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Leadership Development Strategies to Build Leaders Through Mentorship Programs

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Leadership Development Strategies to Build Leaders Through Mentorship Programs

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
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Walden University
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Abstract

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MS, Bethune-Cookman University, 2010

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

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Abstract

Developing employees to assume leadership positions has never been more critical for organizational leaders given the competitive climate and the shortage of executive leaders. Organizations must develop future leaders at unprecedented rates to assume roles and responsibilities of the current executive leaders who will leave the organization due to retirement and other forms of attrition. Using mentorship theory, the purpose of this multicase study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to successfully improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population consisted of 3 business leaders located in central Florida with successful experience in improving their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. Data were collected via semistructured interviews and review of organizational documents. Data were analyzed using methodological triangulation through inductive coding of phrases and words. Three themes emerged from the thematic analysis, which are: mentoring functions are critical for leadership development, multiple modes of mentoring are effective for leadership development, and a mentor's motivation is critical for a successful mentoring relationship with mentee. Business leaders must understand the processes and functions of mentoring to make informed decisions when considering integrating mentorship programs into the organizational processes and initiatives aimed at leadership development. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to make significant contributions to their local communities, allowing leaders to effectively respond to challenges associated with lack of proper health, homelessness, environmental sustainability, and violent acts.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study in loving memory of my grandparents. My parents Dr. David E. Bradley Sr. and Cynthia Bradley, without your love, understanding, unwavering support, and guidance, the completion of this work would not be possible. My brothers David Bradley Jr. and Donte Bradley, you both provide support and encouragement in your own unique ways. My close friends, your patience and positivity.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Business leaders must develop employees into future leaders to respond to current and future challenges to ensure the success and survival of the organization in a competitive global environment (Dongen, 2014). Hunt (2014) argued that 50% of human resource leaders believe that the challenge over the next 10 years is retaining and developing talented employee to become next-generation leaders. Organizations use many different processes and practices for leadership development (Davis, 2014). The purpose of the qualitative, multicase research study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Background of the Problem

Organizations must prepare to overcome the challenge of a shortage of executive leaders (Morrall & Ovbije, 2014). While several business leaders are aware of the importance of developing employees into leaders, many business leaders do not have structured processes in place for developing and retaining their leaders (Dongen, 2014). Morrall and Ovbije (2014) noted that organizations must develop future leaders at unprecedented rates because of the high turnover projections of executive leaders due to retirement and others forms of attrition. To minimize attrition and maximize the investment in recruitment, selection, and training, business leaders must build an organizational culture of support for new employees by a process of carefully matching a mentor with a mentee (Dow, 2014).

Kram (1985) described the process of matching a mentor with a mentee as *mentorship*. Kram defined mentorship as a developmental relationship between a mentor, an older, more experienced leader, and a younger, less experienced mentee, for the mentee's career development and growth. A mentor develops a personalized interest in a new employee and invests sufficient time and effort in guiding that mentee through multiple stages of career growth (Dow, 2014). Sixty-six percent of senior leaders hired from outside an organization are dismissed within the first 18 months (Greenberg, 2013), resulting in costs as much as five times the employee's salary for a bad hiring decision (Kimeldorf, 2013; Wang, 2013). Organizational leaders must develop their own employees to assume leadership positions in their organizations (Morrall & Ovbije, 2014).

Problem Statement

Business leaders are facing the challenge of developing their own employees to assume leadership positions in their organizations (Freeman & Siegfried, 2015; Hunt, 2014). Business leaders devote less than 10% of their time developing employee leadership capabilities through mentoring programs (Winn, 2014), suggesting poor or nonexistent mentoring programs designed to prepare employees to assume leadership positions. The general business problem that was some business leaders do not use mentoring programs to develop their employees to assume leadership positions in their organizations. The specific business problem was that some business leaders lack strategies to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to successfully improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population consisted of business leaders located in central Florida who successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to make significant contributions to their local communities in response to challenges associated with lack of proper health, homelessness, environmental sustainability, and violent acts.

Nature of the Study

Researchers use the nature of a study to identify the research method. The three methods for conducting formal research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Yin, 2014). Qualitative research allows for adaptable, context-sensitive, and data-driven exploration of a problem or phenomena (Reiter, Stewart, & Bruce, 2011). Researchers use the quantitative research methodology when they intend to use numerical data or test hypotheses (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Mixed-method researchers incorporate qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data, integrate findings, and make inferences (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012).

I did not select either quantitative or mixed-methods research methodologies because of the inclusion of quantitative inquiry. Quantitative and mixed-methods research methodologies are well suited for studies requiring mathematical analyses of numerical data to support explanations of phenomena (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013).

Because I did not need to conduct mathematical analyses using numerical data, both the quantitative and the mixed-methods research methodologies were not suitable for my study.

Qualitative researchers explore and record human experiences (Vohra, 2014) as means to gain a deep and rich understanding of a specific phenomenon (Trotter, 2012). The qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to explore the *why* and *how* during the research process (Yin, 2014). In addition, the qualitative research methodology involves using multiple techniques to collect data, such as personal interviews, focus groups, and review of documentation (Yin, 2014). I selected the qualitative research methodology for this study because I explored strategies that business leaders used successfully to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Qualitative research designs include narrative, ethnographic, phenomenological, and case study (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The narrative research design includes limited perspectives and involves individual or small groups' life stories (Bryce, 2013). The narrative research design was not suitable for this study because this study did not involve individual or small groups' life stories. In the ethnographic design, the researcher studies shared behavioral patterns, beliefs, and language of cultural groups (Thomas, 2012). I did not select an ethnography because I did not study shared behavioral patterns, beliefs, and language of cultural groups. Phenomenology relates to in-depth reflective representations of individuals' lived experiences, emphasizing meaning and understanding of various aspects of those experiences, thoughts, and actions (Steffen, 2014). The phenomenological research design was not appropriate for this study because

I did not explore individuals' lived experiences, emphasizing meaning and understanding of those experiences.

Case study research design allows for in-depth exploration of individuals' perspectives related to the phenomenon under investigation in either a single or multiple case design (Rowley, 2012). The case study research design is the most appropriate design to explore the reasons something was established, the way it was implemented, and the results obtained (Yin, 2014). Researchers using the case study research design collect data impartially from real-life scenarios and ask exploritative, open-ended questions (Yin, 2014). I selected the case study research design because it was the most suitable design to explore strategies study participants use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. I used the case study design to collect data from real-life scenarios and ask exploritative open-ended questions.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study was as follows: What strategies do business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development?

Interview Questions

1. How did your mentoring program for leadership development support organizational goals?
2. How did you pair mentor and mentee for leadership development in the mentoring program?

3. Did you offer any incentives to mentors and/or mentees to participate in a mentoring program for leadership development?
4. What is the process for continuous improvement of mentoring programs to increase employee leadership development?
5. What are the most common drawbacks of leadership development experienced in a mentoring program and a mentor-mentee relationship?
6. What technologies did you use to support leadership development in the mentoring program?
7. What are the top priorities of the mentoring program and how do you evaluate the outcomes to determine a successful mentoring experience for leadership development?
8. What components of the mentoring programs did you find most effective? Please explain why?
9. What, if any, adjustments or new approaches have been made to the mentoring program to address new millennial employees?
10. What mentoring models did you use and which ones were most effective?
11. What more can you add to this study regarding strategies you used to improve your mentoring programs for employee leadership development?

Conceptual Framework

I used mentorship theory as the conceptual framework for this study. Kram (1985) developed a mentorship theory to explain developmental mentoring employee relationships. Career and psychological mentoring functions are key constructs underlying Kram’s theory of mentoring. Career mentoring functions increase the mentee’s probability of career success through supportive mentor behaviors specific to a mentee's career progression (Kram, 1985). Mentors engaged in personal relationships with mentees strengthen psychological mentoring functions of a mentee's identity and professional competence (Kram, 1985).

Practitioners primarily used Kram’s (1985) mentorship theory in the context of organizational leadership and management (Alderfer, 2014). I selected Kram’s mentoring theory because its constructs may allow participants to effectively improve employee mentoring programs for leadership development. Business leaders need to know and understand the role mentoring programs play in their organizations.

Operational Definitions

In this section, I provide the following definitions of business terms I used in this study.

Career functions: Career functions are behaviors that enhance a mentee's career by preparing for hierarchical advancement within the mentee’s organization (Grotrian-Ryan, 2015).

Coaching: Coaching is a facilitated, dialogic reflective learning process (Sammut, 2014).

Development: Development is a process that involves growing and leveraging strengths while comprehending and minimizing weaknesses (Johnson, Garrison, Hernez-Broome, Fleenor, & Steed, 2012).

Mentorship: Mentorship is a developmental relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of career development and growth (Kram, 1985).

Perception: Perception is a judgment made from beliefs and attitudes influenced from structural and cultural observations (Kamenou, Netto, & Fearfull, 2013).

Psychological functions: Psychological functions are a protégé's personal and professional growth, self-worth, identity, and self-efficacy enhanced by behaviors that build relationship through trust, intimacy, and interpersonal bonds (Kram 1985).

Self-identity theory: Self-identity theory is the connection between the awareness of an individual's behavioral intentions and identity (Cheng & Chu, 2014).

Leadership: Leadership is a person's use of interpersonal skills to influence and motivate others to follow or commit to the goals of a group (Kaiser, McGinnes, & Overfield, 2012).

Leadership development: Leadership development is the expansion of the capacity to enact basic leadership tasks needed for collaborative work: goal setting, creating alignment, and maintaining commitment (Johnson et al., 2012).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is a leadership model based on ethics with mutually benefiting relationships between leaders and followers that integrates a commitment to values and outcomes by maximizing the long-term interests of stakeholders (Caldwell et al., 2012).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This section includes the assumptions made and the limitations and delimitations established. Assumptions are facts that are assumed to be true by the researcher but prove difficult to verify (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Limitations indicate potential weaknesses in the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Delimitations define the boundaries of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Assumptions

Assumptions are researchers' notions of what they believe to be accurate and true (Elo et al., 2014). Assumptions are principles of logic without verification. Assumptions do not undergo statistical test (Elo et al., 2014).

My first assumption was that participants would provide candid answers to all interview questions, detailing information of the phenomena without intentionally introducing biased responses. The second assumption was that the qualitative research methodology I used to explore strategies that business leaders use to implement mentoring training programs for employee leader development is the best suited research methodology for this study. The third assumption was that a case study research design best suits my approach for this study. The fourth assumption was that the sample size represents the larger target population of business leaders. The fifth assumption was that the use of the concepts of mentoring programs and employee leadership development are universal across industries, cultures, and organizations. The sixth assumption was that the data I collected from business leaders could assist me in answering the overarching research question. The seventh assumption was that business leaders would be willing to participate in this study and that documents for review would be accessible. The eighth and last assumption was that using mentoring programs contribute to employee leadership development.

Limitations

Limitations are methodology characteristics that influence the interpretation of the findings of research (Elo et al., 2014). Limitations create potential weaknesses that affect the study's outcome. Limitations create constraints on transferability and applications to practice (Elo et al., 2014).

A limitation of this study was its sample size, which consisted of three organizational leaders. The small sample could not provide an exhaustive representation of all the businesses in the region. Another possible limitation was participants responding dishonestly and uncooperatively, negatively affecting the study, as pointed out by Elo et al. (2014). Participants responding dishonestly was not a limitation because participants agreed to respond honestly. In addition, the inability for a participant to recall a phenomenon could have been a limitation. The inability to recall a phenomenon was not a limitation as participants were able to recall lived experiences. The lack of trust could represent a limitation because participants might be reluctant to share their knowledge, as suggested by several scholars (Martins, Pak, & Martins, 2013). The lack of trust was not a limitation because I established strong working relationships with participants through effective communication to build trust and to engage participants in this study. Some participants may be intimidated by the interview process or fear the researcher’s failure to keep responses and names confidential. However, this was not a limitation. I was able to reassure the participants that the process was confidential, as agreed in the informed consent form.

Delimitations

Delimitations limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study (Elo et al., 2014). The researcher controls the delimitations of a study. Delimitations are boundaries researchers impose to narrow the scope of the study (Elo et al., 2014). The geographic parameters of this study included only central Florida business leaders who successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development for at least 5 years. I was not able to transfer the results from this study to the larger population due to the limited geographic parameters and small sample size.

Significance of the Study

Business leaders are facing the challenge of developing their own employees to assume leadership positions in their organizations (Freeman & Siegfried, 2015; Hunt, 2014). Business organizations need leaders to respond to current and future challenges to ensure the success and survival of the organization in a competitive global environment (Dongen, 2014). This section includes this study's contribution to business practice and the implications for social change.

Contribution to Business Practice

This study may have value to business leaders striving to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. Understanding strategies used by business leaders to successfully develop their own employees to assume leadership positions in their organizations through mentoring programs may provide fruitful results.

The findings from this study may allow business leaders to evaluate and enhance organizational strategies for the development and retention of skilled professionals to move into leadership positions.

Skilled business leaders are critical to the success and growth of a business (Pryor, 2015). Business leaders who successfully combine leadership development programs with the delivery of professional mentorship programs for employee talent elevate the performance of their employees and increase employee retention an (Huang, 2013). The development of leaders is a critical component that helps businesses sustain profitability, retain corporate knowledge, and improve organizational performance (Chung & Luo, 2013). Leadership development and learning must be business leaders' top human resources priority to increase organizational success in the competitive business market (Huang, 2013).

Implications for Social Change

According to Hunt (2014), a shortage of talent causes a rising demand for leaders that will continue to grow over time. Therefore, understanding the strategies business leaders are using successfully to develop leaders is essential for maintaining the competitiveness and sustainability of an organization. From a social change perspective, this study may be valuable to business leaders because future leaders provide innovation and support for businesses' efforts to provide quality services and products. The success obtained from building socially responsible leaders may positively influence the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the community.

In addition, the implications for positive social change may include the potential of cost savings through higher employee retention, thus affecting profit and allowing the business owners to become more civically engaged. Business owners might have more funds available to make charitable contributions to the community. Mentorship programs could potentially develop strong leaders empowered to mentor citizens interested in enhancing their professional skills to provide for their families. Business owners may be able to give back to local schools by starting mentoring programs for students that may lead to lower student dropout rates and increase social inclusion of disadvantaged youth.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The literature review involved contemporary peer-reviewed research on the current business environment, mentorship, various modes and models of mentoring, business mentorship programs, and mentoring for leadership development. The overarching research question for the study was as follows: What strategies do business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development? Therefore, *business mentoring, mentorship, mentor, mentee, mentee and leader, mentorship and leadership development, mentor and leadership training, leadership development, coaching and mentoring, business strategy,* and *mentor training* were the key terms used to explore sources for this multiple case study.

I used EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Sage Journals as primary sources for the key terms to retrieve scholarly journal articles and peer-reviewed studies. My strategy to search the literature included using previous key terms and subject terms, limiting publication dates, and using boolean operators. The results of key term searches often produced hundreds of articles, but pairing key terms with boolean operators reduced the number of articles. The results produced pertinent aticles and materials for a thorough literature review.

The literature review involved identifying different perspectives and gaps in the existing knowledge. The themes included (a) application to applied business problem, (b) Kram’s mentorship theory, (c) Kram’s mentoring functions, (d) Kram’s career mentoring functions, (e) Kram’s psychosocial mentoring functions, (f) Kram’s informal and formal mentoring relationships initiation, (g) Kram’s mentor relationship processes, (h) Kram’s mentor relationship structure, and (i) modes of mentorship. The literature review includes 66 references. The publication date for 58 (88%) of these references is between 2014 and 2018. In addition, 65 of the 66 references (98%) are peer-reviewed articles.

Application to the Applied Business Problem

The purpose of this qualitative multicase study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. Obedgiu (2017) indicated that business organizations need to develop strategic initiatives to keep pace with the needs of an evolving workforce. Business owners are facing a shortage of leaders because of global competitiveness and the retirement of many experienced, baby-boom leaders (Hunt, 2014). Millennials will soon replace baby boomers as the largest generation living in North America (Pascoe & McKenna, 2015).

Nembhard (2014) identified the technical challenges of cross training between generations in a multigenerational workforce. Baby boomers and millennials have distinct work styles, experiences, and attitudes (Cekada, 2012). Business leaders creating strategic initiatives to retain the best contributors in all generations must understand critical characteristics that distinguish workers in each generation (Al-Asfour and Lettau, 2014). As baby boomers begin retiring, business leaders need to retain organizational knowledge and facilitate the transfer of organizational knowledge to millennials (Muir, 2014).

Morrall and Ovbije (2014) discussed the need for developing future leaders at unprecedented rates in the federal workforce due to the 2020 high exit rate predicted for federal executives. Some workforce projections have over a 35% turnover rate of federal leaders due to retirement or other causes of attrition. The findings of this research study may lead to positive social change because business leaders could develop their own employees to assume leadership positions, avoiding the significant costs of hiring from outside. Finally, business leaders may be empowered to make significant contributions to their local communities to respond to challenges associated with lack of proper health, homelessness, environmental sustainability, and violent acts.

Kram’s Mentorship Theory

The phenomenon of mentoring is an essential element of successful business professionals’ careers. Kram's (1985) influential work, *Mentoring at Work*, unveiled a mentorship theory that moved the field of mentoring forward. Kram's mentorship theory is the conceptual framework of this study. Kram's perspective on the mentoring relationships in the workplace is distinctive compared to other works on developmental relationships in the workplace (Banerjee-Batist & Reio, 2016).

The traditional perspective of a mentor is an experienced individual that provides tutelage for a younger mentee, forming a one-on-one dyadic relationship (Yan, Cotton, & Kram, 2015). A mentor teaches, guides, counsels and inspires another with the goal of generating positive outcomes (Winter & Jackson, 2014). A mentee aligns with a mentor through a formal or informal relationship to seek direction, support, and a role modeling (Brummans, 2012). Kram (1985) described the traditional perspective of mentorship as a relationship that a mentor and mentee maintain over the course of an entire career until the mentee assumes a role of a mentor for a younger individual.

Kram's mentoring functions. Kram (1985) elaborated on the powerful relationship involved with mentoring, in which a mentor that has seniority or more experience provides a mentee with two essential constructs. Kram (1985) identified the potential impact of mentoring relationships on the mentor and the mentee. Mentoring relationships have important outcomes for both the mentee and mentor (Marcinkus-Murphy, 2012). Mentoring relationships offer mentees opportunities for career advancement and psychosocial development. Mentoring programs require organizational leaders willing to assist in building the necessary relationships that enable mentors to assist mentees to grow (Ripley, Markowitz, Nichols-Casebolt, Williams, & Macrina, 2012). Winter and Jackson (2014) argued that some business leaders not only find value in mentoring relationships for the mentor and mentee but the organization as well.

