

2019

Strategizing Effective Succession Planning for Information Technology Executives

Michael Barr
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Databases and Information Systems Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Michael Barr

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Jill Murray, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Janet Booker, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Annie Brown, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2019

Abstract

Strategizing Effective Succession Plans for Future Information Technology Executives

by

Michael Barr

MA, Webster University, 2014

BA, Ball State University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2019

Abstract

Organizations across the United States lose hundreds of millions of dollars each year due to the lack of effective succession planning for information technology executives. The purpose of this single case study was to explore strategies for the development and implementation of effective succession plans for future information technology executives. Bass and Avolio's transformational leadership theory was the conceptual framework for this study. The 3 participants were selected based upon their roles as executives in technology-related positions and their experiences with succession planning. Data were collected using semistructured interviews with these executives from a company headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. Organizational documents, including an employee assessment form and a description of attributes that each information technology professional is measured against, were also analyzed. Yin's 5-phase model was used to analyze the data; steps included compiling, disassembling, reassembling, clarifying, and the development of conclusions. The 3 major themes that emerged from data analysis were diversity of background, professional development, and sourcing of executives to improve the success of information technology executives. Using study findings, organizational leaders may help to bring about social change by enhancing the growth of high-performing information technology professionals. Assessing talent and tailoring development opportunities, coupled with mentorship, could help information technology professionals prepare for future positions that positively impact employee morale, establish a common vision across their organizations, and identify opportunities for interaction with local communities.

Strategizing Effective Succession Plans for Future Information Technology Executives

by

Michael Barr

MA, Webster University, 2014

BA, Ball State University, 2004

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2019

Dedication

The completion of this study is dedicated to my wife, Ashley Barr, and our wonderful children. Throughout this rigorous program, I have spent countless hours focusig on the completion of this degree, and my wife's faith has never waived. My children have also given a lot to help me achieve my goal of completing this doctoral program. I hope that this honor stands as an inspiration to all of my children, that we can do better in life than what we were given.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank my doctoral study chair, Dr. Jill Murray, first. Throughout my struggles in the program, she has supported and challenged me continuously. I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. Janet Booker for stepping in when I needed a second committee member and providing quick feedback to keep me on task. Dr. Annie Brown, my university research reviewer (URR), also provided great and timely feedback through the approval of my prospectus and proposal. Finally, I would like to complement Dr. Susan Davis, the director of the Business Administration program, for tremendous leadership and support.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose Statement.....	2
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	5
Interview Questions	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	7
Assumptions.....	7
Limitations	8
Delimitations.....	9
Significance of the Study	9
Contribution to Business Practice.....	9
Implications for Social Change.....	10
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	10
Conceptual Framework.....	12
Succession Planning for Executive Departure.....	18
Succession Readiness for Information Technology Executives	22

Managing Talent Through Succession Planning	26
Selection of Successors With Desired Skills	28
Professional Development of Potential Successors	30
Mentorship in Preparation for Succession	33
Knowledge Sharing as Part of Succession.....	35
Postsuccesion Sustainability for Information Technology Executives	38
Transition and Summary.....	40
Section 2: The Project.....	42
Purpose Statement.....	42
Role of the Researcher	43
Participants.....	45
Research Method and Design	47
Research Method	48
Research Design.....	49
Population and Sampling	51
Ethical Research.....	52
Data Collection Instruments	53
Data Collection Technique	56
Data Organization Technique	58
Data Analysis	59
Reliability and Validity.....	61
Reliability.....	61

Validity	62
Transition and Summary.....	63
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	64
Introduction.....	64
Overview of the Study	64
Presentation of the Findings.....	65
Theme 1: Diversity of Backgrounds	67
Theme 2: Professional Development	69
Theme 3: Sourcing of Executives	71
Relationship of Findings to the Conceptual Framework	73
Applications to Professional Practice	74
Implications for Social Change.....	76
Recommendations for Action	77
Recommendations for Further Research.....	77
Reflections	78
Conclusion	79
References.....	82
Appendix A: Interview Questions	99
Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation	100

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Major Themes and Subthemes in Interviews and Literature66

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Senior directors lack plans for the succession of information technology executives, which can lead to gaps in an organization's application of technical capabilities and alignment with its strategic objectives (Nissan & Eder, 2017). Lopez, Viveros, and Melendez (2017) identified the need for alignment between an organization's business processes and its strategic objectives to benefit all stakeholders. The information technology executive is a technical and strategic leader whose responsibilities have expanded over the past three decades, requiring the creation of multiple independent positions which interact to achieve technology solutions (Charki, Jossierand, & Boukef, 2017). Executive and operational leaders analyze and identify the technical needs of their organizations and determine the most effective workforce structure (Zurga, 2018). Despite the importance of these organizational requirements, organizations often lack clearly defined succession planning and processes for the development of information technology professionals in executive-level positions.

Background of the Problem

Executive leaders within organizations often fail to identify qualified individuals for senior information technology vacancies (Mazzola, St. Louis, & Tanniru, 2017). Information technology leaders can hinder normal operations and halt strategic initiatives that benefit an organization when they are unprepared for their role as a successor (McKee & Froelich, 2016). Leaders are accountable to their organizations for preparing and leading organizational change that results from turnover in executive leadership, regardless of the purpose reason that led to change (Roberts & Watson, 2016). As

organizations expand and mature their information technology infrastructure, there is an increased need for experienced information technology executives to validate the legitimacy of their information technology programs (Haislip, Masli, Richardson, & Sanchez, 2016). Corporate executives and board members are at the mercy of a new generation of employees who are willing to move on to more attractive job opportunities unless a well-defined succession plan is in place that identifies and supports the development of young information technology professionals (Guha & Chakrabarti, 2016). I explored succession planning strategies for the selection and development of highly qualified information technology professionals for future executive roles.

Problem Statement

A formal succession plan is vital to the cultural and strategic well-being of an organization but is often overlooked by organizations that fail to comprehend the need for effective executive leadership (Nissan & Eder, 2017). Easter and Brooks (2017) noted that stress caused by executive transitions led to an average 30% decrease in business profits over the next 3 years for firms in the United States when there was no succession plan in place. The general business problem is that organizational leaders do not always develop or implement effective succession plans. The specific business problem is that leaders lack strategies for the effective development of succession plans for future information technology executives.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies for the development and implementation of effective succession plans for future information

technology executives. Information technology executives from one corporation headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, were the target population for this study. Participants were expected to have experience in the execution of an effective transition of power according to a succession plan for information technology executives. I wanted to enhance understanding of how information technology executives' alignment with strategic objectives might support social change. Executives provide employees with career advancement opportunities through their understanding of these strategies, ensuring stability in employees' careers and productivity as members of their communities while contributing to positive social change (Arnold, 2015).

Nature of the Study

I used the qualitative method to explore strategies for the effective development of succession plans for future information technology executives. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) observed that researchers using the qualitative method can collect and analyze multiple forms of data. The qualitative method was appropriate for my research because I posed open-ended questions to interview participants and assessed organizational documents to provide contextual information about the study phenomenon. Quantitative and mixed methods both include statistical analysis as a way of measuring data in a study (Migliorini & Rania, 2017). I was not focused on testing hypotheses. In contrast, I was able to use the qualitative method to gain an understanding of succession planning through the perspectives of current information technology executives.

There are multiple qualitative research designs including (a) ethnographic, (b)

grounded theory, (c) narrative, (d) phenomenological, and (e) case study (Yin, 2018). I considered but opted against using the ethnographic, grounded theory, narrative, and phenomenological designs. Boden, Muller, and Nett (2011) described the ethnographic approach as a way of exploring the behavior or beliefs of a culture. The ethnographic approach was not appropriate because I was not interested in exploring the traditions of a culture. Researchers use grounded theory to develop new theories based on data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory was not applicable to this study because I used an existing theory of leader development, transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985), to address the business problem. Researchers use the narrative design to identify the events and experiences of participants to give meaning a narrative or visual representation (Clandinin & Connelly, 1990). The narrative approach was not applicable to my research because the focus was on the development and implementation of strategies for succession planning of organizations. Moustakas (1994) identified the phenomenological method as research into the meanings of life experiences of participants who have experienced a similar phenomenon. A phenomenological approach was not a valid choice because succession planning within an organization is not an extraordinary event. Yin (2018) described the case study design as one in which researchers investigate multiple sources of evidence related to real-world events. The case study design was appropriate for my study because I conducted interviews with employees and reviewed organizational documents as part of my in-depth examination of the case study.

Research Question

What are the strategies that organizations use for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives?

