expectations that enhance workers' productivity. Pillay and Cardenas (2015) opined that business leaders could enhance motivation by involving employees in decision-making. The findings indicated that telecommunications executives could improve the performance of supervisors through empowerment and autonomy to do work. As applied to this study, 60% of the executives attested to use of empowerment to improve supervisors' performance.

Applications to Professional Practice

The identification of strategies that telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance is essential to organizational productivity and sustainability. Eren (2014) demonstrated that working environment was the leading cause of low performance. Researchers have studied the strategies business leaders use to improve employee performance (Campbell, 2014; Dong et al., 2015; Purvis et al., 2015; Winiecki, 2015; Wooderson et al., 2016). The results from this study could contribute to information sharing, collaboration, and networking among telecommunications executives seeking to improve the performance of their supervisors.

Individual motivation is a major component of analyzing employee performance (Gilbert, 2007). Researchers have demonstrated the use of internal motivation and external incentives to improve employee performance (Campbell, 2014; Kehoe &

Wright, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2015). Rehman and Ali (2013) posited that business leaders use merit pay as an incentive to improve job performance. Because employees respond to rewards differently, business leaders use both monetary and nonmonetary incentives to improve job performance (Abdullah & Wan, 2013; Ahiabor, 2013; Alarifi & Alamri, 2014; Graves, 2015; Khan et al., 2013; Tomohara & Ohno, 2013). Based on the study findings, the most significant contribution to professional practice may be the identification of potential leadership strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. New business leaders may use the findings of the study to improve their supervisors' performance.

Lourenco (2016) opined that monetary incentives and recognition improved performance. Rehman and Ali (2013) outlined the advantages and disadvantages of merit pay. Some of the advantages of merit or performance-related pay include (a) effective at lower levels of an organization, (b) facilitates self-determination, and (c) employees decide where to expand efforts. The disadvantages of merit pay are proceeds performance evaluation; some jobs are difficult to evaluate objectively, comparing employees with differing job descriptions is difficult, create conflicts and resentment among employees, relates to individual performance and ignores team-based efforts. All (100%) participants expressed the need for bonuses, incentives, and rewards. The findings of this study may assist aspiring business leaders to understand the potential challenges regarding the use of incentives to improve supervisors' performance.

Hooi and Ngui (2014) identified training and development as a critical element of an organization's strategy for business success. Many organizations do not have robust internal and external supervisory training (Landeta et al., 2015). Sabella and Analoui (2015) identified that some firms do not provide middle management with adequate training. Sharma (2014) outlined the benefits to organizations when executives, managers, and supervisors participate in management development programs. Some of the benefits included increased productivity, better communication skills, and improved ability in response to change. HR professionals interested in the training of employees to improve performance may use this information in the development of training policy.

Implications for Social Change

The major challenge business leaders face is how to improve employee performance, achieve business success, and remain in competition (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). Organizational leaders use various approaches to increase employee performance (Ayers, 2015). As illustrated in my study findings, the improvement of supervisors' performance might assist telecommunications executives to sustain their business and empower their local community with more choices in every aspect of life.

With improved business performance, the telecommunication companies will pay more taxes which community leaders could use to provide social amenities such as schools, libraries, and hospitals to the local citizens (Edogbanya & Sule, 2013). The telecommunication companies will be able to fulfill their corporate social responsibilities by assisting local community leaders with infrastructure development projects such as

libraries, schools, and hospitals. The general public might learn from the leadership strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance.

The study findings may contribute to positive social change by improving the lives of people in the local community through promotion of the adoption of advanced technology. Coussement et al. (2017) identified the critical role of the telecommunication industry in shaping society, cultures, organizations, and the economy. With advanced technology, individuals could attend virtual meetings, classes, and seminars; book reservations; shop and bank online; and correspond with each other by phone, fax, or Internet, thereby enhancing the quality of life for the community. By adopting the advanced technology, organizational leaders including small business owners might learn from the leadership strategies telecommunications executives use to improve employee performance to grow and sustain their businesses.

Recommendations for Action

The performance of supervisors is essential to productivity and sustainability of a business. Organizational leaders should use performance appraisals as a tool to implement goals and increase employee performance (Ayers, 2015). The most common assessment method for improving employee performance is the performance appraisal (Wang et al., 2015). Almatrooshi et al. (2016) noted that the ethical tension exists between business leaders and employees during performance appraisal process. Flynn et al. (2015) posited that effective leaders are skilled at evaluating job performance. I

recommend that business leaders should implement a robust performance appraisal process to improve supervisors' performance.