Career development mentoring functions is one of the essential constructs of mentoring (Ralph & Walker, 2014). Psychological mentoring functions is the second essential construct of mentoring (Ralph & Walker, 2014). Mentors' advanced knowledge and experience provide mentees with career support that may lead to upward mobility (Kram, 1985). Mentees receive the most powerful mentoring when both career and psychological functions occur during the mentoring relationship (Kram, 1985).

Ismail, Alias, and Amir (2012) found interpersonal communication and communication openness as the two primary communications styles for mentors when dealing with mentees. Ramaswami, Huang, and Dreher (2014) found that older mentors provide more powerful mentor relationships with career and psychological mentor functions than younger mentors. Older mentors have an increased likelihood to provide career mentor functions as opposed to psychosocial functions (Ramaswami et al., 2014). The age gap between a mentor and mentee relates to the probability of psychosocial functions occurring during a mentor relationship (Ramaswami et al., 2014).

Mentor relationships that perform career and psychological functions require more time and effort. Mentors performance of career and psychosocial functions increases during long mentor relationships (Banerjee-Batist & Reio, 2016). Mentors willing to invest the effort to sustain a powerful mentor relationship must find the mentee capable and worthy (Reinstein et al., 2012).

Kram’s career mentoring functions. Abalkhail and Allan (2015) conducted a study in Saudi Arabia (SA) and the United Kingdom (UK) exploring managers’ perceptions of career mentoring functions and networking associated with their career development. Abalkhail and Allan used Kram’s (1985) mentoring theory as a foundation to explore SA and the UK managers’ conceptualization of the influence of mentoring and networking. Abalkhail and Allan sought to compare the managers’ experiences with mentoring and networks in their career advancement. Not conducting the research to establish or analyze significant variables, Abalkhail and Allan applied a humanistic and subjective qualitative research methodology involving in-depth interviews to acquire the managers' understanding and perceptions of personal lived experiences.

Abalkhail and Allan (2015) aimed to increase understanding of managers' perceptions of mentoring and networking on their career development. Abalkhail and Allan found distinct differences of managers' conceptual understanding of mentors and the role of career mentoring in Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. The majority of Saudi Arabia's managers noted a minimal presence of mentoring programs and limited access to mentors. Managers from both Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom shared experiences of difficulty identifying mentoring and networks inside their organization.

Remund and Ewing (2016) used Kram's (1985) mentoring theory to provide business leaders thinking points to better understand the process of developing potential leaders. Remund and Ewing research consisted of interviews with both young professionals and senior practitioners having experiences with career mentoring functions. The results of Remund and Ewing's research allowed them to compile five of the most significant leadership development approaches for professionals. Remund and Ewing offered a significant perspective of senior practitioners that a mentor should encourage a mentee to take risks, challenge a mentee, facilitate the learning from mistakes, and provide career guidance for the most appropriate career path. Kasprzak (2015) supported Remund and Ewing's findings by stating a senior person in an organization should provide career mentoring through a comprehensive series of challenging developmental activities focused on a particular young mentee. Muir's (2014) and McCray, Turner, Hall, Price, and Constable's (2014) results of their research studies aligned with Remund and Ewing's position to facilitate the learning from mistakes by reporting the importance of reflection of successful and failed work situations to enhance future leadership development and to increase the productiveness of a mentoring session.

Arora and Rangnekar (2015) conducted a study on career mentoring functions in managerial and supervisory domains. Arora and Rangnekar applied Kram's (1985) career mentoring functions to examine the influence of supervisory career mentoring functions on occupational commitment and to investigate supervisory career mentoring functions and personality variables for predicting occupational commitment. Both researchers approached supervisory career mentoring functions as a catalyst career development and advancement for mentees with a direct impact on career planning and progression.

Arora and Rangnekar (2015) examined 121 of 300 mentees surveyed that reported immediate supervisors as mentors. From the 121 mentees with supervisor mentors, Arora and Rangnekar found significance results that perceived supervisory career mentoring functions strongly related to occupational commitment. Further results implied that a mentee with a more agreeable personality was a significant predictor of occupational commitment. Although Arora and Rangnekar's research has limitations, the highlight of the results is the importance of mentors' understanding of how to conduct a mentor relationship with mentees with different personality traits.

Kram's psychosocial mentoring functions. Psychosocial functions differ from career mentoring functions, which influence the professional factors of a mentee's career. Psychosocial mentoring functions influence a mentee on a personal level that extends over the personal development of identity, competence, and professional effectiveness (Ripley et al., 2012). Chun, Sosik, and Yun (2012) discussed psychosocial mentoring functions' beneficial effects for mentees in competitive working environments.

Grotrian-Ryan (2015) examined the application of mentoring functions to leadership development from the mentees' perspectives within the American Council on Education Fellows Program. Grotrian-Ryan used Kram's (1985) mentoring theory in his study to test the effectiveness of Kram's mentoring functions in developing leaders, responding to an increased turnover rate among campus leaders. The American Council on Education Fellows Program's mission is to prepare mentees for success as leaders at postsecondary institutions by providing them with access to senior executive jobs for leadership development.

Grotrian-Ryan (2015) guided his research study using seven overarching research questions. A mentee's perception of psychosocial mentoring functions of positive influence, multiple sources of mentorship, and a desire for ongoing mentorship emerged as three major themes of the research. Grotrian-Ryan's study results connected the relationship of mentoring functions and leadership development. Grotrian-Ryan used a mixed-methods research methodology in his study and the results supported his proposed conceptual model for leadership development. Grotrian-Ryan's leadership model included three main types of leadership development: experiential, individual, and course-based. Grotrian-Ryan's (2015) research study results highlighted *role modeling* at the highest level, followed by *acceptance* and *confirmation,* and *counseling* for the most effective psychosocial functions. Grotrian-Ryan results relate to Kram's (1985) identification of role modeling as the most frequent psychosocial function in a mentoring relationship.

Grima, Paille, Mejia, and Prud'homme, (2014) and Hebl, Tonidandel, and Ruggs (2012) supported the importance that a mentee should recognize, learn, and benefit from a mentor's positive example. Brown and Trevino, (2014). found positive examples of role modeling, including effective ways to manage teams, peer relationships, work life balance, exposure, visibility, promotions, and heavy workloads.

Lyons and Perrewe (2014) used Kram's mentoring theory to explore the way psychosocial mentoring functions influence a mentee's perception of support and the quality of the interpersonal relationship with a mentor. Relational mentoring stimulates learning, development, and mutual growth between a mentor and mentee within the career context. Lyons and Perrewe aimed to increase understanding of relational mentoring by conducting dyadic surveys of 100 mentor-mentee pairs to extrapolate knowledge of the internal mechanisms dyadic relationships to mentorships. Lyons and Perrewe tested their theoretical model with a partial least squares quantitative analysis. Lyons and Perrewe's empirical study resulted in conclusive distinctions between mentees and mentors regarding the emotional perceptions of the psychosocial functions and perceptions of actual mentoring support behaviors. Lyons and Perrewe's study showcased that despite the differences of goals, perceptions of work, and dispositional traits, mentees and mentors embody an inherent desire to work together to prepare the mentee for success. Gotlieb (2015) supported Lyons and Perrewe's research by noting that the effectiveness of psychological mentoring functions depends on a quality interpersonal relationship and the emotional connection of the mentor and mentee during the mentor relationship. Gotlieb explained that a mentor should be an active listener, understand each mentee's personalized experiences and needs, and respect a mentee's confidentiality and trust to achieve an effective mentor and mentee working relationship.

Kram's informal and formal mentoring relationships initiation. According to Kram (1985), formal and informal mentoring relationships differ by the initiation and both have benefits and challenges over time. A business leader's systematic implementation of mentoring develops formal mentoring relationships. Jones (2013) used Kram's mentoring theory to conduct an extensive longitudinal qualitative case study of a pilot formal mentoring program. Jones explored learning within formal mentoring programs. Jones recognized a gap in understanding the relationship between the factors that influence learning and how these may change throughout the mentoring initiation and process. Jones research aimed to compare learning expectations before and after the initiation of a formal mentoring relationship. Jones noted that individuals in charge of mentoring programs may use trained or untrained mentors; allow a mentee to select the mentor; use a coordinator to assign the mentor and the frequency and location of meetings; or allow mentors and mentees to set up their own relationships.

Jones (2013) highlighted that the results of his study uncovered that mentees and mentors might not be fully aware of the expectations of the mentoring relationship. Jones showed that mentorship program coordinators should raise awareness of mentors and mentees involved in formal mentoring. Jones found that mentees and mentors learn in similar ways. In addition, Jones identified storytelling and shared experiences as keys to learning for both mentors and mentees. Based on these results, Jones suggested that prementoring training should consist of learning behavior training for mentors and mentee to increase awareness of factors that may influence a mentoring relationship. Ismail, Alias, & Amir (2012) discussed that some business leaders try to maximize the value of mentoring relationships for the organization by a systematic implementation of mentoring that produces consistent positive outcomes. Business leaders initiate formal mentor-mentee relationships from personal selection or a pool of interested mentors and mentees (Ismail et al., 2012). Jones asserted that mentorship program coordinators need to select mentors with a balance of suitable work experience along with critical knowledge, behaviors, and skills.

Kram's (1985) mentoring theory highlighted the need for a high-quality mentoring relationship to increase positive outcomes from mentors, providing valuable psychosocial and career support to mentees. Menges (2016) used Kram's mentoring theory in his study to test a similarity-attraction paradigm. Ismail et al. (2012) and Jones (2013) noted the way business leaders attempt to create consistent positive outcomes for mentors and mentees and personal and professional development by implementing formal mentoring programs. Menges noted that previous research shows that informal mentoring programs are more effective than formal mentoring programs because of informal mentoring relationships' spontaneous development without involvement from a mentor program leader, which typically allows mutual identification, sympathy, and interpersonal comfort between mentor and mentee.

Menges (2016) conducted a study of a formal mentor program in a mid-sized organization and examined mentees' psychosocial and career support when mentees and mentors possess similar personalities. Menges tested 68 pairs of mentoring relationships with questionnaires at the six months and 12 months. Menge's study produced significant results that shown similar values for openness to experience improved the career and psychosocial support, and similar values of conscientiousness improved the psychosocial support that mentees received. In addition, Menges found key insight that similar values in agreeableness, extraversion, and neuroticism had no effect on career and psychosocial support.

Lazarus (2015) suggested that systematic formal mentoring initiated by organizational business leaders is not as influential and that the level of interaction as well as the quality of information shared decreases, compared to informal mentor relationships formed by a mentor and mentee. The selection criteria for a program leader depends on competency. Mangan (2013) described the way a program coordinator's selection of a mentor lessens the opportunity for a formal mentoring relationship to develop from mutual respect and perceptions of competency. A mentor might not even meet or know of a mentee until after selection. A formal mentor may develop a negative perception of a mentee because of the lack of selection power and view the mentee as a non-deserving individual for the program (Mangan, 2013).

James, Rayner, and Bruno (2015) described that informal mentorships develop from informal relationships that might initiate from a mentee that garners the respect of a perspective mentor. James et al. examined the perceived value and characteristics of informal mentorships. They administered a survey to compare participants’ informal with formal mentorship experiences. The results showed distinct differences between formal and informal mentorship and a preference for informal mentorships.

James et al. (2015) argued that informal mentorship is the preferred mentorship model. Austin and Nauta (2016) found that mentees need to build a personal and professional identity during early career stages. Austin and Nauta proposed that a mentee might initiate an informal mentor relationship by identifying potential role models, assisting in the development of the mentee’s self-identification. Lazarus (2015) described the way a mentor and mentee interpersonal comfort and confidence in each other may assist in the development of an informal mentoring relationship. Lazarus noted that a mentor and mentee might develop an informal mentoring relationship during a process of building rapport and mutual appreciation and enjoyment working with each other. Hicks & Knies (2015) emphasized the manner the mentor might seek out a mentee during a middle-level career stage of reassessment of life accomplishments. Hicks & Knies proposed that a mentor might find a sense of purpose during mentoring, assisting in the progression to higher levels in life. A mentor may gain comfort in identifying with a potential mentee through seeing a younger version of themselves and may advance an informal relationship to a mentor relationship (Chen et al., 2014).

Kram's mentor relationship processes. Formal and informal mentoring relationships functionality may differ due to processes that exist in the relationship. Kram (1985) identified four processes in the mentoring relationship. The first process involves formal mentors' motivation to be in a relationship compared to informal mentors. Mangan (2013) found that formal mentors may not be as motivated to provide psychosocial and career development functions because of the lack of connection and identification with the mentee. Holt et al. noted how informal mentors might have a more personal drive and internal gratification, as opposed to formal mentors that might receive organizational recognition. The second process involves effective communication and coaching skills. Ismail et al. (2012) argued that while personal communication influences the mentee's perception of the mentor relationship, a formal mentor displays stronger communication during business functions.

The third process is a mentor's engagement in a mentee's career development. Zasloff and Okurowski (2012) found that a formal mentor may lack engagement because of self-consciousness about assisting in a mentee's upward mobility due to the possibility that other organizational members might view it as favoritism. Kumar and Blake-Beard (2012) found that organizational leaders' implementation of formal mentoring programs shows the willingness to invest in employee development, but can create a negative perception of favoritism if the program is not all inclusive. The fourth process involves the selection of a mentee from certain functional units or departments that may not influence the relationship. Mentors might request to be matched with mentees from different departments to avoid the perception of favoritism (Zasloff & Okurowski, 2012).

Mentees matched up with mentors from different functional areas or departments may receive less role-modeling and career counseling due to the differences in career paths (Zasloff & Okurowski, 2012).

Holt et al. (2016) examined the causes that influence mentees to seek informal mentors while participating in a formal mentoring program. Holt et al. administered three different questionnaires to formal mentors assigned by program leaders, mentees, and informal mentors identified by mentees. Each group questionnaire contained nine open-ended questions related to the contact time between a mentor and mentee at work and 13 items related to similar characteristics that may exist between a mentor and mentee. The analysis showed a strong relationship between leader-member exchange, contact time, perceived similarity, and the position of the formal mentor mentee's decision to select an informal mentor.

Wu, Turban, and Yu Ha (2012) conducted a theoretical exploration of the way interpersonal skills, such as social skills, influenced the mentoring process. Wu et al. used Kram's (1985) mentoring theory to guide exploration of the role of interpersonal skills in mentoring relationships. The results suggested that whether it is a formal or informal mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees should observe each other's interpersonal skills before beginning a mentoring relationship. Wu et al. argued that a mentoring pair with high interpersonal skills is capable of building a more enduring, trusting, and pleasant relationship. Wu et al. demonstrated the importance of a mentor program leader's selection of a mentor with a mentee because of the costs associated with the decision. In addition, whenever a program leader pairs a mentor with a mentee ineffectively, this relationship may lead to a non-performing mentee that drains the mentor’s energy and time. A poor pairing may lead to an unproductive mentor and negative consequences for the mentee.

Zoogah (2013) examined how cultural context influences participation in workplace mentoring programs. Zoogah sampled from organizations with mentoring program in the United States and Ghana to gain insight into the mentoring relationship process in individualistic and collectivistic contexts. Zoogah’s study added to the limited body of cross-cultural mentoring participation research, which can assist business leaders in designing effective mentoring systems and develop human capital. Zoogah identified an increased need for human capital development due to the lack of human resource transformation systems and the rapid proliferation of multinational corporations. The results showed that mentoring readiness and career motivation predicted willingness and intention of individualists and collectivists to participate in mentoring activities. Zoogah’s results build upon Wu et al.’s (2013) study of the factors for business leaders to consider that influence the mentor relationship process.

Kram’s mentor relationship structure. An informal mentor relationship can range from three years to more than six years longer than formal relationships that last six months to a year (Kram 1985). The structure of formal and informal mentoring can influence mentoring relationship outcomes (Holt et al., 2016). Jyoti and Sharma (2015) explained that formal mentor program coordinators outline expectations and designate the type, place, and time of meetings between mentors and mentees. Jyoti and Sharma described the flexibility informal mentors and mentees have to meet as desired and adjust goals during the relationship.

Weiler et al. (2015) explored the effectiveness of time-limited mentoring programs. Weiler et al. found evidence of previous studies indicating mentor relationships lasting longer than a year produce more substantial effects compared to relationships lasting less than three months, despite noting gaps in the literature on the relationship length component of mentoring structure. Weiler et al. identified results of studies that did not support any association between relationship structure and outcomes, rather the findings reported in the studies support claims that relate brief relationship structures with positive outcomes in a mentoring relationships. Weiler et al. identified a 12-week, time-limited program to have some positive effects but lacked significance due to the scale and scope to make any strong conclusions.

Sarne and Goldsmith (2013) noted that participants of the U.S. Government Accountability Office’s Mentoring Program wanted extensions of the six-month mentoring program. As a result, the six-month mentoring program expanded to a nine-month program. The mentoring program’s leaders supported the decision because many participants felt that more time with the mentor would be beneficial to allow for increased conformability in the relationship. Jyoti and Sharma (2015) conducted a study to examine the influence of mentoring functions, mentoring culture, and mentoring structure on job satisfaction of employees. The results of the study revealed that mentoring structure had an insignificant impact on job satisfaction. Jyoti & Sharma strengthened the validity of the results with a three-step procedure through structural equation modeling. Despite the results of mentoring structure insignificance on job satisfaction, Jyoti & Sharma argued that mentoring structure strengthen job satisfaction and mentoring relationships. Jyoti & Sharma defended that proper mentoring structure allows mentors to increase influence over the mentees to meet organizational goals, develop a learning bond for the relationship, and allow program coordinators to retrieve accurate information to calculate results of mentoring activities.

Modes of mentoring. Kram (1985) developed a theoretical construct of mentoring based on a single, face-to-face, dyadic, and hierarchical relationship that provided psychosocial and career mentoring functions. Traditional mentor relationships are face-to-face, but now incorporate e-mentoring, an alternative mode of mentoring. Lindsay and Williams (2014) identified email, the application of the web, and other computer-mediated communication components of e-mentoring. Lindsay and Williams noted that e-mentoring allows mentors and mentees to overcome the geographical distance barrier of globalization, which is a permanent factor in today's business environment. During e-mentoring, mentors and mentees may use synchronous communication channels that enable a real-time discourse or asynchronous communication that has a time lag (Sohaib & So, 2013). Rowland (2012) discussed the way mentors and mentees use electronic methods such as email, Skype, and social networking spaces to deliver e-mentoring sessions, but may still arrange personal face-to-face meetings during the development of the e-mentoring relationships.

