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Role of Spiritual Intelligence in Leader Influence on Organizational Trust

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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William E. Kerstetter

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Walden University

2018

Abstract

Role of Spiritual Intelligence in Leader Influence on Organizational Trust

by

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MBA, University of Phoenix, 2007

BS, University of Phoenix, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2018

Abstract

Corporate scandals have disrupted the trust and confidence in leaders over the last two decades. Researchers have not addressed the spiritual intelligence of leaders and the role it might play in influencing organizational trust. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust. The research question addressed the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company. The conceptual framework was based on intelligence theory, leadership theory, spiritual intelligence theory, trust theory, and servant leadership philosophy. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with a purposive sample of 16 employees from a global insurance company. Participant selection included senior leaders in the organization or employees who reported to one of those senior leaders. Data were coded, analyzed, and interpreted manually to identify 5 themes using the methodological framework of reflective lifeworld research: emotional intelligence, servant leadership, integrity, trustworthiness, and moral compass. Findings showed that spiritual intelligence plays a critical role in leaders' capacity to make good decisions, build relationships, and provide a sense of empowerment. Senior leaders who leverage their spiritual intelligence may create an organizational culture of trust and empowerment, and may become role models for others to follow.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral dissertation to the loving memory of my sister, Katherine Kerstetter. Her dedication to learning and pursuit of continuing education inspired me to follow in her shadow. Katherine was always the smart one, striving for perfection in all her goals. She may have been my younger sister, but in many ways, I looked up to her. She never had the opportunity to complete her doctoral dissertation, so this one is for you Kat. I love you and miss you greatly.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Corporate scandals have disrupted the trust and confidence in leaders over the last two decades (Zimmer, 2013). The lack of organizational trust can negatively impact organizational effectiveness, degenerate moral and ethical behavior, and deteriorate the integrity of the organization (Bansal, 2016; Jason, 2014; Zuppa, Olbina, & Issa, 2016). Distrust and suspicion are growing, and confidence in many institutions is lacking (Carucci & Hansen, 2015). Du Plessis, Wakelin, and Nel (2015) argued that new areas of developing trust are being explored. Fry (2003) conducted a study on spiritual intelligence and suggested that a relationship exists between spirituality, spiritual intelligence, and leadership practices.

Much of the research on spiritual intelligence has focused on defining the phenomenon and describing how to tap into spiritual intelligence, rather than on demonstrating practical business applications in leadership development (Fry, 2013). Exploring the role of a leader's spiritual intelligence in the development of organizational trust may help organizations identify the moral and ethical leaders necessary to align the needs of the people with the needs of the company. A lack of empirical evidence exists regarding the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's ability to promote trust within an organization.

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust. In this phenomenological study, I investigated the lived experiences of senior leaders regarding spiritual intelligence and trust. Findings created a deeper understanding of a leader's spiritual intelligence, including the role spiritual intelligence plays in a leader's influence on trust within an organization and the potential business application for leadership development.

Background of the Study

Gardner developed a theory of multiple intelligences in 1983. Initially, Gardner (1983) suggested seven intelligences: spatial, linguistic, logical, kinesthetic, musical, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. In 1999, Gardner added naturalist as the eighth intelligence and contended that spiritual intelligence did not meet his criteria for intelligence. Gardner (1999) suggested that existential intelligence more closely aligned with this criterion.

Intelligence, as defined by Gardner (1983), “is the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural settings” (p. ii). This definition excludes any single property of the mind currently measured by an instrument called the intelligence test. Gardner (1983) introduced eight criteria for intelligence. He proposed that people are born into cultures that have multiple disciplines or talents that are adopted and developed over time; people then get assessed on the level of competence they have attained in these disciplines (Gardner, 1983). Years later, Gardner (1999) refined his definition of intelligence: “a biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture” (p. 33). Spiritual intelligence is grounded in a cursory review of intelligence theorists who have continued to legitimize spiritual intelligence (Vaughan, 2002; Wigglesworth, 2012; Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

Spirituality has no class system or doctrine whereas religion is characterized by a class system and follows a doctrine (Hildebrant, 2011). Hildebrant (2011) differentiated spirituality from religion by highlighting an individual’s personal experience with a connection to a divine source. Spiritual intelligence is different from both spirituality and religion. Spirituality is defined as the innate human need to be connected to something

larger than the self. Religion is a set of beliefs and practices based on doctrine (Hildebrant, 2011). According to Wigglesworth (2012), spiritual intelligence is “the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace regardless of the circumstances” (p. 8). This definition was used as the foundation for the conceptual framework of this study.

This study may provide a deeper understanding of the application of spiritual intelligence and the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader’s influence on organizational trust. Researchers who studied spiritual leadership suggested that spiritual intelligence along with leadership styles and intelligence (e.g., emotional intelligence, servant leadership) may form a new style of leadership conducive to building a culture of trust within an organization (Afsar, Badir, & Kiani, 2016; Esfahani & Sedaghat, 2015; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016). Investigating the role of spiritual intelligence and its potential application in leadership development may increase scholarly knowledge in this area and may shift organizational paradigms on the topic.

Chan and Mak (2014) found servant leadership to be in line with the view that service to others results in a positive subordinate attitude and trust in the leader. Chan and Mak emphasized that a high-quality relationship with subordinates will result in satisfying their needs and fostering their trust. Encouragement from leadership leads to job satisfaction (Chan & Mak, 2014). Relationship building and encouragement are characteristics of the servant leader who builds trust with subordinates (Chan & Mak, 2014).

Greenleaf (1970) used social exchange theory to express how servant leadership influences subordinate relationships to build leader trust. Chan and Mak (2014) suggested that servant leadership is focused on self-interest for the betterment of subordinates.

Subordinates reciprocate by trusting their leaders (Chan & Mak, 2014). Miao, Newman, Schwarz, and Xu (2014), found that perceptions of servant leadership were related to commitment and trust. Z. Chen, Zhu, and Zhou (2015) built on social identity theory by showing that servant leadership extends beyond the effects of transformational leadership through its influence on self-efficacy and group identification.

Since Greenleaf's vision of a service-oriented philosophy, other theorists have developed multiple servant leadership models (Z. Chen et al., 2015; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). From these models, multiple leadership elements have emerged that are essential to the characteristics of a servant leader, including humility, emotional healing, wisdom, altruism, vision, and trust (Winston & Fields, 2015). Value-based, spirit-centered leadership models have recently attracted the attention of leadership scholars, including the servant leadership model (C. Chen, Chen, & Li, 2013).

C. Chen et al. (2013) and Lynch and Friedman (2013) confirmed that the concepts of spiritual leadership and servant leadership are related. Lynch and Friedman posited that spiritual individuals are more likely to become servant leaders. The literature indicated that servant leadership is the only leadership paradigm with an expressly spiritual tone (C. Chen et al, 2013; Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Lynch and Friedman noted that a spiritual servant leader understands that ethical values come first. The addition of a spiritual component to servant leadership completed the leadership paradigm and added value to leadership theory (Lynch & Friedman, 2013).

Without empirical data addressing the influence of spiritual intelligence on organizational culture, trust, and performance, spiritual intelligence may not gain acceptance in academic or scientific communities. Researchers have suggested a relationship between trust and other leadership factors such as emotional intelligence and

servant leadership (du Plessis et al., 2015). However, I did not find empirical data addressing the influence of spiritual intelligence on the development of organizational trust in the literature at the time of the current study. This study was intended to fill the gap in knowledge regarding how spiritual intelligence may be used in leadership development to create a culture of trust within an organization and to improve organizational performance.

The concept of spiritual intelligence (SQ) is new. The intent of this study was to increase the level of knowledge about spiritual intelligence, demonstrate the potential influence spiritual intelligence has on organizational trust, and add to the literature on the potential relationship between spiritual intelligence and the development of organizational trust. Because spiritual intelligence brings up the notion of spirituality and religion, controls must be put in place to manage individual and personal bias. The key was to remove religious traditions out of the definition of spiritual intelligence in this study. Additional concepts of emotional intelligence, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and spiritual leadership were also needed to build on the understanding of SQ.

Problem Statement

The deficit in organizational trust has built up over the last two decades because of prominent organizational failures like Enron, Worldcom, AIG, and General Motors (Bachmann, Gillespie, & Priem, 2015). The lack of organizational trust has negatively impacted ethical behavior and organizational effectiveness (Bansal, 2016; Zuppa et al., 2016). According to Esfahani and Sedaghat (2015), the general problem with organizations is the declining trust between staff and managers. The specific problem addressed in the study was what might lead to improved trust in leaders. Ajike (2016) identified spiritual intelligence and trust as effective factors in enhancing organizational performance. Wang

and Hsieh (2013) found that creating a culture of trust can improve organizational performance and reinforce positive ethical behaviors.

Over the last 15 years, researchers have examined how transformational, servant, and spiritual leadership styles have influenced organizational effectiveness, ethical behaviors, and organizational commitment (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Gilbert, Horsman, & Kelloway, 2016). The lack of research on what might lead to low trust in leaders indicated a gap related to the understanding of working relationships in business environments (Korsgaard, Brower, & Lester, 2015). At the time of the study, limited research existed on how spiritual intelligence in leaders might influence organizational trust.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust. This was accomplished by investigating the lived experiences of senior leaders regarding their spiritual intelligence and trust. I sought to identify the assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions of leaders' awareness and experience of spiritual intelligence and trust to provide a textural description of the meaning and essence of both phenomena (see Moustakas, 1994; Vagle, 2014). Purposive sampling was used to recruit 16 participants in a global insurance company (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Participants included senior leaders and employees who reported to those leaders. Data collection involved semistructured interviews with the 16 employees using open-ended questions, which resulted in data saturation (see Saunders et al., 2017).

Senior leaders are exposed to a variety of leadership styles as they advance through their careers. This exposure is likely to influence their leadership style (Echevarria, 2015; Walker, 2015). Leaders are considered to have the power to influence an organizational

culture, making them the best choice as the primary population for this study. A small sample of general employees were also interviewed to account for possible bias in leaders' perception of trust in the organization.

Research Question

The nature of the research question determined the methodology. A phenomenological study will have a strong central phenomenological question that will address the lived and experiences of the participants studied (Koopman, 2015). The central research question used to guide this phenomenological study was as follows: What is the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that supported this study emerged from a combination of intelligence, leadership, and trust theories. The framework was informed by the intelligence theory of Gardner (1983), the leadership theory of Bass (1985), the spiritual intelligence theory of Wigglesworth (2012), the trust theory of Deutsch (1958), and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership philosophy. These theories collectively formed a conceptual framework to conduct an analysis of a leader's spiritual intelligence and identify the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's influence on organizational trust. These theories with their theoretical underpinnings are examined in detail in Chapter 2.

The field of intelligence has been studied and evaluated since the early 1900s when the first intelligence test was created by Binet and Simon, known as the Intelligence Quotient or IQ (Gardner, 1999). This test is used to measure analytical and linguistic skills and sort people by number to determine their degree of intelligence. In 1983, Gardner

introduced the theory of multiple intelligences and listed seven types of intelligences that included interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

Goldman (as cited by Li, Gupta, Loon, & Casimir, 2016) noted the importance of leaders' emotional intelligence in the workplace. The emotionally intelligent leader can sense, understand, and apply the power of emotion as a source of energy, information, knowledge, connection, and influence (Popoola, 2015). Emotional intelligence (EQ) is defined as the ability to monitor the feelings and emotions of others and self and use this information as a guide to thoughts and actions (Koohbanani, Dastjerbi, Vahidi, & Ghani Far, 2013).

In 2001, Zohar and Marshall introduced the concept of spiritual intelligence. SQ is said to be the foundation for both IQ and EQ to function effectively (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Spirituality gives a new perspective on any situation by putting people in touch with something larger, deeper and richer than themselves (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Spiritual intelligence was defined as "the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value [to] place our actions and our lives in a wider, richer, meaning-giving context" (Zohar & Marshall 2001, pp. 3-4). In 2012, Wigglesworth defined spiritual intelligence as "the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace regardless of the circumstances" (p. 8). Developing and using IQ, EQ, and SQ may enable individuals to deal with everyday situations (Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

Fry (2003) introduced the theory of spiritual leadership to the body of literature on value-based/spiritual leadership models. Like transformational leadership, the spiritual leadership model incorporates vision, hope, faith, altruistic love, workplace spirituality, and spiritual survival (Afsar et al., 2016). A uniting theme that has emerged from workplace spirituality research is the transcendent experience of work as providing people with

meaning (Milliman, Gatling, & Bradley-Geist, 2016). Leadership is defined as collaborative meaning making in practice (Raelin, 2014). Ego-transcendence is defined as working toward a higher purpose (Klaus & Fernando, 2016). A leader with a higher purpose is not necessarily religious; rather he or she makes decisions based on his or her belief of what is right.

A new genre of leadership theories has dominated the study of leadership (e.g., transformational, ethical, and authentic leadership). These theories refer to leadership styles in which leaders create positive change by influencing the beliefs and behaviors in themselves and others (Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2016). Transformational leadership occurs when leaders focus on the interest of their employees, promote employee acceptance of the group's mission, and inspire employees to look beyond themselves and work toward a common goal (Bass, 1985). Schaubroeck et al. (2016) posited that transformational leadership and ethical leadership promote behavior change in followers. LaPuma (2015) concluded that authentic leadership also focuses on the self-awareness of followers and the development of leader-follower relationships.

Servant leadership, a model developed by Greenleaf in 1970, focuses on being a servant first. Servant leadership is initiated by the behaviors of a leader (Winston & Fields, 2015). Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015) posited that servant leadership helps create an ethical work climate. Chan and Mak (2014) found that servant leadership behavior enhances subordinate trust in the leader. Miao et al. (2014) confirmed that servant leadership enhances organizational commitment through the development of affective trust. Servant leadership has also been linked to positive performance, increased productivity, and changes in behavioral outcomes (Miao et al., 2014; Winston & Fields, 2015).

Leadership and trust can significantly contribute to the success or failure of an organization (Zuppa et al., 2016). Creating trust relationships is critical in building collaborative teams (Zuppa et al., 2016). Trust is a dynamic factor, increasing or decreasing over time (Pishdad-Bozorgi & Beliveau, 2016). There are different types of trust, including personal, organizational, or institutional (Vanhala & Ritala, 2016). Organizational trust is an impersonal phenomenon defined by Vanhala and Ritala (2016) as an employee's expectation regarding the capability and fairness of the organization. Impersonal trust has been studied very little (Vanhala & Ritala, 2016).

Several theorists and researchers over the last decade have identified specific characteristics and behaviors related to spirituality. Hildebrant (2011) found that leaders with high spiritual intelligence tend to create a positive organizational culture, increase employee commitment and productivity, and create higher ethical standards within the organization. As the interest in spirituality in the workplace has grown and leaders have gained interest in workplace spirituality, it has become necessary to develop a better understanding of spiritual leader development.

This study addressed how leaders' spiritual intelligence may align with the needs of the employees and the organization. Exploring the role of spiritual intelligence in the development of organizational trust may help organizations identify moral and ethical leaders who can make better decisions and solve problems more holistically and effectively. Zohar and Marshall (2001), Vaughan (2002), Emmons (2000), Amram (2007), Hildebrant (2011), Hyson (2013), and Wigglesworth (2012) were the primary theorists of spiritual intelligence cited in this study.

Nature of the Study

The research method chosen for this study was qualitative. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and describe the lived experiences of leaders and employees who report to them regarding their spiritual intelligence and trust. The intent of using qualitative methodology is to understand participants' perception and perspective on an event or circumstance (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Qualitative interviews can elicit thoughts, feelings, and memories that the interviewee was not aware of before the interview (Patton, 2014). Because the phenomenon of leaders' use of spiritual intelligence to promote organizational trust was not well understood, using a qualitative method to identify the perceptions of study participants was appropriate.

Quantitative methods focus on the relationship between variables. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) stated that quantitative research is used to test existing theories through surveys and experiments. Quantitative designs are focused on testing hypotheses through analysis of numerical data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Quantitative research is appropriate for correlational studies, but not for exploring participants' lived experience of a phenomenon, which was my intent in this study.

The research design chosen for this study was phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) noted that phenomenology is rooted in questions, giving a direction and focus to meaning. When studying a phenomenon, researchers examine participants' lived experiences in their own words (Vagle, 2014). After an extensive review of the literature, phenomenology appeared to be the best approach to answer the research question.

Patton (2014) proposed multiple designs that can inform qualitative inquiries. A few of these designs include narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and

heuristic inquiry. I reviewed case study, hermeneutics, and grounded theory to determine if these designs would provide a better approach to exploring the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence. In a case study, I would look at the behavior of a group over time, not the behavior of an individual in the group (Patton, 2014). Hermeneutics is interpretive rather than descriptive (Patton, 2014). Grounded theory is the process of discovering a theory from extensive data collection and analysis (Patton, 2014). Phenomenology was the only design appropriate for scholarly analysis of the lived experiences of spiritual intelligence in leaders and how that might influence trust (Moustakas, 1994).

Definitions

Emotional intelligence: "The ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and actions" (Koohbanani et al., 2013, p. 315); the ability to understand, perceive, and use emotions to enhance thought and relationships (Knight et al., 2015).