Interview Questions

1. Please describe your role in the development and execution of strategies for succession planning?
2. Please describe how your strategies for succession planning are documented and updated?
3. How do you identify and develop high-performing information technology professionals for future executive roles as part of your strategies for the effective development of succession plans?
4. How do you address the key challenges encountered for effective succession planning strategies?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of your organization's strategies for the succession of information technology executives?
6. What additional information would you like to provide for the effective development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in a qualitative study refers to the core concept and supporting ideas that create the foundation for research (Michael et al., 2017). Burns (1978) coined the term *transformational leadership*, which was further developed by

Bass (1985) into transformational leadership theory. According to Ramsey, Rutti, Lorenz, Barakat, and Sant'anna (2017), transformation leadership theory identifies transformational leaders as those who can identify needed change, motivate followers into action, and then positively influence morale while placing the success of the organization before their own. Leaders are successful when they promote continuous interpersonal engagement and relationship development between themselves and followers, illustrating trust at all levels of the organization (Mencl, Wefald, & van Ittersum, 2017). Bass and Avolio (1994) identified the key components of transformational leadership theory as (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. I used transformational leadership theory as a conceptual framework to explain how leaders constructed strategies for the effective development of succession plans for future information technology executives.

Operational Definitions

Information technology executive: A leader within an organization who leads subordinates in their contribution towards business value by forecasting technological requirements, leveraging available resources, and communicating a vision of strategic performance (La Paz, 2017).

Mentorship: A formal partnership as part of succession planning between experienced and inexperienced individuals that supports the latter's professional development by sharing knowledge and encouraging confidence through continuous engagement (Jakubik, Weese, Eliades, & Huth, 2017).

Strategic capability: The ability of an organization to align available skills and resource in support of its strategic direction (Nguyen, Yu, Melewar, & Chen, 2015).

Succession plan: An organization's documented process for the replacement of an executive in which detailed preparations are made for successors to conduct an efficient transition into responsibility (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016).

Tacit knowledge: The knowledge that is developed through experiences, cultures, and emotions; it is difficult to formally transfer from one individual to another (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016; Yang, Liang, & Avgeriou, 2016).

Talent management: An organization's process for the selection and development of potential leaders who support the strategic direction (Nissan & Eder, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This section contains a description of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations for the study. Each element is important in considering the validity, weaknesses, and scope of the study. Articulating them helped me to identify biases and potential shortfalls within my research.

Assumptions

An assumption comes from a researcher's uncertainty of the facts, pending validation through refinement or research (Yang et al., 2016). The first assumption that I made was that individuals participating in the interview process would provide truthful responses. To help in this regard, I heeded findings from Yin (2018), who identified several skills that researchers can use to increase the participant's desire to cooperate with the interviewer such as preparing well-constructed questions, remaining flexible,

and avoiding conflict or bias with participants. One of the techniques that I used to improve cooperation with each of the participants was that I only asked follow-up questions for clarification and refrained from asking questions that may have led them to an expected answer. I made a second assumption as well which was that the organization's leadership structure had the authority to support the needs of my study. I learned from interaction with previously identified partner organizations who removed their support, that not all executives had the authority to make their own decisions. With the partner organization for my study, I was able to coordinate directly with the vice president for human resources, who had the authority to give me access to prospective participants. This was a great benefit in the process of aligning my interview requirements and access to organizational documents.

Limitations

Limitations prevent a researcher from making a fully understood decision, resulting in the potential for an undesired weakness in the study (Netcoh, 2017). The first limitation that I identified for my study was that there were only a small number of information technology positions considered to be at the executive level within the study organization. The second limitation was that the information technology executives were not identified within their organization's succession plan, depending on the resources available and the priorities of the organization. A third limitation was that there was not a clearly defined program that ensured information technology competence within the executive ranks. Information technology executive positions are managerial, and the training or preparation of successors may not be the same when based on the execution of

a succession plan.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries that define the scope of a study (Nagasaka, 2016). There were multiple boundaries placed on this study including the geographical area and the role of the participants in the study organization. Kansas City, Missouri, was the geographical focus and a county well-endowed with the headquarters of many large corporations. The second delimitation was that participants could be executives, previous successors, or other leaders with a role in the preparation of a succession plan. Study findings may not be applicable to organizations in other geographical settings or with different organizational structures.

Significance of the Study

Succession planning is crucial to the continuity of organizations because of the positive and negative implications of executive turnover (Bills, Lisic, & Seidel, 2017). Succession planning offers an opportunity for the sharing of knowledge, sometimes decades-worth, to ensure the sustainability of leadership (Wilkes, Cross, Jackson, & Daily, 2015). Predecessors who do not share past experiences with successors can cause organizations to struggle through challenges that they should already have been learned from. The results of this research may be beneficial in raising business leaders' awareness of available strategies for the effective development of succession plans for future information technology executives.

Contribution to Business Practice

Effective succession plans improve the continuity of operations and contribute to

knowledge and risk management, as well as the identification of future leaders (Wilkes et al., 2015). Successors developed through formal succession plans can provide multiple benefits to an organization including enterprise-level experience, consistency of decision-making processes, and a reduced perception of risk from stakeholders (Sammer, 2015). Executives can implement succession planning strategies which improve continuity and business processes while reducing risk, which contributes to a successful transition.

Implications for Social Change

This study could spur positive social change by making executives more aware of succession planning strategies, offering avenues for the advancement of employees. Executives may be able employ these strategies to aid in the identification and development of deserving employees, which can have a positive social impact by ensuring long-term employment within the organization, enabling the organization and its employees to support local communities (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016). Future executives may gain confidence, a better sense of security, and be more productive within the organization and their community when there is a plan that takes their career and livelihood into consideration (Judd, 2017). Leaders positively influence the livelihood and long-term welfare of their employees by offering job security to employees and community enrichment opportunities.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This review of the literature on succession planning for information technology executives includes a variety of peer-reviewed, scholarly articles as well as seminal works supporting the transformational leadership theory. I used the research and

interview questions as a guide in investigating strategies that leaders use for the development and implementation of succession plans, focusing on future information technology executives. The literature review may provide substantive information about how information technology professionals develop their skills for an executive role (see Ackerman & Arbour, 2016). In the review, I analyze and synthesize information related to the research question and discuss the study variables, including how it supported the study.

In conducting my review of the literature, I used Walden University Library-provided databases to search for peer-reviewed journals and articles. I used multiple databases including ABI/INFORM, Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, ERIC, IEEE Explore, ProQuest, and ScienceDirect. I also supplemented the search for information by obtaining references from texts I had come across, adhering to the Walden University rubric requirement for the use of peer-reviewed references. The overall study consists of 120 articles and seminal works, with 96% being peer-reviewed and 93% having been published no more than 5 years before January 2019, the anticipated date of approval by Walden's chief academic officer. The search terms included *transformational leadership theory, a succession plan, information technology executive, talent management, strategies, professional development, mentorship, tacit knowledge, and sustainability*. These terms highlight the topics discussed in the review of the literature.

Authors can use themes as a means of organizing their research, as I did for the categorization of data within the literature review. Yun and Duff (2017) noted that

thematic categorization allows for the grouping of topics based on similarities around critical events, objects, or activities. Foote and Halawi (2018) offered that the triangulation of data could allow for the validation of information into various themes related to research. Themes allow for an in-depth understanding of a concept or theory that can influence future knowledge (Cheung, Wan, & Chan, 2018). Researchers organize information into themes to present information in a manner that furthers overall understanding.

Researchers organize data in different ways. Yun and Duff (2017) identified many methods, focusing on taxonomical and thematic categorization in their research. I used thematic categorization to organize the data within the study, developing themes and applying them to succession planning for information technology executives. The development of themes allowed for the identification and implementation of processes that supported the research methodology. Foote and Halawi (2018) noted the importance of theme development in triangulating data. Researchers also use themes to reduce the oversaturation of information and establish a baseline for the design of the study (Yun & Duff, 2017). Using Bass' transformational leadership theory as a theoretical lens, I limited the scope of the study to several themes that supported valid and reliable research into the topic of succession planning.

Conceptual Framework

The transformational leadership theory. I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework in the exploration of strategies for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives.

Bass and Avolio (1994) defined the four components of the transformational leadership theory as (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. This study includes a detailed discussion of the chosen themes and how the transformational leadership theory impacted them. The central themes in the review include Succession Readiness of Information Technology Executives, Succession Planning for Executive Departures, Managing Talent through Succession Planning, Selection of Successors with Desired Skills, Professional Development of Potential Successors, Knowledge Sharing as Part of Succession, Mentorship in Preparation for Succession, and Postsuccession Sustainability of Information Technology Executives. With the themes organized in this manner, the literature review provides a detailed explanation of succession planning and how the transformational leadership theory can impact organizational strategies.

John V. Downton first used *transformational leadership* to describe sociological on business practices during the early 1970s, explicitly developing the term to understand the activities of political leaders (Krinsky & Hickson, 2014). In 1978, James M. Burns adapted the term to the newly minted field of leadership studies, identifying distinctions between transformational and transactional leadership (Adserias, Charleston, & Jackson, 2017). Burns (1978) identified the importance of transformational leadership and the application of the related characteristics to an individual's leveraging of power over others in an ethical and personal way, resulting in increased levels of morale and motivation. Leaders applied these basic principles for 5 years, across diverse career fields, before Burns developed his theory of transformational leadership in 1978

(Krinsky, 2014). Bass spent the next several years working with several other theorists to refine the theory, culminating with the current model of the transformational leadership theory while partnered with Avolio in 1994 (Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2015).