To improve productivity and ensure the business sustainability, organizational leaders should possess the leadership skills for improving supervisors' performance. Carter (2013) outlined the responsibilities of business executives to include decision-making, provision of feedback, identification of needs, framing of ideas, and planning of actions. Business leaders have recognized the importance of acquiring skill sets required to improve employee's performance (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Hatane, 2015). Nikpeyma et al. (2014) posited that some managers might lack the skills needed to improve employee performance. I recommend that telecommunications executives explore new leadership strategies to improve supervisors' performance.

Business leaders face the leadership challenge of deciding which type of incentives and rewards will improve employee performance. Hernandez-Barros and Lopez-Dominguez (2013) identified the major challenge business leaders face when dealing with individual differences in employees' temperament, background, capability, and motivation. Sparrow (2013) opined that business leaders who understand their employees' needs can coordinate their specific objectives and reward staffs in the most meaningful ways. Business leaders should use the most appropriate approach to motivate and recognize employees in the organization (Andersen, 2016). I recommend that business leaders should understand their employees and use appropriate incentives to improve worker performance.

The study findings indicated that telecommunications executives with good leadership strategies are better skilled to improve supervisors' performance. Beiko et al. (2016) posited that leadership requires a high level of stamina, flexibility, consistency, and principals. Lindebaum and Raftopoulou (2014) advised business executives to inspire employees because poor leadership strategies have an adverse effect on employee performance and impact organizational performance negatively. Silva (2014) opined that an individual could develop leadership skills through training and following standards and procedures. I recommend business executives should develop leadership skills to improve employee performance. I will disseminate the research findings to various stakeholders through presentations at trainings, seminars, and conferences on employee performance, publications in academic and business journals, and knowledge sharing within my network community.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of the study was to explore the leadership strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. Many researchers have studied the effect of leadership strategies on improving employee performance and business sustainability (Bloom et al., 2012; Cording et al., 2014; Lindebaum & Raftopoulou, 2014; Nguyen et al., 2015; Turyakira et al., 2014). This study was limited to cross-sectional, qualitative, single case study involving telecommunications executives in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Maarten. Further studies should explore longitudinal, qualitative multiple case study, qualitative

phenomenological, quantitative or mixed methods, various participants from other industrial sectors, and different geographical locations.

The study was limited by the sample size of 10 telecommunications executives. Robinson (2014) posited that use of larger or smaller sample size might generate different themes. Further studies should involve larger sample size of participants from various levels and hierarchy in the organizational management. Another limitation of the study was my professional background as an executive leader in the telecommunications industry with limited knowledge and experience in doctoral research study. Morse, Lowery, and Steury (2014) identified the significant challenge that novice researchers face in organizing participants' statements into themes to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. I recommend further study should involve research experts who have diverse contextual skills and knowledge in research, leadership strategy, and HR management.

Reflections

I utilized the qualitative single case study to explore the leadership strategies telecommunications executives use for improving supervisors' performance. In conducting this study, I realized that telecommunications executives use different strategies to improve supervisors' performance. From the study findings, I obtained an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the different strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The doctoral research process was helpful in developing my understanding and perception of the rigor required for doctoral

research. My doctoral study process was helpful in improving my networking, analytical, interpersonal relationship, and problem-solving skills. By conducting the doctoral study, I gained a better knowledge and understanding of the academic research work.

By reflecting on my experiences within the doctoral study, I found that I learned from the challenges encountered which positively changed my personal biases and preconceived ideas and values about this study. The purposive sampling technique was useful in selecting 10 telecommunications executives who have relevant experience and knowledge to answer the research question. The qualitative research method enabled me to conduct semistructured interviews, involving interaction with the participants, which was helpful in improving my emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and communication skills. By conducting the interviews at participants' convenient time, the respondents expressed themselves freely, which enabled me to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance.

Reflecting on the interview process, I found that the executives used similar strategies to improve supervisors' performance. The executives shared different perspectives of the interview questions, which enabled me to understand the strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The study findings changed my personal bias and preconceived ideas and values on leadership strategies for improving supervisors' performance because I gained understanding and knowledge from 10 executives.