Executive leaders: C-level employees as defined by the organization's hierarchy. Examples include CEO, CFO, CIO, and Chief Technology Officer (CTO).

General employee: Employees holding a title of vice president or below as defined by the organization's hierarchy. These employees could hold a managerial position or no leadership role.

Interpersonal intelligence: Understanding how to communicate with and understand other people and how to work collaboratively (Gardner, 1983).

Intrapersonal intelligence: Understanding the inner world of emotions and thoughts and the ability to control them and work with them consciously (Gardner, 1983).

Organizational trust: An employee's belief that the organization will act as he or she has anticipated (Liu & Wang, 2013).

Senior leaders: Employees holding a title of senior vice president or above as defined by the organization's hierarchy. These leaders also hold a title of executive vice president, president, CEO, CIO, or CFO.

Spiritual intelligence: "The ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace regardless of the circumstances" (Wigglesworth, 2012, p. 8).

Spiritual leadership: "The values, attitudes, and behaviors . . . necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others . . . through calling and membership and encompasses qualities of faith, love, vision, inspiration, service, and discipleship" (Fry, 2003, p. 695).

Assumptions

There were three assumptions in this study. First, I assumed that the difference between spirituality and religion was clearly communicated and understood. Second, I assumed that participants would answer interview questions candidly and honestly. Maintaining confidentiality of the participants was intended to promote honest responses. Third, I assumed that the participants had experienced the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence. The inclusion criteria called for executive or senior leaders, and employees who reported to them but did not require leaders to have self-proclaimed experience with spiritual intelligence.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study included both executive or senior leaders, and employees who reported to them in a large global financial organization. I intended to include at least 20 participants, and data saturation was achieved after 16 interviews (see Saunders et al.,

2017). The participants included senior leaders with a title of senior vice president or above and employees who reported to them with a title of vice president or below.

The ratio of participants was half leaders and half employees. The reasoning behind this ratio was to account for potential leader bias regarding the perception of trust in the organization. An equivalent sample of employees enhanced credibility of the study. I conducted 1-hour semistructured interviews using an interview script with a list of open-ended questions.

The selection criteria for this population were based on the participant's position in the organization. Senior leaders were defined as holding a job title of senior vice president or higher. General employees were defined as holding a job title of vice president or lower. The inclusion criteria called for senior leaders because they were perceived as having the power to influence organizational trust. An equivalent sample of general employees was included to account for the possibility of bias in leaders' perception of trust in the organization. The study addressed the role of spiritual intelligence in senior leaders and their influence on trust. The perspectives of senior leaders, based on their lived experiences with spiritual intelligence, provided insight regarding the role of spiritual intelligence in influencing trust within the organization.

In this study, I used a sample of executive and senior level corporate leaders as well as general employees. My initial design called for executive level leaders only, but there were fewer than 10 executives to choose from, which did not meet Walden University's recommended requirement for a phenomenological study. I expanded the sample to include senior level leaders to ensure data saturation. I recruited participants from one large global company in one specific industry. This company has three major organizational structures

with multiple lines of business with different geographical U.S. locations to allow for a diverse population.

Limitations

This study may have been limited by the participants' understanding of the difference between spirituality and religion. Understanding the distinction was critical for data collection. My lack of control over participants' honesty in answering questions was another limitation. The study may also have been limited by participants not having experience with the phenomenon.

In addition, participant selection bias could have influenced the outcomes of this study. Limiting the sample to executive and senior leaders in the organization may have resulted in a biased viewpoint. This was taken into consideration when I designed the study to include the experiences of senior leadership and employees. Adding general employees' perception of trust in the organization helped account for the possibility of bias in the leaders' perception of trust in the organization. Researcher bias was also a concern in this qualitative study. I limited the risk of personal bias by transcribing interviews exactly and using the participants' words to obtain the results, not my interpretations.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study added to the body of knowledge on spiritual intelligence. While scholars debate the operational definition for spirituality and spiritual intelligence, this study may further the understanding of the influence of a leader's spiritual intelligence on the development of organizational trust. Studies on spiritual leadership indicated that spiritual intelligence and a combination of other leadership factors (e.g., emotional intelligence, servant leadership) work together to form a transformational leadership style

conducive to building a culture of trust within an organization (Bligh, 2017; Gieseke, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2016).

Significance to Practice

The potential contribution of this study was that it might not only bring new insight to the study of spiritual intelligence, but it may influence leadership development. Organizations that experience low trust levels might consider spiritual intelligence development programs to change their corporate culture. The results of this study may be the catalyst to inspire leaders to take a new approach toward developing their leadership skills.

Significance to Theory

For scholars, the results of this study may inspire future research into spiritual intelligence. Research on the factors that create and maintain trust in organizations, servant leadership, and the elements that form a spiritual leader are all positive social change initiatives. The results of this study may also add to the scholarly knowledge of organizational trust.

This study filled the gap in the literature on how the spiritual intelligence of leaders influences trust in their organizations. A significant relationship exists between spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership (Gieseke, 2014). This study might provide insight into future research on spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership.

Significance to Social Change

Research into the spiritual intelligence of leaders may result in findings that could produce bolder, wiser, more self-aware and compassionate leaders. Insights from this study may improve the quality of organizational leaders and may also lead to positive social on a

broader scale by bringing these qualities home to families and communities. The results of this study might be the catalyst for organizational leaders to learn how to behave with greater wisdom and compassion.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1, I introduced the need to research spiritual intelligence from the perspective of leaders' lived experience of the phenomenon. The lack of trust between leaders and employees was the research problem addressed in the study. I hoped to gain a better understanding of the influence of leaders' spiritual intelligence on organizational trust.

The conceptual framework for this study was based on various intelligence theories. Because the interest in spirituality in the workplace has grown and leaders have gained interest in workplace spirituality, it became necessary to develop a better understanding for spiritual leadership development. The purpose of this study was to identify the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and report the lived experiences of senior leaders of a global insurance company regarding their spiritual intelligence and trust. Data collection was accomplished through semistructured interviews using open-ended questions with a population of 16 employees in a global insurance organization, which resulted in data saturation (see Saunders et al., 2017). Research on the factors that create and maintain trust in organizations, servant leadership, and the elements that form a spiritual leader are all positive social change initiatives.

In Chapter 2, I present a review of the literature that addressed leadership theories and spiritual intelligence. The literature review provides background on spirituality, servant leadership, transformational leadership, emotional and spiritual intelligence, and

organizational trust. These theories formed a sound conceptual framework to conduct an analysis of the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's influence on organizational trust.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and report the lived experiences of senior leaders who are employed in a global insurance company. Distrust and suspicion are growing, and confidence in many institutions is lacking (Carucci & Hansen, 2015). The problem appears to be a lack of spiritual intelligence to create an environment that promotes ethical behavior and organizational effectiveness (Ajike, 2016)

A lack of organizational trust can negatively impact organizational effectiveness, degenerate moral and ethical behavior, and deteriorate the integrity of an organization (Bansal, 2016; Jason, 2014; Zuppa et al., 2016). One of the outcomes of this study was to provide a deeper understanding of a leader's spiritual intelligence and the potential application in leadership development. Much of the research on spiritual intelligence has been focused on defining the phenomenon and explaining how to tap into spiritual intelligence, rather than demonstrating practical business applications to leadership development.

My professional experience spans more than 30 years in military and civilian leadership roles. Throughout this time, I personally experienced the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence and observed it in other leaders. I also experienced work environments that had high levels of organizational trust and others that had low levels of organizational trust. I noticed the organizations with high levels of trust also had leaders with a perceived high level of spiritual intelligence. Conversely, organizations with low trust had leaders with low or no sign of spiritual intelligence.

Researchers have studied different aspects of leadership theories, styles, and behaviors such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and emotional

intelligence (Amram, 2007; Greenleaf, 1970; Hildebrant, 2011). In this literature review, I examine leadership theories, styles, and behaviors and expand on the theory of spiritual intelligence as an important aspect of leadership development. For this study, spiritual intelligence was defined as a leader's ability to think, judge, and react to each situation with prophetic inspiration. The term prophetic was used because it had no reference to a specific religion, but referred rather to a fundamental belief in some power greater than humans.

This literature review was structured to provide breadth and depth to the study of spiritual intelligence including different leadership theories and styles. The review includes the literature search strategy and the conceptual framework used to support the study. The body of this review includes the concepts of effective leadership, leadership theories, and organizational trust. The review concludes with a summary of the findings.

Literature Search Strategy

Research for this study was conducted through Walden University's online library and the Google Scholar online search engine. The following databases were used to search the literature: ABI/INFORM Complete, Academic Search Complete, Dissertations & Theses at Walden University, EBSCO eBooks, Emerald Insight, ProQuest Central, SAGE Premier, and Thoreau.

The key search terms used in this research included *spiritual intelligence*, *spirituality*, *spiritual leadership*, *servant leadership*, *transformational leadership*, *organizational trust*, *spiritual leadership and trust*, *spiritual intelligence and trust*, *spirituality and trust*, *servant leadership and trust*, *spiritual leadership and transformational leadership*, *spiritual intelligence and transformational leadership*, *spirituality and servant leadership*, *spiritual intelligence and servant leadership*, *spiritual leadership and servant leadership*, *emotional intelligence*, *emotional intelligence and trust*, *emotional intelligence and spiritual*

intelligence, emotional intelligence and spirituality, emotional intelligence and spiritual leadership, emotional intelligence and transformational leadership, multiple intelligence and trust, multiple intelligence, effective leadership, leadership theories, leadership trust, leadership integrity, leadership ethics, and moral leadership. Additionally, I searched for authors of important articles to find related articles by the same authors. Lastly, I reviewed the reference pages of articles and dissertations to find related sources. The search resulted in over 300 articles, dissertations, and books from as recent as the current year and going back to over 30 years ago, all relevant to this study. In this study, I referenced 157 sources, and 87% were published within the last 5 years.

Conceptual Framework

Many psychologists and scholars have explored the phenomenon of spirituality. Over the last two decades, researchers have examined spirituality as a form of intelligence. Spiritual intelligence (SQ) has been defined many ways and continues to be debated as a legitimate form of intelligence. In this study, I defined SQ as the ability to think, judge, and react to each situation with prophetic inspiration. I used the term prophetic because it had no reference to a specific religion, but referred rather to a fundamental belief that there is some power greater than humans.

Intelligence is a complex concept and has been the focus of research for many years. Studying intelligence, sharing the meaning of intelligence, and applying this knowledge to the field of education is attributed to the works of Gardner (1983, 1999), Sternberg (1988, 1997), and Perkins (1995). Gardner (1983) proposed a theory of multiple intelligences. Originally, Gardner (1983) identified seven types of intelligence (kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, linguistic, mathematical, musical, and spatial). Gardner never legitimized spiritual intelligence but considered adding existential intelligence to the list. In 1999,

Gardner added the eighth intelligence, naturalistic, while also suggesting a philosophical intelligence that would incorporate the spiritual, moral, transcendental, and religious intelligences.

To examine the complexity of human intelligence and imagination, researchers should consider more than IQ and EQ (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). The ability for human beings to be creative, insightful, and discerning takes spiritual intelligence (Radhika, 2014). Gardner (1999) viewed spirituality as a religious, theological, mystical, and transcendent phenomenon. Conversely, he viewed existentialism as an understanding of self in relation to the cosmos, including the significance of life and the meaning of death. Gardner decided not to include spiritual intelligence in the list of intelligences. Gardner argued that cognitive-based conversations of spirituality were problematic because the essence of spirit was primarily seen as phenomenological.

Zohar and Marshall (2001) defined SQ as “the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value” (p. 3). In the simplest terms, SQ provides direction and the ability to choose right from wrong. SQ allows people to voice, defend, and apply their personal moral standards. People use SQ to expand their capacity to make greater contributions to the service of others (Radhika, 2014). Zohar defined 12 principles of spiritual intelligence, and five are frequently addressed in the literature: self-awareness, compassion, humility, asking why, and being value led. Emmons (2000) defined SQ using five core abilities:

the capacity for transcendence; the ability to enter into heightened spiritual states of consciousness; the ability to invest everyday activities, events, and relationships with a sense of the sacred; the ability to utilize spiritual resources to solve problems

in living; and the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior or to be virtuous (to show forgiveness, to express gratitude, to be humble, to display compassion). (p. 10)

SQ includes deep inner resources to give people the capacity to care and the power to tolerate and adapt (Radhika, 2014). SQ aligns personal values with a clear sense of purpose (Radhika, 2014).

Wigglesworth (2012) defined SQ as “the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation” (p. 9). SQ is separate from spirituality and religion. SQ is viewed as skills developed over time. Wigglesworth broke down SQ into 21 skills arranged into four quadrants: ego self-awareness, universal awareness, ego self-mastery, and spiritual presence/social mastery. SQ allows people to stay calm and focused in the face of crisis and chaos, to maintain a selfless and altruistic attitude toward others, and to have a relaxed perspective on life (Radhika, 2014).

A servant leader seeks to fill the needs of followers by providing them with the tools and support necessary to accomplish their goals (Zimmerer, 2013). Servant leaders influence organizational culture through example and by creating a culture of trust. One of the factors in creating a trust culture is the ability to generate quality interpersonal relationships (Korsgaard et al., 2015). A lack of organizational trust could be addressed through the development of servant leadership patterns within the organization. Low-trust organizations result in decreased job fulfillment, poor work quality, low motivation, and high employee turnover (Sinclair, 2013).

The phenomenon of trust has been explored by social science researchers including Fukuyama, Deutsch, and Barber (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013). Deutsch (1958) provided one of the earliest observations of trust in social situations in which one person’s loss or gain is

dependent on another person's behavior. Trust is a dynamic, interpersonal connection between an employee and a leader (Le & Lei, 2018). Balliet and Van Lange (2013) argued that trust is essential to initiate, establish, and maintain social relationships.

Effective Leadership

A framework that integrates transformational, servant, and spiritual leadership theories is needed to create a future for cogent leadership theories. Latham (2014) proposed a roadmap for future leadership theory research to address an inadequate definition of effective leadership. Latham argued that effective leadership must operate free of context, include measurable variables, and present predictable relationships. Latham pointed out that human beings are not predictable and do not always obey the immutable natural laws of science. Spirituality could be a competitive advantage when it comes to organizational effectiveness and performance (Latham, 2014).

Effective leadership was defined as achieving high quantity and quality standards of job performance through people (Popoola & Zaid, 2015). Researchers have found a relationship between spiritual values, spiritual practices, and effective leadership (Rahal & Rimsr, 2016). Popoola and Zaid posited that additional competencies of effective leadership include: integrity, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence. Effective leadership is the key to organizational success, and identifying the appropriate leadership model is also essential to organizational success (Raddanipour & Siadat, 2013).

A comprehensive definition of success is necessary to assess effective leadership. Researchers have examined how to leverage leadership theories and styles to create an environment beneficial to all stakeholders (Latham, 2014). Latham (2014) argued that the increase in workforce diversity in a global environment complicates the leadership role. Success is often measured financially and often at the cost of other stakeholders, society, or

the environment (Latham, 2014). The most effective leaders combine different styles of leadership depending on the situation, allowing them to act quickly in emergency situations and include the whole team in the process (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2014).

Leader success is measured by subordinate loyalty, organizational effectiveness, and the ability to build psychological capital and well-being with employees (C. Chen et al., 2013). C. Chen et al. (2013) confirmed that servant leadership influences a subordinate's eudemonic well-being. C. Chen et al. specified that through the creation of a positive work environment, servant leaders enable employees to develop higher professional goals. The result is increased motivation and greater productivity (C. Chen et al., 2013).

Virtue-based leadership principles are a useful approach for leaders (Caldwell, 2017). Ethical leadership involves the advancement of moral conduct while developing follower commitment (Skubinn & Herzoz, 2016). Transformative leadership is a model that enables leaders to demonstrate their ethical commitment to employees and integrate the ethical elements of other leadership perspectives such as transformational and servant leadership (Caldwell, 2017).

Researchers have examined how the spiritually intelligent leader improves leadership effectiveness. Hyson (2013) looked at how leaders use their spiritual intelligent skill set to stay focused, motivate others, and produce more effective results. Borrowing from Wigglesworth's (2012) research on the 21 skills associated with spiritual intelligence, Hyson composed the four cornerstones of spiritually intelligent leaders (SQLs). The first attribute is the awareness of time and space. SQLs know how to take time out, refresh, and return refocused on the situation at hand. The second attribute is a tolerance for imperfection. The SQL knows that no one is perfect, and mistakes sometimes happen.

Fostering an atmosphere of learning helps others feel more comfortable to take risks and be vulnerable. The third attribute is servant leadership. SQLs make a special effort to help others. The fourth attribute is radiating peace. The SQL has inner peace and can maintain it under pressure (Hyson, 2013). What makes SQLs special is they live these attributes every day (Hyson, 2013).