Bernard M. Bass introduced transformational leadership as a theory in 1985 with a focus on organizational performance (Arnold, Loughlin, & Walsh, 2016). Bass introduced the theory of transformational leadership which was enhanced through collaboration with Bruce J. Avolio. Transformational leaders display many qualities that contribute to a well-developed organization and a reduction in anxiety for their employees (Germain, 2017). Organizational leaders achieve these effects through the development of mutually beneficial relationships with their employees and establish a foundation of trust (Valeriu, 2017). Leaders can use the transformational leadership theory as a framework for all employees within an enterprise or corporation (Berkovich, 2016).

The transformational leadership theory includes a broad array of characteristics that may be condensed into a set of attributes that benefit an organization's performance. Bass and Avolio (1994) contributed an enhanced explanation of the four attributes of the transformational leadership theory, which include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders can use one, some, or all of the attributes to influence their employees' behavior and stimulate their actions towards the greater good of the organization (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). Transformational leadership theory may provide a platform to identify strategies for the development of an effective succession plan for executives (Lambert,

2015). Leaders can use the transformational leadership theory as a means of developing a competitive advantage for the organization while also providing personal benefits to members within the organization.

Organizational leaders use the attributes of the transformational leadership theory to explore and refine succession planning for information technology executives. Gozukara and Simsek (2015) mentioned that the attributes of the transformational leadership theory could provide a context that enhances the preparedness of leaders. Leaders use transformation leadership to prepare their subordinates for increasing responsibilities through the incorporation of a positive work environment that supports organizational success (Ma, Seidl, & Guerard, 2015). I examined how the attributes of transformational leadership theory can drive strategic gains in organizations while giving future information technology executives a valuable tool for their professional development.

Transformational leaders use the idealized influence attribute as a method of establishing trust between themselves and their employees. Zdaniuk and Bobocel (2015) identified idealized influence as a leader's use of charisma to bring employees together in the interest of the group, putting employees' needs before his or her own. Leaders gain trust when they do what is right for the organization, ethically and strategically (Arnold et al., 2016). Those who place themselves in the same environment and situations as their employees, going through the same stress, gain respect and adherence to a higher standard of work from their employees (Gozukara & Simsek, 2015). Leadership that is successful in using the idealized influence attribute is significant because it means the

leader is setting a positive example for his or her employees, one that they will follow (Valeriu, 2017). Leaders can improve their employees' standards of performance when they achieve a high level of trust and shared respect.

Leaders use the inspirational motivation attribute to arouse the ambitions of their employees through a variety of methods. In the application of the inspirational motivation attribute, successful executives integrate this characteristic with the other attributes of the transformational leadership theory (Smothers, Doleh, Celuch, Peluchette, & Valadares, 2016). Employees can be motivated to improve their performance and gain confidence through their leader's charisma and their support in exacting change (Jiang, Gao, & Yang, 2018). Arnold et al. (2016) stated that inspirational leaders could motivate employees toward the execution and achievement of goals. Inspirational motivation ties directly to a leader's charisma and ability to communicate a shared vision with his or her followers (Jiang et al., 2018). Charismatic leaders in an organization can directly impact the performance of their employees by motivating them towards the achievement of strategic objectives.

Managers within an organization may provide intellectual stimulation to their employees to enhance their readiness for future opportunities and to utilize their talent while allowing for creativity. Smothers et al. (2016) opined that transformational leaders encourage employees to innovate in the execution of tasks while providing opportunities to display their skills and integrity. Employees can think for themselves, exercise their resourcefulness, and influence the direction of initiatives while supporting the goals of the organization (Arnold et al., 2016). Leaders can benefit significantly from their

application of intellectual stimulation, learning whom they can trust to complete tasks.

The application of idealized consideration is vital to followers because it represents a leader's understanding of followers' needs and desires (Smothers et al., 2016). Followers grant trust and admiration to leaders through their reciprocated respect and the alignment of their mutual needs (Jiang et al., 2018). Arnold et al. (2016) stated that leaders could elicit a positive response in productivity when they take an interest in the safety and security of their employees, whether job-related or concerning their personal lives. Zdaniuk and Bobocel (2015) added that idealized consideration for employees includes a leader's influence towards the collective interests of the group. Transformational leaders can create opportunities for organizational improvement by exhibiting interest in the success and needs of their followers.

The transformational leadership theory is a mechanism that leaders can use to improve the effectiveness and morale of their employees, teams, and organizations. Valeriu (2017) stated that organizations could benefit from increased emotional and social competencies that improve relationships between leaders and followers. Leaders promote creativity and adaptability by hiring professionals with transformational personalities (Ward, Berenson, & Daniels, 2018). Dash and Chaudhuri (2015) noted that the employment of the transformational leadership theory could increase productivity and performance in organizations of any size when offered as a top-down means of influence. Leaders use the transformational leadership theory to enhance the functions of their organization and galvanize processes, meeting the strategic needs of their organization.

Transactional leadership in comparison. Transactional leadership is a

competing theory for the development of information technology executives as part of succession planning. Leaders use transactional characteristics to stimulate employees through the exchange of benefits for performance (Saravo, Netzel, & Kieswetter, 2017). Saxena (2016) mentioned that transactional leaders tend to hold onto their authority rather than train and develop their successor in preparation for the transition. Executives achieve the most effective results by incorporating a balance of the transformational and transactional leadership in their leadership style (Saravo et al., 2017). Organizations benefit from executives who understand how to leverage the transactional side of leadership but may be more effective when supplementing a transformational leadership style.

Succession Planning for Executive Departure

Succession planning is a deliberate process for the preparation of high-achieving employees to succeed critical leaders in an organization upon their departure and is often implemented during times of uncertainty for the continuity of leadership (Bloom & Abel, 2015; Ma et al., 2015). Organizations use succession planning to mitigate disruptions in workplace morale, financial growth, and strategic direction (Nissan & Eder, 2017; Zdaniuk & Bobocel, 2015). A succession plan meets the needs of the organization and prepares future executives through the provision of professional development opportunities (Bloom & Abel, 2015; Jakubiak et al., 2017). Leaders can identify talented individuals through a selection process, retaining individuals who already have resident knowledge of the organization and have developed relationships with stakeholders (Hall-Ellis, 2015). Succession planning committees may use frameworks, such as the

transformational or transactional leadership theories, as the foundation for their succession planning programs.

The continuity of an organization is a process that ensures an appropriate level of leadership and operational capabilities due to an unforeseen event. Rivolta (2018) mentioned that succession planning is one of the most critical processes that organizations can undertake due to the need for the successful continuity of operations. Executives consider the needs of the organization and future requirements when preparing their succession plan (Nissan & Eder, 2017). The executive succession board, as leaders in their organization, develop succession plans to ensure the continuity of operations when leaders transition out of their organization, often through retirement or other job opportunities (McKee & Froelich, 2016). Senior executives use succession planning as a process for selecting leaders with the necessary skills to lead their organization during trying times.

An executive board integrates a broad set of skills and a significant amount of experience in their role as developers of organizational processes. Senior executives functioning as succession planning board members develop processes and enhance the operations of their organization through transformational leadership, redefining success according to strategic goals (Haislip et al., 2016). Transitioning employees can create a vacuum within an organization due to the loss of experience and leadership (Nissan & Eder, 2017). Board members use succession planning to increase the capabilities and decrease the operational risk that is inherent with executive turnover.

Succession planning allows leaders to prepare for the operational risks associated

with executive turnover, providing plans for the development and mentorship of successors (Edenfield, 2015). Leaders use succession plans to mitigate the impacts of turnover, regardless of the size or function of the organization (Rivolta, 2018). Nissan and Eder (2017) mentioned that leaders tailor a succession plan to align with the experience and skills that their organization needs rather than the focusing solely on filling the role. Departing executives who depart on a good standing within the organization can provide feedback that offers a detailed list of skills identified within the succession plan, considering a prospects ability to influence change and ensure the continuity of operations (Rivolta, 2018). A departing executive can aid in the developmental requirements of their successor based on their experience and time spent in the role.

There was a significant amount of literature supporting the need for succession planning within organizations. Benaroch and Cherbonai (2017) mentioned that strategic and operational failures in leadership reflect the importance of suitably selecting and training the proper individuals as part of a structured succession plan (Wilkes et al., 2015). A well-defined succession plan promulgates critical systemic successes such as the retention of skilled professionals for advancement, sharing of knowledge through effective mentorship programs, and the continuity of well-rounded leaders (De Tuya, Cook, Sutherland, & Luna-Reyes, 2017). Haislip et al. (2016) also noted that adequately preparing leaders for their position through a comprehensive succession plan allowed for the implementation of controls that ensure compliance with corporate governance measures properly. Literature identifying success in meeting strategic objectives was

overwhelmingly supportive of all organization's needs for a succession plan identifying the replacement of critical roles.