Bishop (2016) conducted an experiment to evaluate e-mentoring at a distance. Bishop examined the effectiveness of AVEUGLE, an online and in person augmented reality approach to e-mentoring used for assisting with the personal development of mentees. Bishop recorded the Skype e-mentoring sessions. Lindsay and Williams (2014) discussed the way e-mentoring might increase the time to establish and build nurturing relationships. The results of the recordings allow Lindsay and Williams to showcase the effective manner in which the Skype online conferencing method helped them to overcome many of the relationship-development barriers to bonding and rapport. Bishop acknowledged the reduction of affective information, such as body language, would decrease the trust-building process.

Barrett (2013) argued that virtual environments allow mentors and mentees to create value by supporting global growth for the organization, the learning process, including mentoring online. Despite the proliferation of the use of e-mentoring, challenges still exist when compared to face-to-face mentoring (Lindsay & Williams, 2014). Williams, Sunderman, and Kim (2012) identified technology, communication, and identification of mentoring roles as challenges to e-mentoring. Bishop (2016) argued that mentors and mentees need elevated levels of written communication skills and computer literacy for effective e-mentoring. Mentors and mentees using e-mentoring have to trust the process because of the concern with privacy protection mechanisms inherent in the technology. Barriers to online communication include difficulty understanding and the misinterpretation of information (Williams et al., 2012). Van Gramberg, Teicher, and O'Rourke (2014) noted that e-mentoring is not constructive for thoughtful transfers.

Other Contrasting Theories

Mentorship programs add value to the organization and provide the mentee career and psychosocial development. However, this section contains a discussion of other contrasting theories used for leadership development, including (a) coaching, (b) executive coaching, (c) team coaching, and (d) counseling.

Coaching. Sammut (2014) defined *coaching* as a facilitated, dialogic-reflective learning process. Moore (2016) noted that coaching in the twenty first century must overcome the most demanding challenge of talent turnover due to retirement or voluntary departure of high performers. Moore identified the development of others as the most important leadership competency for talent retention. However, research revealed the development of others as the lowest leadership competency. Moore explored the effectiveness of coaching as a leadership development tool. Moore noted that multiple researchers identified coaching as the reason for improvements achieved in the areas of leadership, personal performance, management, productivity, and employee satisfaction.

Salter and Gannon (2015) examined the coaching and mentoring disciplines for similarities and differences in approach. Salter and Gannon explored practitioners' approaches and perspectives within multiple disciplines. Coaching attempts to address performance in a particular aspect of an individual's work or life. Salter and Gannon argued the key differences between coaching and mentoring is that coaches assist individuals in finding their own answers and conclusions. Mentors approach the relationship with a mentee from a position of expertise in a particular context and offer specific advice and suggestions.

Al Shamsi, Ali Obaid, Dixon, Hossan, and Papanastassiou (2015) evaluated the effect the coaching process has on leadership development. Coaching emerged in research studies since 1950 and expanded into business management literature during the 1970s. Al Shamsi et al. argued that researchers have highlighted leadership coaching as an essential element of an organization's leadership development strategy. Al Shamsi et al. used a 32-item questionnaire survey to investigate the effect of coaching constructs on leadership development of 700 employees. The results from conducting a one-way ANOVA test revealed a positive relationship between coaching constructs and leadership development.

Susing (2016) described coaching as the most prevalent organizational leadership development initiative. Despite the popularity of coaching, the frequency of inconsistent results makes it difficult for business leaders to justify significant investments. Susing explored strategies to address the challenges of coaching and to optimize the outcomes. The results of the study supported Susing's position that coaching is more influential when coaches combine evidence-based approaches with selective advice and targeted learning content.

Witherspoon (2014) offered double-loop coaching as a new approach to coaching that fosters deep learning and critical self-reflection of behavior and thinking processes. Witherspoon developed double-loop coaching approach from distinct components of single- and double-loop learning that emphasizes how people react to error and change. Witherspoon designed a double-loop coaching for the guidance of a leader's action and thinking with a reflective, reframed, and redesigned framework. The drawbacks of double-loop coaching, compared to basic coaching, are the need for repeated contracting, additional implementation time, and advanced coaching skills needed by coaches.

Weer, DiRenzo, and Shipper (2016) examined employee coaching, which occurs between an internal coach, such as a manager, and an employee with the goal of continuous performance improvement. Weer et al. described employee coaching as an unstructured developmental relationship, in which managers offer feedback and guidance to inspire improvement and enhance employee performance. The quality of the employee coaching relationship depends on a constant reciprocal relationship between the employee and manager. Weer et al. explored the variability in coaching styles and behaviors of managers that used pressure-based and facilitative coaching. The results showed that facilitative coaching fostered enhance commitment among employees and positively influenced team effectiveness. Pressure-based coaching, which is characterized by managers that criticizing mistakes in public and reprimand poor performance to apply extensive pressure to get results, had a direct negative influence on employee commitment and team effectiveness over time.

Executive coaching. In contrast to Weer et al.'s (2016) study of employee coaching, Vien (2016) argued that companies should focus on high-potential employees when offering executive coaching. Vein identified a multi-industry survey that measured the use of executive coaching leadership development. The results showed 87% of the participants acknowledged their companies provided coaching to high potential employees. Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) described executive coaching as a formal and often short-term coaching agreement in which external coaches help clients develop executive behaviors, enhance performance, and advance their careers.

Ladegard and Gjerde (2014) argued for the use of executive coaching as an intervention for leadership development. Ladegard and Gjerde supported the use of executive coaching by noting the results of other researchers that noted high financial numbers. Ladegard and Gjerde presented the work of other researchers that used practitioner evaluations to examine the return on investment of coaching. The results from one study showed a researcher’s claim of a return on investment of 545% from the amount invested into executive coaching. Another study’s results indicated two months of coaching yielded an 88% increase in productivity. Ladegard and Gjerde conducted a field study and found that organizational-focused coaching of interior processes accelerated effectiveness of leadership development programs.

Grant (2014) argued for the use of executive coaching to assist high level management develop their capability to deal with organizational change. Grant examined coaching effects on executives as they go through periods of organizational change. Grant selected quantitative evaluations to provide objectivity and comprehensive measures of change and qualitative evaluations to capture individual participants’ subjective experiences. The results showed that a manager participating in coaching has positive relationships with others, an enhanced ability to deal with change, increases goal attainment, increases leadership self-efficacy, enhances solution-focused thinking, stronger resilience, and decrease depression.

Business coaching is a variation of executive coaching. Kruez (2014) emphasized that business coaching offers expert business and industry insight about management and decision issues. The business coach's expert perspective transcends the role of an experienced executive coach that assist in the development of behavior, leadership skills, communication, and presentation style. Kruez explored if high-level executives in the chemical industry could endure without a business coach. The results suggested that companies in all industries would increase the working relationships with executive coaches and business coaches. Kruez highlighted that some of the companies mandate high potential employees work with a business while other companies implement systematic pairing of business coaches and executives.

Schutte and Steyn (2015) acknowledged business coaching as a relatively new approach to leadership development. Only a small group of active researchers explored business coaching, which led to gradual growth as an academic discipline. Schutte and Steyn investigated current body of knowledge related to business coaching by conducting scientific analysis and synthesis of business coaching concepts, typologies, definitions, models, paradigms, and theories. The results produced 36 articles with specific inclusive and exclusive criteria for analysis. Schutte and Steyn confirmed the limitation of available data and researchers' misuse of the term *business coaching*, confusing it with terms such as executive coaching, coaching, and management coaching.

Mihiotis and Argirou (2016) identified the potential of executive coaching to have negative influences and produce undesirable outcomes for the organization, coach, and coachee, despite its growing presence in developmental leadership practice. Mihiotis and

Argirou explained that some organizational leaders lack understanding of the proper application of coaching and the factors critical for successful coaching initiatives. Organizational leaders may invest an average $500 per hour up to $3,500 per hour to use executive coaching services. Mihiotis and Argirou offered five factors needed to leverage the benefits of coaching. First, business leaders must offer to coach the right people and identify clear goals. Second, business leaders must position coaching to the company in a positive, sincere manner to encourage acceptance from participants. Third, business leaders need high standards for the selection of quality coaches and criteria for matching coaches and coachees. Fourth, all stakeholders should provide feedback during the process. Fifth, business leaders should establish measurements and metrics to measure the value of coaching.

Team coaching. Clutterbuck (2013) argued that organizational leaders need to focus on coaching initiatives for teams. Clutterbuck aimed to raise awareness by investigating current research and practical experiences in team coaching. The results showed that multiple definitions of team coaching weakened its presence in business practice; however, with a clear definition, the practice of team coaching can emerge. Clutterbuck identified that confidentiality, pace of thinking and deciding, and scope of thinking team differentiate team coaching from one-to-one coaching.

Britton (2015) addressed the concerns of Clutterbuck (2013) by defining team coaching as a continuous series of conversations structured to deepen awareness, set goals, create accountability, and support team actions that link back to business goals, results, and relationships. Britton argued that team coaching might focus on the team as a whole system and/or supporting individuals in the team. Business practitioners often collapse the term coaching with mentoring and counseling. Britton explored team coaching to focus the definition on the core elements, which differentiate the coaching process. Britton found important differences that separate team and group coaching. A typical group coaching session has four to eight individuals engaged in a more intimate conversation. Britton argued that team coaching supports the full team to expedite results and strengthen relationships.

Brennan and Hellbom (2016) argued that organizational leaders should use team coaching for the development of people, as opposed to fixing problems. Team coaching allows organizational leaders to scale coaching to reach and influence more individuals. Brennan and Hellbom observed, over a six-year period, an increasing need for coaching in organizations to develop the team as part of the goal. The results showed that silos within the organizational teams had negative influence on a team’s success. Brennan and Hellbom recommended positive team coaching as an approach to catalyze teams and create high-performing teams that demonstrate creativity, learning, shared leadership, commitment, purpose, and trust.

Dassen (2015) offered that drama techniques are a powerful tool for the success of team coaching. Dassen argued that unconscious behavioral patterns and dysfunctional group dynamics have a negative influence on a team’s effectiveness and success. Team coaching that incorporates drama techniques raises team member’s consciousness and awareness of behavioral patterns and dysfunctional group dynamics, which allows leaders to rebuild a once healthy and well-functioning team. The results showed that the playful, physical, and creative characteristics of drama techniques increased awareness of unconscious defensive patterns and increased team performance, supporting Dassen's argument.

Counseling. Joseph (2012) defined counseling as a process through which a counselor helps an individual by holding intentional conversations that lead to self-discovery of answers and decisions from the available choices. Counseling creates a comfortable environment for the counseled to reduce tension and anxiety of difficult personal situations, experiences, and challenges by elaborating thoughts and feelings. Joseph explored the influence of counseling on individuals as an innovative professional development technique. Joseph administered structured interviews with 110 randomly selected employees. The results of the study showed that 61% of the employees lacked awareness of the concept of employee counseling. Only 25% of the employees partially understood the concept and 14% had incorrect idea about the concept.

Von Bergen, Campbell, and Leird (2016) acknowledged that employment counseling has influenced workforce professional development since the early 1960s. Business leaders used counseling to improve employee workforce performance and help employees with job advancement and career development. Von Bergen et al. argued that high levels of counseling could have negative consequences to employee development. Von Bergen et al. used a counter argument to several business management experts' philosophies to support their own argument. One expert recommended focusing only on strengths to produce results and improve performance levels. Von Bergen et al.'s counter argument was that strengths become weaknesses when a manager over exerts in one great skill, such as over planning, over motivating, over delegating, and over detailed. Von Bergen et al. argued that counseling in moderation creates the most effective results.

Transition

This literature review section included an analysis and a synthesis of existing literature used to support the research topic. The literature review included a literature-based description of Kram's (1985) mentoring theory that included Kram's mentoring functions, career mentoring functions, psychosocial mentoring functions, informal and formal mentoring relationships initiation, mentor relationship processes, mentor relationship structure, and modes of mentorship. The literature review section also included other contrasting theories to Kram's mentoring theory. The focus of the literature review was the major themes of Kram's mentoring theory, with an application to applied business problem.

Section 1 of this qualitative multiple case study included the (a) background of the problem; (b) problem statement; (c) purpose statement; (d) nature of the study; (e) research and interview questions; (f) theoretical framework; (g) definitions; (h) assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; (i) significance of study; and (j) literature review.

In Section 2, I provide an in-depth description of the research project. This section includes the purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection instruments, data collection techniques, data organization technique, data analysis, reliability and validity, and transition and summary. In Section 3, I present the first line of the purpose statement, research findings, application to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and for future research, reflections, and conclusion and summary.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes the (a) purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) participants, (d) research method, (e) research design, (f) population and sampling, (g) ethical research, (h) data collection instruments, (i) data collection technique, (j) data organization technique, (k) data analysis, (l) reliability and validity, and (m) transition and summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population consisted of business leaders located in central Florida who have successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to make significant contributions to their local communities to respond to challenges associated with lack of proper health, homelessness, environmental sustainability, and violent acts.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the research instrument to obtain and analyze data for patterns and themes related to the phenomena of the study (Fagerberg, 2012). My role as the researcher was to serve as the research instrument by personally asking open-ended questions during face-to-face, semistructured interviews and by reviewing company documents. Mojtahed, Nunes, Martins, and Peng (2014) noted that qualitative researchers use a series of interview questions to extract knowledge from the participants about the phenomenon under investigation in order to provide a contextually appropriate description of the underlying meaning.

I conducted this study with three organizations. It is crucial for researchers to clarify their research roles, particularly in the case where the researcher is an *outsider-researcher* (Van Dyke, 2013). I had experience both as a mentee and mentor in leadership development. I had no direct relationship with participants from the organizations.

Drew (2014) affirmed that conducting qualitative interviews is an effective method for outside researchers to retrieve data from organizational leaders. Conducting outside research holds the advantages of no role confusion and objectivity, but it may pose challenges of access and suspicion of the interviewer as an outsider and potential threat (Drew, 2014). Therefore, to ensure credible research, it is critical that outsider researchers address both the advantages and disadvantages of conducting outsider research (Driskell, Blickensderfer, & Salas, 2013). Driskell et al. (2013) suggested building rapport with participants before interviews to overcome these challenges. Researchers need to build trust through honest communication to ensure participants are comfortable with the decision to participate.

It is important that researchers clearly indicate their underlying assumptions when conducting research to avoid perceptions held by others that the researchers lack integrity and competence (Blackwood et al., 2015). When conducting social research, ethical considerations that researchers should take into account are available in the form of guidelines, codes, and regulations enforced by review boards and professional associations. Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov (2015) recognized that researchers have a moral obligation to conduct their research studies ethically, including following the guidelines established by the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The Belmont Report protocol has a focus on the well-being of the research subjects as a core ethical foundation (Bromley et al., 2015). The Belmont Report's ethical guidelines include three principles: (a) beneficence, which relates to increasing benefits while minimizing risk; (b) respect for persons with voluntary involvement in research; and (c) justice, which is to treat participants fairly regarding potential benefits and risks associated with research (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

The Belmont Report protocol also includes information related to the use of ethical principles during a research study, including the assessment of risks and benefits, participant selection, and informed consent. Regarding informed consent, researchers must disclose and explain information about the research and the voluntary nature of participation (Koocher, 2014; National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). As the researcher, I was responsible for incorporating (a) the ethical principles contained in the Belmont Report, (b) Walden University's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) requirements, and (c) participating organizations' ethical requirements. I obtained permission from the IRB before collecting data for this research study. I ensured the ethicality of the research study by clarifying the informed consent principle to participants and collecting participants' signed consent forms before conducting my research study. Additionally, I treated participants fairly, notifying participants that their participation was voluntary and that they may terminate their participation at any time, and communicating to participants that their information was confidential.

Researchers may have predispositions for favoring evidence that aligns with their underlying beliefs (East, 2016), causing difficulties with avoiding bias in the research process (Spiegelman, Rivera-Rodriguez, & Haneuse, 2016). Nelson (2014) described confirmation bias as the tendency to recognize and identify information that supports a researcher's preexisting beliefs and to avoid conflicting information. Researchers alert peers to take caution not to introduce other types of bias in an effort to remove a specific bias. A researcher's inclusion of member checking in their research design is an effective strategy for avoiding bias (Johnson, 2015). A researcher presents participants with the transcribed interviews to allow the participants to review their description of their experiences for accuracy (Johnson, 2015). During the member checking process, I permitted participants to review interview responses and leave remarks. To allow readers to assess validity and reliability of this study, I identified specific assumptions and limitations before conducting this study.

I intended to maximize the benefits for participants and minimize risks by ensuring participants' anonymity, avoiding prejudice and bias in collecting and reporting data, and providing access to the results and outcomes of the study to the public. The prolonged social interaction of open-ended interview questions allows opportunities for interview bias to increase substantially (Welch, Plakoyiannaki, Piekkari, & Paavilainen-

Mäntymäki, 2013). I asked all open-ended questions exactly as written in the same order to each participant. I separated personal feelings from the research study to avoid possible biases in the form of integrating my own beliefs, life experiences, and personal views into my interpretation of participant responses.

An interview protocol includes information such as interview procedures, a script of the introduction and the conclusion, prompts for obtaining consent from participants, and interview questions and prompts (Morison, Gibson, Wigginton, & Crabb, 2015). The interview protocol was important because I avoided entering the interview with any preconceived notions of relevancy in concepts and hypotheses. Relationships and categories should emerge from the data and be bracketed to mitigate any preconceptions in the research process and add rigor to the study (Welch et al., 2013). Researchers use the interview protocol as a procedural guide (Morison et al., 2015). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to assist and guide me through the interview process and to ensure that I consistently shared the same information with all participants.

Participants

Participants involved in qualitative case studies need experience in the problem that the researcher is trying to solve in the study (Abro, Khurshid, & Aamir, 2015; Josselson, 2014; Toolis & Hammack, 2015). For this reason, the criteria used to select participants for this study included that each participant must be a business leader with at least 5 years of successful experience using strategies to implement mentoring training programs for leader development. A sample size of three provides a sufficient foundation to conduct a case study (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Stewart, 2012; Yin, 2014). I selected three business leaders to participate in this study.

To gain access to study participants, several experts (Evangelista, Poon, & Albaum, 2012) recommended the use of involvement or commitment strategies that connect participants' loyalty to the professional or social context of which they are a member (King, O'Rourke, & DeLongis, 2014). The involvement or commitment strategies may create collaboration and persistence towards common goals over some period (Wood, Kowalczuk, Elwyn, Mitchell, & Gallacher, 2011). I used involvement and commitment strategies to connect study participants' loyalty to the professional and social context in which they thrive. I connected with business leader participants by looking up the organization and contacting leaders by phone. I introduced myself during the initial phone conversation; incorporated involvement strategies; and explained the research topic, the criteria and purpose for their participation, confidentiality, and informed consent process. I obtained e-mail addresses and send e-mail consent forms to business leaders meeting the criteria to review and return if willing to voluntarily participate. I also communicated to participants that their contributions could add knowledge to existing literature of leadership development and the advancement of the mentoring field.