To address the leadership challenges of the 21st century, a convergence of leadership theories is necessary. Bass (1985) posited that transformational leadership occurs when leaders focus on the interest of employees, gain their acceptance, and inspire them to look beyond themselves and work toward a common goal. Transformational leadership, although successful, does not prevent abuse of power (Bass, 1985). Servant and spiritual leadership are emerging alternatives with quite a bit of overlap; however, research is still being done to validate these theories (Latham, 2014). Latham (2014) argued for theories that address how leaders can create value for multiple stakeholders. Latham also challenged researchers to have the courage to throw out the theories that do not address value creation.

Leadership Theories

Leadership theories include the emotional and moral aspects of leadership behaviors (Pawar, 2014; Spector, 2014). Bass (1985) introduced transformational leadership theory, focused on leadership behaviors like influence and motivation. Fry (2003) introduced spiritual leadership theory, focused on leadership behaviors like values and attitudes. Servant leadership is a philosophy, introduced by Greenleaf (1970), that focused on serving followers' needs. Researchers consider servant leadership a theory that shows concern towards followers and helps them develop and grow (Kashyap, 2016).

Transformational leadership is an effective leadership style because it has significant effects on follower performance (Le & Lei, 2018). Bass (1985) argued that transformational leaders motivate followers by emphasizing the value of goals and working with the organization toward a common goal and perform beyond expectations. Leadership behavior has a direct influence on follower outcomes (Breevaart et al., 2014) and goal achievement can be predicted by leadership style (Hamstra et al., 2014). The development of spiritual leadership is positioned in the middle of other value-based leadership theories like transformational leadership and servant leadership (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017).

There is growing interest in studies on the link between spirituality and organizational leadership (Geh, 2014; Mohla & Aggarwal, 2014; Yusof & Mohamad, 2014). Studies over the past 10 years have shown that the effectiveness of leaders is associated with their spirituality (Yusof & Mohamad, 2014). When highlighting the importance of spirituality in the workplace, how spirituality impacts employees and the organization are the main areas of empirical research (Yusof & Mohamad, 2014). The emphasis of spirituality in leadership is important to future leaders because it provides new knowledge and skill as well as develops a higher level of emotional and spiritual maturity. A heightened interest in spirituality also opens us up to a greater understanding of the meaning of our own lives (Geh, 2014).

Leadership style affects the eudemonic well-being of subordinates (C. Chen et al. 2013). Leadership style also illustrates how an individual chooses to manage any given situation to drive employee motivation and satisfaction (Walker, 2015). Leaders should become more aware of their own style and make the necessary adjustments to create a more positive work environment. Additionally, leaders who create an environment of

autonomy will encourage employees to internalize their motivation to produce eudemonic well-being (C. Chen et al. 2013).

Servant leadership refers to a behavior that demonstrates leaders' desire to serve first (Chan & Mak, 2014). When servant leadership was first introduced it brought a moral dimension to the leadership field (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). Servant leaders embody ethical values, inspire trust, offer empathy and emotional support, act as role models, and place the satisfaction of subordinate needs before their own (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Leaders who desire a personal approach to leadership, quality relationships, and open communication seek to cultivate a servant leadership culture (Flynn, Smither, & Walker, 2015).

Transformational Leadership Theory

Bass (1985) defined transformational leadership as leaders who create a culture of helping others and influence others toward organizational goals. Transformational leadership theory also emphasizes how leaders elevate follower perceptions of themselves in ways that enable them to perform and achieve at levels that exceed expectations (Schaubroeck et al., 2016). Transformational leadership theory focuses on the leader's influence on followers by way of intellectual stimulation, inspiration, and individual attention to motivate toward goal achievement. Research findings by Schaubroeck et al. (2016) indicated that transformational and ethical leadership are both influential behaviors, even among leaders with no formal authority.

Pallas (2016) found a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Additionally, Potter, Egbelakin, and Phipps (2018) found a relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. These findings might imply that emotional intelligence is an antecedent to

transformational leadership. Leaders who understand emotions are better suited to develop relationships with followers (Seena, Suresh, & Ravindranadan, 2017). Followers want to know that their leaders care about them.

Ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, and servant leadership can all be classified as transformational (Gieseke, 2014; Gilbert et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2014). Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) referred to transformational and servant leadership as examples of value-based theories of leadership. These value-based leadership models can be considered transformational because of their focus on leader behavior, emotions, and moral values; unlike the traditional leadership models that are based strictly on cost-benefit and leaders-follower exchange relationships (C. Chen et al., 2013). Spiritual or spirit-centered leadership has been a hot topic in business literature for the last decade (Crossman, 2011; Fry, 2013; Hyson, 2013; & Maharana et al., 2014). Spiritual leadership is characterized by high morals and ethics, making spiritual leaders ideal to influence and motivate employees to go beyond self-interests for the good of others and society (Afsar et al., 2016).

Spiritual Leadership Theory

Spiritual leadership theory is associated with forming a learning organization, bringing people together, and creating a sense of calling and membership to the organization. "A spiritual leader is a person who provides spiritual survival of organizational members using values, attitudes, and behaviors that are essential for his/her internal motivation and that of others" (Raddanipour & Siadat, 2013, p. 186). Spiritual leaders have an important role in organizational effectiveness (Zavvareh & Samangoeei, 2013). Followers become more willing to share in the responsibility of harmonizing compassion and wisdom in a more ethical work environment (Zavvareh & Samangoeei,

2013). The expected result is increased motivation, higher performance, and greater organizational commitment (Mohla & Aggarwal, 2014).

A universal definition of spirituality continues to be open for interpretation. Crossman (2011) posited that spirituality can be distinguished from religion in which it is an unsystematic, individually interpreted, private experience whereas religion is a public and institutionalized process based on sacred texts, rituals, and practices. Researchers have examined that spirituality impacts an individual's attitude, behavior, and decision-making process (Kaur, Sambasivan, & Kumar, 2013). Spiritual leadership combines transformational and servant leadership with spiritual, ethical, and value-based leadership models to create a combination of core competencies that develop into a behavior model for the spiritual leader (Hildebrant, 2011).

Crossman (2011) highlighted the relationship between spiritual leadership and other value-based leadership theories like transformational and servant leadership, while contributing to the theoretical understandings necessary to develop spiritual leadership into a workable paradigm. Spiritual leadership is part of the value-based leadership theories that serve as a response to disturbing situations, non-ethical leadership, and abuse in an unhealthy organization (Zavvareh & Samangoeei, 2013). Spiritual leadership builds an environment of respect, ethics, values and integrity. However, it begins with the leader's own ethics and integrity. The benefit spiritual leadership brings to the organization includes increased performance, greater employee job satisfaction, and higher rates of return on investment (Hildebrant, 2011).

Leadership is defined as the decisions and actions of a leader that are intended to influence followers (Longest, 2017). Spiritual leadership takes into consideration the social good with a history of ties to corporate social responsibility. Therefore, spiritual leaders are

motivated more by their contribution to the social good rather than the money they earn (Zavvareh & Samangoei, 2013). The purpose of spiritual leadership is to develop the spiritual well-being of both leaders and followers through making a difference in life and a sense of belonging (Fry, 2003; Mohla & Aggarwal, 2014). This type of leadership brings real meaning and importance to an employee's job (Raddanipour & Siadat, 2013). Spiritual leaders have the capacity to build organizational trust and compassion (Crossman, 2011).

A leader is an influential role model within the organization and instrumental in fostering the development of spiritual organizations (Geh, 2014). Dougherty (2011) examined spiritual leadership theory (SLT) and found that the qualities of a spiritual leader increased organizational productivity and commitment. Geh (2014) posited that organizational spiritual leadership is about managing the spiritual energy of an organization starting with the power to feel in a leader, then spreading it throughout the organization. Spiritual leadership can also be connected to Servanthood (Crossman, 2011). Servanthood was first composed by Greenleaf (1970) as a leader who considers the common good or the interest of people before themselves.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf first introduced the concept of servant leadership in his 1970 essay, *The Servant as Leader*, where service and meaning were brought together. Servant leadership has been defined as “a leader who has a sense of values and consciously serves these values in his or her leadership style” (Zohar & Marshall, 2001, p. 33). In American business, values are defined as demonstrating excellence, fulfilling potential, and showing a commitment to never ending growth. Over the last few decades, values have strayed from those traditional eastern values like compassion, humility, gratitude, and service to family and earth (Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

The concept of servant leadership inspires subordinates to generate better awareness, trust, learning, and spiritual fulfillment at work (C. Chen et al., 2013). The term service is at the core of servant leadership. The function of a servant leader is to put people's interest before self-interest (van Dierendonck et al., 2014). The result is greater tolerance, open-mindedness, patience, optimism, proactiveness, and a willingness to learn by the employee. From an ethical standpoint, a leader who recognizes the value of moral and ethical behavior is worthy of the trust of employees, customers, and business stakeholders (Fry, 2003).

C. Chen et al. (2013) discovered an interesting discrepancy between supervisor and subordinate perception of servant leadership. A high proportion of supervisors rated themselves higher than their subordinates, suggesting that supervisors overestimate themselves, or employees do not perceive the leadership values as much as their supervisors perceive in themselves (C. Chen et al., 2013). Although servant leadership has mostly positive effects on followers, some servant leaders could become obsessed with the needs of followers and lose sight of the organization. A spiritual or transformational leader focuses on the needs of the organization (Geh, 2014).

The concept of servant leadership has its roots in the Bible. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, English Standard Version). Greenleaf (1970) introduced the concept of servant leadership to the world of leadership studies. A servant leader is the opposite of an authoritarian style leader who is primarily concerned with power and wealth (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Lynch & Friedman suggested that spiritual individuals are much more likely to become servant leaders since the concepts are so very closely related.

Academic studies on servant leadership focused on follower growth, empowerment, and ethical behavior (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Crossman (2011) found a clear relationship between servant leadership and spiritual leadership. Trust, humility, vision and integrity are descriptors found in both servant leadership and spiritual leadership literature (Winston & Fields, 2015). Crossman's big picture view of the commonalities between spiritual leadership and other value-based leadership theories helped to develop the concept of servant leadership and build its application to organization management and added to the literature on leadership theories.

Crossman (2011) examined the synergies that appear to exist between spiritual leadership and environmental leadership. Commonalities include social responsibility, good stewardship, servanthood, and a sense of connectedness (Crossman, 2011). Crossman established the relationship between business and spirituality through the early works of Tawney, Weber, and Maslow. Tawney argued that the Christian values of thrifty, diligence, sobriety and frugality are the very qualities valued in business (Crossman, 2011). Weber focused on spiritual matters and the relationship with economic life and rationality (Crossman, 2011). Maslow believed that everything we do is tied to some sort of spiritual values (Crossman, 2011).

A spiritual or transformational leader focuses on the needs of the organization, unlike a servant leader who focuses on both the needs of followers and the needs of society (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Little is known about the antecedents or leader traits associated with servant leadership (Flynn et al., 2015). The ideal leader is a servant but must also have a moral compass to be a spiritual servant leader. Zohar and Marshall (2001) posited that a person high in spiritual intelligence is also likely to be a servant leader; someone who is

responsible for bringing higher vision and value to others and showing them how to use it. A person with spiritual intelligence inspires other people (Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

Researchers have examined the relationship between servant leadership and organizational trust. Researchers found that servant leadership was an antecedent of organizational trust (Sinclair, 2013). High levels of trust increase employee motivation and decreases cost for control mechanisms due to the improved self-control of employees. Emphasis is placed on leadership to create a stimulus for driving toward organizational goals. One leadership model that harmonizes interpersonal skills with organizational goals is servant leadership (van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

Intelligence Theories

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self and others intelligently (Gardner, 1983). Understanding the emotions of others and the ability to manage those emotions can help with leader success and follower job satisfaction (Gardner, 1983). Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand behavioral reactions and the motivation behind those patterns (Yadav & Punia, 2016). Leaders who can regulate their own emotions, read others' emotions, and effectively communicate typically exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence and facilitate high performance in their organization (Nikoui, 2015; Seena et al., 2017).

Goleman (2014) argued that emotional intelligence consists of four multidimensional components such as empathy, social skill, self-awareness and self-regulation. Emotional intelligence is different from other intelligences because it focuses on skills and abilities in the emotional realm like self-awareness, empathy, and quality

communication (Freed, 2016; Seena et al., 2017). Authentic leaders who demonstrate empathy, compassion and support for others develop strong relationships with their team. Building relationships and encouragement are characteristics of both servant leaders and emotionally intelligent leaders (Chan & Mak, 2014; Goleman, 2014).

There are three skills of emotional intelligence that influence the personality of leaders: self-awareness, recognizing the emotions of other people, and dealing with the emotions of other people (Cic, Mulej, & Zizek, 2018). These skills intertwine personality and social skills. Self-awareness is key because a leader should be aware of their own emotions and be able to modify potential negative behavior (Zhang, Cao, & Wang, 2018). Dealing with the emotions of other people is a leader's ability to understand how to react to certain feelings and the impact on other people (Cic et al., 2018). Lastly, successful leaders are aware of employee's needs, concerns, and feelings while providing them guidance to achieve their professional goals (Goleman, 2014).

Researchers have examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (Potter, Egbelakin, Phipps, & Balaei, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). Transformational leaders display inspirational motivation, demonstrate effective communication skills, and create a vision of the future that inspires followers to commit (Echevarria, 2015). Transformational leaders are considered agents of social and organizational change. Researchers examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and other leadership behaviors and found that managers with higher emotional intelligence prefer open communication and proactive leadership styles (Zhang et al., 2018).

Barbuto, Gottfredson, and Searle (2014) examined emotional intelligence as an antecedent to servant leadership. Their results suggested that emotional intelligence is a good predictor of servant leadership from a leader's perspective, but not from a follower's

perspective. Du Plessis et al. (2015) conducted a similar study to investigate the relationships between servant leadership, emotional intelligence and trust. Their results provided evidence for the relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership. The significance of these studies is important in the understanding of servant leader behaviors and how emotional intelligence training might be a necessary step in the development of servant leaders (Beck, 2014; du Plessis et al., 2015).

Findings from Seena et al.'s (2017) study revealed spiritual intelligence as having crucial importance on a person's emotional intelligence and well-being. People with higher emotional intelligence benefit from a greater sense of creativity, critical thinking, lower anxiety, and ability to develop strong relationships with others (Nikoopour & Esfandiari, 2017). Wills (2018) replicated previous studies of EQ and SQ (Yadav & Punia, 2016) and although she confirmed the relationship between EQ and SQ, Wills found that SQ factors to predict EQ and EQ factors to predict SQ were much less in the U.S. versus India. The significance of these findings is that predictive relationships between EQ and SQ may be influenced by different cultures (Wills, 2018).

Spiritual Intelligence

Spiritual intelligence (SQ) has been an emerging topic for over a decade. Scholars are still in debate on whether SQ should be considered a legitimate intelligence or remain an elusive construct. Fry and Wigglesworth (2013) argued the existence of a multi-level ontology that could serve as a foundation for a being-centered theory of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is "the ability to behave with altruistic love through wisdom and compassion while maintaining inner and outer peace regardless of the circumstances" (Fry & Wigglesworth, 2013, p. 34). Future research is still needed on

workplace spirituality as well as the role of spiritual intelligence and its influence on spiritual leadership.

Spirituality is an individual experience, searching for the meaning of life, a quest for existential understanding, looking for personal truths (Crossman, 2011). Spirituality has no class system or doctrine, whereas religion is characterized by a class system and a doctrine (Crossman, 2011). The definition of spiritual intelligence throughout the literature references many of the same characteristics as spirituality and similarly contrasts with the definition of religion. It is important to note this contrast while studying the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence (Hildebrant, 2011). “Spiritual intelligence has been proposed as a measure of an individual’s propensity toward spiritual leadership” (Hildebrant, 2011, p. 61).

Wigglesworth left her full-time job in human resources to create her own consulting company focused on spiritual development (Wigglesworth, 2012). She designed the SQ21 spiritual intelligence assessment instrument to identify 21 measurable SQ skills. These skills presented in faith-neutral terms, help people understand and increase their own spiritual intelligence (Wigglesworth, 2012). A model for spiritual leader development was then introduced in a co-authored paper (Fry & Wigglesworth, 2013) based on their theory of spiritual intelligence.

As Wigglesworth’s own spiritual growth occurred, she recognized a direct impact on her effectiveness as a leader (Wigglesworth, 2012). Working in human resources, she understood the sensitivity of talking about religion or anything that sounds religious in the workplace (Wigglesworth, 2012). This was the beginning of Wigglesworth’s work in translating spiritual intelligence into universal terms that are free from religious

associations. Through this process, spiritual skills and competencies were identified along with a scientific way to measure these skills (Wigglesworth, 2012).

Wigglesworth studied the works of Daniel Goldman on emotional intelligence (EQ)(Wigglesworth, 2012). Goldman highlighted three skills for building relationships: emotional self-awareness, empathy, and emotional self-control (Wigglesworth, 2012). These skills are important because they are the foundation for working with spiritual intelligence (Wigglesworth, 2012). Although spiritual intelligence is less accepted than emotional intelligence, it is slowly making its way around philosophical and psychological scholars as well as the business world. Covey (2004) identified spiritual intelligence as a key component of leadership. “Spiritual intelligence is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences because it becomes the source of guidance for the others” (Covey, 2004, p. 53).