Conclusion

Employees are the biggest asset to any organization. The poor performance of employees has a negative effect on business profitability. Some telecommunications executives lack strategies to improve supervisors' performance for business success. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to use BEM as the lens to explore strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. Using the semistructured interview technique, I asked eight open-ended questions to 10 telecommunications executives to gather data to answer the research question. Five themes emerged from the thematic analysis of data which included archived performance reports indicating the strategies telecommunications executives use to improve supervisors' performance. The themes are (a) need for implementing communication and team activities, (b) need for providing bonuses, incentives, and rewards, (c) organizational commitment adopting goals setting and performance appraisal, (d) organizational culture promoting training, and (e) required autonomy to do work.

Telecommunications executives use various strategies to improve the performance of supervisors. All the participants attested to using communication, meetings, and team activities and bonuses, incentives, and rewards to improve supervisors' performance. Using BEM as the lens in analyzing the single case study involving the telecommunication industry may fill a gap in the literature. The findings from this study support the conclusions by other scholars on the importance and benefits of leadership strategies for improving supervisors' performance.

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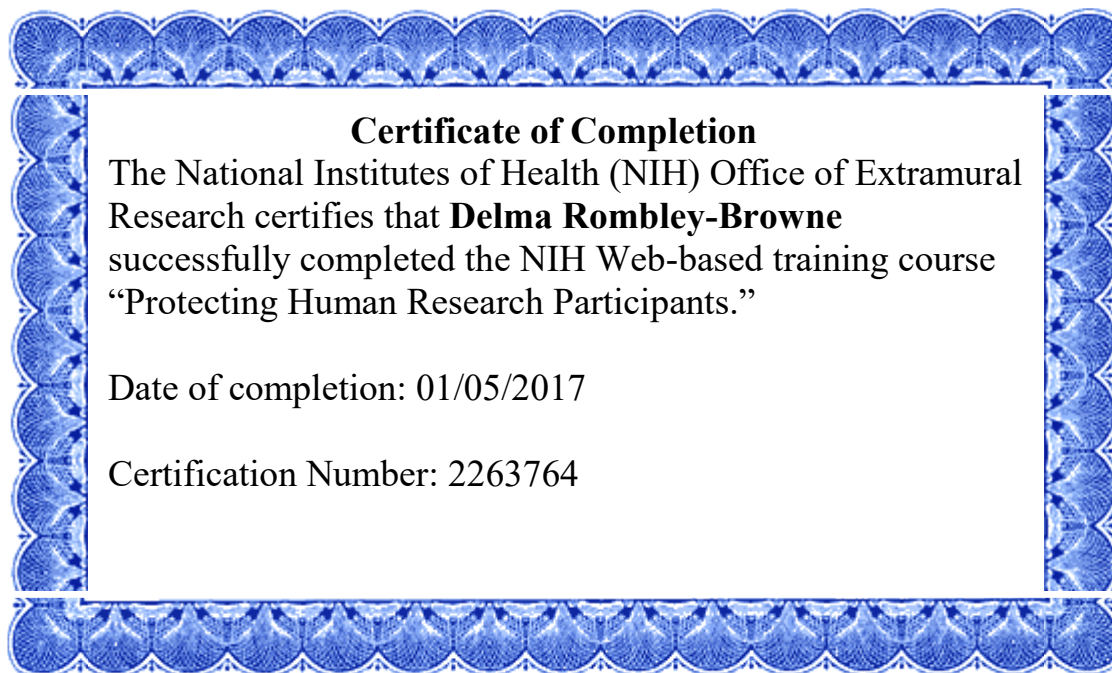
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Appendix A: The National Institutes of Health Certificate



Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I used the following interview protocol:

1. Upon obtaining the name and contact information of an authorized representative from the telecommunication company, I requested to have an email sent to all department executives inviting them to participate in the study. If interested the telecommunications executive contacted me directly. I emailed requesting permission to conduct the research. I emailed a request for participation. The email request follows:

Dear Executives:

My name is Delma Rombley- Browne and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am working on completing my Doctor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in international business. I am conducting a dissertation research study on leadership strategies to improve supervisors' performance. I invite all personnel in an executive or managerial position to participate in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, I ask you to allow me to interview you for approximately 45 minutes. To ensure I interpret your data correctly, I will request a follow-up interview. I will also contact you for any follow-up/clarification if needed. Please provide me with your preferred method of communication.