Gaining access to participants can involve internal or external processes of review and monitoring to regulate research (Griffiths, 2014). Hammond and Cooper (2011) noted that a critical part of research governance is demonstrating the ability to gain access to potential participants and, once they have agreed to participate, secure the signed informed consent forms. Participants must have a complete understanding of the requirements when agreeing to take part in research for informed consent to succeed (Morton et al., 2013). I displayed research governance by gaining access to potential participants and securing an informed consent form that confirmed participants' knowledgeable involvement in this study.

Researchers should provide a comprehensive briefing for participants to become comfortable with the research study (Cadman et al., 2014). For research projects, securing informed consent (Driskell et al., 2013) and briefing participants (Margolin, 2013) help establish relationships. Because of these reasons, I established working relations with participants and held briefings. As a result, the participants and I had tangible assurance of complete disclosure of the boundaries, roles, and involvement with the research.

Martins et al. (2013) encouraged researchers to establish strong working relationships with participants. To promote a higher level of openness, experts (Sala, Burton, & Knies, 2012) recommended building trust. Trust helps to cultivate collaboration and enhance transfer of knowledge (Cadman et al., 2013). Researchers need effective communication to facilitate active involvement (Engdahl & Lidskog, 2014) for cognitive and physical connections with participants (Martins et al., 2013). Roberts (2000) and Olson and Bilgen (2011) stated that building mutual trust is a foundation for achieving an in-depth mutual understanding of a shared context. Because of the participatory nature of this research study, I established strong working relationships with participants through effective communication to build trust with participants and to engage participants in this study. Once I established trust, I then cultivated the working relationship to enhance collaboration and transfer of knowledge.

Experts reinforced that participants must align with the overarching research question of a given study (Malbasic, Rey, & Potocan, 2015; Rahmawati, 2015; Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). In this study, the participants aligned with the overarching research question because I purposively selected participants with successful experience in using strategies to implement mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Research Method and Design

The nature of the research question should determine the methodology and the specific research design (Landrum & Garza, 2015). Venkatesh et al. (2013) described qualitative and quantitative research methods as the first and second movements of research and mixed methods as the third movement. Researchers must select the appropriate method to attain significant results (Weiner, Amick, Lund, Lee, & Hoff, 2011). According to these criteria, I explored strategies that business leaders have used successfully to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Research Method

Researchers use qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods to conduct research studies (Jackson, 2015). Madill (2015) argued that researchers should select a research method based on the purpose of the study. Qualitative research is an effective method for investigating topics (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013), particularly in the complex phenomenon of leadership (Vohra, 2014). Researchers using qualitative methods collect and analyze nonnumeric data (Lerner & Tolan, 2016), such as information in the form of narratives, texts, observations, and pictures (Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2013). Modalities of collecting data during qualitative research include in-depth semistructured interviews, open-ended questions, and focus groups (Yin, 2014). Jenkins (2015) identified that a qualitative research methodology allows for adaptable, context-sensitive, and data-driven exploration of a problem or phenomena. Researchers also use the qualitative research methodology to interpret meaning of human practices (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As a researcher, a qualitative method is appropriate to explore the breadth of a phenomenon, as opposed to the control of experimental variables of the quantitative research methodology that limits the ability to provide an in-depth exploration of the study's phenomena, as explained by Trafimow (2014). The characteristics of qualitative research methodology are consistent with the nature of this study because the focus is on exploring strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. I selected qualitative research methodology for this study because the qualitative research method allowed me to conduct adaptable, context-sensitive, and data-driven exploration of the problem under investigation.

Quantitative inquiry, compared to qualitative inquiry, comprises of different interpretative frameworks and methods that rely on numeric data from instruments and closed-ended questions to reject or not reject hypotheses (Yoshikawa et al., 2013). The quantitative research method allows researchers to establish general laws or principles but do not account for context and use few variables, prohibiting broad understanding of a phenomenon (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Researchers conducting quantitative research studies focus on prevalence rates, relationships, and cause-and-effect relationships. Quantitative research studies are confirmatory in nature (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The emphasis on statistics, relationships, and cause-and-effect relationships rather than humanistic perspectives made the quantitative research methodology not suitable for this study.

Researchers using the mixed-methods research methodology use qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data, integrate findings, and make inferences (Marshall et al., 2013). The mixed-methods research methodology allows researchers to combine elements of both approaches to broaden the breadth of understanding and validation (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). The mixed-methods approach balances the strength of both quantitative and qualitative methods without overlapping weaknesses (Janssena, Meierc, & Traceb, 2015). However, I did not select the mixed-methods research methodology because the quantitative design component did not assist me in answering the exploratory research questions. In addition, I did not collect and analyze numerical data or use identifiable variables in this study and, as Yin (2014) claimed, without identifiable variables, the quantified portion eliminates the use of the mixed-methods research methodology.

Research Design

Cao and Triche (2013) reaffirmed the importance of aligning the overarching research question, method, and design of the study. Gay et al. (2012) stated that the phenomenological, ethnography, narrative, and case study qualitative methods are high-quality research designs. Singh (2012) suggested implementing a case study to explore the newness and depth of the research phenomena and nature of the overarching research question. Yin (2014) posited that researchers can use case studies for exploring the complexity of a case and evaluating initiatives of the main case. Researchers need an appropriate method for exploring complex issues (Baek, Kwon, Kim, & Hahn, 2016), and a case study provides exposure to in-depth, firsthand information about a study's phenomenon (Iden, 2012). Rowley (2012) suggested researchers use the case study research design for the exploration of *why* to establish something, *how* to implement something, and *how* to evaluate the results. Case study research design involves an in-depth investigation of occurrences of a phenomenon in its natural context, from the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Ferreira de Lara, Neves, & Guimaraes, 2014). In addition, Ferreira de Lara and Neves Guimaraes (2014) and Choudhari, Adil, and Ananthakumar (2012) acknowledged that case study research supports goals of social and business contribution. Kang, Chiang, Huangthanapan, and Downing (2015) explained that the case study design could allow researchers to minimize the distance between theory and practice and to increase the usefulness of the research study for practitioners. I selected a qualitative multicase case study design to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. I selected a multicase study design to enhance the exploration of the phenomena under investigation while supporting my research goals to make social and business contributions to society.

I confirmed the decision of selecting a multicase research design by reviewing and eliminating other designs that did not suit the purpose of this study. The emphasis of the narrative research design is on the chronological recap of individuals' life stories (Lewis, 2015), told from their perspectives (Rindstedt, 2015). The results of narrative design focus on the researcher retelling the experiences and story of study's participants (Wolgemuth, 2014). The limited perspectives and the need to retell the story of the participants made the narrative design inappropriate for this study and, consequently, I did not select the narrative research design for this study.

The ethnographic research design is the study of a culture or population in its cultural or social context (Baskerville & Myers, 2015). The researcher makes close, in-depth observations, interpretations, and readings of the culture (Bertero, 2015). Coughlin (2013) explained that the focus of ethnographic research is on the whole population and not specific experiences and perspectives of any one person. My research did not involve understanding a culture, making an ethnography inappropriate for this study.

Phenomenology relates to in-depth reflective representations of individuals' experiences, emphasizing meaning and understanding of various aspects of those experiences, thoughts, and actions (Strandmark, 2015). The focus of phenomenological research is in discovering and understanding the inner essence of the participants' mental processing regarding some common experience (Sousa, 2014). Steffen (2014) argued that phenomenological research is more appropriate for studying emotional and intense human experiences. My intent was not to discover and understand the inner essence of the participants' mental processing regarding some common experience and, as a result, a phenomenology was not a suitable design for this study.

Population and Sampling

Stuart, Bradshaw, and Leaf (2015) advised that researchers would need to target specific groups of individuals for certain studies. Puhan (2013) proposed that the target population should relate to the research study and serve a particular purpose. Robinson (2014) recommended purposeful sampling as a sampling method that allows the researcher flexibility to regulate the selection process of a target population. Cleary, Horsfall, and Hayter (2014) claimed that purposeful sampling allows researchers to select participants that can provide deep insight and understanding of a phenomenon, increasing the accuracy of the results. I used purposeful sampling to select business leaders possessing successful experience in improving mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Qualitative methods have no standard rules that determine the size of the sample and may cause researchers uncertainty during the selection of a sample size (Topkaya, 2015). McShane and Bockenholt (2016) advised that researchers should consider the amount of information needed to serve the purpose and credibility of a study when selecting a sample size. The number of individuals that have the characteristics essential for the study's purpose may dictate the number of participants needed for a research study (Yin, 2014). Larger samples sizes for case studies do not guarantee rich data. Case study research should contain sample sizes between one and 10, but a sample of two or three is sufficient with low ambiguity phenomena (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Based on these recommendations, I selected three participants as the appropriate sample size from the target population to accomplish my objectives of this research study.

The study participants should provide an adequate sample size to achieve data saturation (Johnson, 2015). Data saturation occurs when a researcher is unable to obtain any new information from the research participants (O'Reilly & Parker, 2015). Morse (2015) identified that, when there is not a significant variation among the participants, data saturation can occur sooner. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) advised that researchers ensure data saturation by searching for emerging themes during data collection, reflect on the data, and continue to question participants until reaching data saturation and no new themes emerge. I searched for emerging themes during data collection, reflected on the data, and continued to question participants until no new data emerged. I reached data saturation with three participants, I did not recruit additional participants or conduct additional interviews because I reached data saturation with the three initial participants selected.

According to Vohra (2014), purposeful sampling allows researchers to identify participants with extensive knowledge in a specific area. Topkaya (2015) emphasized the importance of selecting participants with the qualifications, knowledge, experiences, and multiple perspectives to allow for an in-depth exploration of the phenomena. To gain deeper insight into the overarching research question and maximize the accuracy of results, I selected business leaders willing to participate in this study and possessing at least 5 years of experience in improving mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

A suitable interview setting is a place that is available, comfortable, and accessible, allowing researchers and participants to have privacy without the risk of interruption (Mahfoud et al., 2015). Mellor, Ingram, Abrahams, and Beedell (2014) recommended conducting interviews in areas familiar to participants because participants could feel more comfortable and researchers may be able to enhance communication during the interviews. I used a private room that was comfortable, accessible, and available at the participating organizations to conduct face-to-face, semistructured interviews with participants to allow study participants to have privacy and enhanced communication with no interruptions.

Ethical Research

A researcher should prioritize conducting ethical research by receiving signed informed consent forms from participants, protecting study participants from danger, and ensuring participants' confidentiality (Yin, 2014). Qualitative researchers use informed consent forms as a primary ethical consideration (Koocher, 2014). The informed consent process validates the integrity of the research by protecting research participants' privacy, building trust and awareness, and safeguarding rights to withdraw from research. The informed consent form includes the nature of the study, participants' expectations, potential risks and benefits, and researchers' contact information (Morison et al., 2015). Participants voluntary informed consent certifies an accurate understanding of the purpose and nature of the study (Morison et al., 2015). I acquired the signed informed consent form to acknowledge the participant's voluntary involvement in the study and to provide participants with the right to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. I protected the study participants' privacy and confidentiality.

Participants should be willing to participate in a research study and be knowledgeable of the study’s purpose and interview procedures (Schnieders et al., 2013). Results from research studies have the potential for social and business impact (Koocher, 2014). A participant may find personal incentives to join the study, such as professional and personal development opportunities and the opportunity to contribute knowledge to their field (Schnieders et al., 2013). I did not provide participants any financial incentives to join my study. I informed participants of the opportunity to contribute knowledge to the mentoring and leadership development fields and the possible benefits to business and society.

Drake (2014) discussed the methodological and ethical challenges experienced throughout a doctoral study, which participants feared retribution. Drake noted the importance of assuring participants about their protection and transparency. The Institutional Review Board’s (IRB) human research ethics committee helps oversee the protection of human research subjects and assures no harm to study participants (Ranjbar, 2012). The IRB regulates the ethical standards for human subjects research. Researchers conducting studies involving human subjects must meet the IRB’s established specific regulatory criteria before data collection begins (Blackwell et al., 2015). Institutional Review Boards have a responsibility to uphold ethical principles found in the Belmont Report to protect participants, the researcher, and the institution (Metro, 2014). Most institutions require participants to note IRB applications approval for legal and ethical considerations (Metro, 2014). The data collection process did not start until I received permission from Walden University's IRB. Following Walden University's IRB guidelines, I conducted interviews with participants focusing on participants' safety and informed consent. The Walden University's IRB approval number for this study is 08-30-17-0396649.

IBM research (2013) made the confidentiality and protection of consumer surveys data from third parties a top priority. Yin (2014) described effective management of data to include safe storage, protection from inadvertent disclosure of confidential data, and effective destruction of data. Marshall and Rossman (2016) recommended the application of code numbers as identifiers for participants to protect names of individuals and keep the participants confidential. I protected the names of individuals and keep the participants' identity confidential by applying code numbers as identifiers. I protected participants' confidentiality by storing all electronic information on a password protected external hard drive and jump drive. I secured both electronic and hard copy data in a locked cabinet in my home for at least 5 years. I will destroy all data after 5 years.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher's role as a primary data collection instrument is essential for a successful case study (Keepes, Bennett, & McDaniel, 2014; Larson-Hall & Plonsky, 2015; Yazan, 2015). I served as the primary research instrument and assume responsibility for the collection, organization, and analysis of research data. Qualitative research instruments yield data that falls into four basic categories: documents, observation, audiovisual, and interviews (Burr, King, & Butt, 2014; Hernandez-Hernandez & Sancho-Gil, 2015; Lerner & Tolan, 2016). As the primary research instrument, I collected data from conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing company documentation. Qualitative researchers use a myriad a data collection instruments to conduct studies in many disciples, but face-to-face, semistructured interviews is a preference for collecting deep and thought-provoking data (Burr, King, and Butt, 2014; Curtis & Davis, 2014; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014).

I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions (see Appendix A) as the primary data collection instrument. The semistructured interview, during the data collection process, is one of the most vital informational sources of a case study (Drew, 2014; Muskat, Blackman, & Muskat, 2012; Yin, 2014). When using semistructured interviews, a researcher uses base questions to explore the experiences of research study participants, and introduce follow up questions to generate data and increase understanding of a phenomenon (Drew, 2014; Jones, 2013; Muskat et al., 2012). I took advantage of the flexibility of semistructured interviews as a data collection instrument to tap into the expertise and experience of this study’s participants. The researcher’s ability and skills to conduct interviews can uncover nuances in participants' stories and increase understanding of the perspectives and experiences of study participants (Drew, 2014; Lerner & Tolan, 2016; Muskat et al., 2012). I facilitated conversations during the interviews with participants to generate rich and thought-provoking data about mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Researchers use interview protocols to help elicit information and conduct interviews during data collection (Drew, 2014; Hernández-Hernández & Sancho-Gil, 2015; Muskat et al., 2012). Researchers establish an interview protocol by confirming consent from study participants to conduct the semistructured interview, protecting participants' confidentiality and safety, minimizing personal bias from entering the study, and asking appropriate open-ended questions to gain a thorough understanding of participants' responses (Drew, 2014; Muskat et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). My interview protocol listed interview questions and the procedures of the interview process. I acquired informed consent forms signed by study participants to conduct the semistructured interviews, protecting participants' confidently and safety and minimizing bias by following a script before and after the interview. Using a script allowed me to guide dialogue and avoid leaving out important information participants need to know and to ask appropriate open-ended questions to gain a thorough understanding of participants' responses.

Annual reports, websites, and company documents can supplement the primary data collected from interviews (Nummela, Saarenketo, Jokela, & Loane, 2014; Taylor-West, Saker, & Champion, 2014; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015). I controlled the quality of this study by examining company documents of participating organizations. I reviewed the 2016 Corporate Social Responsibility Report, which was a comprehensive document of the company's activities, initiatives, and environmental and social wellbeing. I also reviewed the Leadership Development Order, which was a document leaders use to address key elements in the development of personnel necessary to succeed at work and in life, supporting the objective of leadership as stated in the Organizational Manual. The review of company documents is a cost effective alternative to gain access to quality and thoughtful information about the organization (Harris et al., 2014; Jenkins, Grimes, Proudfoot, & Lowry, 2014; Morgan, Paucar-Caceres, & Wright, 2014). Despite being one of the easiest ways to obtain readily available documents, business leaders may be reluctant to share internal documents making this data collection method unreliable (Carvalho & Rabechini, 2015; Filip, Jeanjean, & Paugam, 2015; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015).

Qualitative researchers need data collection instruments that produce reliable and valid research findings (Cai & Zhu, 2015; Chipperfield, Brooker, Fletcher, & Burney, 2014; North & Park, 2014). Member checking is a method researchers use to enhance the reliability and validity of their research findings (Birt et al., 2016; Keegana et al., 2014; Harvey, 2014; Lechuga, 2012). Member checking enables researchers to refine the data collection process and data quality by reviewing interview data with participants (Kamal et al., 2015; Keegana et al., 2014; Treloar, Martens, & McCarthy, 2015). I used member checking to validate participants' responses to semistructured interview questions to increase the credibility of my study. I voice-recorded participants' responses and interpreted the interview data by placing the interview data into a Microsoft Word document. I gave my interpretation of participants' interview responses to study participants and asked participants to add, delete, confirm, and/or clarify the data collected.

Data Collection Technique

With variety of qualitative data collection techniques available, researchers often select interviews to explore participants' experiences (Nesensohn, Bryde, & Pasquire, 2016; Onete, Pamfilie, & Grosu, 2014; Srivastava, 2016). Qualitative researchers ask open-ended questions during structured, semistructured, or unstructured interviews to allow participants in their own words to describe experiences with phenomena (Sella, Mendonça Ribeiro, & White, 2014). Researchers that use semistructured interviews maintain control of the interview by asking the participant predefined questions on specific areas of interest related to the overarching research question, remaining flexible to ask supportive questions to expand on the phenomenon under investigation (Khansa, Ma, Liginlal, & Kim, 2015; Sella et al., 2014; Tourangeau, Conrad, Couper, & Ye, 2014). The researchers' flexibility to adapt supportive questions when conducting semistructured interviews allows for an in-depth exploration that yields rich and thick data (Khansa et al., 2015; Sella et al., 2014; Conrad et al., 2014). Researchers typically record and transcribe interviews to capture the data for analysis (Mojtahed et al., 2014; Jones, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Researchers and participants benefit from the advantages of using interviewing as the data collection method. The advantage of a semistructured interview with open-ended questions is the potential for researchers to produce rich data with flexible questioning, while allowing participants to discuss in depth their knowledge in and experience of a particular area (Abawi, 2012; Drew, 2014; Driskell, Driskell, & Salas, 2015). Additionally, researchers implement active listening techniques to develop a relationship that facilitates extended and in-depth responses from participants (Mojtahed et al., 2014; Sandy, Beigi, Cohel, & Nash, 2014; Smith, 2012). Active listening enables researchers to show that they care about the participants by picking up verbal and nonverbal cues, allowing the opportunity to develop rapport, building on participants' responses, and identifying additional themes for exploration (Mojtahed et al., 2014; Sandy et al., 2014; Smith, 2012).