Wigglesworth became certified in the Goldman and Boyatis methodology of emotional intelligence and attended many emotional intelligence conferences (Wigglesworth, 2012). She believed someone should do for SQ that Goldman and Boyatis did for EQ. Wigglesworth searched for researchers and scholars and found no one working on developing a spiritual intelligence methodology. This was the motivation for her to leave her full-time employment to start her own business. The first step was to develop some hypotheses and begin describing these spiritual intelligence skills from a low-level novice to a high-level expert (Wigglesworth, 2012). These skills would fall into four quadrants just like Goldman’s EQ competency framework, except SQ skills would be a step up (Wigglesworth, 2012).

Wigglesworth (2102) created a chart to identify the 21 skills of SQ and presented these skills as levels from one to five. She created a questionnaire, validated it, tested it,

made adjustments, and tested it again. The result was a self-assessment online instrument that asks approximately 130 questions to measure 21 skills (Wigglesworth, 2012).

Zohar and Marshall (2001) explored spiritual intelligence from a psychology, neurology, anthropology, and cognitive science viewpoint. Zohar and Marshall argued that spiritual intelligence is viewed as how we address and solve problems of meaning and value. IQ, known as intelligence quotient, is our intellectual or rational intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). EQ, known as emotional intelligence, is our awareness of feelings both self and in others (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). SQ, known as spiritual intelligence, is our ability to answer the question why and allows us to be creative and compassionate (Hacker & Washington, 2017; Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

It is SQ that gives people the ability to discern right from wrong (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). SQ gives people their moral sense. SQ is used to challenge the question of good and evil. SQ is used to envision unrealized possibilities and to dream and aspire (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). SQ is a transformative power (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). While EQ focuses on how to behave in any situation, SQ allows people to determine if they want to be in that situation (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). "SQ must show up in our actions and our behaviors" (Wigglesworth, 2012, p. 9).

Zohar and Marshall (2001) examined three psychological processes. Freud defined the primary and secondary processes (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). The primary process is associated with the id: instinct, body, emotion, and the unconscious (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). The secondary process is associated with the ego: conscious and rational mind (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Zohar and Marshall linked the secondary process to IQ based on the serial neural wiring in the brain. They linked the primary process to EQ based on the associative neural wiring in the brain. Therefore, SQ would be considered the third neural

system based on the synchronous neural oscillations that unify data across the whole brain (Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

“Conventional religion is an externally imposed set of rules and beliefs” (Zohar & Marshall, 2001, p. 9). SQ is about a person’s inner self. SQ is the intelligence that rests in that deep part of the self that is connected to wisdom from beyond the ego; it is the intelligence with which people not only recognize existing values, but with which new values are creatively discovered (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Developing that wisdom and learning how to follow its guidance is the most vital part of spiritual intelligence (Wigglesworth, 2012).

Before the 1990’s, researchers only examined two forms of brain neural organization: serial and parallel. Serial neural connections are the basis of IQ; allowing people to follow rules, think logically and rationally (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Parallel neural network organization bundles a hundred thousand neurons and connects haphazardly to other bundles (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). This neural network is the basis of EQ; giving people emotion-driven, pattern recognizing, habit building intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Both have different abilities, but neither operates with meaning; neither can ask the question why (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). This is where the work of Austrian neurologist, Singer, on unifying neural oscillations offers a third kind of thinking, unitive thinking, or spiritual intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2001).

Hildebrant (2011) examined the relationship between spiritual intelligence and moral development. Three measurement instruments for SQ were evaluated and the SISRI-24 instrument was selected (Hildebrant, 2011). The Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS) was used to measure moral development. Hildebrant validated SISRI-24 as a reliable measurement instrument for SQ. She found that the level of SQ was not affected by age, gender, or educational level. Religious affiliation and spiritual practices were found to be

linked to the constructs used to measure SQ (Hildebrant, 2011). Hildebrant's results are consistent with the literature. The level of SQ and the stage of moral development were correlated (Hildebrant, 2011). Leaders with high moral character also have high levels of SQ (Hildebrant, 2011).

Dougherty (2011) explored the relationship between spirituality, spiritual intelligence, and leadership practices and found recurring themes in the definitions and interpretations of spirituality. These themes included: connectedness to or a relationship with a higher power, a search for the meaning of life, and beliefs and practices related to religion (Dougherty, 2011). Dougherty focused on college students and the literature confirmed a considerable interest in spirituality within the academic environment. "Spiritual intelligence has been characterized as a distinct set of mental capacities contributing to refined self-awareness, enhanced personal meaning, heightened spiritual states of consciousness, and virtuous behavior" (Dougherty, 2011, pp. 1-2).

Dougherty (2011) reviewed the literature and focused on the major contributors in the study of spiritual intelligence (Emmons, Kwilecki, Mayer, Gardner, Wolman, Zohar and Marshall, Vaughan, Rogers and Dantley, Covey, Amram and Dryer, King and DeCicco). The general theme focused on the meaning, value, and purpose of life. Dougherty offered multiple definitions of spiritual intelligence and introduced two instruments developed to measure the construct.

Dougherty (2011) concluded that a significant correlation was measured between spirituality, spiritual intelligence, and leadership practices. The SISRI-24 instrument was used in the study to measure the level of SQ (Dougherty, 2011). Dougherty found this instrument to be reliable. However, because the population studied was limited to only BYU

students, generalized statements about spirituality cannot be made across all populations (Dougherty, 2011).

“To have high spiritual intelligence is to be able to use the spiritual to bring greater context and meaning to living a richer and more meaningful life, to achieve a sense of personal wholeness, purpose, and direction” (Zohar & Marshall, 2001, p. 111).

Wigglesworth (2012) argued that physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual intelligences should be developed to meet the demands of life and fulfill the desire to grow. These intelligences are interconnected in the same way Maslow’s hierarchy of needs are developed (Wigglesworth, 2012). Lower level needs must be fulfilled before moving up to the higher levels (Wigglesworth, 2012).

Organizational values are critical to business success (Hildebrant, 2011).

Organizations are made up individuals and it is those individuals that influence the values of the organization (Hildebrant, 2011). Personal values shape how leaders respond in times of conflict. People with the clearest personal values make choices based on principle and can identify ethical concerns even when they are not clearly visible (Hildebrant, 2011).

Organizational Trust

Trust is a common term but can have different meanings depending on context. In a social context, trust can be defined as a general willingness to be vulnerable (Zuppa et al., 2016). Trust is a dynamic, interpersonal link between people (Bligh, 2017). Trust is also typically viewed as reciprocal, expecting that others will exhibit the same behavior (Lusher, Kremer, & Robins, 2013). Trust is the framework for leader-follower relationships in the workplace (Le & Lei, 2018).

Trust is the root of all great leadership (Bligh, 2017). To foster trust among the followers of an organization, leaders need to pay more attention to practicing

transformational leadership (Le & Lei, 2018). Researchers found that emotional intelligence is an important element for trust to exist (Ansari & Malik, 2017). Trust has become a key component in most core leadership theories (Bligh, 2017). Trust in a leader is built on the character of a leader which is focused on how followers perceive a leader's characteristics, such as ability, integrity, dependability, and benevolence in the workplace (Goh & Low, 2014).

Trust is a key process in ethical, servant, and authentic leadership styles (Bligh, 2017). Transformational leaders become role models for their followers and through observation, they develop trust in them. Over time, followers learn more about their leaders providing evidence for their trustworthiness. Choi et al. (2015) posited that emotional intelligence creates the trustworthiness and authenticity of a person. Cognition-based trust is established through an individual's perception of another person's trustworthiness, which is based on that person's integrity, behavior, capability, and reputation (Pishdad-Bozorgi & Beliveau, 2016). Miao et al. (2014) found that higher levels of trustworthiness may be established through servant leader behavior.

Researchers have examined ways that trust can develop close relationships (Ansari & Malik, 2017). Communication is key to building strong trust-based relationships in the workplace (Seifert, Brockner, Bianchi, & Moon, 2016). Good working relationships are developed when values and attitudes are shared (Seifert et al., 2016). A willingness to build strong interpersonal relationships and being genuinely concerned about the well-being of subordinates mediate the impact of servant leadership on affective trust (Miao et al., 2014). Integrity is established when leaders and followers abide by a standard set of rules and ethical conduct. Honesty and integrity are ethical values characterized by spiritual managers (Faraji & Begzadeh, 2017). Leaders must develop and sustain perceptions of

integrity through justice, acting in ways that are consistent with their values and accountability (Bligh, 2017).

Perceptions of justice are important in determining trust in a leader or the organization. The ability to express personal views has a positive impact on the perception of fairness and productivity in the organization (Vanhala & Ritala, 2016). The perception of an ethical work climate is directly related to leader trust, implying that organizational elements might influence the perceptions of a leader's trustworthiness (Bligh, 2017). Organizational trust refers to both trust in individuals and trust in the organization as a whole (Vanhala, Heilmann, & Salminen, 2016).

Trust in organizational leadership tends to have a greater impact on organizational outcomes, such as whether or not an employee is committed to the company even if they receive a more attractive offer somewhere else. This example suggests that followers might develop different trust relationships with their immediate leaders versus leaders higher up in the organization (Bligh, 2017). Vanhala et al. (2016) examined employee trust in their organization, their future in that organization, and employee support for the evolution of interpersonal trust. Researchers have found that both organizational trust and leader trust were positively associated with servant leadership style and concluded that servant leadership was an antecedent of organizational trust and leader trust (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016).

Trust theories are based on social exchange theory, suggesting that trust forms through repeated exchange of interests between two entities, or through the interaction of a person's values, attitudes, and emotions (Liu & Wang, 2013). Liu and Wang (2013) found that managers need to earn employee trust to sustain long-term relationships. Establishing employee trust will aid in the development of the organization (Liu & Wang, 2013).

Researchers have examined mutual trust and support the notion that when one party acts in a trustworthy manner, both parties are apt to have higher levels of trust (Koorsgaard, Brower, & Lester, 2015). To maintain a trust relationship with employees, organizations should focus on controlling the work-related risk to create an effective work environment (Liu & Wang, 2013).

Trust is a multi-faceted component, and the level of trust is related to the level of perceived risk (Knight et al., 2015). The connection between trust and risk comes from a reciprocal relationship in that risk creates the opportunity for trust that can subsequently lead to risk taking (Vanhala et al., 2016). Two conditions must be met for trust to exist, risk and interdependence. Risk creates the opportunity for trust (Vanhala et al., 2016). The greater the risk, the greater the trust (Knight et al., 2015).

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I presented a review of the literature that addressed leadership theories and spiritual intelligence. The literature review provided background on spirituality, servant leadership, transformational leadership, emotional and spiritual intelligence, and organizational trust. These theories formed a sound conceptual framework to conduct an analysis of the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's influence on organizational trust.

I divided the literature review into four sections: effective leadership, leadership theories, intelligence theories, and organizational trust. I examined studies with a focus on spiritual intelligence, emotional intelligence, servant leadership, and organizational trust. Each of these studies demonstrated a positive relationship between emerging leadership theories and organizational trust. I also reviewed the seminal works of Gardner, Emmons, Fry, Zohar & Marshall, and Greenleaf to explore how spiritual intelligence, emotional

intelligence, and servant leadership contributed to leadership development and the development of organizational trust. Ajike (2016) concluded that organizational trust and spiritual intelligence are effective factors that enhance organizational performance. Ajike validated the importance of researching the relationships between spiritual intelligence and organizational trust. Kaya (2015) posited that spiritual leadership is not only linked with organizational citizenship behaviors, but he also agreed with researchers on the relationship between spiritual leadership and other variables such as job satisfaction, morale, productivity, and trust.

Addressing the gap in the literature of the spiritual intelligence of leaders who influence organizational trust and specifically, the lack of spiritual intelligence that helps create the environment for ethical behavior and organizational effectiveness will extend the knowledge of spiritual intelligence and its role in leadership development. Roberts (2013) argued that future studies are needed to link servant leadership and spiritual intelligence to organizational outcomes like productivity, job turnover, and job satisfaction. Fry and Wigglesworth (2013) argued that organizations and their leaders have a vested interest in better understanding spiritual intelligence and its role in leadership development. She recommended future research on workplace spirituality to explore increased organizational performance.

In Chapter 3, I will outline the research design and methodology. I will provide details on why the phenomenological design was chosen and how the research question guided the direction of this study. I will describe the role I played as the researcher, and the process I used to select participants, collect data, and the data analysis plan.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and report the lived experiences of senior leaders of a global insurance company regarding their spiritual intelligence and trust. The implications for social change include creating a deeper and broader understanding of a leader's spiritual intelligence, how spiritual intelligence might play a role in a leader's influence on trust within an organization, and the potential business application for leadership development. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the research methodology used in this phenomenological study.

Phenomenology is a form of inquiry that addresses participants' lived experience of and perception of a phenomenon (Patton, 2014). Researchers should examine participants' descriptions in their own words, distinct from the researcher's perception of the phenomenon (Saldana, 2009). The participants are viewed as subjective epistemological beings to prevent contamination of the data with extraneous worldview assumptions (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008). This Husserlian method is intended to create pure presentations and uninterpreted data based on human experience (Koopman, 2015).

This chapter includes an overview of the research design and the rationale for choosing this design. This is followed by a description of my role as the researcher. I explain how participants were selected, the data collection method that was used, and the recruitment plan. Lastly, I summarize the data analysis plan and address ethical considerations and credibility of the study.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question guided this qualitative study and informed the phenomenological approach: What is the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company? Several theorists and researchers have identified specific characteristics and behaviors related to spirituality (Crossman, 2011; Fry, 2003; Geh, 2014; Yusof & Mohamad, 2014). Workplace spirituality appears to be gaining more interest, and leaders are becoming more aware of the value it brings to the organization (Milliman et al., 2016). This suggested a need for leaders to learn more about spiritual leadership and for organizations to develop leadership programs around it (Hacker & Washington, 2017).

Gardner (1999) viewed spirituality as a religious, theological, mystical, and transcendent phenomenon. Zohar (2001) defined spiritual intelligence as “the intelligence with which we address and solve problems of meaning and value” (p. 3). Transformational and servant leadership styles are examples of value-based theories of leadership (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013). Crossman (2011) classified spiritual leaders as inspirational and noted that spiritual intelligence should be linked to transformational leadership. Spiritual leaders have the capacity to build trust and compassion within an organization (Crossman, 2011). The objective of this study was to explore the influence of a leader’s spiritual intelligence on the development of organizational trust.

Patton (2014) described several theoretical and philosophical perspectives that inform qualitative inquiries and research designs. A few of these perspectives include narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and heuristic inquiry. Each design has a specific focus and addresses issues in a unique way. In the current study, a

phenomenological design was chosen to capture and analyze the lived experiences of spiritual intelligence among executive leaders.

In phenomenological studies, the researcher focuses on exploring the human experience of the phenomenon and transforms that experience into real-world meaning (Patton, 2014). Moustakas (1994) classified phenomenology as “rooted in questions that give a direction and focus to meaning, and in themes that sustain an inquiry, awaken further interest and concern, and account for our passionate involvement with whatever is being experienced” (p. 59). The intent of using phenomenology in the current study was to understand leaders’ perception and perspective on spiritual intelligence and how spiritual intelligence might play a role in leaders’ influence on trust in organizations (see Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

I used a descriptive design based on the theoretical framework grounded in lifeworld phenomenology. The research process was guided by the phenomenological approach of reflective lifeworld research, which was based on the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty (Lindberg, Hörberg, U., Persson, E., & Ekebergh, 2013). This approach allowed me to identify the experiences, thoughts, and feelings of leaders. I chose phenomenology because it was a rigorous alternative to the traditional methods used in the natural sciences that were not appropriate for examining human experience (see Brooks, 2015).

A qualitative approach allows the researcher to explore the perceptions and perspectives of a particular event rather than determining the relationship between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The research design of phenomenology was most appropriate because it allowed me to explore the lived experience of the phenomenon. A narrative study addresses participants’ experiences told through stories (Leedy & Ormrod,

2010). A grounded theory study is used to create a theory based on the experiences (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). An ethnographic study involves a cultural group and addresses the shared experiences of members (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A case study addressed a specific issue using one case or multiple cases looking for common themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). In the current study, I used a phenomenological design to “contemplate and theorize the various ways things manifest and appear in and through our being in the world” (see Moustakas, 1994, p. 22).

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the role of the researcher is important to the accuracy, authenticity, and reliability of the observations being made (Patton, 2014). The researcher is the instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Patton, 2014). My role as researcher was to collect data as the interviewer. As a qualitative researcher, my role was to learn from the experiences of my participants and maintain a stance of empathic neutrality (Patton, 2014). The interviewer influences the worth of the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Phenomenological research grows out of an intense interest, excitement, and curiosity of the researcher, but Moustakas (1994) cautioned the researcher to contain his or her opinions, beliefs, and suppositions to reduce potential bias. Bracketing (or bridling) allows the researcher to remove personal beliefs, judgments, and preconceived ideas (Moustakas, 1994). Planning the interviews is essential. The interview process includes establishing rapport, showing respect, building trust, showing interest, taking notes, and recording the session (Patton, 2014). The researcher needs to echo the voice of each participant and synthesize the voices of all participants when analyzing the data (Patton, 2014).