Organizations suffer from performance setbacks due to the lack of a succession plan, sometimes resulting in a revolving door of executives within a brief period. The absence of an effective succession plan in place for the loss of an executive can have many negative consequences for a team or an organization (Soebbing, Wicker, & Weimar, 2015). Tichy (2015) noted that successors often fail after their succeeding their predecessor because they are unable to restore control of political and cultural changes that manifested during leadership vacuums. These negative manifestations can include the lack of a strong vision, divisions within an organization, and difficulty developing relationships with other top leaders (Ma et al., 2015). An effective succession plan that does not include strong technical, political, and cultural components may not attract an executive who can influence all the dynamics needed to achieve successful organizational performance (Tichy, 2015). Executives who cannot modify their leadership style to align with the characteristics of the transformational leadership theory are not able to meet the needs of an organization during a transition in leadership.

Executives incorporate a vast array of tools to develop an effective succession plan through the adaptation of organizational processes (Ma et al., 2015). One of the best tools that an incoming executive can utilize during their succession into a leadership role is a process that evaluates the current level of turmoil, assesses the desired capabilities and hurdles to success, and achieves support for their vision through a transformational type of leadership (Tichy, 2015). Soebbing et al. (2015) mentioned that the failure of

successors to understand the expectations of their executive board and subordinate employees could play a crucial role in the demise of an organization's performance. Failure is a risk whenever there is not a comprehensive plan for the development of leadership continuity or a phased approach to the succession activities that allow for the management of the organizational environment (Ma et al., 2015). The risk is difficult to eliminate in the face of adversity or an organization that does not have a plan for change in leadership.

The results of not having a succession plan that develops potential leaders for the departure of a standing executive may have a broad range of adverse effects on the goals of an organization. Tichy (2015) commented that a weak or non-existent plan for succession could lead to a power vacuum that comes from a succession of failed executives, preventing a shared vision of success from taking hold. Ma et al. (2015) mentioned that a string of ineffective executive leaders could be disruptive to an organization and prevent the attainment of routine operations. Successors who disrupt the strategic goals of their organization can also contribute to the loss of financial stability or competitive advantage (Soebbing et al., 2015). The lack of an effective succession plan does not provide a positive outlook for the organization, regardless of its size or the market it operates in.

Succession Readiness for Information Technology Executives

An information technology executive is a senior leader who is responsible for the application of technology to meet the overall strategic goals of an organization and support a competitive advantage (La Paz, 2017). Zardini, Rossignoli, and Ricciardia

(2016) determined that information technology executives ensure the efficiency of information systems infrastructure and promote the success of information technology initiatives while developing relationships between information technology and other business-oriented departments. Information technology executives can come from diverse backgrounds and have a variety of skill sets, not necessarily in information technology (Wilkin, Couchman, Sohal, & Zutsh, 2016).

Information technology executives have only gained an executive-level of significance over the past few decades (La Paz, 2017). These executives are required to take on more responsibilities for corporate governance and the decentralized operations that are required to be successfully integrated (Benaroch & Cherbonai, 2017). The need for predominantly information technology-focused training and education is no longer a strict requirement to become an information technology executive (Ball & Anderson, 2017). Succession planning involves information technology leaders looking for employees with leadership skills who can develop active teams who support and challenge each other, sometimes with an opposing view, but always in the best interest of the organization (Mazzola et al., 2017).

An executive role comes with a requirement for the establishment and management of personnel and organizational processes offers complexities that reach beyond administrative and operational requirements (Sirisomboonsuk, Gu, Cao, & Burns, 2018). Senior leaders of organizations and information technology executives specifically, benefit from having governance programs that identify allow employees opportunities to assume responsibilities while retaining the supervision of tasks (Wilkin

et al., 2016). Organizations require information technology executives who can develop and implement a well-planned governance program that focuses on business objectives and information technology capabilities while including the delineation of roles and responsibilities within the organization (Hansen, Kræmmergaard, & Mathiasen, 2017).

Information technology executives can also sponsor an individual to manage the organization's information technology portfolio; someone who understands the technical aspects can develop a robust information technology governance program and can align their initiatives with business objectives (Serrano, Gomez, & Juiz, 2017). A leader can use the characteristics of the transactional leadership theory to motivate and empower the chosen individual, so they can help their organizations by developing a healthy relationship between the chosen information technology initiatives and the strategic goals of the organization (Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018). Executives improve the performance of their organization through the creation of healthy competition.

Information technology leadership failures are very disruptive to the financial welfare, sustainability, and competitiveness of an organization while resulting in economic losses that can represent hundreds of millions of dollars (Benaroch & Chernobai, 2017; Krotov, 2015). Researchers are not always able to identify the effectiveness of information technology on strategic success directly, typically requiring a mechanism to bridge the gap (Ramsey et al., 2017). Abdelkader and Abed (2016) noted that firms who invest in information technology capabilities and the welfare of their employees, specifically their development, are likely to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Mao, Liu, Zhang, and Deng (2016) also mentioned the need for investment in

information technology resources but included the training of staff and the building of relationships to improve value to the business. The importance of information technology executives is due to their ability to align information technology capabilities and business-oriented processes for a competitive advantage.

Information technology professionals desiring to fill an executive role as part of a succession plan can benefit from displaying qualities such as charisma and trustworthiness (Ramsey et al., 2017). These individuals have the skills needed to fulfill their new position and gain the trust of other executives and other leaders inside and outside of their organization (Blumentritt, 2016). Executive selection committees choose information technology successors based on their ability to avoid value-destruction (Benaroch & Chernobai, 2017). These chosen successors are identified and developed to fill critical roles in an organization based on their knowledge and character (Nogueira, de Deus, Peixoto, & de Sousa, 2017; Ward et al., 2018). Experienced information technology executive can increase the sustainability and morale of their organization (Ward et al., 2018).

Often, successors have a diverse set of skills leading to their selection in fulfilling the needed leadership role (La Paz, 2017). An experienced information technology executive thinks strategically and aligns their leadership and technological capabilities with the organization's mission (Milovich, 2015). Information technology leaders can align the technology and business aspects through the implementation of programs and execution of initiatives that give the organization a competitive advantage (Krotov, 2015). Hickman and Akdere (2018) noted that mentors develop their successors so that

they are an asset to the organization and not just where information technology is related. Organizations implement succession plans to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organization and its stakeholders' needs.

Information technology professionals may be able to understand and employ information technology capabilities and initiatives that are specific to the organization if they receive professional development and counseling throughout their careers (Akhaven, 2018). As executives, they drive their employees to coordinate and plan for solutions meeting the needs of the organization and aligning with their strategic mission (Zardini et al., 2016). Abdelkader and Abed (2016) Information technology executives understand how to develop and integrate information technology infrastructure and processes for their organizations that create opportunities within their market segment while being able to apply technology to meet financial threats. The integration of information technology and the associated processes are essential to influencing financial performance, innovation, and the effectiveness of organizations (Mao et al., 2016).

Managing Talent Through Succession Planning

Talent management is a discipline that is relevant to many functions, including information technology, and includes many components in support of succession planning (Naim & Lenka, 2017). Nissan and Eder (2017) noted that talent management holds many definitions but generally include the selection, development, and retention of employees to fill critical vacancies within an organization. Tan (2016) opined that talented information technology executives come into an organization through many means, whether grown within the organization or hired from elsewhere to inject

innovative ideas and promote stability. Naim and Lenka (2017) mentioned that the selection of inclusive leaders allowed the collection of social capital and the achievement of high-performing organizations. Talent management is a complicated process tailored to achieve the desired results of an organization's succession plan in hiring information technology executives.

Organizations that focus on talent management and select the best-qualified information technology executives as part of their succession plan have historically outperformed competitors, regardless of the industry in which they operate (Kinley & Ben-Hur, 2014). Ward et al. (2018) identified that individuals selected as replacements for critical vacancies offer sustainability within any business environment. Information technology executives who champion educational opportunities for their employees can improve the long-term sustainability of their organization by developing highly-skilled professionals for future advancement (Krinsky & Hickson, 2014). A large pool of skilled information technology professionals can allow greater competition when executive and management positions come available.

There was no shortage of literature for the management of talent in corporations. Naim and Lenka (2017) described the significant challenges that organizations need to overcome when identifying and retaining high-achieving employees through well-developed succession processes. Tan (2016) mentioned that there are many ways of overcoming the challenge of filling critical vacancies including the internal and external sourcing of individuals with valuable skill sets. Organizations can benefit significantly from the development of a strong foundation of leadership incorporating talent

management into succession planning for information technology executives, of which Kinley and Ben-Hur (2014) noted very few had achieved globally. The literature reviewed was overwhelmingly in favor of investing all necessary resources to succeed in talent management activities, but also seemed to insist that corporations were not using the tools available (Naim & Lenka, 2017; Tan; 2016). An increase in individual competencies could support enhancements to corporate gains.