You will receive a copy of your responses and a summary of the results of the strategies to improve supervisors' performance. I will keep any information you share confidential and protected.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me directly or email and I will email you a consent form. The consent form outlines the procedures I will follow for this study as well as the interview questions for your review. Should you choose to participate in this study following the receipt of the emailed consent form, please reply 'I Consent', then I will contact you to arrange a preferred date, time, and phone number to call you.

You are free to contact either my faculty chair or myself by clicking reply all or directly emailing me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Delma Rombley-Browne.

2. Upon receipt of acknowledgement of the volunteers willing to participate, I will ensure that I obtain the signed Informed Consent Form from each participant before the interview. I will store all materials relating to this study in a bank safe and on a password protected file on my computer for a minimum of five years. No one else will have access to the data other than me.

3. I will call each participant at the time/date the participant selected. I will remind each participant that he/she may withdraw from the study prior final write-up and all data will remain confidential. I will thank each participant for volunteering his or her insights. I will remind each participant that the focus of the interview will relate to strategies for improving supervisors' performance. I will ask the following interview:

1. What strategies are you using to ensure improved supervisors' performance?
2. What method do you find work best to improve supervisors' performance?
3. How do supervisors respond to your different leadership strategies?
4. How do you implement the strategies for improving supervisors' performance?
5. How do you reward supervisors for their work, motivation, or knowledge?
6. How do you measure accomplishments of a supervisor?
7. What is the difference between an ordinary and exemplary supervisor?
8. What additional information can you share that is pertinent to your strategies to improve supervisors' performance?

4. Upon the completion of the semistructured interview, I will send the following thank you email to each participant:

Dear <Participant>:

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank you for participating in my research study on leadership strategies for improving supervisors' performance. I recognize you are very busy and truly appreciate your time and effort. I am currently assembling and exploring the data and looking for themes. I will provide you with a summary of the results of my findings upon completion of the research and final approval of the study.

Thank you again for sharing your insights!

Sincerely,

Delma Rombley-Browne
Doctor of Business Administration Candidate-Walden University

Appendix C: Authorizing Agreement

Dear Authorized Agent,

My name is Delma Rombley-Browne and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am working on completing my Doctor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in international business. I am conducting a dissertation research study on leadership strategies for improving supervisors' performance. My research consists of two parts: interviewing executives and reviewing any performance policies that your company has.

I am respectfully requesting permission to utilize your facility as a research site for the sole purpose of conducting semistructured interviews in an open-ended format via telephone with your executives for the purpose of data collection. In addition, I request that you forward the attached invitation letter to all of your executives on my behalf. All personnel will contact me directly to express interest in participation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Delma Rombley-Browne
Walden University DBA Candidate

Appendix D: Letter of Cooperation

Dear Delma Rombley-Browne,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled *Leadership Strategies for Improving Supervisor Performance* within the telecommunications industry. As part of this study, I authorize you to conduct semistructured interviews in an open-ended format via telephone for data collection purposes. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand our organization's responsibilities include emailing invitation to all department executives requesting participation. The email request will include your contact information, so executives will contact you directly, if interested. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study prior to final write-up if our circumstances change.

I authorize approval for you to conduct research and review archived documents. I understand the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

Appendix E: Letter to Executives

Dear Executives:

My name is Delma Rombley Browne and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am working on completing my Doctor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in International Business. I am conducting a dissertation research study on *leadership strategies to improve supervisors' performance*. I invite all personnel in an executive or managerial position to participate in this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, I ask you to allow me to interview you for approximately 45 minutes. To ensure I interpret your data correctly, I will request a follow-up interview. You will receive a copy of your responses and a summary of effective strategies to improve supervisors' performance. I will keep any information you share confidential and protected.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me directly at or email at and I will email you a consent form. The consent form outlines the procedures I will follow for this study as well as the interview questions for your review. Should you choose to participate in this study following the receipt of the emailed consent form, please respond with 'I Consent', then I will contact you to arrange a preferred date, time, and phone number to call you. Please provide me with your preferred method of communication.

You are free to contact either my faculty chair or myself by clicking reply all or directly emailing me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Delma Rombley-Browne.