The sample for this study was purposely drawn from my company. The participants included executive or senior leaders with a title of senior vice president or above, and employees who reported to them with a title of vice president or below. The ratio of participants were half leaders and half general employees. The rationale for this ratio was to account for potential leader bias regarding the perception of trust in the organization. An equivalent sample of general employees added credibility to the study.

Participants who were leaders inside my chain of command were all senior to me; therefore, I had no power or influence over them. I did not choose general employees within my chain of command to remove any possible conflict of interest or bias regarding their participation. However, I needed to address the perceived barriers created by the hierarchical relationship of leaders above me. The first step was to confirm the confidentiality of the conversation. Next, I offered a copy of the transcripts and results so the participants would have full disclosure of the completed study. Lastly, I followed Moustakas's (1994) suggestion to begin interviews with a social conversation to create a relaxed and trusting atmosphere.

Choosing the researcher's workplace as the focus of research can present ethical concerns, including conflicts of interest and power differential issues (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). I held a leadership role in my organization and developed professional relationships with many senior level leaders. The topic of my study did not involve any of the internal workings of the company or any proprietary information. My research addressed the leadership styles of executive and senior level managers throughout the company. Participation was confidential, and no names or other identifying information was used in the study.

Methodology

Because phenomenology was the chosen design for this study, I implemented strategies related to this design. These strategies started with how participants were selected and the method that was used for data collection. In the following sections, I describe the strategies used for recruitment, participation, data collection, and data analysis. I also address the credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures for this study.

Participant Selection Logic

The global insurance company chosen for this study is a 95-year-old company doing business in 100 countries with over 65,000 employees. The organization is split into corporate and business structures. I work in the corporate structure, but I wanted to include the business organization as part of the sample. The strategy behind selecting participants from both corporate and business organizations was to explore leaders' spiritual intelligence and trust across the entire company and not in one silo of leadership.

The first criterion to participate in this study was to hold an executive or senior level leadership position in the company. A senior leader was someone holding the title of senior vice president or above. The second criterion to participate in this study was to be an employee reporting to these senior leaders with a job title of vice president or below and in a reporting structure outside of my chain of command. I purposely excluded general employees within my chain of command to eliminate any possible conflict of interest or bias. As a corporate employee, I had access to organizational charts to confirm that participant selection criteria were met. Additionally, my employment with the company

provided access to these participants and their office locations with proper notification prior to arrival.

Patton (2014) explained the reasoning behind purposeful sampling, which is why I recruited leaders from both corporate and business organizations. Demographic and geographic criteria were not important for this study and were not used to select the sample. Phenomenological research has no specific guide for participant sample size. Walden University suggested a minimum of 20 participants or until data saturation occurs. My study included 16 participants with an even mix of senior leaders and general employees who reported to them.

Saturation is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges (Saunders et al., 2017). Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that structured interview questions would help achieve data saturation. Fusch and Ness also recommended interviewing people who would not normally be considered to enhance data saturation. To determine saturation, I conducted 10 interviews, coded and analyzed the data, and noted the emerging themes. Then I conducted two more interviews, analyzed the data, and looked for new codes or new emergent themes. I repeated the process until no new themes emerged and saturation was confirmed. No new codes or themes emerged from the data after the 16th interview. Data saturation was declared, and the interviews stopped (see Morse, 2015).

The participant selection process included purposive sampling of senior leaders and employees who reported to them using organizational charts and sending letters of cooperation. Initially, 20 participants were selected (10 leaders and 10 general employees), with a contingency of 10 additional participants (five leaders and five general employees) in the event some of the original participants were unable or unwilling to participate.

Participants were chosen from both the corporate organization and the business organization. Because I had a rapport with many of the senior leaders, recruitment was not an issue. I was also able to leverage my relationships with senior leaders to foster participation at the executive level of the organization. All participants were told that their contribution to this study would be completely voluntary and confidential and they could withdraw from the study at any time.

I recruited 20 employees to participate in this study without coercion. Each of the leader participants had a title of senior vice president or above and was employed in either the corporate or business organization. The general employees held various positions in the company, reported to one of the senior leaders, held a job title of vice president or below, and were not within my chain of command. I chose 20 participants across the corporate and business organizations to ensure maximum variation sampling and a balance of leader and employee participation in the study. No other demographic factors were considered, and I did not exclude anyone from the study except those within my chain of command.

Data Collection Method

The primary source of data collection for this study was interview driven. The interviews were comprised of open-ended questions based on the theoretical framework of lifeworld phenomenology. Husserl is acknowledged as the founding father of phenomenology (Vagle, 2014). Husserl believed the only way to understand the human experience in the world is to be grounded in the human experience, focusing on what people perceive rather than how it is perceived (Brooks, 2016).

In lifeworld research, data gathering is an activity where researchers seek out narratives, descriptions, utterances, and any other expression of the phenomenon being studied (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The researcher is responsible for understanding the

meanings that belong to the lifeworld and the relationship between the subject and the phenomenon (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Researchers should use an open and bridled approach to find their way through these meanings (Moustakas, 1994). Researchers taken for granted perspectives of lived experiences are replaced with a glimpse of the phenomenon as it was truly lived, not theorized (Vagle, 2014).

The level of knowledge the researcher has about the phenomenon can have a negative impact on the research project (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Dahlberg et al. (2008) advised not to read too much existing literature about the phenomenon to avoid making it difficult to *bridle* new information from the research. Lifeworld research does not have specific methods or techniques; instead, it uses every day means of understanding (Brooks, 2016).

Instrumentation

The data collection instruments used for this study included an interview protocol, an interview guide with script, audio tape of interviews, and field notes. All instruments were researcher produced. I created the interview protocol to consistently record the participants in my study. The information recorded included their name, contact info, position in the organization, location, interview date and time and the unique code used to confidentially label their data. I also created an interview script to maintain consistency with each of my interviews. Lastly, I used a digital recorder and took field notes to document each interview.

The basis for instrument development came from literature sources such as Vagle (2014) and Dahlberg et al. (2008). These literature sources suggested that unstructured interviews are the most common method for data gathering in a phenomenological study (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Vagle, 2014). Validity was established by field-testing the interview

questions to assure they would produce the necessary data for this study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). A panel of four qualitative experts were assembled to review my problem statement, purpose statement, research question and the list of interview questions to validate alignment. After making the recommended changes by the panel and the URR, the interview questions and phenomenological design were in alignment.

Field Test

To validate that my research method and design were aligned to my research questions and interview questions, I conducted a field test with four qualitative research experts. I extended invitations to seven Walden University faculty members with four who agreed to participate and three who cordially abstained. I sent each participant a copy of my problem statement, purpose statement, research question and list of interview questions. I requested each participant to review the draft to determine if my interview questions aligned with my research method, design, and research question.

All four participants concluded that my interview questions were too pointed and might lead interviewees to a specific answer rather than identify their experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon. One suggestion was to break down the questions to simplify the understanding of the phenomenon I was trying to identify. A suggestion made by two panel members was to focus on asking questions about the lived experience. One panel member believed some of the interview questions did not support the purpose of the study and other questions needed more focus and clarity. I adopted the suggestions and revised the interview questions accordingly.

I received mixed reviews on the alignment of my study. Two panel members believed my problem statement, purpose statement, and research question were in alignment. One panel member believed I should narrow down the population and tighten

the link between problem, purpose and research questions. The fourth panel member believed I was saying three different things in my problem, purpose and research question. Since 50% of my panel did not see alignment, I worked with my chair and committee to add clarity and focus on aligning the problem, purpose and research question. I adopted panel recommendations and incorporated them into my proposal.

Upon the second review of this proposal, the URR found that the research method and design were not aligned to the research question and interview questions. After confirming a few recommendations with the URR, I adjusted the research question and interview questions to better align with the research method and design. The new interview questions are aligned to the phenomenological design and should produce an expected aligned outcome. The revised interview questions are listed in Appendix F.

Procedures for Recruitment and Participation

As specified in the previous section, I used the interview as the primary source of data collection for this study. No collection of data occurred until permission was received from Walden University IRB on 2017.02.14 17:26:46-06'00'. The IRB approval number for this study is 02-17-17-0138797. Data was collected from the interviews of 18 employees within the corporate and business organizations and resulted in data saturation.

For each interview, I had planned to travel to the participant's office, some of which require out of state travel or to set up a video conference for participants who were unable to meet personally. I scheduled one-hour appointments with each participant to respect their time and each interview lasted no longer than one hour. The interviews were recorded, and I took field notes. The interviews were conducted over a 9-week period due to participant availability.

At the start of each interview, I reviewed the protocols outlined in the interview script, reviewed the consent letter, and let the participants know that they could stop the interview at any time since this was strictly voluntary. I reinforced that the interview would be recorded, I would be taking notes, and no information would be shared with anyone, nor would their names or positions be revealed in the study. I confirmed data confidentiality and that this information would only be used for my study. I also offered to provide a summary of the findings after the study was complete. Lastly, I provided each participant with the contact information for the Director of Walden University's Institutional Review Board.

The interviews were guided by the list of open-ended questions relevant to help answer the research question. Probing questions were asked to obtain details or clarifying unclear statements to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon. The revised list of questions used during the interview is attached in Appendix F. After each interview, the recordings were transferred to a large storage device with a copy in the cloud as a backup.

Access to this data was password controlled and I am the only person with access. Names and positions were not used to label the data. As an additional precaution, I used date of interview, initials and the sequence number of the interview for filename identification. In addition to recordings, I also took notes to help verify the data collected.

Interviews were conducted in person, in the private office of the participant or by a conference call in the event a face-to-face meeting was not conducive. This environment was chosen to help participants feel comfortable in their own office. Interviews were recorded using a digital recorder with a backup recorder in the event one fails. I set one-hour appointments to respect participant time, but always allowed the interview to continue beyond the allotted time if the participant was comfortable and it did not interfere

with other engagements. Although I had interview questions to guide the conversation, I attempted to keep the interview more conversational to allow participants to open and share their experiences freely. Moustakas (1994) described the interviewer as being responsible for creating a climate in which the research participant will feel comfortable and will respond honestly and comprehensively.

In lifeworld research, the question of sample size cannot be decided in exact numbers before the study begins (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Dahlberg et al. (2008) argued that the more complex phenomenon may require a larger participant pool. Alternatively, a less complicated phenomenon may only require a few (Dahlberg et al., 2008). For this study, a participant pool of 20 employees was chosen. In the event saturation was not met with 20 participants, an additional 10 participants were chosen and recruited as standby participants. In the event saturation occurred early, the remaining participants would be contacted and informed that I collected sufficient data to complete the study and thanked them for volunteering to participate. After 16 interviews, no new themes emerged, and saturation was declared (Morse, 2015).

Interviews were transcribed, and a copy of the transcript was made available to the participants. I had planned to ask each participant to review the transcript and notes, checking for accuracy and completeness. However, the IRB indicated that having participants review transcripts for accuracy places an unnecessary burden on them in terms of their time and effort, as most people do not accurately remember what was said in the interview. They recommended checking the transcript against the audio tapes to validate accuracy.

Data Analysis Plan

All recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim by hand. Accuracy was validated by following along with the transcription as the recording was played back. Analysis software such as NVivo was not used in this study. Handwritten notes were added to the transcription to validate the data. Transcripts were zipped and stored securely for the allotted period required by Walden University. All data was stored electronically using passwords where only I have access. A backup of this data was stored in the cloud and password protected as well. Transcribed data was organized, coded and analyzed manually.

The first step in data analysis was reading and rereading the data to understand the interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Verbal and nonverbal (consider silence and hesitation) listening and transcribing contributed to becoming familiar with the material (Lindberg, 2013). I searched for meaning in the transcribed interviews. I used bridling to pull out personal experience and allowed for essential meanings to appear (Kymre, 2013).

Step two in data analysis was organizing the data into categories or themes called clusters. Putting meanings into clusters created temporary patterns in search for essential meaning (Vagle, 2014). The most abstract level of analysis was to find the essence (Horberg, 2013). Essence was formulated by rereading clusters and original data (Horberg, 2013). The best method for getting to the real meaning or essence of the data was to constantly flip back and forth between the clusters and the original data (Lindberg, 2013).

The third step was to transform the data into meaning. "Interpretation brings meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, categories, developing linkages and a story line that makes sense and is engaging to read" (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p. 162-163). Reflective lifeworld research requires the researcher to have a reflective attitude and allow the true meaning of the phenomenon to come through (Dahlberg et al., 2008). The act of

bridling or bracketing sets aside the researcher's pre-understanding or assumptions about the phenomenon (Lindberg, 2013). Bridling gives room for new and unexpected meanings to show up. The researcher must wait for meanings to emerge by continually putting questions to the data (Vagle, 2014). Once the essence was formulated, analysis continued to identify contextual nuances of the phenomenon known as constituents.

Lastly, the results were presented in structures of meanings. The essential meanings were illustrated in a way that expands the understanding of human beings and the human experience (Kymre, 2013). The researcher applied a word or phrase to the constituents based on the shared meanings of the participants. All the identified constituents were pulled together in a descriptive paragraph, forming a general descriptive psychological structure.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The credibility and believability of qualitative research rests on its validity (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). To ensure credibility of this phenomenological study, I validated data saturation. Saturation was determined at the point when no new meanings were revealed (see Saunders et al., 2017). I used bridling to isolate personal experience and bias and allowed the essential meanings of the phenomenon to appear (Lindberg, 2013). Interviewing a small population of general employees helped add credibility to the leader's perception of trust in the organization. Lastly, to make sure this study had credibility, I checked for alignment between the research question and the instrument used to collect the data.

Transferability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) argued that transferability is the ability of the researcher to argue that his findings will be useful in other similar situations using similar research questions. In this study, leveraging purposive sampling, the findings could be applied to other contexts. Moustakas (1994) validated that phenomenological studies create a greater interest and concern about the phenomenon. The findings from this study could be used to build a quantitative study looking at the relationship between the level of spiritual intelligence in a leader and the level of trust in the organization.

Dependability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) argued that in an ever-changing world, the concept of replication is problematic. The dependability of a study assumes that if similar subjects and similar context were replicated, it would yield the same result (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). To establish dependability, I utilized audit trails by taking notes, recorded interviews, and leveraged electronic journaling on the computer.

Confirmability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) also argued that confirmability is simply a matter of determining if someone else can confirm the conclusions and interpretations of a researcher. The best method for establishing confirmability in this study was to maintain clear and detailed documentation for auditors to follow. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and validated. Researcher notes from the interviews were also included as part of the transcriptions. Analysis notes were maintained for review if someone else wanted to confirm my results.

Ethical Procedures

Qualitative researchers should always be thinking about moral and ethical concerns. “Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories: protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleagues” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 101). Qualitative interviews can open thoughts, feelings, and experiences that the interviewee did not know before the interview (Patton, 2014). In this study, I planned to be diligent about having informed consent from my participants, providing the right to privacy, and working honestly with integrity with my professional colleagues.

As required by Walden University IRB, I sent consent forms to all participants for signature. At the start of each interview, I reviewed the informed consent form with participants to make sure they had no questions or concerns. I reiterated that their participation was strictly voluntary, and they could stop the interview at any time without recourse.

The nature of this study dealt with the personal lived experiences of senior leaders regarding their spiritual intelligence and the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader’s influence on organizational trust. Participants can often feel uncomfortable talking about these topics and do not want to share personal insights. Privacy is a great concern for participants. Before the interview started, I reviewed the right to privacy with participants and let them know that anything conveyed during the interview was held in strict confidentiality. I let them know that names and positions were not used in my study. Lastly, I offered to share a summary of the study after it was complete.

Keeping the data safe was also part of the right to privacy. Interviews were recorded and stored on high capacity hard drives that were password protected. I am the only one with access to this storage. Data was also backed up in the cloud, which was also password

protected. I reviewed my data handling process with each participant and let them know the data will be destroyed after the waiting period dictated by Walden University IRB.

Lastly, the population I chose to study was in my workplace. The participants selected do not report to me, but some might be in my chain of command. This study was not a conflict of interest since the topics did not involve the internal workings of the business. However, I was diligent about the personal sensitivity of the information the leaders shared during the interview.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided a detailed description of the research design used in this phenomenological study. The research question guided this qualitative study and informed the phenomenological approach. I summarized the conceptual framework that drove the research design and the rationale for choosing this design. I described my role as the researcher and how that role influences the outcome of the study. I explained how participants were selected, the data collection method, and the recruitment plan. Lastly, I reviewed the data analysis plan and reframed all ethical considerations and credibility of the study.

When studying phenomenology, researchers try to contemplate and theorize the various ways things manifest and appear in the world as they see it (Vagle, 2014). By design, the researcher identifies and reports the lived experience of those who experienced the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014). Phenomenology is a form of inquiry that holistically values the participants lived experience of meaning making and informs people about their perception of the phenomenon. This Husserlian method created pure presentations and uninterpreted data based on human experience (Koopman, 2015) that are organized in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and report the lived experiences of senior leaders in a global insurance company regarding their spiritual intelligence and trust. The central research question used to guide this phenomenological study was the following: What is the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company? The implications for social change include creating a deeper understanding of a leader's spiritual intelligence, how spiritual intelligence might play a role in a leader's influence on trust within the organization, and the potential business application for leadership development.