The literature reviewed was beneficial to the discussion on information technology executives and how succession planning can relate to the transformational leadership theory. Valeriu (2017) discussed how leaders who applied the behaviors inherent in the transformational leadership style could help their organizations implement successful change. Talent management seeks out future leaders who support the needs of their organization, often driving change or disruption to organizational processes that provide a fresh perspective (Tan, 2016). The application of talent management supports competency in future leaders and an organization's competitive advantage.

Selection of Successors With Desired Skills

An information technology executive may not succeed based on being skilled in only one set of criteria, such as being only technologically proficient (Adserias et al., 2017). Instead, executive committees use succession planning to choose a successor that can align information technology capabilities with the organization's strategic goals (Judd, 2017). By doing this, the committees select future information technology executives because of their broad skill set and identification as a high-achiever that is capable of filling a position of increased responsibility (Wilkin et al., 2016). The

successor is not just chosen for their education or certifications but based on the needs of the organization and how their skills fill the need for a multidisciplinary expert (De Tuya et al., 2017).

Executives are responsible for achieving success within the scope of their duties but measuring success across functional areas requires context and the use of flexible methods. Organizational leaders interpret success based on metrics that incorporate the needs of all stakeholders in business success (Harvey, Marshall, Jordan, & Kitson, 2015). Hansen et al. (2017) mentioned that although business and information technology activities could occur separately, the performance of the organization is highest when measurements holistically. Managers use many tools to define success including maturity or capability models and the international standards of organization (Hansen et al., 2017; Serrano et al., 2017). Senior leaders can identify their successes and failure by measuring the synchronization of business and information technology activities, as well as a comprehensive governance plan (Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018). The measured success of these activities allows for the maximization of profits and the reduction of risk through appropriate planning (Krinsky & Hickson, 2014). Leaders can provide a strong influence on their organization's overall performance through the implementation of information technology governance programs.

Information technology executives are the driving force behind the implementation of information technology governance and sustainability to ensure that future capabilities meet the strategic needs of an organization (Serrano et al., 2017). The governance of information technology is the framework by which organizations ensure

the efficient and effective use of technology in achieving their strategic goals, with leaders focusing on the long-term sustainability of the processes needed for profitability (Nogueira et al., 2017). Wilkin et al. (2016) described information technology governance in maximizing the resources committed to achieving the strategic goals of a corporation. Information technology executives develop programs of governance to manage the technology needs of the organization through ensured compliance with the industry standards for resource management, security, and other requirements while increasing profitability and working towards a competitive advantage (De Tuya et al., 2017). Information technology executives enact governance to lay the foundation for the sustainment of technical resources and an extension of their strategies for risk management (Wilkin et al., 2016). Corporate governance is a tool that information technology executives can use for the management of resources, mitigation of risk, and maintenance of security while achieving an advantage over its competition.

Professional Development of Potential Successors

Successors are selected by succession planning committees to not only replace a departing information technology executive but to redefine the role and advance new initiatives as part of the organization's strategic plan (Krinsky & Hickson, 2014). The successors accept responsibility for innovation as an information technology executive, requiring an ample amount of time to absorb the knowledge and experience that can be offered by their predecessors (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016). The need for knowledge requires successors to communicate regularly with the departing information technology executive and be willing to take advice (Hummel, 2016). Mentors develop

their successor using their experience in the role as an information technology executive (Kennedy, 2015). The responsibilities and transition requirements for the successorship may be outlined in the organization's succession plan and executed expertly to ensure a productive handover.

Successors complement the needs of their organization by bringing a different perspective from their predecessor (Mazzola et al., 2017). Knell (2017) mentioned that the old ways of training and retaining information technology professionals for succession are often challenging in practice as young information technology professionals tend to move from one organization to another more often. Regardless of hiring processes, a plan for information technology succession can be tailorable to meet the activities that help move the organization towards a competitive advantage through the attainment of strategic objectives.

Future information technology executives benefit from having a broad understanding of the inner-workings of their organization and their activities as part of the more significant market. Fernandez-Araoz, Roscoe, and Aramaki (2017) identified several competencies that measure success in personal, organizational, and industry-wide actions. Every executive or successor is not likely to reach a level of perfection for all necessary competencies but can continue to learn and pay particular attention to their relationships and communications with employees, customers, and supporting staff (Beck, 2018). The development of relationships is a topic that executive may benefit from throughout their careers, personal interaction and coordination with others (Fernandez-Araoz et al., 2017). There is no guarantee that an individual will reach the

competencies needed for the role, but executives must identify the organizational needs and choose a talented individual who can achieve the optimal level of competence and character for the executive vacancy (Chlebikova, Misankova, & Kramarova, 2015). Many internal and external factors can limit the capabilities of a successor's full development, and succession planners need to fully integrate tools for the mitigation of this risk in the successor's preparations (Beck, 2018). Executives can ensure adequately mentor their successor to understand the importance of using a transformational style of leadership to ensure positive relationships between leaders and employee while also keeping their focus on the achievement of organizational goals (Germain, 2017).

There are many activities required to be successful in transitioning duties from the current information technology executive to the successor (Knell, 2017). Krai (2015) stated the importance of investing in the proper time and resources into a successor's development. Some situations allow for increased transition time such as that of family business transitions where the child assumes responsibilities for the parent (Blumentritt, 2016; Parker, 2016). Leaders introduce conflict by not properly managing the skill sets and transition time between the predecessor and the successor (Hummel, 2016). The predecessor and successor can achieve a smooth transition through collaboration and understanding while the successor gains experience through mentorship and opportunities to lead (Kennedy, 2015). Predecessors develop and mentor their successors through opportunities requiring initiative, learn, and risk assessment.

Organizations can invest resources in programs that support the organization's succession plan. Krotov (2015) mentioned that the investment of resources may not be

solely for information technology capabilities but need to provide a return on investment (ROI) commensurate with the expense. Resources may benefit the training and other developmental opportunities for individuals identified as successors (Hickman & Akdere, 2018). Successors will have already shown increased abilities to communicate and motivates employees, with levels of comprehension that have led them to this pivotal point in their career as a selectee for an information technology executive position. The information technology executives who choose to invest in successors allow them to develop trust and increase their ability to influence others around them as they gain experience (Krotov, 2015). Milovich (2015) added that the trust and influence that came from experience contributed to the successor's ability to accomplish tasks and support strategic objectives. Information technology successors have displayed the capacity to fill a leadership role and regularly provide a positive return on investment when given the opportunity to lead.

Mentorship in Preparation for Succession

Information technology leaders use mentorship to develop the business and technical skills of their employees, improve the efficiency of their organization, and prepare their protégés for advancement in their careers. Mentors are selected and paired with subordinate employees to share their knowledge for the benefit of all parties, most importantly the organization (Woodley, Burgess, Paguio, & Bingley, 2015). Bozionelos et al. (2016) mentioned that mentorship exposes subordinates to a more comprehensive understanding of the operational and strategic functions of the business. Executive members must ensure that their organization has an active program of succession,

including a structured mentorship program that focuses on the needs of the organization and the skills required for the position (Windeler & Riemenschneider, 2016). Leaders who take an interest in their assignment as mentors may provide a tremendous boost to the morale of their employees and offer increased opportunities for a competitive advantage.

Mentors provide their mentees with the most significant opportunities for development and increased knowledge when they engage in transformational leadership. Leaders may stimulate their employees and improve the effectiveness of their organizations through intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, perseverance through conflict, idealized influences, and inspirational motivation (Germain, 2017). Comparably, Lonquist (2015) identified that successful mentors develop their successors by incorporating multiple characteristics associated with the transformational leadership theory into their training. Huang, Weng, and Chen (2016) offered an alternative theory by stating that mentorship did not have to be formal, but that a formal process ensured a mentee's further access to professional development. Senior leaders use the transformational leadership theory as a valuable tool in determining the correct approach needed to properly develop a successor for a future role of increased responsibility.

Mentorship offers valuable opportunities and insight for the mentor, the protégé, and the organization. Information technology mentors can share their technical knowledge and experiences with protégés through structured succession programs that ensure continuity within the organization (Bozionelos et al., 2016). Protégés must

develop a comprehensive understanding of how their organizations have previously leveraged their available information technology resources while looking towards the future and becoming the agent of change that can identify new opportunities (Woodley et al., 2015). Organizational leaders must ensure that their succession plans include programs for the development of deserving information technology professionals who can lead the organization forward, regardless of their ethnicity or gender (Windeler & Riemenschneider, 2016). Information technology leaders mentor their successors towards success in their future assignments and are more likely to lead their organizations towards their strategic goals (Bozionelos et al., 2016). Mentorship programs are a critical factor in the continuity of operations and initiatives for any organization of any size (Hickman & Akdere, 2018).