Researchers and participants also experience disadvantages when using interviewing as the data collection method, affecting the quality of data (Corus & Saatcioglu, 2015; Feiler & Powell, 2016; Strawn & Thorsteinson, 2015). Several common disadvantages of using interviews to collect data include the fact that a novice researcher with personal bias, poor investigative skills, and ineffective interview skills weakens the interview data collection technique and may distort data, which make results unreliable (Chipperfield et al., 2014; Lechuga, 2012; North & Park, 2014). Additional bias can form during interviews when participants provide answers they feel the researcher would like to hear versus providing unfiltered honest responses to questions (Abawi, 2012; Drew, 2014; Driskell, Driskell, & Salas, 2015). Another disadvantage is that participants feeling nervous and uncomfortable about the interview process might perceive the interview as invasive (Abawi, 2012; Drew, 2014; Driskell & Salas, 2015). Researchers use the interview protocol to mitigate weaknesses of the data collection techniques, help produce sufficient information, and facilitate efficient interview sessions (Drew, 2014; Holmberg & Madsen, 2014; Jones, 2013). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) that mitigated weaknesses of the data collection techniques, produced sufficient information, and facilitated efficient interview sessions.

Researchers should use pilot interviews with an eligible participant to refine interview protocol and facilitate consistency in the execution of the data collection instrument with all participants (Chipperfield, Brooker, Fletcher, & Burney, 2014;

Lechuga, 2012; Treloar, Martens, & McCarthy, 2015). Researchers use pilot interviews to assess the data collection timing and the usefulness of instruments and protocol, giving researchers an opportunity to make adjustments that can enhance quality and trustworthiness of the data collected (Chipperfield et al., 2014; Lechuga, 2012; North & Park, 2014). Upon receipt of IRB approval, I conducted pilot interviews with other eligible participants. I used the feedback from pilot interviews and refined my data collection instrument. No adjustments were made to the interview protocol.

Member checking allows participants an opportunity to increase the accuracy of research analysis by reviewing interview transcripts and offering feedback to clarify information (Caru, Cova, & Pace, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Johnson, 2015). The process of member checking involves presenting participants with researchers' interpretation of the interview data collected to confirm the credibility of the information (Caru, Cova, & Pace, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Johnson, 2015**).** Member checking is not fail safe, researchers warned that lack of constructive feedback after review may be a result of participants not reading interpreted interview data at all (Randall et al., 2015). Another disadvantage of member checking is participants becoming uncomfortable with providing honest feedback that contradicts the text in the researchers' interpretation of the interview data collected (Caru, Cova, & Pace, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Johnson, 2015).

I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data from participants. I aligned the interview protocol with the overarching research question which provided paticipants with interview guides. I used the interview questions as a semistructured guide for each participant's interview. I recorded and transcribed all participant interviews. I ensured the accurate representation of participants' responses by asking participants to review my interpretations of their responses.

While I used semistructured interviews as the primary data collection technique, I used document analysis as a secondary source of data. Researchers use document analysis to collect data in several format, including text, graphs, and pictures as an accepted method for data collection (Clarke & Mosleh, 2015; Limborg, Gron, & Jensen, 2014; Weishaar, Collin, & Amos, 2015). Data triangulation improves the rigor of a study and, for this reason, a researcher incorporating document analysis with interviewing can triangulate data collected to develop a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Nummela, Saarenketo, Jokela, & Loane, 2014; Taylor-West, Saker, & Champion, 2014; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015). Document analysis includes important company documents, such as annual reports, financial statements, and budget justification forms (Nummela et al., 2014; Taylor-West, Saker, & Champion, 2014; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015).

Challenges exist when using document analysis because of the risk of encountering a witness that authored a document due to a specific interest (Nummela et al., 2014; Taylor-West et al., 2014; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015). Researchers during the review of a document should consider the purpose for which organizations originated the documents (Clarke & Mosleh, 2015; Limborg, Gron, & Jensen, 2014; Weishaar et al., 2015). Researchers need to take into account the possible bias of the author that could skew document accuracy of recorded events. Researchers may face an additional challenge of obtaining or accessing relevant documents when using documents as a source of data (Clarke & Mosleh, 2015; Limborg, Gron, & Jensen, 2014; Weishaar et al., 2015).

Document anaylsis is an advantageous data collection method in case study research because researchers triangulate documents using company documentation and semistructured interviews (Nummela et al., 2014; Taylor-West et al., 2014; Wijnhoven & Brinkhuis, 2015). Researchers benefit from company document data to uncover new themes or identify areas that require further exploration (Clarke & Mosleh, 2015; Limborg et al., 2014; Weishaar et al., 2015). Yin (2014) suggested an additional advantage of reviewing company documents is to obtain detailed information, such as spelling of names or details of events pertaining to the case study. I accessed organizational documents related to the phenomenon under investigation that facilitated the review and analysis process, including the 2016 Corporate Social Responsibility Report and the Leadership Development Order.

Data Organization Technique

A qualitative researcher's data organization technique is important to ensure integrity of research, manage large amounts of data, reduce errors, and increase quality (Bibu, Sala, & Alb, 2016; Kenno, McCracken, & Salterio, 2017, Skivington, Lifshen, & Mustard, 2016). Yin (2014) suggested that before beginning with data analysis, a qualitative researcher should establish a system to organize data. The process and system to organize data can include record cards, research logs, and to-do lists (Gill, 2014; Singh, 2015; Watkins, 2012). The to-do lists, record cards, and research logs are data organization techniques that the researcher uses to cover all research topics and achieve research objectives in the required time (Corti, 2012; Gill, 2014; Singh, 2015). I used to-do lists, record cards, and research logs as data organization techniques.

I used a rubric as a to-do list for the organization and presentation of the content of this study. I maintained a research to-do list during data collection to fulfill various tasks and protocols of the study. I created record cards as cover headers for management and identification of the multiple data sets, including interpreted interview data and notes and organizational documents. I used research logs to maintain record of searches used to find references and to avoid wasting time because of repeated searches. In addition, I kept track of all the time in the field conducting research and interviews.

I used interview questions (see Appendix A) as a guide to conduct semistructured interviews with the participants. To maintain the confidentiality of participants, researchers recommended implementing participant codes as identifiers to keep participants anonymity (Graffigna, & Gambetti, 2015; Hansen, Mena, & Skipworth, 2017; Laihonen, & Pekkola, 2016). I removed identifying information from the transcribed interview data and will replace it with participant codes to protect confidentiality of all participants and others individuals and locations referenced by participants.

I protected data and participants' confidentiality by storing all electronic information, such as transcribed interview data, notes, and observations on a password-protected external hard drive and jump drive, as recommended by several scholars (Graffigna, & Gambetti, 2015; Gill, 2014; Singh, 2015). I confirmed the data was correct and useful by reviewing notes throughout the data collection. I indexed electronic information according to relationship and relevance to enhance data organization and retrieval. Furthermore, I improved the data organization process by entering the qualitative data in NVivo 10 software, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, as recommended by several scholars (Hutchinson, Nite, & Bouchet, 2015; Nairn, & Spotswood, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2015). Researchers use NVivo 10 software tool because of the effectiveness in organizing the data analysis process (Hutchinson et al., 2015; Nairn & Spotswood, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2015).

Researchers keep a reflective journal to become more immersive in the research and demonstrate transparency (Braund, Scholtz, Sadeck, & Koopman, 2013; Rich, 2015; Ward & Coates, 2016). By keeping a reflective journal, researchers can enhance their research analysis by capturing specific details, such as the description of the interview environment or participant reactions during interviews (Braund et al.,2013; Rich, 2015; Ward & Coates, 2016). I kept an electronic reflective journal to document the research process; the interview setting and process; interview process aspects, such as participants' reactions to the interview process and setting; thoughts about productiveness and how to improve effectiveness; decisions on how to ensure transparency; and decisions on the selection of codes and themes.

Deposing of data is an important practice of information security, making sure not to retain data longer than needed and to protect the privacy of participants (Farrall, Hunter, Sharpe, & Calverley, 2016; Gupta & Vishvakarma, 2016; Tsesis, 2014). Tsesis (2014) highlighted the importance of not retaining data longer than required and keeping the information secure. Researchers should adopt best practices for data protection during and after conducting research, as recommended by the research data protection legislation (Ploem, Essink-Bot, & Stronks, 2013). These best practices include (a) stating a clear purpose for collecting data, (b) retrieving informed consent forms from participants, (c) processing only legititmate data for the study, (d) using data collected for the research study appropriately, (e) retaining the information only as long as required, and (f) keeping the information secure.

I preserved data and ensured participants' confidentiality by storing all electronic information on a password-protected external hard drive and jump drive. I secured both electronic and hard copy data in a locked cabinet in my home. Various researchers used similar strategies to ensure secured storage throughout the research process (Goth, 2013; Thomson & McLeod, 2015; Torrance, 2012). I maintained raw data, a period of 5 years was the selected time for data preservation and then after data desctruction. These action met the requirements established by Walden University to require researchers to lock raw data in the safe for 5 years and destroy the data after these 5 years.

Data Analysis

Multiple sources of data is a distinct characteristics of case study research (Yin, 2014). Researchers conducting case study research select data, investigator, theory, or methodological triangulation for data anaylsis (Yin, 2014). Wijnhoven and Brinkhuis (2015) supported the use of methodological triangulation data analysis for case studies because researchers showcase the richness and depth of the data. During methodological triangulation, researchers explore various perspectives of phenomena with multiple data collection techniques, such as interviews, observations, documents, and questionnaires

(Tibben, 2015). Based on the definition and elements of methodological triangulation, the most appropriate data analysis process for this case study was methodological triangulation because I used at least two data collection methods, including semistructured interviews and review of company documents.

Following the Interview Protocol (see Appendix A), I imported data from semistructured interview recordings, and interview notes into NVivo 10 software. Researchers use various methods for qualitative data analyses, including thematic, content, and discourse data analysis to capture rich descriptive data, uncover patterns, determine meanings, and create conclusions (Rowley, 2012; Tibben, 2015; Yin, 2014). I conducted a thematic data analysis for this case study research. In thematic analysis, researchers read the transcribed interview data several times to gain a better understanding of the text (Manafo & Wong, 2012). Thematic analysis is appropriate whenever researchers use semistructured interviews to extract basic themes or codes, code, and organize key quote themes, and sort into global themes (Arbeit, Hershberg, Rubin, DeSouza, & Lerner, 2016; Vaughn & Turner, 2016).

Researchers can experience challenges determining units to analyze (Chenail, 2012). I used the meaningful unit analysis as the data analysis method in this study. A meaningful unit could consist of a letter, word, or phrase as meaningful units of analysis, as opposed to following a word-by-word or line-by-line analysis because researchers identify meaningful units regardless of length and label meaningful units of transcribed interview data (Chenail, 2012). Researchers use NVivo 10 software to assist with classifying, ordering, and analyzing data and identifying themes and the relationships among these themes (Hutchinson et al., 2015; Nairn, & Spotswood, 2015; Pettigrew et al., 2015).

The review of company documents significant to the purpose of this study was the second source of data for triangulation. I used content analysis to analyze documents relevant to this study. Researchers using content analysis extract emerging themes and organize and sort key codes into global themes (Arbeit et al., 2016; Manafo & Wong, 2012; Vaughn & Turner, 2016). The three stages of content analysis as a data analysis method consist of preparing, organizing, and reporting data collected (Arbeit et al., 2016; Manafo & Wong, 2012; Vaughn & Turner, 2016). I reviewed the 2016 Corporate Social Responsibility Report, which was a comprehensive document of the company's activities, initiatives, and environmental and social wellbeing. I also reviewed the Leadership Development Order, which was a document leaders use to address key elements in the development of personnel necessary to succeed at work and in life, supporting the objective of leadership as stated in the Organizational Manual. I converted the documents into PDF files and imported these PDF files into NVivo 10 software where I prepared, organized, and reported the data collected. While in the preparation stage, I established a suitable unit of analysis and included sense making, the organization stage included giving codes to the data and sorting the data.

I took notes using a reflective journal to enhance research analysis with descriptions of the context, interview environment, and participant reactions during interviews, as several scholars (Braund et al.,2013; Rich, 2015; Ward & Coates, 2016) recommended. Researchers use concept and mind mapping to analyze and interpret data collected because concept and mind mapping allows researchers to design a map that includes the potential relationships between concepts and themes (Arbeit et al., 2016; Manafo & Wong, 2012; Vaughn & Turner, 2016). I used concept and mind mapping to identify themes, demonstrate connections between themes, related literature, and the conceptual framework I selected for this study.

Reliability and Validity

By addressing Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four widely accepted criteria, which are dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability, researchers establish reliability and validity, both critical elements of research standards. Although the four factors do not have the same meaning in qualitative studies, researchers treat these four criteria as a qualitative research study's trustworthiness (Chipperfield et al., 2014; Lechuga, 2012; North & Park, 2014). The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research is equivalent to the reliability and validity elements a researcher addresses in quantitative research.

Reliability

Researchers must address reliability in qualitative research particularly when using a case study design. Researchers must ensure that the instruments they use in their research studies are reliable to obtain accurate and convincing results (Barusch, Gringeri, & George, 2011; Garside, 2014; Trotter, 2012). I used two sources of evidence in this study, including semistructured interviews and company documentation, as suggested by several researchers (Burr, King, & Butt, 2014; Hernandez-Hernandez & Sancho-Gil, 2015; Lerner & Tolan, 2016). Yin (2014) claimed that in a well-designed case study, researchers should not favor a source of evidence over the others because all sources of evidence are important because all sources of evidence complement each other.

Dependability refers to the consistency of results under similar conditions (Åkerlind, 2012; Noble & Smith, 2015; Newman, Lim, & Pineda, 2013). To enhance dependability, I used a panel of experts to provide deep insight and understanding of the interview questions to increase the accuracy of the results, as recommended by several scholars (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Puhan, 2013; Stuart, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2015). I also used the same list of interview questions in all interviews to increase the dependability of the data collection instrument and enhance the quality and trustworthiness of the data collected, as recommended by several authors (Chipperfield et al., 2014; Lechuga, 2012; North & Park, 2014). To confirm data dependability, I used member checking, as suggested by the experts (Birt et al., 2016; Keegana et al., 2014; Harvey, 2014; Lechuga, 2012). Researchers using member checking provided participants with the researchers' interpretation of participants' interview responses and ask participants to check for possible errors and to verify their answers, as suggested by several scholars (Kamal et al., 2015; Keegana et al., 2014; Treloar, Martens, & McCarthy, 2015). To increase data dependability, researchers use member checking to ensure that the researchers' biases have not been combined with the actual results (East, 2016; Johnson, 2015; Spiegelman et al., 2016).

Researchers produce reliable transcripts and themes by reviewing and reflecting upon the recorded dialogue with participants during interview sessions (Harper and Cole, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Trotter, 2012). I reduced the possibility of adding my biases to the interview data by asking participants to explain their answers to obtain sufficient detail and to expand their answers if participants' answers lack relevance or depth. I avoided altering participants' perspectives and produced more reliable results by not discussing with participants any details about the nature of the study prior to conducting the interviews, as suggested by several researchers (Drew, 2014; Hernández-Hernández & Sancho-Gil, 2015; Muskat et al., 2012). I maintained consistency and increased reliability by following the interview protocol and not introducing any new questions, as recommended by several scholars (Drew, 2014; Muskat et al., 2012; Yin, 2014).

Validity

As a part of the research validation framework, qualitative researchers must maintain trustworthiness of the study through creditability, transferability, and confirmability (Manafo & Wong, 2012; Morse et al., 2002, Yin, 2014). Researchers ensure credibility when doing a case study design by using a process for data collection methods, which compares within and across cases for research validity (Ali & Yusof, 2011, Morse et al., 2002; Yin, 2014). When only a single researcher analyzes the data, the researcher could ensure the credibility of data analysis by the inclusiveness and representativeness of the data as a whole (Manafo & Wong, 2012; Morse et al., 2002; Yin, 2014).

Researchers establish credibility by carefully reading the interview transcripts (Caru, Cova, & Pace, 2014; Harvey, 2015; Johnson, 2015). I reviewed the interview transcripts carefully by verifying that I have captured every aspect of the participants' perspectives. I emphasized the differences and similarities within and across study participants. I used member checking after interpreting participants' interview data and before analyzing data to ensure the validity of the captured interview data, as recommended by several experts (Birt et al., 2016; Harvey, 2014; Keegana et al., 2014; Lechuga, 2012).

Transferability is the applicability of results from one study to another (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Sousa, 2014). Researchers allow other researchers to transfer the findings from one study to another by providing rich and thick detailed descriptions of essential aspects (Houghton et al, 2013). Important parts of a research process include the research method selected, participants' descriptions, thought processes, and decisions taken during data analysis (Houghton et al, 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013; Yin, 2014). Researchers use interview protocols to ensure consistency of questions asked (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interview protocol serves as a script for the interview process (Marshall et al., 2013). I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) for reflection and debriefing after the interview, assisting me in my thought process. I used a semistructured interview format and a pilot study to increase internal and external validity and to obtain similar results from other populations in a similar context, as suggested by several researchers (Crowe, Inder, & Porter, 2015; Morse et al., 2002; Vaughn & Turner, 2016). To increase the transferability of this study, I produced high-quality results by selecting appropriate study participants, generated detailed-oriented demographic information, analyzed data extensively, and presented results in an intuitive format.

Confirmability, which follows the establishment of dependability, credibility, and transferability (Manafo & Wong, 2012; Morse et al., 2002, Yin, 2014), is the researchers' ability to demonstrate that the data collected are study participants' actual interpretation without the researchers' biases (Harper & Cole, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Morse et al., 2002). To increase the confirmability of the results, I implemented active listening with each study participant to record my insights, thoughts, and biases. I interpreted participants' interview responses accurately, connecting data and results and using existing, recent, and relevant literature.