Chapter 4 contains a presentation of the data collected from interviews in this phenomenological study. Data collection began on March 10, 2017 and took 9 weeks to complete and achieve data saturation. The data collected from the interviews reflected the lived experiences and perceptions of spiritual intelligence and trust by the participants. This chapter includes a review of the research setting, participant demographics, and data collection process. I also present the results of the study and address issue of trustworthiness.

Research Setting

Senior leaders and employees of a large global insurance company were asked to participate in interviews lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour. Participants were in various offices across the United States making it a challenge to meet face-to-face with everyone. Senior leaders were very busy, making it a challenge to schedule time for interviews. Despite these

challenges, 14 phone interviews and two face-to-face interviews were conducted to reach data saturation.

During the period of the study, the company was going through changes in leadership and a reduction in personnel because of budget cuts. When the study began, the CIO resigned from the company and was replaced by an internal candidate. Only a few weeks later, the CEO announced his resignation. Throughout the 9-week period of the study, dozens of employees had their positions eliminated. Several participants shared their thoughts about the changes and their perceptions about the future. It is my opinion that these organizational changes had some influence on participants' perspectives.

Interview results differed slightly between senior leaders and employees. Budget cuts and layoffs seemed to have more negative effects on employees than senior leaders. I took notes during the interviews to capture first impressions of the participant's attitude, tone of voice, and behaviors that may have been important in the analysis of data. I also recorded the date, time, and length of interview for each participant. All participants agreed to recording the interview, and I received a signed consent form from each of them. After the interviews were completed, I transcribed and reviewed the recordings to ensure accuracy.

Demographics

The participants were selected from a large global insurance company. The inclusion criteria were senior leaders with a title of senior vice president or above and general employees below senior vice president. The decision to include general employees was made to mitigate potential bias regarding senior leaders' perceptions of trust within the organization.

Data Collection

The primary source of data collection for this study was interviews. The interviews included eight open-ended questions based on the theoretical framework of lifeworld phenomenology. I planned for 20 interviews to ensure data saturation. I conducted 10 interviews, performed some initial coding and analysis, conducted two more interviews, and coded again looking for repeating themes. I repeated the process until I reached saturation, which occurred after interviewing 16 participants (see Morse, 2015).

Most interviews were conducted over the phone because participants were scattered across the United States. When participants were local, interviews were conducted face-to-face. Interviews were scheduled and conducted at the convenience of the participant. Because of the busy schedule of senior leaders, some interviews had to be rescheduled. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The data collection process took approximately 9 weeks.

Interviews were recorded digitally. During the interviews, I took field notes to evaluate my initial observation of the participant regarding each question. After each interview, I listened to the recording and made additional notes to help during the coding and analysis process. I took note of nuances in the conversation such as long pauses or difficulty answering a question. I also considered when certain questions were not understood and needed clarification. Once saturation was achieved, I transcribed the interviews for analysis.

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants. I planned to conduct more face-to-face interviews, but participant availability and location were challenges. I also planned to use video conferencing to accommodate the issue of location, but that technology was not available to most of the participants. I contacted 50 candidates and

scheduled 18 interviews. Senior leaders were difficult to schedule, and many declined to participate. Nonsenior leaders were happy to participate and easy to schedule. This phenomenon was included in my analysis.

Data Analysis

Based on my review of data analysis practices in phenomenological research, I discovered that most approaches incorporated the whole-part-whole analysis method (Dahlberg et al., 2008; Vagle, 2014; Van Manen, 2016). My data analysis consisted of a four-step process. The first step, reading the whole data set, involved highlighting key words, phrases, and descriptions. The second step, reading part of the data, involved finding meanings based on highlighted words, phrases, and descriptions. The third step, reading the whole data set, included exploring the clusters and patterns in search of essential meanings or essences in relation to the whole data set.

The first step of data analysis, according to Marshall and Rossman (2014), is to read and reread the data to understand the interviews. Dahlberg et al. (2008) noted that “to understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole is a methodological principle that takes research into an art of understanding” (p. 237). Listening to the recordings and personally transcribing the interviews contributed to my familiarity with the data. The analysis process started with hand-coding each interview transcript. Following Dahlberg et al.’s recommendation, I searched for meaning in the transcribed interviews and used bridling to set aside my personal beliefs and experiences with the phenomenon allowing the essential meanings of the data to appear.

The second step in the data analysis was to organize the data into patterns of meaning (see Dahlberg et al., 2008), themes (see van Manen, 2016) or meaning units (see Giorgi, 2009). In this process, I chose to use a descriptive phenomenological method. I

organized meanings into clusters to create a temporary pattern when searching for essential meanings. To identify the real meaning or essence of the data, I had to flip back and forth between the clusters and the original data multiple times.

The third step was to transform the data into meanings. In this step, I assessed the meaning that was discovered as belonging to the phenomenon and avoided supplying understanding with the meaning (see Dahlberg et al., 2008). The act of bridling involves the researcher setting aside assumptions or beliefs about the phenomenon and opening up for new and unexpected meanings to appear (Lindberg, 2013). I continued my analysis by questioning the text about; what was said, how it was said, and what was the meaning behind what was said (see Dahlberg et al., 2008). By questioning the data, I was able to reveal more about the phenomenon. After many iterations of reading the original data, listening to the recordings, and comparing the clusters, patterns gradually emerged.

The fourth step was to present these structures of meanings in a descriptive way that expanded the reader's understanding of the phenomenon. In this step, I wrote a narrative to emphasize the essence of the phenomenon. After the essence was presented, I pulled together the general meanings as well as the individual lived meanings as they were expressed by the participants and presented them in a descriptive paragraph, forming a general descriptive psychological structure (see Dahlberg et al., 2008).

I immersed myself in the data collection and analysis by personally transcribing the recorded interviews. Taking advice from Vagle (2014), I performed all the coding and analysis by hand to stay as close as possible to the data. My analysis approach included a combination of steps from Giorgi's (2009) descriptive-oriented, Van Manen's (2016) interpretive-oriented, and Dahlberg et al.'s (2008) reflective-oriented methods. This

combined approach provided results that yielded a new understanding of the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence and trust.

The initial codes were derived from the conceptual framework for the study, my research question, and the list of interview questions in my interview guide. These initial codes included emotional intelligence, spiritual intelligence, compassion, wisdom, empathy, spiritual leadership, higher purpose, big picture, transformational, authentic, ethical, inspire, self-awareness, servant leader, and trust. After the first round of analysis, additional codes were added to the list: integrity, moral compass, communication, vision, risk, and disruption.

Interview Question 1 (IQ1) was designed as an icebreaker to get participants warmed up to answering questions openly. The question addressed the attributes of a leader that were considered important to the participant. This question led to the themes of servant leadership and integrity emerging from the data. The theme of servant leadership was also supported by Interview Question 7 (IQ7) when Participant 1 (P1) reported that his perception of spiritual intelligence in a leader was “someone who has a heart for service.”

Interview Question 2 (IQ2) was designed to elicit how participants perceived spiritual leadership in a business environment. This question led to the themes of emotional intelligence, moral compass, trust, and empathy emerging from the data. These themes emerge from IQ4, IQ7, and IQ8. P6 summed up his perception saying, “spiritual leaders are confident, believe in people, support people, work hard, fair, a leader who has your back, and someone you can trust with confidence.”

Interview Question 3 (IQ3) was designed to elicit how participants perceived big idea ways of thinking in business. This question led to the themes of vision, disruption, and risk emerging from the data. The general perception of leaders who exhibit big idea ways of

thinking was that they are risk takers and see disruption as a positive. Participants used terms like *visionary* and *strategic* to classify this type of leader.

Interview Question 4 (IQ4) was designed to elicit how participants perceived empathy in the workplace. This question contributed to the emerging theme of emotional intelligence, integrity, and trust. Interview Question 5 (IQ5) was designed to elicit how participants perceived business decisions that go against popular proposals. Similar to IQ3, this question led to the themes of vision, disruption, and risk emerging from the data.

Interview Question 6 (IQ6) was designed to elicit what participants believe is learned when things go wrong in the workplace. This question led to the theme of communication emerging from the data. P3 summed up the theme by saying “it’s an opportunity to sit and talk with one another, to have clear communication about the challenges, and how to improve upon them.”

Interview Question 7 (IQ7) and Interview Question 8 (IQ8) were designed from my central research question. These questions addressed participants’ perception of spiritual intelligence in a leader and the perception of trust in their organization. The data from these questions were consistent with the themes identified from the previous six questions. Participants saw a relationship between an emotionally intelligent leader and a spiritually intelligent leader.

Dahlberg et al. (2008) asserted that the process of analysis and understanding the data might seem endless, and it is up to the researcher to determine when it is time to stop. By spending a lot of time immersing myself in the data, I was able to develop a better understanding of participants’ perception of themselves, senior leaders, spiritual intelligence, and trust. Most participants reported their experiences from a positive perspective. However, a few participants reported their experiences from a negative

perspective. These negative perspectives might have resulted from the organizational changes occurring at that time.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

The credibility and believability of qualitative research rests on its validity (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). I reached data saturation after 16 interviews using open-ended questions and asking for more details as necessary to enhance my understanding of the participant's response. The sample population was split evenly between senior leaders and general employees to enhance credibility of the study. I was careful to bracket my personal experiences to allow for the true meaning of the phenomenon to appear. I also verified the accuracy of the transcripts with the recorded interviews.

Transferability

Marshall & Rossman (2014) proposed that transferability is the ability of the researcher to argue that his findings will be useful in other similar situations using similar research questions. In this study, I took a sample from a single global organization. The findings from this study could be applied to other contexts. Moustakas (1994) argued that phenomenological studies create a greater interest and concern about the phenomenon. The findings from this study could be leveraged across other organizations to expand the reader's understanding of the phenomenon and bring a fresh perspective. Additionally, a quantitative study could be designed to look at the level of spiritual intelligence in a leader and its relationship to the level of trust in the organization.

Dependability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) argued that in an ever-changing world, the concept of replication is problematic. The dependability of a study assumes that if similar subjects and similar context were replicated, it would yield the same result. In this study, I utilized consistent and systematic procedures for data collection and analysis.

Adding to the dependability of this study, I conducted a field test leveraging a panel of phenomenology experts to help validate proper alignment of the problem statement, purpose statement and research question. The field notes from each interview, the transcripts taken from each recording, and the consistent application of codes taken from the conceptual framework of this study added to consistency. A future researcher could repeat the work using the same phenomenological design.

Confirmability

Marshall and Rossman (2014) defended confirmability as simply a matter of determining if someone else can confirm the conclusions and interpretations of a researcher. The best method for establishing confirmability in this study is to maintain clear and detailed documentation for auditors to follow. First, I utilized a script for each interview (Appendix C), leveraging the same questions for each of the participants (Appendix F). Secondly, I took field notes during interviews to include in the transcripts. Thirdly, I recorded interviews and transcribed them later. I verified transcripts against the recorded interviews for accuracy. Lastly, I compared the hand coding and analysis of the data with the literature review and conceptual framework of this study to confirm the trustworthiness of the research findings.

Study Results

The central research question that guided this study was: What is the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company? The results were reported as themes that developed from the coding and analysis of the responses from the 16 participants to the 8 interview questions posed in the interview guide. The sections that follow present the five themes and five sub-themes that emerged from the lived experience of the participants to support the central research question.

Theme 1: Emotional Intelligence

A recurring theme that emerged from the participant's responses was emotional intelligence (EQ). Thirteen (81%) of the participants interviewed stressed the importance of emotional intelligence in a leader. Participant responses indicated that authentic leaders who demonstrated empathy, compassion and support for others developed strong relationships with their team. In a conversation about empathy in the workplace, Participant 2 (P2) concluded, "it's understanding the impact that you have on people and the impact the organization has on people and for me, that's really validation that empathy is important to be a leader, to be a team player." P4 summed up the theme saying:

taking into account just sort of that personal aspect of understanding how things affect people's performance in the workplace and working either around and with that, to ensure that people are motivated and happy and productive and doing their job is pretty important.

EQ is the ability to understand behavioral reactions and the motivation behind those patterns (Yadav & Punia, 2016). P4 reported:

I think it's very important for a leader to understand what motivates people and how different people are motivated differently and how people just inherently by personality or intellect or what have you will respond to different things differently. I think that's when EQ becomes particularly important, recognizing when people are having trouble with their environment because of more of the emotional aspect of things or from a morale perspective and that sort of thing with them being able to actually respond to it effectively and keep people on board and moving forward.

P8 summed up by saying:

it's understanding what motivates people. That's more of the practical side of it.

Once you get those theoretical considerations down, understanding how to motivate people and how to interact with them successfully is the next big thing. At a high level, that's what I think of what leadership is.

EQ differs from other intelligence with a focus on skills and abilities in the emotional realm including self-awareness, empathy, and quality communication (Freed, 2016; Seena et al., 2017). In response to the conversation on empathy in the workplace, P7 summed up his perception by saying, "I think it comes down to self-awareness and I think some people have more self-aware than others." P8 added, "I think emotional intelligence and being connected to people emotionally (and I think empathy is part of that) is super important because it's just another way that you form a connection with people."

Leaders who can regulate their own emotions, read others' emotions, and effectively communicate typically exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence and facilitate high performance in their organization (Nikoui, 2015; Seena et al., 2017). P9 summed up his perception saying, "I also believe that a leader has to have a strong EQ because you've got to be able to connect with people, so your communications skills have to be terrific." When

asked about important attributes of a leader, P13 expressed, “pretty simple, the ability to communicate clearly their thoughts above and below.” P16 reported, “it comes down to how they communicate, whether you want to call it charisma or their style or their personality, however you want to put it, but I think how people communicate is absolutely critical for them to be a leader.”

Theme 2: Servant Leadership

The emerging theme of servant leadership was equally emphasized by 13 (81%) of the participants interviewed. Academic studies on servant leadership focused on follower growth, empowerment, and ethical behavior (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Servant leadership is unique because it combines the drive of a leader with a focus on serving follower needs (van Dierendonck et al., 2014). P2 described the servant leader saying, “it’s a leader’s responsibility to support their teams, build an organization, design and drive their team’s success so that a leader truly serves their team.” P3 reported, “I will attempt, with the organization I’m responsible for, to provide a vision, a direction, sense of empowerment, to the folks I’ve been given the opportunity and responsibility to drive that mission in mandate for and then, to provide both support and the challenge that is necessary as we go forward to try to achieve and adjust towards those objectives.”

Servant leadership has been compared with a variety of elements describing how it works. Some descriptions include humility, wisdom, vision, trust, and transcendental spirituality (Winston & Fields, 2015). P5 described the attributes of a leader saying, “I think a leader, especially in a work environment, would have the best interest of the employee in their personal growth, to encourage them to grow further, to gain more knowledge more skill sets even to broaden their own bigger picture so that they can understand the bigger problem and succeed on their own.” P6 reported, “a leader is someone you can trust, who is

trustworthy, and someone who is a protector of other people.” P8 added, “a good leader has the ability to create a shared vision for people to follow . . . people feel like the leader has their interest at heart . . . the leader cares about what it is their trying to do . . . and you can’t be a leader without trust.”

Trust in a leader is built on the character of the leader which is focused on how followers perceive the leader’s character (Goh & Low, 2014). P9 summed up his perception saying, “anyone of us we can get a lot done as an individual but you’re going to get so much more done if you get a team or group of people, a country, the world, behind you. But you’re never going to do that unless you won both their hearts and minds. And so, the most effective leaders, I think, are the ones that just have an amazing EQ. They have an amazing ability to connect with people, to empathize with people, to understand what makes people tick and they make it work.” P11 added, “I look for someone who has an authentic leadership style . . . somebody who walks the walk and not just talking the talk, they lead by example . . . somebody that possesses integrity and is honest in their dealings.”

Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) concluded that a leader’s humility would moderate their effectiveness in motivating followers. P14 reported, “I really try to incorporate into my style with not just my direct reports, but my entire team, and let them know my personality. I let them know that I am no better, I’m no worse, than anyone else. I just happen to have a higher box on an org chart and I get to make the final decision. But I’m human like everyone else.”

The ability to be compassionate, wise, and peaceful should matter to a leader. Leveraging spiritual intelligence to motivate people taps into their desire for meaning and purpose in their work life (Wigglesworth, 2014). P16 reported, “people are going to need to have a sense of purpose. When you look at why people stay in a job, and why people are

motivated to go the extra distance, or above and beyond in their job, there needs to be some sense of belonging or obligation or purpose . . . you got to have that sense of purpose and the ability to translate to whoever it is you're trying to get to. Being able to connect people to that sense of purpose is what I would interpret as spiritual leadership."

Theme 3: Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was reported by 11 (69%) of the participants interviewed. A willingness to build strong interpersonal relationships and being genuinely concerned about the well-being of their subordinates mediate the impact of servant leadership on affective trust (Miao et al., 2014). P1 reported, "I think it's people that drives trust in the organization." P2 read up on how to turn his collection of direct reports into a trusted leadership team. He summed up his perception saying:

the ideal team player has a balance of 3 attributes. The first is humility, which I love. The second is hunger, which he (the author of the book) equates to a leader's drive, in that leaders want to have to work hard. The third is, he (the author of the book) calls it smarts but, in his book it's EQ.