Knowledge Sharing as Part of Succession

Organizational leaders value the knowledge gained by defining the internal and strategic requirements of the information technology executive position (Milovich, 2015). In practice, leaders use explicit knowledge to identify knowledge gaps and develop a formal means of coding their activities in a way that is understood by others (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016). Equally crucial to the continuity processes of an organization and succession programs is tacit knowledge (Zardini et al., 2016). Tacit knowledge is gained through the documentation or quantification of one's culture and experiences, as a supplement to explicit knowledge (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016). Although explicit knowledge is usually available in abundance, tacit knowledge is difficult to transfer at a between individuals but contributes greatly to organizational

learning (Zardini et al., 2016). Mentorship activities are useful because ongoing communications ensure mentee learning and continuity (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016).

The sharing of tacit knowledge from one information technology executive takes significant effort in practice because it requires the transfer of personal knowledge gained through experience, which is difficult to document (Akhavan, Shahabipour, & Hosnavi, 2018). Tacit knowledge contrasts with explicit knowledge which is more easily communicated through organizational learning initiatives and knowledge creation products (Shao, Feng, & Wang, 2017). In combination, tacit and explicit knowledge provide information technology executives a solid foundation for their role as a strategic leader (Zimmerman & Ravishankar, 2014). Individuals sharing tacit knowledge with successors require the ability to effectively translate information that can only be understood based on a standard set of experiences or given context (Bozionelos et al., 2016). Tacit knowledge is only a small piece of the knowledge transfer process, but essential to leaders who struggle to share it effectively.

Information technology executives absorb and share tacit knowledge, offering a mechanism for the improvement of their business and technical functions (Shao et al., 2017). Zimmerman and Ravishankar (2014) speculated that organizations could benefit from cost advantages and the standardization of processes while transcending organizational boundaries through charisma and the influence of networking, or expense of social capital. Interpersonal relationships and first-hand communications are essential to the sharing of knowledge, which is a characteristic of tacit knowledge sharing (Shao et

al., 2017). Mao et al. (2016) offered that the creation and implementation of processes based on tacit knowledge sharing require organizations to be more adaptable to change and flexible in their culture because this type of knowledge comes from personal experience and effective personal contact. The importance of tacit knowledge to information technology executives is that it helps to fill gaps between the documented processes supporting the full function of their strategic position.

Tacit knowledge is essential to all areas of business as no individual or organization can function and innovate solely based on their documented processes (Akhavan et al., 2018). Nguyen et al. (2015) opined that the sharing of tacit knowledge is essential to organizations because it offers opportunities for knowledge creation and improvement of their processes. In developing new knowledge-based opportunities, information technology executives can gain essential skills for communication while imparting and absorbing the tacit knowledge of other executives (Foote & Halawi, 2018). Zimmerman and Ravishankar (2014) also mentioned that constant interaction between individuals, regardless of the size of the organization or locations of leaders, improves the transfer of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is essential for information technology executives because the sharing of experience gives them a higher level of professional development.

Aspects of the transformational leadership theory such as the need for charisma and social networking, building stronger contextual-based relationships, and enlightening individuals for the good of the organization improve the transfer of tacit knowledge (Harvey et al., 2015; Zimmerman & Ravishankar, 2014). Shao et al. (2017) identified that

information technology executives could influence their relationships with followers in a way that resulted in increased levels of trust, commitment to the leader's vision, and a desire to put the good of the organization before themselves. Information technology executives can offer their successors and other leaders a wealth of tacit information through the sharing of their experiences. Explicit knowledge, referring to documented information, may not provide the contextual significance of their leadership requirements by itself.

Tacit knowledge was also relevant to my study due to the importance of knowledge transference during succession planning. Tacit knowledge is difficult to transfer effectively but offers a wealth of experience and knowledge to employees and potential successors (Zimmerman & Ravishankar, 2014). Information technology executives can benefit from succession planning that incorporates mentorship opportunities and networking with executives, allowing for the expansion of knowledge creation activities (Maruto, 2014). Succession planning with the incorporation of the transformational leadership theory attributes and the sharing of tacit knowledge offers benefits to organizations who are interested in innovating and achieving sustainable growth.

Postsuccesion Sustainability for Information Technology Executives

Venkitachalam and Willmot (2017) identified sustainability as the ability of an organization to maintain an elevated level of productivity and innovation for an organization. As a strategic leader in an organization, information technology executives create an environment that supports sustainability by developing processes meant to

achieve or continue a competitive advantage within their industry (Ward et al., 2018). Bloom and Abel (2015) stated that information technology executives could gain the skills and training needed to implement a program of sustainability from their professional development opportunities. Information technology executives establishes a stable posture of sustainability through strategic-focused training programs and investments in opportunities for innovation.

Sustainability is vital to the development of a nurturing and flexible workplace (Bloom & Abel, 2015). Information technology executives apply changes and provide capabilities that offer consistency, achieving technical goals that are in line with the organization's strategic objectives (Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018). Hickman and Akdere (2018) mentioned that sustainability not only benefits an organization while also creating a significant positive influence on an entire industry through the development of reliable projects and services, as well as improved customer relations. Sustainability can also come from a structured and well-developed plan for the sharing of information that creates continuity in operations (Venkitachalam & Willmot, 2017). Information technology executives do not just offer sustainability to their organization but can transcend the walls of their organization with processes that are multi-functional.

Information technology executives use technical solutions to transform a diverse range of organizations with opportunities that can accelerate their maturity processes (Hansen et al., 2017). Venkitachalam and Willmot (2017) noted that information technology allows organizations to retain knowledge and ensure continuity throughout periods of transition. La Paz (2017) also noted that sustainability and continuity could

include the retention and development of personnel with these programs directed to meet the changing priorities of an organization. Organizations can gain technical sustainability and continuity of their strategic processes from the influence of their information technology executives.

Sustainability is an important topic with a vast amount of literature surrounding its viability as a part of information technology initiatives. Information technology executives play a vital role in establishing platforms for the management of knowledge and the development of processes (Wilkin et al., 2016). Bloom and Abel (2015) identified that literature relates sustainability to the professional development and standardization of processes within an organization, leading to a favorable work climate and an improved effort from employees. Leaders implement a transformation leadership style to improve employee morale and prevent negative behavior, leading to positive results for productivity and strategic success (Jiang et al., 2018). Information technology executives hold a position of responsibility that allows them a tremendous amount of influence and when mixed with the appropriate leadership style, leading to increased sustainability and the continuity of operations.

Transition and Summary

Section 1 of this study contained information that focused on the strategies used by leaders for the effective development of succession planning for future information technology executives in Kansas City, Missouri. This section included the background of the problem, problem and purpose statements, the nature of the study, and the research question identifying my interest in the topic. Interview questions for my participants, the

conceptual framework of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations were components of the section as well. The final component in Section 1 was a review of the academic and professional literature that included an analysis and synthesis of the transformational leadership theory, the importance of succession planning for information technology executives, as well as how the research pertained to the success of the corporation.

In Section 2, I described the role of the researcher as well as the ethical and successful interaction methods that I planned to use with the study participant. I identified the data collection methods and analytical techniques in this section while maintaining awareness of the reliability and validity required for my research. I described the quantitative methodology and case study design for use in conceptualizing succession planning strategies. In Section 3, I presented and discussed the results of my study as well as their application to business practices, including their implications for social change. Finally, I reflected on the impact of my research and identified future research opportunities before concluding with a summary of the results.

Section 2: The Project

I conducted a qualitative single-case study of a corporation with a strong interest in succession planning. The purpose of the single-case study was the exploration of strategies that organizational leaders use to prepare future information technology executives as part of a succession plan. A lack of planning for succession can cost organizations millions of dollars in resources and lost competitive advantage (Benaroch & Chernobai, 2017). Participants were information technology executives in various positions such as the vice president of technology, chief information officer, and chief technology officer. As I discuss in this section, I uncovered several themes as part of my exploration of the importance of succession planning in the development of information technology professionals for an executive role.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single-case study was to explore strategies for the development and implementation of effective succession plans for future information technology executives. The target population for this study consisted of information technology executives from one corporation headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, that has executed an effective transition of power, according to a formal succession plan, for information technology executives. I wanted to enhance understanding of how information technology executives' alignment with strategic objectives might support social change. Executives provide employees with career advancement opportunities through their understanding of these strategies, ensuring stability in employees' careers and productivity as members of their communities while contributing to positive social

change (Arnold, 2015).

This single-case study may contribute to positive social change by raising executives' awareness of succession planning strategies and offering avenues for the advancement of employees. Executives can use these strategies to aid in the identification and development of deserving employees, which can create a positive social impact by ensuring long-term employment within the organization, enabling the organization and its employees to support local communities (Pipatanantakum & Ractham, 2016). Future executives may gain confidence and a better sense of security and be more productive within the organization and their community when there is a plan that takes their career and livelihood into consideration (Judd, 2017).