Several researchers (Bohme et al., 2012; Corti, 2012; Tibben, 2015) argued that methodological triangulation is a process that allows researchers to increase the validity of a case study. Methodological triangulation involves researchers using multiple data sources to confirm study findings (Bohme et al., 2012; Corti, 2012; Tibben, 2015). I used methodological triangulation, conducted member checking to interpret participants' interview responses, and analyzed company documents. Several researchers (Manafo & Wong, 2012; Morse et al., 2002, Yin, 2014) claimed that because the case study research design's foundation is the collection of data from multiple sources, methodological triangulation of data sources is the main strategy supporting the elements of case study research validity.

I collected data until I reached data saturation, as Johnson (2015) claimed that data saturation is the point where additional data collection and analysis no longer provides any new meaningful information and data are replicated or redundant. Researchers not achieving data saturation are unable to generate conclusive findings

(Manafo & Wong, 2012). Researchers could achieve data saturation in a case study by using methodological triangulation, conducting 3-5 interviews (Emmel, 2013), and providing depth and breadth of information. Reaching data saturation increases the quality of a qualitative study (Morse et al., 2002). I conducted three semistructured, in-depth interviews with business leaders to obtain rich and meaningful data. I did reach data saturation with three participants and, consequently, I did not continue to interview participants.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 contained the purpose statement of this research study, a detailed description of the role of the researcher, details concerning the participants and sample size. In addition, Section 2 included the research method and design, data collection, data organization and analysis, and the process to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected. In Section 3, I present findings and applications to professional practice, the implication for social change, recommendation for action and further study, reflections, summary, and study conclusions.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 3, I provide an overview of the purpose of the study, restate the research question, and present the findings. Also included in this section are the applications of this research study to professional practice, implications for social change, recommendations for action and further study, and reflections. Finally, the conclusion encompasses the closing statements for the study.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study was to explore strategies that business leaders use to successfully improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. I conducted individual semistructured interviews with three leaders who had at least 5 years of successful experience using strategies to implement mentoring training programs for leader development. Other sources of data included organizational documents. Analysis of data resulted in five themes: (a) mentoring functions are critical for leadership development, (b) multiple modes of mentoring are effective for leadership development, (c) a mentor’s motivation is critical for a successful mentoring relationship with mentee, (d) support processes and systems for mentoring programs are essential for continuous improvement to enhance leadership development, and (e) continuous improvement is critical to address mentoring challenges and enhance mentoring programs.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this qualitative multicase study was: What strategies do business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development? To answer the research question, I conducted semistructured interviews with business leaders. Following the coding and triangulation process, five themes emerged from the analysis of interview responses and organizational documents:

- Mentoring functions are critical for leadership development.
- Multiple modes of mentoring are effective for leadership development.
- A mentor's motivation is critical for a successful mentoring relationship with mentee.
- Support processes and systems for mentoring programs are essential for continuous improvement to enhance leadership development.
- Continuous improvement is critical to address mentoring challenges and enhance mentoring programs.

Theme 1: Mentoring Functions Are Critical for Leadership Development

The overarching theme that emerged from analyzed data was that mentoring functions are critical for leadership development in mentoring relationships. From the analysis of the interview data and review of company documentation, I identified both formal and informal mentorship and two dominant developmental constructs associated with mentoring functions that are critical for leadership development, psychosocial and career mentoring.

Formal and informal mentoring. P2 described a formal mentoring program that has mentees and mentors matched based on their background, career history, and skillset. To achieve a successful mentor-mentee match, mentees have the opportunity to suggest the type of mentor they would prefer. P2 described trying to avoid matching a mentee with a current or possible future direct supervisor within the same department, which is difficult because of the small size of the career field. Zasloff and Okurowski (2012) found that a formal mentor may not be successful at engaging a mentee because of self-consciousness about assisting a mentee in moving up in rank, resulting in the possibility that other organizational members might view it as favoritism. Kumar and Blake-Beard (2012) found that matching a mentee with a supervisor could create a negative perception of favoritism or allow a mentor to retaliate on a mentee if the relationship is unsuccessful.

P1 identified formal mentorship programs structured with three levels of training, associate development programs, business leadership programs, and management training programs. For each of the three programs, dedicated mentors are available to provide leadership. I reviewed an organizational document at P1's organization titled *2016 Corporate Social Responsibility Report* and gained an understanding of the structured approach to develop and train employees using mentoring, skills training, and coaching. The learning model is a 70-20-10 model that emphasizes 70% practical, on the job experience; 20% coaching; and 10% formal instruction.

P1 acknowledged that informal mentorship opportunities exist, as leaders encourage employees to connect with possible mentors other than their formal mentor. There are formal mentoring activities assigned during the day and opportunities for informal activities as well, such as book club meetings held in the evening. P1 stated, "typically, if the formal mentorship goes well, it will never end." The formal mentorship has a duration of 1 year; however, mentees and mentors who developed strong connections many times maintain a relationship that takes the form of informal mentorship moving forward. Colakoglu and Gokus (2016) suggested that mentoring could have its most dramatic influence within the first year of an individual joining the organization; however, an employee's first year is the least likely time for informal mentoring relationships to occur. Colakoglu and Gokus explained that organizational leaders use formal mentoring programs to allow new employees to identify a mentor at this important time, one who can remain beyond the program.

P3 described a formal training program that was intense and viewed as a possible screening process. Analysis of the interview data led me to determine that the program in place had minimal formal mentoring. While the expectations and training are rigorous, the review of organizational document, *Leadership Development Order*, confirmed that there is no formal mentorship program, and instead, informal mentoring is the primary mentoring program. The *Leadership Development Order* document contains the following text: "While a formalized, structured approach to mentoring is no longer prescribed, mentoring remains an important component of developing individuals and is addressed in this document."

Psychosocial and career mentoring. All participants combined cited *psychosocial* and *career mentoring* 30 times throughout all the interviews. Participants noted psychosocial mentoring most often with 18 indications and career mentoring had

12 indications. P1 and P2 cited psychosocial mentoring more than P3; however, P3 did not have a higher frequency of citing career mentoring functions.

The most common example of psychosocial functions cited during the interviews was role modeling. P1 described how organizational workshops held in conference rooms, computer labs, or online tech talks, are set up to allow mentees to display particular skills and highlight their strengths. The intent was to provide mentees with an opportunity to make presentations in a nonthreatening environment, share knowledge, and try out a skill. This example of role modeling provided exposure and visibility (Ruru, Sanga, Walker, and Ralph, 2013), positive feedback, and encouragement to mentees.

P2 reported on a personal mentoring experience when mentored by a high-level manager who provided counsel and exposure and allowed mentees to attend executive meetings, which gave mentees insight into effective ways to manage teams and peer relationships. P2 stated,

> I learned a lot about her leadership style and the values that were important to the company at the time. You could see how she was taking the high-level strategy and implementing it. It was a very holistic perspective instead of just talking to someone one-on-one about a particular issue.

P2's personal mentee experience was significant for future success. Gotlieb (2015) discussed the importance of experiences comparable to P1. Gotlieb asserted that a mentor needs to provide exposure and to engage the mentee with effective communication to build a strong relationship. Gotlieb called for active listening and learning by the mentee. P1 stated that mentees struggle to handle difficult situations and that one-on-one talks with a mentor enable social learning.

Tremblay, Dahan, and Gianecchini (2014) stated that business leaders increased the focus on cultivating employees’ expertise and skills to enhance organizational performance. Leaders use career mentoring functions to provide career support to a mentee and to enhance a mentee’s learning and preparation for advancement in the organization (Wong, Mohd Rasdi, Abu Samah, & Abdul Wahat, 2017). P2 asserted that leaders use career mentoring functions to raise a mentee’s acumen, making the company more productive in developing and delivering better products and services. An increase in employees’ career support leads to enhanced organizational performance.

P3 mentioned that one of the largest parts of the program is placing a high degree of importance on performance from candidates in the program. P1 provided an example of a mentee having challenges working on a job assignment. The mentee used the relationship with the mentor for direct assistance with technical skills and advice to solve problems, instead of producing inferior work or getting stuck and settling for lower productivity. The mentor relationship in this example had a positive effect on performance and productivity by allowing the mentee to seek counsel during challenging work assignments.

P2 described instances of speaking on behalf of mentees, giving strong references, and providing recommendations for jobs. The actions of P2 are significant to a mentee’s career opportunities and advancement. Helms, Arfken, and Bellar (2016) found that when a mentor goes beyond providing feedback and advice and leverages influence with executives and decision makers to advocate for the mentee in ways directly leading to career advancement, the mentor becomes a sponsor.

Correlation to the literature. The findings noted in Theme 1 aligned with the results revealed by Matarazzo and Finkelstein (2015), that different organizational contexts lead to variations of formal and informal mentoring and that there is no one best model used by all organizations. Stewart and Harrison (2016) highlighted that informal mentoring coupled with a formal training program increased the amount of knowledge absorbed by employees. Stewart and Harrison argued that informal mentorships could be more important to an employee's performance than formal mentorships, giving mentees an opportunity to acquire knowledge specific to their needs. Matarazzo and Finkelstein noted that formal mentorship programs differ on the amount of structured support provided by the organizational leaders, ranging from vague, verbal support to full support through all steps of the mentor process.

Additional findings noted in Theme 1 aligned with the work of Grotrian-Ryan (2015) in that the most effective psychosocial functions are r*ole modeling*, followed by *acceptance, confirmation*, and *counseling*. Hu, Wang, Yang, and Wu (2014) suggested career related mentoring functions for mentees to assist in mentees' development in their career and sense of competence. Career related mentoring might increase mentees perceived organizational support and interest in a long-term relationship.

Similarly, Park, Newman, Zhang, Wu, and Hooke (2016) noted that psychosocial mentoring functions have a positive influence on mentees' ability to deal with challenges encountered in their work environment and to increase functionality at work. Theme 1 results correlate with Holtbrugge and Ambrosius' (2015) study, in that skill and leadership development is an important outcome of mentoring. According to Holtbrugge and Ambrosius, this outcome may involve the mentee's manual or physical skills, cognitive skills, and affective learning.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. In Theme 1, I highlighted the initiation of formal and informal mentoring. Mentoring relationships have different types of initiations, which make them formal and informal and each with benefits and challenges over time (Kram, 1985). Participants noted common themes of their formal mentoring programs in which mentors were matched with mentees based on similar personal and career factors. James, Rayner, and Bruno (2015) described that informal mentorships develop from informal relationships that might initiate from a mentee who garners the respect of a prospective mentor. Business leaders initiate formal mentor-mentee relationships from personal selection or a pool of interested mentors and mentees using Kram's recommendation to match mentors and mentees based on the similarity-attraction paradigm that allows mutual identification, sympathy, and interpersonal comfort between mentor and mentee.

Mentors and mentees experience greater comfort and attraction with each other using the similarity-attraction paradigm (Menges, 2016). Kram (1985) noted the benefit of matching mentor and mentee based on complementarity by stating that "complementarity suggests the opportunity to complete oneself" (p. 101). Kram highlighted that mentor-mentee relationships provide balance and opportunities for growth for both mentors and mentees. Lazarus (2015) noted that a successful match of mentee and mentor is critical to the effectiveness of formal mentoring programs.

Kram (1985) noted that a mentee receives the most powerful mentoring when both career and psychological functions occur during the mentoring relationship. The literature in Section 1 related to Kram's mentoring, career mentoring, and psychosocial mentoring functions aligned with Theme 1. Sponsorship emerged from data analyses as an effective and important contrasting theory to Kram's mentoring theory. The inclusion of sponsorship in this study is important for consideration, as sponsorship was not included in Section 1 of this study. Sponsorship was an emerging framework from the results that is a contrasting theory of Kram's mentorship theory. Hewlett (2013) argued that all positive benefits of career and psychosocial mentoring are not enough and that the action of sponsorship is necessary.

Theme 2: Multiple Modes of Mentoring Are Effective for Leadership Development

All participants shared common experiences with the traditional mode of mentoring. Each participant provided occurrences of the most common mentoring mode, a one-on-one mentoring with one mentor and one mentee. The analysis of the data resulted in participants using a total of five different modes of mentoring: traditional, digital, reverse, group, and project based.

P2 described the advantage of traditional mentoring as an increased opportunity for a mentor and mentee to develop a more significant personal relationship with increased individual support. Winter and Jackson (2014) explained the mentors' responsibility to not only teach, guide, and counsel, but also to inspire a mentee, to generate positive outcomes. P3 acknowledged the potential effectiveness of the traditional mode of formal mentoring; however, formal mentoring is not the primary mode of mentoring, as informal mentoring occurs very often within the organization. Lazaru (2015) noted that when rapport, mutual appreciation, and enjoyment of working together develop among individuals, an opportunity exists to develop informal mentoring relationships. P1 noted that leaders use the associate development programs to connect, in a face-to-face format, a more tenured employee with a younger, less tenured employee.

P1 described the synergy and fellowship created by group mentoring opportunities. Leaders holding group mentoring at quarterly meetings allowed 40-50 employees to engage in mutually beneficial interactions to occur between mentors and mentees. P3 acknowledged the nonuse of the traditional mode of mentoring. P3 identified that group mentoring, although not formal, was the primary mode of mentoring used in P3's organization. P3 elaborated on group mentoring as an interesting concept because there is not a true matching of mentor and mentee. A typical group consisted of 40-50 individuals led by five leaders.

Upon reviewing a company document in P3's organization, Leadership Order, I found a common framework and practical tools to assist leaders in developing all employees to achieve their full potential and become successful. Consequently, I gained a better understanding of the organizational philosophy towards mentoring significance in leadership development. I found in the Leadership Order document that while organizational leaders' practices no longer prescribe a formalized, structured approach to mentoring, leaders still perceive mentoring as an important component of developing employees into leaders. For example, in Section B of the concept of operations, I found section (b) indicate that while leaders drive the development of individuals, leaders involve all employees in development activities. Regular mentoring between leaders and subordinates is vital. James et al. (2015) argued that informal mentorship is the preferred mentorship model. Because mentors see a mentee as a younger version of themselves, mentors appreciate the process of forming and advancing an informal mentoring relationship with mentees (Chen et al., 2014).

Sanyal and Rigby (2017) asserted that traditional, face-to-face mentoring is not always practical, and digital mentoring is an alternative with multiple forms of communication that erodes barriers of traditional mentoring relationships. P1and P2 both used digital mentoring. P1 explained that digital mentoring is useful when traditional mentoring becomes difficult. There are times when pairing up mentors and mentees is not possible, at which time digital mentoring bridges the gap. In contrast, P2 acknowledged the challenges of using digital mentoring. The location of the mentee or mentor is important because, in certain countries, such as Dubai, privacy issues. In addition, P2 identified time zones as a constraint because the time difference is a challenge when using digital mentoring. Along with time zone and geographical distance, Sanyal and Rigby (2017) identified other challenges to digital mentoring, such as culture; organization; and the reliability, cost, and total dependency on electronic technology.

P1 was the only participant using project-based mentoring and reverse mentoring modes. P1 acknowledged project mentoring as an effective way to give mentees a nontraditional opportunity to receive mentoring to develop as a leader. During project mentoring, leaders create a project and project charter to allow a mentee an individual leadership development opportunity with the supervision of a mentor. In addition, P1 explained that the use of reverse mentoring is not a formal process; instead, the process evolves from an informal mentoring relationship. At times, leaders match new millennial mentees with more tenured mentors and share knowledge, which allows for increased growth for the mentor. Taysır and Ulgen (2017) explained that reverse mentoring has a significant influence on developing relationships between generations. A senior employee using reverse mentoring learns new technical knowledge, understands new approaches and trends, recognizes the generational differences, and minimizes own assumptions and negative stereotypes about younger generations (Tayır & Ulgen, 2017).

Correlation to the literature. The findings noted in Theme 2 align with the findings of Matarazzo and Finkelstein's (2015) study in that organizational differences influence the way business leaders design and administer mentoring modes. Schnader, Westermann, Downey, and Thibodeau (2016) noted that the traditional mode of mentorship is a one-on-one dyadic relationship with an experienced mentor providing face-to-face tutelage to a less experienced mentee. Sanyal and Rigby (2017) acknowledged that using face-to-face mentorship allows communication in the richest medium, giving mentees immediate feedback and multiple cues in natural language. However, Panopoulos and Sarri (2013) asserted that leaders using digital mentoring overcome obstacles of traditional mentoring, such as the (a) unavailability of suitable mentors; (b) time constraints or geographical barriers; and (c) incompatibility in social status, gender, physical appearance, or behavioral expectations, resulting in an increase in collaboration, satisfaction, and involvement.

Burdett (2014) noted reverse mentorship as a mode of mentorship for a changing workplace that supplements traditional mentorship. Burdett asserted that equal power could exist in mentoring relationships, with a focus on co-learning, as younger employees could impart valuable knowledge to their senior mentors. Redmond (2015) suggested group mentoring as a valuable mode of mentorship, particularly when a limited availability of mentors exists. Johns, McNamara, and Moses (2012) acknowledged the beneficial opportunities of group mentoring but asserted that group mentoring is a weak mode of mentoring with less psychosocial support, role modeling, and inclusion.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. Theme 2 relates to Kram's (1985) framework for mentoring because many modes of mentoring involve dyadic relationships between experienced mentors assisting less experienced mentees. More recent mentoring literature expands on Kram's framework of mentoring to include alternative forms of mentoring, such as group, peer, reverse, digital, and team mentoring (Coppin & Fisher, 2016). Brondyk and Searby (2013) suggested that modes of mentorship related to Kram's conceptual framework facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge. Johns and McNamara (2014) noted that group mentoring emerges from the strengths of Kram's one-on-one mentoring theory with added benefits of group learning rather than one person. Lindsay and Williams (2014) identified digital mentoring through channels of email; the internet; and other computer-mediated communication, such as Skype, to overcome the geographical distance barrier of globalization. P2 identified challenges with digital mentoring to include privacy issues. Bishop (2016) explained the inherent concern with privacy protection mechanisms in the technology and digital mentoring.

Theme 3: Mentor’s Motivation is Critical for a Successful Mentoring Relationship With a Mentee

Theme 3, mentor’s motivation is critical for a successful mentoring relationship with a mentee, emerged from interview question three, which was as follows: *Did you offer any incentives to mentors and/or mentees to participate in a mentoring program for leadership development?* Deepali, Jain, and Chaudhary (2016) described the manner in which individuals could experience entry barriers when considering taking up the role of a mentor, noting that these barriers limit or even discourage their participation in the mentoring process. Deepali et al. identified the main negative factors of mentoring from the mentors’s perspective, namely lack of time, feeling of being unqualified to be a mentor, lack of commitment, personality mismatch, conflict of interest, problems associated with the mentor’s own job turnover, stress, jealousy, competition, dishonesty, and ingratiation.