P3 added, "to me, having some level of trust that the organization you work for cares for you and supports you and therefore that you would support that organization is a really valuable measure."

Cognition-based trust is established through a person's perception of another person's trustworthiness, which is based on that person's integrity, behavior, capability, and reputation (Pishdad-Bozorgi & Beliveau, 2016). P6 summed up his perception saying, "the key attribute of a leader is someone you can trust with confidence." P7 reported, "I think the people that you're dealing with make all the difference as far as whether you feel there is

trust in your organization because you know they're the ones you're interacting with." P8 added:

I think operating in a fashion where you demonstrate that you care about people, that you care about what you're trying to do, you operate in an environment of trust and with integrity. I think those characteristics, aside from any personal characteristics, are what makes a great leader.

The ability to express one's views has a positive impact on the perception of fairness and productivity in the organization (Vanhala & Ritala, 2016). Communication is key to building strong trust-based relationships in the workplace (Seifert et al., 2016). P12 reported, "open and honest communication leads to trust." P14 added, "trust is probably one of the most important things of a positive culture and a positive work environment. It's certainly something I try to invoke in my style." P15 believed the top three attributes of a leader are, "empathy, trust, and determination." P16 reported:

I've dealt with various people throughout my career from entry-level managers up to executives. The key portion around leadership is somebody you can trust. And for me personally, even more than you can trust somebody, they need to have a high amount of integrity.

Theme 4: Integrity

Integrity was reported by nine (56%) of the participants interviewed. Trust in a leader is built on the character of a leader which is focused on how followers perceive a leader's characteristics, such as ability, integrity, dependability, and benevolence in the workplace (Goh & Low, 2014). When asked about the important attributes of a leader, both P7 and P12 reported, "honesty and integrity." P8 believed strongly about integrity stating, "I view the political capital you have with people is based, to me, almost entirely upon your

integrity.” While reviewing the importance of trust in the organization, P3 reported, “I think trust is another way of saying that they (employees) trust that the organization highly values their contribution, their intellectual integrity, and what they think about the situation and what they’re willing to stand for.”

Honesty and integrity are ethical values characterized by spiritual managers (Faraji & Begzadeh, 2017). Integrity was number one according to P9 saying:

if you give me integrity and you give me great communication skills and then you combine that, for me, with the ability to have an intellectual capacity that challenges people and makes people better, because they have to stretch their minds to keep up with you, to me, that’s an effective leader.

P11 reported, “a spiritual leader is somebody who is going to be an authentic leader and operates with honor and integrity and does so with all their interactions with the people that they work with and that they lead.”

Theme 5: Moral Compass

Moral compass was reported by only four (25%) of the participants interviewed, but they believed a strong moral compass leads to the development of a spiritual leader. A leader with a higher purpose might respond to everyday business challenges in an ordinary manner but demonstrate little spirituality. Higher purpose does not necessarily mean a religious higher purpose but more of a leader’s belief in doing what is right (Klaus & Fernando, 2016). P5 provided an example of spiritual intelligence saying, “if you relay something in confidence, with the expectation that there is trust between someone and somebody who has a strong moral compass or spiritual intelligence, I would assume they would respect that.” P7 reported, “somebody could have all of those traits and have absolutely no spiritual base whatsoever, they could just have a very strong moral code in

their upbringing and they just pride themselves on trying to live by that particular code.” P8 added, “part of that moral compass is creating an environment where people can raise concerns and where you deal with those concerns appropriately.”

Spiritual leadership is characterized by high morals and ethics, making spiritual leaders ideal to influence and motivate employees to go beyond self-interests for the good of society (Afsar et al., 2016). P9 reported, “to me, integrity and moral compass go hand-in-hand. I believe the idea of leading, getting the people that you’re leading to believe in something, is an emotional not just factual experience.” In a post-materialistic world, people’s basic needs and workplace needs are changing. To accommodate the new higher-order needs, leaders must focus on values over profits (Korazija, Sarotar, & Mumel, 2016). P15 agreed with the need to focus on values saying, “I think most people would say, when push comes to shove, whether it’s layoffs, as you’ve experienced, or bonuses, the time to do things of quality or feels morally right, those are often decremented to some other overarching priorities.”

Subtheme 1: Communication

Communication is an important attribute for leaders and 10 (63%) of the participants interviewed agreed. Managers can shape an organization by creating an effective communication system that allows employees to participate in the decision-making process (Yusof & Mohamad, 2014). P3 reported:

you know when everything goes right, everybody feels great about it. And when things go wrong, that’s when you learn the most. The opportunity to improve comes when we when we miss step. So, it’s the opportunity to sit and talk with one another, to have clear communication about what are challenges and how to improve upon them.

P9 added:

I also believe that a leader has to have a strong EQ, because you've got to be able to connect with people. So, your communication skills have to be terrific. You need somebody who's a good communicator. Interestingly, I'm going to say that the communication capability is far more the spirituality element of this, which is, I need to be able to communicate facts that I need to be able to get you to believe in the thing you're hearing in your heart and in your mind.

When asked about important attributes of a leader, the first thing that came to mind for P10 was communication. P12 reported:

if you have that spirituality in front of you, that means that you are always upfront with your employees, right. You're always upfront, you're honest with them, they trust you, right. They trust your open and honest communication leads to trust.

P15 summed up his perception saying, "I think it's transparency. Maybe you get transparency through communication, but I think there's something to be said for understanding all dynamics in the problem." P16 reported:

I think it's pretty hard for somebody to just come in and lead and not have some experience base. So, I'd say integrity, experience, and then it comes down to how they communicate. Whether that's you want to call it charisma or their style or their personality, however you want to put it, but I think how people communicate to their teens or their peers or their boss, is absolutely critical for them to be a leader.

Subtheme 2: Empathy

The importance of empathy was reported by 8 (50%) of the participants interviewed. Goleman (2014) argued that emotional intelligence consists of four multidimensional components such as empathy, social skill, self-awareness and self-

regulation. P1 reported, "I think people would have healthier relationships with their positions if there was more empathy in the workplace." P2 added, "it's understanding the impact that you have on people and the impact an organization has on people. And for me, that's really validation that empathy is important to be a leader, to be a team player." P4 summed up his perception saying, "I don't think you can be a good manager without a certain level of empathy."

"Empathy and social skills are core competencies for managing emotions in interpersonal settings" (Choi et al., 2015, p.63). P7 reported:

I think empathy gives you the ability to understand kind of the human component. I think that it speaks to, sort of, you know, I know it's kind of a catch phrase that everybody's using now, but sort of like your emotional intelligence and whether you can really recognize when you're communicating with somebody. Where the right places to go, what the right thing is to say, where the boundaries are, and also, I think it helps you to be compassionate.

P6 added, "I think empathy toward others is really powerful and necessary."

Subtheme 3: Vision

Vision was reported by 7 (44%) of the participants interviewed. Leaders articulate a vision that inspires followers to commit to that vision (Echevarria, 2015). P2 reported, "I find good leaders need to be able to not only operate at the strategic visionary level but being able to go down into the details of understanding and come back up, helps a leader in an organization's effectiveness." P3 summed up his perception saying, "I really think the compelling attribute for a leader are to provide a vision and the support and challenge functions necessary for the overall team to drive toward accomplishing that and creating that ecosystem and environment which is necessary." P4 added:

I really think it's important for a leader to have a vision and have the ability to communicate effectively because if you don't have that vision in the first place, you're just wandering around. You might be able to get people to follow you, but where are you going?

Transformational leaders articulate a vision and inspire motivation to develop follower goals and accomplish a shared vision (Gilbert et al., 2016; Mackington, 2015). P6 reported:

I tend to side with leaders who are more visionary, not just because I believe that change is always a constant, and if you're not looking for change, and you're not looking at what direction you may need to be considering, for better or for worse, then you're going to die and you'll just be swallowed up by somebody else in the company; some other innovator, right or wrong.

P8 summed up his perception saying, "I think the qualities that make a good leader are the ability to create a shared vision for people to follow." P15 worked for an innovative leader and remembered, "the experience I had was you're either very centered or focused on what the vision looks like." P16 added, "I think the job of a leader is being able to have some vision for the team and being able to connect people to that vision."

Subtheme 4: Self-Awareness

The concept of self-awareness was reported by 5 (31%) of the participants interviewed. The development of spiritual intelligence begins with stimulating a deeper awareness of self (Wigglesworth, 2012). Self-reflection and inquiry is fundamental to spiritual intelligence (Hacker & Washington, 2017). P7 reported:

If you are somebody who has a strong spiritual base or spiritual self, that is going to be reflective in your work. I would say that probably, I would bring that into my own

work. I would think that it does give me somewhat of a solid foundation when I'm dealing with my own team and coworkers. I think you could also have the person who is the more detail-oriented person, that you would say could also have a very strong spiritual kind of sense of self. I just really think it depends, where everybody's unique, so how those aspects of ourselves are reflected in the world are unique. I think it comes down to self-awareness and I think some people or more self-aware than others.

Spiritual intelligence contributes 44% to work performance and significantly impacts service quality (Taneva-Veshoska & Drakulevski, 2014). Wigglesworth (2012) asserted that the ability to listen to individuals' inner-self can be learned and then used to lead with wisdom and compassion. P8 reported:

I think one of the most important things that you have to do as a leader is be able to self-assess. I think that is absolutely critical for a variety of reasons. And what I mean by that is there are things that I'm good at and there's things that I'm not good at. And so, one of the things I always try to do when I build out my team is I don't hire a bunch of people just like me. I think that spiritual intelligence really starts with self-assessment and self-knowledge. It's knowing what you can do and what you can't do. It's bringing people around you to help you with that. Everyone should step outside of their comfort zone, but it's not stepping outside of your competence zone.

P14 added:

The individual leader has to be able to be self-aware. Maybe they are somebody that doesn't show trust. So, if I'm a leader that I'm not trusting my team at all, and I go learn that high trust leads to high productivity, but I believe I'm giving high trust,

then I'm not going to make any change. So, I have to be emotionally intelligent. I have to be self-aware. I have to be willing to acknowledge where my faults are.

Subtheme 5: Disruption/Risk

The concept of creating disruption or risk was reported by 5 (31%) of the participants interviewed. Resilient leaders are those who act and lead with courage despite the risk they may face (Ramachandaran, Krauss, Hamzah, & Idris, 2017). Emotionally intelligent leaders are willing to take risks that other might view as impractical (Freed, 2016). P6 reported:

I'm a big believer in disruption. I want to be on the receiving end of that, quite frankly, no, sorry, I want to be on the delivery side of that and not the receiving side of that. And to do so, you need to always be looking at what's happening in the future. And I love talking to futurist. And I love talking to people who are looking at ideas 20 years out and trying to figure out what my path is going to be, to potentially be involved in some of that. You have to just be able to stand up and say, I'm going to take a risk and call the ball. I may fail, but I may be successful at the same time, you never know. But it's a risk. You need to be able to take a risk. Good leaders take risk. Usually calculated risks, but sometimes they are instinctual risks.

Servant leaders are effective leaders when they show initiative, assume risk, and take ownership for their actions (Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017). P3 reported:

We are in inside an industry that everyone is talking about being ripe for disruption. We have more than 10,000 people working in the IT space. The opportunity for big picture thinking is people who are able to kind of look at our portfolio and look at the way we do things and really imagine something which is completely different, completely alternative way of approaching the way that our business gets done.

P8 added, "I think, in today's environment, there are so many disruptive threats to business that I think you have to get out of your day-to-day routine for a certain amount of time in the year and think about that stuff because destruction is everywhere. It's so easy now."

Two conditions must be met for trust to exist, risk and interdependence. Risk creates the opportunity for trust (Vanhala et al., 2016). Greater trust is required when the risk is greater (Knight et al., 2015). P14 reported:

I think it's important that people feel it's okay to make a mistake and not walk on eggshells and be afraid of making mistakes because then they're not willing to take risks. And if you're not willing to take risks, you're not going to be innovative or you're not going to move the business forward. I can only get things done by the power of the people that I lead. And so, for me, it's the need, if I don't trust them, then how can anything get done. Because, I can't go do the job of 50 people, and I think it's important that they feel trusted as well. Because, it gives them again, that comfort level to take some risks. It gives him that comfort level to be empowered.

P15 added:

I think more and more of those people find themselves not working in large companies. I think that there's so much involved in making the safe decision in a large company, that I think if someone is truly willing to take risks like that, they probably long ago decided to do it in a small company, or in a startup. So unfortunately, it's hard harder and harder to get that kind of leadership or innovation in a large company. And even when we talk about willingness to fail and stuff like that, I still think that's not how most people behave in a large organization.

Summary

Chapter 4 included the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and study results based on the data gathered from the interviews of 16 participants who worked at a large global insurance company. I recorded and transcribed the interviews. The data gathered was organized, coded, and analyzed using only manual techniques. Finally, using a combination of techniques by Dahlberg et al. (2008), Giorgi (2009), and Van Manen (2016), I reported on the lived experience of participant's perception of spiritual intelligence and trust.

To answer the central research question of this study, a series of eight interview questions were created to encourage participants to talk about their experiences with spiritual intelligence and trust. Using the whole-part-whole analysis technique outlined by Dahlberg et al. (2008), I saw five themes emerge from the data: emotional intelligence, servant leadership, integrity, trustworthiness, and moral compass. Additional sub-themes were documented: communication, vision, empathy, self-awareness, and disruption/risk.

In Chapter 5, I present how the findings from this study extends the knowledge of spiritual intelligence and trust. I compare the findings from the study with what was found in the peer-reviewed literature summarized in Chapter 2. I examine the limitations to trustworthiness that arose from the execution of this study. Lastly, I propose recommendations for further research based on the limitations of this study and the gaps in the literature. I evaluate the potential impact for positive social change with both leaders and organizations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust and report the lived experiences of senior leaders in a global insurance company regarding spiritual intelligence and trust. The implications for social change included creating a deeper understanding of a leader's spiritual intelligence, identifying the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's influence on trust within the organization, and describing the potential business application for leadership development. Phenomenology was the chosen design because it provided the best approach to construct meaning from the participants' experience (see Vagle, 2014). Interviews were conducted with 16 participants, and saturation was achieved (see Saunders et al., 2017).

The conceptual framework that supported this study comprised intelligence, leadership, and trust theories. The framework was informed by the intelligence theory of Gardner (1983), the leadership theory of Bass (1985), the spiritual intelligence theory of Wigglesworth (2012), the trust theory of Deutsch (1958), and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership philosophy. These theories collectively formed a sound conceptual framework to conduct an analysis of a leader's spiritual intelligence and identify the role of spiritual intelligence in a leader's influence on organizational trust.

Interpretation of Findings

The findings from this study were reported as themes that developed from the coding and analysis of participants' responses to the eight interview questions. Using the whole-part-whole analysis technique outlined by Dahlberg et al. (2008), I saw five themes emerge from the data: emotional intelligence, servant leadership, integrity, trustworthiness,

and moral compass. Additional subthemes were documented: communication, vision, empathy, self-awareness, and disruption/risk. These themes represented the lived experience of the participants to answer the central research question.

Seena et al. (2017) posited a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is essential to individuals' well-being and helps to provide meaning and purpose to life (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Participant 4 reported that emotional intelligence was particularly important for leaders to understand how people are motivated. Thirteen (81%) of participants believed emotional intelligence was important to effectively communicate and connect with people. Participant 7 related that "being self-aware was important." The participants' experiences with emotional intelligence as an attribute of a spiritually intelligent leader was supported in the relevant literature.

Servant leadership is a unique leadership style because it combines the drive of a leader with a focus on serving follower needs (van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Lynch and Friedman (2013) posited that the concepts of servant and spiritual leadership overlap. Participant 3 reported that he is responsible for providing a vision, direction, and a sense of empowerment to his team. Eight of the 16 participants reported a leader should care for the employees and have their best interests at heart. Participant 11 added that "an authentic leader is one who leads by example, not just talk the talk." The participants' experiences with servant leadership as an attribute of a spiritually intelligent leader was supported by the literature.

Trust in a leader derives from how followers perceive a leader's characteristics, such as ability, integrity, dependability, and benevolence in the workplace (Goh & Low, 2014). Honesty and integrity are ethical values characterized by spiritual managers (Faraji

& Begzadeh, 2017). Participant 8 reported that “the political capital you have with people is based almost entirely upon your integrity.” Eight of the 16 participants reported that integrity was the most important attribute for a leader. Participant 11 added that “a spiritual leader is somebody who is going to be an authentic leader and operates with honor and integrity.” The relevant literature in this study supported the participants’ experience with integrity as an attribute of a spiritually intelligent leader.

Miao et al. (2014) found that higher levels of trustworthiness may be established through servant leader behavior. Choi et al. (2015) posited that emotional intelligence enhances the trustworthiness and authenticity of a person. Participant 1 and Participant 7 reported that people drive trust in the organization. Participant 12 reported that “open and honest communication leads to trust.” Communication is key to building strong trust-based relationships in the workplace (Seifert et al., 2016). The participants’ experiences with trustworthiness as an attribute of a spiritually intelligent leader was supported in the relevant literature.