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to observe an environment, collect data, and provide a valid analysis in response to the chosen research question (Yates & Leggett, 2016). Researchers are expected to choose an appropriate research methodology and design, determine a conceptual framework that focuses on the problem, identify a pool of participants, and then collect and evaluate data (Olin, Karlberg-Granlund, & Furu, 2016; Takyi, 2015). My responsibility, as the researcher, was to conduct an ethical study and protect the rights and welfare of the participants. Compliance with ethical standards outlined in the *Belmont Report* (United States, 1978) allowed me to conduct my study ethically, applying respect and justice towards the human subjects (see Goss, 2017). As verification, I completed web-based training from the National Institutes of Health to acknowledge my understanding of the ethical and

protective requirements for human research.

I avoided injecting bias while conducting and analyzing the interviews by asking exploratory questions and obscuring the identity of participants. Bias can come from the individual opinions of the researcher based on previous experiences or relationships (Takyi, 2015). The role of a researcher includes the identification and mitigation of potential bias that can affect the interpretation of data (Yates & Leggett, 2016). My interviews and review of the organization's succession planning documentation allowed for collection of data that yielded what I believe to be a complete picture of processes without identifying specific individuals. I used questions that were open-ended and allowed the participant to provide unique responses while avoiding questions that might have introduced bias. For example, I did not ask follow-up questions based on my personal experiences. I also avoided conversations where the participants began to add comments about the employment at other organizations.

I planned to conduct professional interviews with a select group of participants who held executive-level positions within the information technology domain. Taki (2015) noted that any contact with participants that is not professional in nature can interfere with the responses and allow for personal feelings that may affect the data collection. Olin et al. (2016) mentioned that conducting a formal interview and logging the details not only formalizes the meeting, but helps to format the process for retention future use. I combined the interview responses with the explicit knowledge from organizational documentation to create a clear understanding of how the organization planned for the succession of their information technology executives, while also

maintaining a professional relationship with the participants and avoiding bias.

I have more than 15 years of work experience in the field of information technology including technical and managerial jobs, as well as professional instruction in the field. I have worked for multiple levels of information technology executives. Takyi (2015) mentioned that although experiences can support the goals of research, they should not interfere with the validity of the research. My broad experiences provided insight into the development of information technology professionals for an executive role, but I refrained from injecting my specific experiences with information technology executives into the content of the research.

Participants

In this study, I interviewed four information technology executives working for a major corporation in Kansas City, Missouri. Participants interviewed as part of this study currently hold the roles of chief information officer, chief technology officer, and chief innovation officer. By interviewing a variety of executives, I was able to explore strategies that the organization used for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives. Succession planning is a process that is used to identify and prepare individuals for key leadership roles (Nissan & Eder, 2017). The individuals identified as successors in the succession plan receive some combination of support from a succession board, the predecessor, and other members of the current executive leadership team (Judd, 2017). Succession strategies often involve leaders selecting individuals for executive positions who have held progressively increasing positions of responsibility such as other executive positions (Bills et al., 2017).

Information technology executives selected to be participants were experienced members of their organization with experience as part of the succession planning process and had support from their leadership.

After obtaining IRB and organizational approval, I contacted the organization's vice president of human resources to coordinate access to prospective participants. Ajjan, Kumar, and Subramaniam (2016) mentioned that access to organizational assets and data should contribute to a better understanding of strategic planning through the integration of administrative personnel. Access to corporate personnel and information requires formal acceptance from the organization in order to access sensitive documentation (Salim & Arman, 2014). I was prevented from conducting interviews or organizational documents until after I gained IRB approval. The final requirements for access serve as controls to ensure that the information obtained from participants is valid and within compliance of the organization's internal control process (Haislip et al., 2016). Access to the participants and organizational documentation had to be coordinated through the appropriate level of leadership after approval from the IRB, ensuring the integrity of information gleaned through the interviews and its analysis.

The development of a professional relationship within participants in the study was of utmost importance to the accuracy of the interview data. Netcoh (2017) mentioned that participants could modify their responses based on their perceptions or expectations of the interviewer's motives. Boden and Nett (2011) noted that a positive relationship between an interviewer and the participant could improve the content and context of the collected data. With the development of trust and professional relationships, an

interviewer achieves truthfulness and integrity with less risk of bias (Ramsey et al., 2017). My productive relationship with the interview participants improved results in the analysis and synthesis phases of the study.

As determined by the participants' eligibility, it was important for the participants to understand that they would be contributing to a study that would improve the nature of their work. Smothers et al. (2016) commented that researchers select knowledgeable participants and empower them to provide valuable content to the discussion. Participants provide responses that give insight about the study phenomenon and help to verify assumptions (Tyssen, Wald, & Speith, 2014). Yang et al. (2016) concluded that significant representation from many participants could provide clarity and consistency from interview results. My choices for representation ensured that there was a diversity of responses from across the organization and the data did not focus on the opinion or bias of one individual (see Boden et al., 2011).

Research Method and Design

I used the qualitative research methodology in my case study to provide a deeper understanding of how succession planning could impact transitions of leadership within an organization, rather than just numerical data with no context. Researchers can use the qualitative methodology as a means of representing a dynamic situation, providing context to complex events (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Mohajan (2018) determined that a qualitative methodology with a case study design could provide an effective means of navigating the complexities of research topics and incorporating the experiences of participants. Tibben (2015) stated that the most effective way of dealing with these

complexities was to provide a systematic process that included the triangulation of data ensuring the validity and reliability of the data while supporting the topic. Researchers use triangulation and the systematic analysis of data to establish metrics that guarantee an accurate portrayal of the topic, leading to results that provide quality for future studies (Harvey et al., 2015). I provided a detailed analysis and synthesis of study-related data through the establishment of metrics, using the qualitative research methodology, and a case study designed to provide a richer understanding of the content.

Research Method

In conducting the research, I chose the research methodology that was the most appropriate for achieving the research goal. Migliorini and Rania (2017) noted that qualitative researchers attempt to find for a deeper understanding of human experiences and culture. Moustakas (1994) identified that researchers use the qualitative approach to allow for a humanistic depiction of research using interviews and open-ended questions. The qualitative method provides for a richer explanation of the data while remaining open to changing situations (Romero, Pare, & Khemici, 2017). I used the qualitative research methodology in the study to provide the most comprehensive and colorful explanation in response to the primary research question.

Wilkin et al. (2016) suggested that the quantitative research method was beneficial to the investigation and comparison of the differences between variables using numerical values. The quantitative method was not appropriate for this study because there was no comparison of variables within the research. Cheung, Wan, and Chan (2018) posited that the mixed method is used to measure the relationship between relevant

variables while using triangulation to provide a comprehensive response to a research question. The mixed method of research was not appropriate in responding to the research question because the relationship between variables was not necessary for the exploration of the specific business problem. The quantitative and mixed research methodologies were not necessary for the completion of the single case study. I used qualitative approach as the research methodology which allowed for a better understanding of the research and complexity of issues.

Research Design

The narrative researcher retells a story based on human experiences (Prufeta, 2014). A narrative design was not suitable for this study because it did not relate to the development of organizational processes, such as succession planning. Phenomenological studies are not supportable by empirical evidence but focus on an event or activity as an anomaly (Moustakas, 1994). This design was not sufficient for this study because the focus was on the organization and their processes. Saunders et al. (2015) defined grounded theory design as the use of a systematic approach towards developing a new theoretical framework. Grounded theory was not necessary as this study used an existing conceptual framework. The ethnographical approach implies the use of social perspectives to understand social structures within their community or organization (Boden et al., 2011). Ethnography was not a viable design choice because the purpose of this study was to understand the processes behind succession planning, not the underlying cultural factors. The appropriate research design for this study was an exploratory single case study.

I used the case study design to explore the development of succession planning activities for information technology executives. Scholars use the case study design to provide an in-depth exploration of a research question in the context of a real-life topic (Saunders et al., 2015). Yin (2018) identified that a case study design relies on the convergence or triangulation of data to ensure relevance to the topic. Ajjan et al. (2016) stated that the case study methodology allows for the understanding of dynamic interaction through events, projects, organizations, and other situations. As a researcher using a case study design, I evaluated the collection of data against the research question with the intent of validation through multiple sources while ensuring reliability.

Charki et al. (2017) determined that the emergence of data was essential to continued analysis in support of the research question, but that once participants no longer presented contradictory data, data saturation would prevent further influence on the topic. Ajjan et al. (2016) identified that data saturation occurred when no new relationships emerged from the data and learning conducted through analysis was minimal. Harvey et al. (2015) noted that without the achievement of data saturation, responses from participants are not representative or trustworthy for the conclusion. The researcher can conclude their collection of data upon achieving data saturation (Tibben, 2015). After receiving institutional review board (IRB) approval for my study, I interviewed information technology executives who contributed to the implementation of succession planning within the organization selected for my qualitative single case study until I reached data saturation.