When discussing the mentorship program in the company, P1 stated that all the mentors that take part in the program are volunteers and start the mentorship relationships at a volunteer event. The volunteer event serves as a type of mixer for mentors and mentees, allowing them to get to know each other. As such, leaders use the volunteer event to facilitate the matching process and to raise awareness of all involved about the program characteristics and goals. Participants found the volunteer event a rewarding experience. According to Silver (2016), one of the first objectives of a mentor is to establish a trust relationship with the prospective mentee in a face-to-face meeting to facilitate the achievement of that objective.

When discussing mentors that volunteer in the mentorship program, P3 countered P1’s perspective, noting that mentors do not volunteer their participation in the mentorship program because it is a part of their job responsibilities. Thus, P3 argued that the need to perform well in the job motivates the mentor. P3 also stated that, upon program completion, mentees obtain a leadership position. Thus, for mentees, the potential for job advancement is the primary motivation to participate.

P2, on the other hand, concurred with P1 in that mentors not only volunteered their time to the program, but also had a vested interest in the success of the program. The responses of P1 and P2 align with the findings reported by Kupersmidt, Stelter, Rhodes, and Stump (2017), claiming that volunteer mentors, possessing key cognitions, a high level of self-efficacy, and a sense of preparedness, maintain high retention rates and enhance the effectiveness of the mentoring relations; thereby, improving the outcomes for mentees. P2 also stated that, despite the lack of incentives, mentors participate to gain valuable experience, enhance their résumés and potentially help career advancement.

Holden (2014) described inspired mentoring as an unselfish act to help others, transfer knowledge, and discover the next step in the journey of authentic leadership, as opposed to secure the next promotion. P2 described inspired mentoring in a response:

> For intelligence, there's also not a lot of classical training, classical schooling for this. There is, but there isn't. So, there's a couple of schools that do have corporate intelligence, security intelligence degrees, but it's like two. So, it's not like you're

> going to be a mechanical engineer where there's a very strict process, or there's a very strict curriculum for it. Or you're going to be a doctor; you're going to be a classic surgeon, so you have to start with all the Med 101 classes and go all the way through it. People have very diverse backgrounds, and then once they get out of school, they could go to the government. They could go to corporations. There's really no one way to be an intelligence analyst. There's no curriculum. There's no continuing education for it. So, what we are trying to do is not really getting any accolades for this. What we are trying to do is set up the next generation to have these best practices and keep sharing this tribal knowledge that some of us old timers have to ensure that it keeps going throughout the generations of intelligence analysts.

The statement of P2 exemplifies inspired mentoring as the motivation for someone to participate in a formal mentorship program. As mentors face many challenges, having inspired mentoring as motivation to participate in mentorship programs is important to the overall success of the mentoring relationship. Opposite to inspired mentoring, Holden (2014) identified human resource managers' claims that the lack of motivation to participate in the formal mentoring relationships led some mentors to file false paperwork to cover up their inactivity.

P2 also offered a negative example of a mentor's motivation to take up a formal mentoring role. P2 described a situation in which a particular mentor desired to be in a position of perceived power over the mentee because of an egotistical personality. While this mentor did engage with the mentee, the relationship was selfserving and did not provide any substance to the mentee. The mentor's selfishness had a negative influence on the mentoring relationship and resulted in a poor experience for the mentee. While such mentors are not uncommon, several researchers (Hu et al., 2014) indicated that providing external motivation can partially counteract the adverse effects of mentors with selfish personalities, in some cases transforming them to nurturing mentors. Hu et al. posited that this type of mentor might feel coerced while in a formal relationship and is more likely to perceive high-entry barriers compared to volunteer mentors. The perspective of Hu et al. aligns with the findings reported by Holden (2014) in that inspired mentors perceive fewer barriers to mentoring, do not seek external motivation or incentives to undertake the mentoring role, and remain committed to mentoring others.

Correlation to the literature. The findings related to Theme 3 align with those reported in the literature. For example, Bear and Hwang (2015) provided insight into the theoretical and practical implications of the effect employee motivation has to a mentor's willingness to participate in a mentoring relationship. In particular, Bear and Hwang asserted that, as the population ages, it is essential for professionals to pass on their knowledge and expertise to the next generation. Similarly, Pompa (2012) found that motivation is one of the key elements of the mentoring relationship. Pompa's results supported Bear and Hwang's findings, which revealed a positive relationship between an individual's motivation to work in a way that will benefit others and the willingness to serve as a mentor. Deepali et al. (2016) investigated the factors affecting the mentoring intentions of mentors and found that commitment and motivation are the primary motivators for most mentors. Deepali et al. identified both nonfinancial and financial factors as precursors to mentoring intentions. More recently, Wilson (2017) emphasized that a mentor's most precious gift is time and talent. Moreover, Wilson noted that, in many cases, the satisfaction of seeing mentees progress and gaining a mentee's appreciation constitute sufficient reward for the time and effort invested into the relationship. Conversely, Silver (2016) asserted that individuals not suited for the mentorship role are unwilling to express their intentions, motivation, and background upfront to build a personal relationship with a mentee. In particular, Silver stated that while building the relationship with the mentee, mentors should not brag, but rather show humility by sharing the way successes and failures influenced their life journey.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. Theme 3 relates to Kram's (1985) framework for mentoring because business leaders may encounter challenges in formal mentoring programs due to the unwillingness of experienced employees to assume mentoring roles. In mentoring theory, Kram highlighted the need for a high-quality mentoring relationship to increase positive outcomes for both mentors and mentees, which occurs only if the mentor is willing to provide valuable psychosocial and career support to the mentee. The motivation to participate in a mentoring relationship is essential because a mentor must invest time, energy, and personal commitment into guiding a less experienced mentee (Kram, 1985). On the other hand, Holt, Markova, Dhaenens, Marler, and Heilmann (2016) focused on volunteer mentors, noting that volunteer mentors might have a more personal drive in the form of internal gratification, which can lead to more productive mentoring relationships, compared to those formed by a mentor seeking organizational recognition. Results of Holt et al. study align with

Kram’s theory in that personal growth, satisfaction, visibility experience, self-confidence, role modeling, networking, rejuvenation, exposure, and assistance are the main motivating factors for experienced employees to undertake mentoring.

Theme 4: Support Processes and Systems for Mentoring Programs Are Essential for Continuous Improvement to Enhance Leadership Development

From analysis of interview data, I found three participants relied on structure, training, technology, and partnerships, as important factors facilitating mentorships to enhance mentorship programs. P1 noted that mentees need to complete eight steps with different requirements during a one-year formal mentoring program. P1 shared that leaders support the mentees and mentors organizational learning with a learning management system. P1 further noted that leaders use the record of completed activities logged in the learning management system to support real-time tracking of a mentee’s progression through the program.

Carvin (2015) noted that mentors use effective mentoring support system designs to facilitate discussion boards where mentors answer mentees’ questions and to provide self-service tools for mentees to locate groups of interest and workspace to post event notices, group projects, and resources. During the interview, P1 discussed the use of online instructors, self-led modules, and discussion boards in the mentoring support system. P1 described using the entire breadth of media available for a mentoring support system, including guides delivered online and on responsive apps designed for any mobile device. Colton and Hunt (2016) highlighted the importance of written online support and guidance for mentees to navigate the mentoring support system. Colton and

Hunt often found that websites, used as platforms to host mentoring support systems, contain guidance and processes with complex academic jargon, which cause difficult navigation and poor experiences for users. Thus, Colton and Hunt asserted that business leaders should support the use of apps on digital tablets and smartphones in mentoring programs for more intuitive ways of working, while also allowing users to personalize data presentation.

P2 and P3 also assisted in designing and implementing a yearlong mentorship program but did not have technology support, such as a learning management system. P2 described instances in which leaders established formal mentoring relationships for a set period, but terminated the relationship early, in some cases, after only six weeks, if a mentor was a poor match for a particular mentee and was ineffective in facilitating the relationship. To decrease the number of terminated mentorships, P2 focused on increasing selectiveness and thoroughness when implementing the screening process. For formal mentoring programs, Matarazzo and Finkelstein (2015) emphasized the importance of leaders creating processes that best match mentors and mentees. In particular, Matarazzo and Finkelstein highlighted the importance of similar and complementary individual characteristics and congruence in needs when matching mentors to mentees.

P1 believed that mentor training is essential to the overall success of a mentoring program, which is in line with the findings reported by Grindod (2017). Grindod asserted that mentors receive training to learn the roles and responsibilities of mentoring because varying levels of experience might not be adequate to support a productive mentorship. In addition, mentors should be familiar with the technology that supports the mentoring program to provide mentees with instructions on the proper use of the technology to assist mentees in forming a productive relationship. Kupersmidt et al. (2017) stated the importance of business leaders providing standardized, evidence-based training for employees involved in mentoring programs to enhance their preparedness to mentor. In addition, well-designed and research-informed web-based training could be more effective in accomplishing mentor preparedness goals than regular in-person training (Kupersmidt et al., 2017).

P1 identified effective communication as an important factor in a successful mentorship. Furthermore, P1 described that organizational leaders train mentors to use the Socratic method of communicating with mentees. As an approach to cultivating critical thinking skills and a disciplined mind, Zare and Mukundan (2015) described the Socratic method of communication as analytical questioning that explores comprehension and reasoning. Furthermore, for successful use of the Socratic method, Templeton and Tremont (2014) asserted that mentors must be skilled communicators, which includes being able to listen actively, intervene, avoid being judgmental, give accurate and constructive feedback, challenge failure-causing behaviors, provide counsel for personal issues, support efforts to change, and advocate for their mentees. P3 noted that mentors do not receive training as a part of organizational practices. P1 recommended that mentors attend a three-day learning camp to train and establish expectations for their performance. I reviewed an organizational document at P1’s organization, titled

Leadership Order, and noted the following statement of the organizational leaders’mentoring philosophy,

> Mentoring happens most effectively when two individuals find commonality and, although it is not limited to the chain of command, the initial relationship between leader and led should contain an element of mentoring. Most leaders naturally mentor others. In a mentoring relationship, teaching, coaching, and counseling usually occur.

The mentoring philosophy defined in the *Leadership Order* aligns with Grindod’s (2017) study, in that mentoring relationships are more successful when a mentee finds commonality and selects mentor. Grindod recommended assisting mentees with appropriate technology to explore a large field of qualified mentors during the selection process.

Organizational training is important, as leaders use training to build skills and increase performance. Organizational leaders can enhance the outcomes of mentorship relationships by providing mentorship structure and training (Dominguez & Hager, 2013). Dominguez and Hager defined the mentoring structure as a strategic technique for designing flexible, comprehensive organizational activities. P1 described that, even with the assistance of a learning management system, leaders still need to bridge gaps between the conceptual framework of organizational training and the application of employee learning. According to P1, organizational leaders use mentorships to bridge this gap, extend the social learning, and increase the positive employee outcomes from the training. In addition, P1 acknowledged that organizational leaders combine external partnerships with the in-house training to support employee development. Business leaders use such partnerships to leverage the expertise and the resources of individuals outside of the organization to achieve employee development objectives more efficiently.

Correlation to the literature. The findings of Theme 4 correlate with the results reported by Carvin (2015), suggesting that the use of mentoring technology or other collaboration platforms extend the effectiveness of in-person mentoring. Specifically, Carvin found that business leaders use mentoring technology to expedite the mentoring initiation process, while also providing a central point of communication, as well as facilitating easy monitoring and evaluation by mentoring program administrators. Bishop (2016), however, cautioned that the use of technology to facilitate mentoring relationships that are not in the face-to-face format may have an adverse effect on mentoring effectiveness. On the other hand, Silver (2016) noted that, regardless of the geographical distance, leaders could use video conferencing technology to create better conversational bonds, thus strengthening mentoring relationships. Hence, business leaders should leverage technology when mentoring. More recently, Grindod (2017) posited that the ability to match mentees with mentors is the number one reason for using technology in mentoring. Grindod elaborated on this assertion by noting that leaders should be able to match mentors with mentees using technology that meets specific development requirements, while also allowing the mentee to review the mentor’s career histories, as a part of the mentor selection process, thereby making a better career match and leading to a more productive relationship.

Correlation to the conceptual framework. The findings of Theme 4 pertaining to the structure of mentoring relationships correlated with Kram's (1985) mentoring theory. Kram claimed that the formal mentoring relationships structure typically last 6−12 months, which is a considerably shorter period than that involved in informal mentor relationships that can range from 3 years to more than 6 years before separation. Jones (2013) uncovered that, in many cases, neither mentees nor mentors are fully aware of the different experiences to expect through the initiation, cultivation, and separation stages of the mentoring relationship. Jones suggested that both mentors and mentees would benefit from mentoring training before beginning, as training would help raise mentors and mentees awareness of learning behaviors and factors that may influence a mentoring relationship. Kram posited that each relationship starts with an initiation stage, which involves the matching process of two individuals that would enter into the mentoring relationship and realize their respective expectations. Following initiation is the cultivation stage, which is the primary stage of learning and development, in which participants share important lessons learned related to experiences, new technologies, new practices, and emerging issues in the field. The mentoring relationship concludes with the separation stage, which should be a source of satisfaction, as mentor and mentee achieve success and meet the learning objectives. Banerjee-Batist and Reio (2016) presented empirical evidence showing mentoring relationships that serve career and psychological functions require more time and effort. Moreover, a long mentor relationship increases mentors' performance of career and psychosocial functions (Banerjee-Batist & Reio, 2016).

Theme 5: Continuous Improvement is Critical to Address Mentoring Challenges and Enhance Mentoring Programs

Each participant encountered a unique set of mentoring challenges and opportunities to enhance mentoring programs, demonstrating the importance of continuous improvement. In particular, P2 noted that pairing a mentor with a mentee could be a challenge for various reasons. First, the limited selection of mentors was an issue. James et al. (2015) suggested that having a mentor assigned to a mentee through a formal scheme is rarely optimal when having a limited mentor pool. Instead, leaders might serve prospective mentees best by encouraging them to seek a formal mentor outside of the organization, especially if the mentees are not comfortable recruiting from within their organization.

Second, matching the personalities and backgrounds of mentors and mentees can be difficult, according to James et al (2015). For instance, program leaders would avoid pairing mentors and mentees with drastically different backgrounds or political views. Juliano, Royster, Johnson, Larrivee, and Driver (2013) asserted that mentees could encounter challenges with a mentor’s availability, personality, ethnic group, or gender, which may prompt a mentee to seek opportunities for mentorship outside the organization, when deemed to result in a better mentor match. Third, poor matching and bad mentoring relationships can lead to the mentor retaliating against a mentee. P1 noted the importance of considering the possibility of retaliation when pairing mentees with a mentor because the mentor might become the mentee’s boss in the future. Such a situation can present future challenges, not only for the mentor and the mentee in question, but also for the mentoring program. Employees may be less likely to participate in these programs if they feel that they may face repercussions when the mentoring arrangement is not working out well.

P2 and P1 both described time as an issue for most mentors and concurred that personal dedication is necessary to overcome the constraint of time. P1 expressed the difficulty in pairing individuals to meet in person because of distance and noted that many mentors and mentees would use digital communication as a substitute. Sanyal and Rigby (2017) noted that leaders find digital mentoring useful for mentoring pairs separated by geographical distance.

In addition to time, P1 noted money and scope as obstacles to mentoring. In particular, P1 spoke of trying to do more with less and discussed the issues stemming from the need to bridge the digital divide. Panopoulos and Sarri (2013) acknowledged similar challenges of money, time, and the digital divide in traditional mentoring. Panopoulos and Sarri explained that digital mentoring, while a viable alternative to traditional mentoring, also presents unique technical and practical challenges that may result in significant upfront or operational costs, which can be difficult to manage.

On the other hand, P3 focused on challenges that stemmed from the program design, noting that it is limited in scope, with most of the attention given to screening and evaluating, comprising 90% of the curriculum and leaving only 10% for mentorship. In a perfect scenario, P3 suggested that a stronger program would dedicate at least 25% of the content to mentorship. P3 also spoke of leaders that take pride in having an effective program and seek opportunities for its improvement. P3 further noted that leaders conduct evaluations on a regular basis to meet certain standards and should insert checks and balances to ensure that the program maintains its required levels of effectiveness. Leaders accept submissions from mentors and mentees for program changes to facilitate the evolution of the mentoring program.

Similarly, P2 discussed opportunities for mentors and mentees to give constructive feedback, stating that program leaders send out surveys to the mentors and mentees upon the completion of the formal mentorship. P2 pointed out that the dependability and effectiveness of the survey occurs only when the participants give honest feedback and mentors are receptive to internalizing critical feedback. P1 similarly noted the importance of continuous improvement of the mentoring, training, and learning processes, stating that leaders often use Kirkpatrick's (1950) evaluative sessions for the purpose of continuous improvement. La Duke (2017) described the Kirkpatrick model as a training evaluation model for evaluating the reaction, learning, behavior, and results to determine the effectiveness of training. Ho, Arendt, Zheng, and Hanisch (2016) noted difficulties in evaluating mentoring and training program results, as leaders may struggle to determine appropriate metrics. P1 described a system called "Metrics that Matter" that allows business leaders to evaluate metrics based on performance, excluding monentary value. P1 explained that leaders actively encourage mentees and mentors to give feedback to alert leaders when processes or content become obsolete.

Correlation to the literature. The findings related to Theme 5 align with those yielded by the study conducted by Browne, Thorpe, Tunny, Adams, and Palermo (2013), aiming to evaluate a mentoring workforce development strategy used for leadership development. Browne et al. revealed time constraints as the most frequent challenge of a mentoring program. Browne et al. further stated that leaders often do not understand the nature of the mentoring. In a particular case, the chief executive officer discontinued the mentorship program without any explanation. Browne et al. provided clear evidence of a lack of leadership support for mentoring activities likely due to the organizational focus on costs, time, and processes, rather than on measuring the value added by effective mentoring programs. In this study, I found that mentoring programs are an effective tool for leadership development. Yet, as noted by previous researchers, a gap between theory and practice still persists. La Duke (2017) asserted that continuous improvement and evaluation of mentoring programs is critical for leadership development programs, and recommended the Kirkpatrick model as the standard for evaluation. Ho et al. (2016), however, cautioned that leaders are reluctant to conduct such evaluations either because they believe that it is difficult or lack confidence in the value that the mentorship programs bring to the organization. Kirkpatrick acknowledged that business results, while difficult to measure, are the most effective way for leaders to evaluate a training program (La Duke, 2017).