The moral side of leadership has gained interest as an essential motivator for servant leadership (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). People’s spiritual experiences serve to guide their moral compass (Creighton-Smith, Cook, & Edginton, 2017). Participant 7 reported that people could have no spiritual base but have a strong moral code. Participant 9 reported that “integrity and moral compass went hand-in-hand.” Spiritual leadership is characterized by high morals and ethics, making spiritual leaders ideal to influence and motivate employees to go beyond their self-interests for the good of others and society (Afsar et al., 2016). The literature supported the participants’ experience regarding moral compass as an attribute of a spiritually intelligent leader.

Communication and transparency are necessary to build organizational trust (Bansal, 2016). Communication is key to building strong trust-based relationships in the workplace (Seifert et al., 2016). Ten (77%) of the participants commented on the importance of effective communication to be a good leader. Participant 15 reported that transparency is important, and you get transparency through communication. Participant 12 reported the best way to get to trust is by open and honest communication. The participants' experience with communication as an element of leader influence on organizational trust was supported by the literature.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are visionaries who believe in a vision. In doing so, the leader can decisively lead people to achieve that vision (Cic et al., 2018). Only 7 (44%) of the participants said anything about visionary leaders. Those participants reported that leaders with a vision were focused, innovative, and had a direction for people to follow. According to Fought and Misawa (2016), leaders viewed their primary role as creating the vision and direction for their organization. Participant 16 assessed it this way: "I think the job of a leader is being able to have some vision for the team and being able to connect people to that vision." The literature supported the participants' experience with vision as an element of an emotionally intelligent leader.

One of the core components of an emotionally intelligent leader is empathy. Wigglesworth (2012) identified empathy as one of three important skills necessary for building strong relationships. Eight (50%) of the participants in the current study reported that empathy was important to be a leader. Participant 8 reported that "emotional intelligence and being connected to people emotionally was important and empathy was part of that." Leaders who can regulate their emotions, read others' emotions, and effectively communicate exhibit high levels of emotional intelligence and facilitate high

performance in their organization (Nikoui, 2015; Seena et al., 2017). Participant 9 reported that a strong EQ came down to effective communication. The participants' experience with empathy as an element of an emotionally intelligent leader was supported by the literature.

Self-awareness and the ability to self-assess are the basic principles for having high levels of emotional intelligence (Rubens, Schoenfeld, Schaffer, & Leah, 2018). The development of spiritual intelligence begins with stimulating a deeper awareness of self (Wigglesworth, 2012). Participant 8 reported that "one of the most important skills to have as a leader is the ability to self-assess." Knowing yourself and what you can and cannot do are important to being emotionally intelligent. Self-awareness is key to successful management (Cic et al., 2018). Participant 14 associated self-awareness with emotional intelligence and organizational trust. The literature supported the participants' experience with self-awareness as an element of an emotionally intelligent leader.

Leaders must transform culture, reinvent themselves, change the organizational structure, and encourage innovation to avoid getting disrupted (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Resilient leaders are those who act and lead with courage despite the risk they may face (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). Five (31%) of the participants reported on disruption or risk during the interviews. These participants explained that for leaders to be innovative or think outside of the box, they had to take risks and be disruptive. Risk creates the opportunity for trust (Vanhala et al., 2016). Participant 14 reported that it was important to let people know it is okay to make a mistake, so they will be willing to take risks. The participants' experience with disruption and risk as an element of leader influence on organizational trust was supported by the literature.

The themes that emerged from this study indicated that spiritual intelligence plays a critical role in leaders' capacity to make good decisions, build relationships, and provide a

sense of empowerment. Leaders with these qualities influence organizational trust. The literature showed a link between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence (Seena et al., 2017), an overlap between servant leadership and spiritual leadership (Lynch & Friedman, 2013), and that trust derives from a leader who has ability, integrity, dependability, and benevolence in the workplace (Goh & Low, 2014). Honesty and integrity are ethical values characterized by spiritual managers (Faraji & Begzadeh, 2017).

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the participants' understanding of the difference between spirituality and religion. I attempted to mitigate this limitation by providing a definition of spirituality and religion to help explain the difference. I used a descriptive design based on the theoretical framework grounded in lifeworld phenomenology. The sample included 16 employees of a large global insurance company. The phenomenological design was limited to the identification and reporting of participants' personal experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence and trust. Understanding the distinction between spirituality and religion was critical because this study had no connection to religion. Providing definitions helped participants understand the distinction.

The participants were open and forthright in their responses to the questions, but some participants did not understand the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence and did not draw a distinction between spirituality and religion. In these cases, I provided the definition of spiritual intelligence used in the study. I also differentiated between spirituality and religion to let participants know that this study had no connection to religion. Some participants were not able to relate personal experiences, but these participants provided their perception based on their new understanding of the phenomenon. I found this data to

be relevant because the participants explained their perceived experience as if it were reality. Their responses aligned with participants who did experience the phenomenon.

The selection of participants was split between senior leaders and employees to control for potential bias of leaders' perception of trust within the organization. Participant responses appeared to be open and honest, yet I noticed a difference in perception between senior leaders and general employees. Senior leader responses did not appear to be inflated. Rather, the difference resulted from how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Senior leaders experienced trust among their peers, their teams, and the CEO. General employees experienced trust among their peers, their teams, and their immediate managers. However, trust in the organization began to diminish the further away an employee was from the CEO on the organization chart. The differences may be the result of the organizational changes that occurred or might be based on personal opinions of the participants. These differences may limit replication of this study, and different results may be found in other organizations.

Researcher bias was also a limitation in this study. During the interview phase, my employment position was eliminated, and I lost my job. I was able to complete my interviews and begin the analysis phase of my study. The experience of losing my job emphasized a lot of the experiences, perceptions and feelings that the participants expressed in the interviews. I began to sympathize with the participants because I had the same perceptions and feelings. When a person sympathizes, they become emotionally involved. When I became emotionally involved, I introduced bias into my analysis. To manage my bias, I leveraged my notes, transcripts and recordings to focus on the emerging themes that came from the data. I used a qualitative reflective strategy to control personal bias that may have emerged from my experience. I bracketed my experience throughout the

analysis process, referring back to the recorded interviews as necessary to ensure credibility and reliability of the findings.

Recommendations

The study of spiritual intelligence is relatively new and often is paired with research on emotional intelligence. A shortage of research on the constructs of spiritual intelligence in leaders exists. The lack of research addressing what might lead to low trust in leaders and low organizational trust contributed to the motivation for this study.

I interviewed senior leaders and nonsenior leaders to understand their lived experience of spiritual intelligence and trust. Some participants self-identified as not having spiritual intelligence, yet they were asked to provide their experiences or perceptions of spiritually intelligent leaders. Because I did not control for this bias and participants did not identify as having spiritual intelligence, future research could address individuals who self-identify as having spiritual intelligence and compare their perception of spiritually intelligent leaders with that of individuals who self-identify as not having spiritual intelligence. Additionally, researchers could examine whether spiritually intelligent individuals only trust other spiritually intelligent individuals. This study is needed to help further understand the trust phenomenon among spiritually intelligent people versus nonspiritually intelligent people.

The theme of emotional intelligence emerged from the data with 13 (81%) of the participants reporting the relevance to spiritual intelligence and trust. I found various articles on emotional intelligence, but nothing that explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence on organizational trust. Future research is needed to explore the perception from both a leader and a follower perspective.

The theme of servant leadership emerged from the data with 13 (81%) of the participants reporting the relevance to spiritual intelligence and trust. A need exists for empirical work that allows for the discovery of how servant leadership and spiritual leadership work together to create organizational trust. Future research is needed to address the role of servant leadership and spiritual intelligence in developing organizational trust.

The participants for this study were selected from a large global insurance company. Just prior to and during the data collection period of this study, the company experienced significant organizational changes in senior leadership. These changes introduced a feeling of uncertainty and possible fear throughout the company. Participant responses to interview questions might have been biased. Future research should consider changing the demographics to include smaller companies in different industries that have been stable for a year. Changing the demographics may result in a new understanding of the role spiritual intelligence has in leaders influence on organizational trust.

One unique interview with a participant generated answers that took on a negative tone. The participant appeared to view leaders through a negative lens which resulted in responses that described bad experiences or leader qualities that were not appreciated. One example is the participant's perception of big picture thinkers:

I'm kind of detailed myself, so that kind of falls along with managers that get too detailed. I'm going to take care of the details. If you give me something to do, I don't need somebody to be petty. I don't need the manager to be petty or to get too involved in the details.

The participant's answers changed my view of the lived experience. From the negative answers, I was able to create a positive view by contrast. Future research is needed to

explore followers with negative perceptions of leaders to better understand their perception of a spiritually intelligent leader.

The research methodology used for this study was qualitative with a phenomenological design. In this type of research, researcher bias and inaccurate interpretation of data might skew the results and not present the true essence of the study. Future research should consider a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to add validity and reliability to the data.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The collection of themes that emerged from the data in this study contribute to social change by adding to the knowledge of spiritual intelligence and organizational trust that could help leaders gain a deeper understanding about themselves. This study might be applicable to human resource personnel in developing leader training programs designed to help current and future leaders understand the issues related to leadership practice in today's business environment. Spiritual intelligence training should become part of leadership development. Focus should also be given to building relationships when coaching and mentoring their subordinates in order to build trust (du Plessis et al., 2015).

Ramachandaran et al. (2015) identified the attributes of spiritual intelligence as a proposed prerequisite of contemporary organizational leadership. Faraji and Begzadeh (2017) posited that spiritual managers create insight, they trust, and they show humility. The potential for social change in senior leaders who leverage their spiritual intelligence is they create an organizational culture of trust and empowerment. As a result, these

behaviors become a role model for others to follow. These behaviors transcend the workplace and can have a positive impact on family and community life.

Vanhala et al. (2016) confirmed that impersonal trust can be used to increase employees' commitment to the organization. Paliszkievicz, Koochang, and Nord (2014) acknowledged that organizational trust has a significant role in organizational performance. The potential for social change is supported by the findings of this study as senior leaders influence organizational trust and create stronger relationships, improve organizational commitment and performance.

Methodological

For this study, I used a phenomenology form of inquiry to holistically value the lived experience of participants on their perception of the phenomenon of spiritual intelligence and trust. It was important to have personal descriptions of the phenomenon from each participant rather than my interpretation of their experience. The research participants were viewed as subjective epistemological beings to prevent contamination of the data with extraneous worldview assumptions (Koopman, 2015). This Husserlian method created pure presentations and un-interpreted data based on human experience (Koopman, 2015).

This study used a description design based on the theoretical framework grounded in lifeworld phenomenology. I chose to use phenomenology because it was a rigorous alternative to the traditional methods used by natural sciences that are not appropriate for examining human experience (Brooks, 2015). Participant responses were mainly based on the perception of leaders grounded on their insight of leadership and experience. By entering into the field of perception, I was able to understand spiritual intelligence as the participants saw it (Ramachandaran et al., 2017).

Recommendations for Practice

Radhika (2014) asserted spiritual intelligence is used to expand the capacity and make greater contributions to the service of others. Spiritual intelligence utilizes our deep inner resources to give us the capacity to care and the power to tolerate and adapt. In an effort to develop leaders with a strong sense of individual purpose, vision, and values, spiritual intelligence is being added to executive training curricula (Hacker & Washington, 2017). Since training is available, senior leaders should consider taking advantage of this self-improvement opportunity. A university-based leadership program that includes SQ as part of the curriculum is available at University of Alberta.

Another resource for leadership development using SQ skills is training through Deep Change (https://www.deepchange.com/about/meet_us), founded by Wigglesworth. The Deep Change organization utilizes a proprietary approach called Deep Intelligence to evaluate the leader and the organization and begin to understand the situation. This is a customized approach to leadership development. The potential for social change is the development of a transformational, self-aware leader.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust. Interviews were conducted with 16 participants and the data collected was used to describe the lived experiences of senior leaders regarding spiritual intelligence and trust. The results were reported as themes that developed from the coding and analysis of the responses from each participant to 8 interview questions. The themes that emerged from the data represent the lived experience

of the participants to support the central research question. The findings from this study support the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter 1 and 2.

The conceptual framework that supported this study comprised of intelligence, leadership, and trust theories. The framework was informed by the intelligence theory of Gardner (1983), the leadership theory of Bass (1985), the spiritual intelligence theory of Wigglesworth (2012), the trust theory of Deutsch (1958), and Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership philosophy. The themes that emerged in support of this framework included emotional intelligence, servant leadership, integrity, trustworthiness, and moral compass. The interpretation of the findings supported two structures that emerged from the shared experiences of the phenomenon.

The first structure that was prevalent throughout this study was emotional intelligence. Thirteen (81%) of the participants interviewed stressed the importance of emotional intelligence in a leader. The findings indicated that authentic leaders who demonstrated empathy, compassion and support for others developed strong relationships with their team. Goleman (2014) described that how well we manage ourselves and our relationships will determine how effective we are as leaders. Participant 9 reported, "a leader has to have a strong EQ because you've got to be able to connect with people." The emergent theme of emotional intelligence from this study supports previous research that suggested spiritual intelligence in combination with emotional intelligence and servant leadership may work together to build a culture of trust within an organization (Afsar et al., 2016; Esfahani et al., 2015, Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016).

The emergent theme of servant leadership was the second structure prevalent throughout this study. Thirteen (81%) of the participants interviewed emphasized that leaders who demonstrated humility, wisdom, vision, and trust were more effective in

motivating followers. Trust in a leader is built on the character of the leader which is focused on how followers perceive the leader's character (Goh & Low, 2014). Participant 11 reported:

I look for someone who has an authentic leadership style . . . somebody who walks the walk and not just talking the talk, they lead by example . . . somebody that possesses integrity and is honest in their dealings.

The emergent theme of servant leadership from this study supports previous research that suggested servant leadership represents one of the four cornerstones of a spiritually intelligent leader (Hyson, 2013).

The structures of emotional intelligence and servant leadership are the building blocks for a spiritually intelligent leader. Servant leadership was found to create follower trust in leaders (Chan & Mak, 2014). Building relationships and encouragement are characteristics of both servant leaders and emotionally intelligent leaders (Chan & Mak, 2014; Goleman, 2014). Interpreting the results from this study and comparing it to the data from the literature in Chapter 2, I concluded that spiritual intelligence plays a critical role in leaders' capacity to make good decisions, build relationships, and provide a sense of empowerment. Leaders who demonstrate these characteristics influence organizational trust.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your leadership experience.
2. What do you consider are the important attributes of a leader?
3. How would you describe a spiritual leader?
4. What deeply motivates you?
5. What guiding principles do you live by?
6. What are your perceptions about big picture thinking?
7. What are your perceptions about empathy?
8. How do you feel about standing on your position even when it goes against mainstream thinking?
9. What are your perceptions about adversity (in other words, when things go wrong how do you use what you learn from those situations)?
10. Please share with me some words that sum up spiritual intelligence to you.
11. Tell me your thoughts and ideas about trust.
12. How do you perceive trust in the organization you work for?
13. Share with me some words that demonstrate trust.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Schedule Interview Time and Date: _____

Interviewer: Bill Kerstetter _____

Interviewee Name: _____

Interviewee Code: _____

Interviewee Contact Info _____

Interviewee Position: _____

Organization _____

Location _____

Actual Interview Date: _____ **Time:** _____ **to** _____

Appendix C: The Interview Script

Welcome

Hi, my name is Bill; very nice to meet you. (*Shake hands*)

Is this a good place to meet? Are you comfortable? (*If yes, proceed. If no, move location*)

This interview is planned for one hour to be considerate of your time. If you are comfortable exceeding that time, I am happy to continue beyond the hour.

I will be recording this interview and taking notes as we talk. After the interview, I will transcribe our conversation for further analysis. As part of the consent form that I'm about to review, are you ok with my recording this interview? Recordings will be kept private for my use or faculty review only.

This is the consent form to participate in this study. Do you have any questions? Do you still want to participate?

(*If the answer is yes*) Please sign here. (*If no, thank them for their time and leave*)

No one will ever know your name because I have assigned this code to your information.

Let's begin now with the questions.

Foundational Research Question

- What is the role of spiritual intelligence in leader influence on organizational trust within a global insurance company?

Interview Questions:

1. What do you believe are the important attributes of a leader?
2. What are your perceptions of spiritual leadership in a business environment?
3. What is your perception of innovative, creative, and big idea ways of thinking in business?
4. What are your perceptions about empathy in the workplace?
5. What is your perception about business decisions that go against the popular proposals?
6. What do you believe is learned from situations where things go wrong in the workplace?
7. What is your perception of spiritual intelligence in a leader?
8. What is your perception about trust in your current organization?

Conclusion

This is the end of the questions, thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix F: Revised Interview Questions

1. What do you believe are the important attributes of a leader?
2. What are your perceptions of spiritual leadership in a business environment?
3. What is your perception of innovative, creative, and big idea ways of thinking in business?
4. What are your perceptions about empathy in the workplace?
5. What is your perception about business decisions that go against the popular proposals?
6. What do you believe is learned from situations where things go wrong in the workplace?
7. What is your perception of spiritual intelligence in a leader?
8. What is your perception about trust in your current organization?