Correlation to the conceptual framework. Theme 5 relates to Kram's (1985) mentoring framework. Kram proposed a conceptual model identifying the mentoring structure as a critical factor to successful mentoring relationships. Kram further noted that, as mentoring structure has a significant influence on individuals and organizations, the mentoring structure requires defined goals and objectives, regular evaluation of relationship and issues, and feedback for improvement. Dominguez and Hager (2013) asserted that leaders using a well-designed mentoring program improve performance and productivity ratings, as well as develop mentees' and mentors' career prospects, while improving diversity. More recently, Jyoti and Sharma (2015) found that a successful mentoring structure requires a true commitment from leaders, adequate financial support, time, and facilities. Continuous improvement is critical to address mentoring challenges and enhance mentoring programs. Kram developed a mentoring structure framework to support mentoring and provide records for evaluation and benchmarking. Dominguez and Hager (2013) noted that the aim of the mentoring structure is for leaders to set expectations and accountability by clarifying goals, roles, and responsibilities, while also allowing users to provide feedback. According to Berg and Conway (2015), mentoring program benefits include mentee growth, continuous professional development, increased retention, and elevated leadership. Berg and Conway also identified design and implementation of processes and support, mentor effectiveness, and sustainability as the key mentoring program implementation challenges. Templeton and Tremont (2014) pointed out that the key to continuous improvement is a reflective practice, which the program leaders master through experience, observation, reflection, and planning.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this qualitative multicase study have some important implications for professional business practice. The three successful business leaders that took part in this study discussed strategies for improving mentorship programs aimed at employee leadership development that other business leaders could use in a wide range of organizational contexts to improve profitability and effectiveness. These findings may also be of use to business leaders and other community partners seeking to evaluate and enhance organizational strategies for the development and retention of skilled professionals aspiring to move into leadership positions. Business leaders may use the findings to increase awareness and understanding of business practices, which may assist in establishing the reason certain organizational strategies for improving mentorship programs are not viable options if the intention is to improve leadership development.

Business leaders must adopt suitable strategies to leverage mentorship programs for cultivating employees to become leaders. Skilled business leaders are critical to business performance (Pryor, 2015). Business leaders that successfully combine leadership development programs with the delivery of professional mentorship programs aimed at enhancing employee talent not only elevate the performance of their employees, but also increase employee retention and decrease employee turnover in the organization (Huang, 2013). The development of leaders is a critical component that helps business leaders sustain profitability, retain corporate knowledge, and increase organizational performance (Chung & Luo, 2013). Leadership development and learning must be a top human resources priority because business leaders use leadership development to increase organizational success in the competitive business market (Huang, 2013).

The motivation and roles of both informal and formal mentors are diverse, complex, and critical to the success of any mentorship initiative. Researchers often equate mentors with leaders. For example, Clayton, Sanzo, and Myran (2013) claimed that business leaders expect employees that assume the mentor’s role to perform as a leader. Mentors need leadership skills to energize mentees’ commitment, inspire personal change, encourage self-discovery, and enhance performance (Clayton et al., 2013). Shapira-Lishchinsky (2014) explained that mentors should act as authentic leaders to guide mentoring processes with self-awareness, honesty, transparency regarding their motivations and expectations, and a high sensitivity to the mentee’s needs. Similarly, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Levy-Gazenfrantz (2016) noted that the mentor should enable the mentee’s independent adoption of leadership processes by listening to the mentee and sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences. Therefore, caring for the mentee should motivate the mentor to focus on listening to the mentee’s feedback, considering the mentee’s perspective, and making the mentee feel valued.

Mentees’ leadership opportunities do not start with a promotion into a managerial or supervisory role, as leadership opportunities are available at all levels of mentees’ careers. Krasnyanskaya (2016) noted that leadership skills could be a significant determining factor in a mentee’s career advancement and success. Laurent, Sosenko, Zamfirova, and Hartwig (2017) similarly noted that effective mentorship programs should help business leaders explore mentees’ comprehension of leadership concepts, leadership skills, evidence of leadership capacity, and desire for a leadership role.

Clayton et al. (2013) found that leaders using mentoring functions had a positive effect on the leadership development of mentees and mentors. More recently, Huang and Weng (2017) explained that leaders could use mentorship programs to allow mentees to receive meaningful feedback and support, share personal experiences, and increase confidence in the mentee’s leadership capacities. In the same vein, Anderson and Wasonga (2017) highlighted that mentors using career and psychosocial mentoring functions allow mentees to acquire leadership skills and knowledge and create opportunities to enact best practices. In some mentoring relationships, mentees and mentors can have different leadership styles that challenge their leadership philosophies and beliefs; yet, these differences may motivate them to consider new ways of approaching leadership (Clayton et al., 2013).

Implications for Social Change

This study's implications for positive social change include improvements to individuals, institutions, organizations, and cultures or communities. Ismail and Rishani (2018) stated that business leaders are continuing to search for strategies to develop leaders and nurture employees' innovation, as innovation is critical for organizations' competitiveness and prosperity. From the social change perspective, the findings reported in this work may be valuable to business leaders because future leaders could provide innovation and support for organizational efforts to deliver quality services and products. Baue and Wood (2015) explained that social sustainability is destabilizing due to the widening of the wealth gaps and income inequality of individuals. The success obtained from building socially responsible leaders can thus increase an organizations' prosperity, while decreasing wealth gaps and income inequality, which may positively influence the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of the community.

The implications for positive social change may include the influence of employee leadership that could surpass the direct objectives of the organization to include broad social influence. Wang, Feng, and Lawton (2017) asserted that leaders could encourage employee interaction with stakeholders, which establishes mutual understanding and reduces social pressure, even when firms fail to meet external stakeholder expectations. Business leaders convey value to employees through effective mentorship relationships by treating them with dignity and not just as means to an end. Barrick, Thurgood, Smith, and Courtright (2015) noted that business leaders using mentorship programs might nurture positive psychological conditions for the mentees, thus enhancing their organizational commitment and engagement at work. The implications of the present study findings for positive social change may include the potential for cost savings through higher employee retention, which would have positive effect on profit, while allowing the business owners to increase civic engagement. Business owners might have more funds available to make charitable contributions to the community when the organizational processes are efficient and cost-effective. Charitable contributions from business leaders of profitable organizations produce positive outcomes, such as improvements to the living conditions of community members (Gautier & Pache, 2015).

Gordon and Gordon (2017) explained that business leaders should support corporate social responsibility by encouraging employees to assume leadership roles in volunteer organizations. Mentorship programs could potentially develop strong leaders empowered to mentor citizens interested in enhancing their professional skills to provide better living standards for their families. Business owners may be able to give back to local schools by starting mentoring programs for students that may lead to lower student dropout rates and higher social inclusion of disadvantaged youth. Current or retired employees could display goodwill to improve the community and exert positive influence when mentoring local students.

Recommendations for Action

Recommendations for action should (a) flow logically from the conclusions and contain steps to useful action, (b) state the individuals that need to pay attention to the results, and (c) indicate the possible dissemination of results via literature and conferences. Findings and recommendations from this study may be of value to any business leader considering strategies for developing leaders in their organization effectively to improve profitability. Adoption of effective organizational strategies for improving mentorship programs may help business leaders use structured mentoring techniques to integrate with leadership development for improving profitability and employee retention.

Dominguez and Hager (2013) argued that some mentoring programs are diverse and well-structured, despite receiving limited organizational support for formal mentoring programs. A significant recommendation for business leaders is to determine the optimal mentoring program structure, as both informal and formal mentoring have their benefits and disadvantages. In this study, I found that showed that the most successful mentoring programs are formal and structured because business leaders are able to assign pairs, monitor effectiveness, obtain feedback, and make continuous improvements to the program design. The findings of this study align with pertinent literature, in that while informal mentorships can be as effective as formal mentorships, informal mentorships are difficult for business leaders to control and measure outcomes.

Thus, business leaders need to apply minimum requirements even when preferring an informal structure instead of a formal mentorship program.

Traditional mentoring, characterized by a one-on-one mentoring relationship, is the most common mentoring mode. Nonetheless, traditional mentoring is not necessarily the most effective mentoring mode in all organizational settings. Thus, business leaders must determine the most appropriate modes of mentoring to use within the mentoring programs. Matarazzo and Finkelstein (2015) suggested that business leaders design and administer modes of mentoring according to organizational needs, citing traditional, digital, reverse, group, peer, and project-based mentoring as the most prevalent options. Business leaders can select one, a combination of several, or all the aforementioned mentoring modes in their organizations.

As a standard for better business practice, business leaders should define methodologies and practices for assigning mentors to mentees and for monitoring the effectiveness of mentoring relationships. Kram (1985) emphasized the need for an appropriate fit between mentors and mentees. The findings evident in this study confirm that organizational leaders must take an active role in matching individuals entering mentoring relationships. A recommendation for business leaders is thus to combine insight into organizational goals, mentor capabilities and experiences, and the needs of the mentees when determining mentoring pairs. Business leaders should also focus on preparing and planning, in particular to the mentor characteristics, a matching process, and goals of the initial meeting.

Drawing from the suggestions offered by Mains and MacLean (2017), business leaders must align mentoring-matching criteria with the needs of the organization and the overall objectives of the mentoring program, and incorporate the insights from mentees and mentors. Business leaders can use the similarity-attraction paradigm to identify mentor and mentee pairs that complement each other. Business leaders can conduct interviews, administer questionnaires, and have a mentorship committee make recommendations for the mentee-mentor pairs. Other matching methods may include mentors and mentees completing strengths and interests inventories, as leaders could use this strategy to facilitate more optimal pairing.

Another practical recommendation for business leaders is to leverage mentorship programs as a strategic organizational tool to accelerate leadership development and preparedness, recruit and retain high-level talent, and close generational and engagement gaps. Major themes that emerged from this investigation, as well as the insights shared by the participants, centered on career and psychosocial mentoring functions. Studying the most effective psychosocial functions, such as role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, and counseling, and using the data to modify the mentoring program structure is essential to facilitating effective leadership development that increases organizational profitability. Samah and Abdul Wahat (2017) asserted that business leaders deliver career mentoring functions to provide career support to mentees and to enhance their learning process in preparation for advancement in the organization. Tremblay et al. (2014) recommended that business leaders seeking to enhance organizational performance increase the focus on cultivating employees’ expertise and skills.

Another recommendation arising from this study is that business leaders select talented and devoted mentors to the mentorship program and provide mentor training for those individuals. Mentors vested into the organization and motivated to assist in the mentees' personal growth and professional development should participate in the formal mentorship program. Holden (2014) suggested that mentors practice inspired mentoring, which is mentoring with a purpose that is unselfish and aimed at helping others, transferring knowledge, and growing as leaders.

Another recommendation is that business leaders begin the mentoring program by training all participants. Finkelstein (2015) recommended that business leaders provide an orientation event at the start of the program, as leaders use this orientation to manage the mentee and mentor expectations by clarifying roles, identifying goals, establishing relationship guidelines, and setting timelines. During these sessions, it is also beneficial to explain how to give and receive constructive feedback in training because mentor relationships thrive on effective communication and feedback. Kupersmidt et al. (2017) asserted that business leaders should aim to deliver standardized, evidence-based training to enhance preparedness of participants and increase the likelihood of the mentoring program success. According to Kupersmidt et al., business leaders more easily attain mentorship program goals through research-informed, web-based training, rather than in-person training.

Business leaders should ensure the administration of assessments to evaluate the mentorship program effectiveness. Business leaders should also track progress throughout the mentorship program using metrics linked to the program's objectives.

Upon the conclusion of the mentoring relationship, the participants should give feedback on the entire mentoring experience. The feedback is essential for continuous improvement and for enhancing leadership development. Business leaders could apply qualitative measures, such as interviews or surveys, with the mentee, mentee's manager, and mentor at the end of the mentorship program.

I will disseminate the results of this study via publication in scholarly, professional, and business journals, and peer-reviewed electronic media. In addition, I plan to present the results of this study as a white paper that is available to business leaders attending professional conferences. Business consultants may utilize the study results to conduct training, workshops, and seminars that relate to effective strategies for improving mentorship programs for leadership development.

Recommendations for Further Research

I offer several recommendations for future research based on the results obtained from this study and its limitations. One of the limitations of the current research study stems from a small sample size, as only three organizational leaders took part in the interviews, which is insufficient for obtaining an exhaustive representation of businesses. Robinson (2014) asserted that the proportion of the sample size to the overall population of interest can yield to wide variations in research results. Researchers should, therefore, conduct further, more extensive, research studies into the leadership development strategies investigated in this study. Input from a greater number of participants would certainly yield results that are more generalizable.

While exploring leadership development strategies aimed at building leaders through mentorship programs, I realized the need for more empirical research on mentoring programs success. Further research conducted on mentoring program success, whereby researchers evaluate and compare the quality of mentoring programs to determine the ideal combination of formal and informal mentorships. The finding of the ideal combination of formal and informal mentorships is essential, as the general measures of the successful integration of formal and informal mentoring in mentorship programs seem to be lacking.

Another possible limitation of the present study was that the interview process in academic research might be intimidating for participants. Thus, participants offer information believed to satisfy expectations of the interviewer, rather than sharing truthful insights. While I addressed this limitation, researchers could use the quantitative or mixed-method research methodology to further this research study. As quantitative studies involve much larger sample sizes, researchers could possibly examine the influence of cross-gender mentoring on leadership development and the relationship quality.

Reflections

This doctoral study is more than a means to an end or merely an academic research study needed to earn the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) title. This doctoral study is part of an ongoing journey and the DBA will mark the end of one season and the beginning of another. In this season, I experienced successes, overcame challenges, and learned many lessons. I had the opportunity to grow with Walden

University’s faculty and fellow doctoral students at residencies and intensives, in which we shared experiences, identified possible biases, and developed academic strategies and outlines to complete the doctoral study. When I started on this journey, I felt confident in my ability to get the job done, but I was wrong. The attitudes, aptitudes, and skills that I started the study with were not enough and I had to grow. I not only grew, but also experienced a profound transformation.

The disappointments and challenges I encountered tested my will and drive to succeed. My passion and purpose allowed me to overcome challenges, which enabled me to experience the transformation, and thus exert a significant influence upon the leaders and future leaders of the world. I conducted a qualitative study to explore strategies that business leaders use to successfully improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The findings from this study can help current business practitioners.

I value the journey of completing this study because of my personal growth. Starting with topic formulation, followed by the literature review of the conceptual framework of Kram’s (1985) mentorship theory, defending my proposal, conducting the interviews with successful leaders, and analyzing the results, I increased my leadership capacity in this process, which prompted me to focus on my purpose. I strongly believe that I will use this experience to make more significant business and social contributions. My purpose focuses on training individuals to become leaders that are victors. I also wish to empower others to mentor and become agents of change, reach one and teach one, and change the world one person at a time.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Successful implementation and improvement of mentorship programs could enable business leaders to develop and retain skilled professionals, allowing them to move into leadership positions. Mentoring employees could help business leaders to maximize the return on investment in recruitment, selection, and training of employees, and develop leaders that can contribute to the effort to generate higher profitability for the organization.

Five themes emerged from the analysis of three participant interviews and document analyses, namely (a) mentoring functions are critical for leadership development, (b) multiple modes of mentoring can lead to effective leadership development, (c) a mentor's motivation is critical for a successful mentoring relationship with the mentee, (d) support processes and systems for mentoring programs are essential for continuous improvement to enhance leadership development, and (e) continuous improvement is critical to address mentoring challenges and enhance mentoring programs. I found in this study that business leaders must understand the processes and functions of mentoring to make informed decisions when considering integrating mentorship programs for leadership development into the organizational processes and strategies. Business leaders must also understand the motivation of individuals applying for mentorship roles and structure mentoring programs to align them with organizational goals to foster better business practices.

I used the results of this study validate the importance of formal and informal mentoring in mentoring programs. Psychosocial and career mentoring also emerged as two dominant developmental constructs associated with mentoring functions that are critical for leadership development. Specifically, role modeling is the most critical psychosocial mentoring function for leadership development. Because leaders are vital to organizational success, leaders must adopt effective strategies for developing leaders to allow businesses to thrive in the increasingly competitive economic climate. Because mentorship programs are an effective tool for developing leaders, it is possible for business leaders to use the findings of this study to make transformational changes to the people and culture of their organizations.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

Leadership Development Strategies to Build Leaders Through Mentorship Programs

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study is to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population will consist of business leaders located in central Florida having successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The implications for positive social change include the development of leaders empowered to make significant contributions to their local communities to respond to challenges associated with lack of proper health, homelessness, environmental sustainability, and violent acts.

Interviewee: ___________________________ Location: ____________________

Date: ______________________ Time: _______________________

Notes:

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

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

Interview Questions

1. How did your mentoring program for leadership development support organizational goals?
2. How were different levels of the organizational hierarchy involved in the leadership development of the mentoring program?
3. How did you manage and coordinate the mentorship programs for leadership development?
4. How did you pair mentor and mentee for leadership development in the mentorship program?
5. Did you offer any incentives to mentors and/or mentees to participate in a mentor program for leadership development?
6. How is a long distance mentorship relationship for leadership development supported?
7. How are multiple mentors used for leadership development with one mentee in the mentorship program?

8. What is the process for continuous improvement of mentorship programs to increase employee leadership development?
9. What are the most common drawbacks of leadership development experienced in a mentorship program and a mentor-mentee relationship?
10. Did you have separate mentoring programs for leadership development for new hires and current employees? If so, how were the mentorship programs structured differently for leadership development?
11. What technologies did you use to support leadership development in the mentorship program?
12. What are the top priorities of the mentorship program and how do you evaluate the outcomes to determine a successful mentorship experience for leadership development?
13. What components of the mentoring programs did you find most effective? Please explain why?
14. What, if any, adjustments or new approaches have been made to the mentoring program to address new millennial employees?
15. What models of mentorship did you use and which ones were most effective?

Appendix B: Observation and Document Review Protocol

Leadership Development Strategies to Build Leaders Through Mentorship Programs

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study is to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population will consist of business leaders located in central Florida having successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

Interviewee: __________________________ Location: ___________________

Date: _____________________ Time: ______________________

1. Obtain a signed consent form. Offer to answer any questions that interviewee may have.
2. Remind interviewee about their volunteer efforts to participate in the study.
3. Start the interview by recording interviewee's pre-assigned coded name, date, time and location.
4. Start interview and begin observation of participants.
5. Watch the interviewee carefully noting participant behavior and enviroment.
6. At the end of the interview, prepare documents for review
7. Begin document review.
8. Provide participant my contact information if they have any questions.

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate

Leadership Development Strategies to Build Leaders Through Mentorship Programs

The purpose of this qualitative, multicase study is to explore strategies that business leaders use to improve their mentoring programs for employee leadership development. The target population will consist of business leaders located in central Florida having successfully improved their mentoring programs for employee leadership development.

1. I will use public records to identify local organizations using mentorship programs.
2. I will contact the business leaders for each organization identified through public records.
3. I will explain the study and invite participant to take part in a research study about the use mentoring programs for employee leadership development.
4. Business leaders who are interested or who would like additional information will be sent the Informed Consent form.