Population and Sampling

In this single case study, I used the purposive sampling method. This method was appropriate because it involved interviewing individuals with specialized knowledge of a topic or industry best business practices (Mojahan, 2018). Apostolopoulos and Liargovas (2016) defined purposive sampling as a pre-determined group of individuals who provide expertise to support a specific standpoint. The purposive sampling method provided the most logical means of conducting the sampling of participants in this study due to a limitation on information technology executives within any single organization, referring to the scope of this single case study. Geraghty and Oliver (2018) used the purposive sampling method to identify criteria for inclusion in their study. As the researcher, I established a set of criteria and pre-determined metrics that allowed for the collection and saturation of data.

I expected to interview a minimum of three information technology executives who had filled multiple executive roles, were experienced in the development of succession plans, and had been responsible for supervising the professional development and mentorship of successors. Professional development opportunities support an individual's growth as well as their commitment to their organization, increasing their desire for retention (Ward et al., 2018). Due to the executives' travel schedules and limited availability, the interviews were done telephonically. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) mentioned that coordinating for a centralized location could hold many secondary benefits for the interviewer including opportunities to observe meetings and network with other executives are a part of succession planning. Researchers can conduct the

interviews in a space that allows for flexibility in questioning the participants but allows them to express their thoughts and opinions freely. Arnold et al. (2016) noted the importance of the location of interviews being conducive to the recording or transcription of conversations while striving for data saturation. I was able to interview the participants at a time and location that caused the least interference with their schedules while still providing the flexibility to record the interviews and clarify comments as necessary.

Ethical Research

The authors of the *Belmont Report* (United States, 1978) identified the importance of providing sufficient information on research to subjects, ensuring the understanding of the information, and the consent to participate in the study. Participants provided their consent before being interviewed for research. I coordinated with vice president of human resources to access on behalf of the organization. Data collection met regulatory requirements using the standards set forth by Office of Human Research Protection (1998), stating that the researcher will receive consent from participants in conjunction with IRB guidelines (Haines, 2017). The IRB determined that I had established the proper conditions to protect the participant before the execution of the interviews (OHRP, 1998).

A copy of the informed consent checklist was completed with all criteria meeting the minimum requirements as defined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, 46 CFR 46, and was added to this study as an annex for review. To ensure the protection of each participant's privacy, I adhered to the informed consent checklist that was approved by the IRB for my search. The informed consent checklist

provides guidelines for topics such as the purpose and consent of the research, the duration of participation, the execution of the research, and consequences of the study (OHRP, 1998). The *Belmont Report* (United States, 1978) defined a participant's ability to withdraw from the study at any time. I coordinated with the selected corporation to ensure that there was a viable number of information technology executives willing and qualified to participate in the study. There were no incentives for participants in this research, preventing any ethical dilemmas throughout the conduct of this research. Harvey et al. (2015) mentioned that incentives could negatively impact the direction of the study and result in ethical issues hindering the veracity of the data. I protected all human participants by following the research protocol set forth by OHRP and IRB. The OHRP (1998) and IRB required written documentation of informed consent. Information retrieved from participants will be stored securely for 5 years and then destroyed to protect the integrity of the informed consent process. The purpose of secure data retention for this period was to ensure an audit trail of the results (Haines, 2017). The destruction of this data will protect information identifying the participants and further securing their respective information beyond the coding initiatives mentioned in the *Belmont Report* (United States, 1978). The Walden University IRB approval number for this study was 03-15-19-0724984.

Data Collection Instruments

As the researcher and data collection agent, it was my responsibility to collect and analyze data as well as defend the proposed study during the doctoral study review. The researcher reviews current information on a topic and conducts an evaluation using a

conceptual or theoretical framework to establish the significance of a research problem (Sudheesh, Duggappa, & Nethra, 2016). I interviewed participants using semistructured interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies that organizations use for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives. Researchers use semistructured interviews to develop rich observations based on the thought processes of research participants (Pontis & Blandford, 2016). I asked the participants a specific set of interview questions (see Appendix A) that may contribute to a greater understanding of the importance of succession planning. Mohajan (2018) noted that saturation is dependent upon the needs of the research and does is not limited to a specific number of participants or interview questions.

The data collection method, semistructured interviews, that I used as the primary means in data collection allowed ample time for responses. The length of interviews is dependent upon the amount of time that participants have available and requires prior coordination for maximum availability (Haines, 2017). I spent approximately twenty minutes with each participant, ensuring the accuracy of their statements. Interview participants require a sufficient amount of time to articulate their responses properly, although digital recordings and transcriptions save time for any future review of comments (Harvey et al., 2015). The execution of interviews achieves the goal of identifying data that is integrated and offers explanations that support the research questions and purpose of the study (Apostopoulos & Liargovas, 2016). Geraghty and Oliver (2018) added that interviews could contribute to existing or enhance existing themes for the study. I coordinated with participants before the interview to ensure that

there was an appropriate amount of time for complete responses that aligned with the themes of the study and could be analyzed to explain succession planning strategies within their organization.

Tibben (2015) noted many tactics for ensuring validity and reliability within case studies including the triangulation of multiple sources, audio recordings of the interview, and the chain of custody for research data. I used these tactics in the research by obtaining evidence from multiple sources, including the interview of multiple participants, the review of organizational documents, and the recording and retention of research data to ensure integrity. Mohajan (2018) mentioned that transparency also contributes to validity and reliability while removing the opportunity for a researcher's injection of bias. I continued communications with the participants and their sponsor, using the process of member checking throughout the data analysis process. Member checking allowed for the verification of evidence gained from interviews and succession planning documents in the best interests of the study, the participants, and the organization. Researchers use the member checking technique to verify or clarify information for consistency by sharing their interview transcripts back with the participants (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Yang (2016) added that researchers contribute their studies' integrity by applying the necessary resources such as time for additional interviews and access to alternate sites that may be required. The responsibility of coordinating for interviews and additional access to participants' time and locations was necessary to achieve a valid and reliable study that would contribute to succession planning for information technology executives. I explained the interview protocol within

my introductory letter. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) defined the need for a case study protocol as being critical to the enhancement of reliability and avoidance of criticism.

Data Collection Technique

I used the case study design for this study to investigate multiple sources through individual interviews and a review of organizational documents. Saunders et al. (2015) stated that case studies achieve greater quality when they include evidence taken from multiple sources and research methods. Yin (2018) identified the primary tasks in a data collection technique as (a) access to organizations or participants, (b) resources sufficient for research, (c) mentorship availability during research, (d) timeline of activities in data collection, and (e) readiness to handles changes or unanticipated event that may arise during the research process.

Upon receipt of the approval from the IRB, I contacted my partner organization with an invitation for participation in my study. Appendix B includes the letter of cooperation from the organization authorizing me to conduct the study. An organization that takes part in a study will require sufficient participants available to offer reliable and valid evidence (Haislip et al., 2016). The resourcing of research activities helps to mitigate risks and control the activities of a research project, improving the quality of data collected and access to participant knowledge (Akhavan et al., 2018). Mentorship allows a researcher to gain knowledge in their area of interest while receiving support from an experienced individual who can provide guidance in the correction of research miscalculations (Bloom & Abel, 2015). A schedule of activities contributes to the effectiveness of a study by identifying resource requirements and milestones (De Tuya et

al., 2017). I planned for the resourcing and execution of activities that met the necessary level of rigor for a quality study. The final task in data collection, change control, requires a researcher to modify their assumptions or perspective based on the information gleaned from participants (Migliorini & Rania, 2017; Yin, 2018). I used these data collection tasks for a well-crafted study that met the quality requirements of reliability and validity.

The interview technique can provide many advantages and disadvantages, sometimes overlapping in other data collection methods. Romero et al. (2017) specified that one advantage of the interview technique was the identification of new data relevant to the current study. Researchers commonly use semistructured interviews to explore areas of interest requiring further development (Charki et al., 2017). Participants also contribute independent responses through structured interviews that are untampered by other individuals (Hansen et al., 2017). Researchers who review corporate documents can gain a greater understanding of processes and procedures for controlling and monitoring activities (Lopez et al., 2017). I used the interview technique and document review to gain a comprehensive understanding of organizational processes. I incorporated the relevant components of multiple data collection techniques with knowledge as to why the organization operated in a specific manner, without restricting the participant's opinion or feelings.

After I completed the required interviews and review of organizational documents, I used member checking to confirm and validate the accuracy of my notes. Massis and Kotlar (2014) noted that member checking is vital to the researcher allowing

for the verification of a participant's interview responses and additional content that may be relevant to the research question. Researchers use member checking to prevent the insertion of bias into the data triangulation process while achieving data saturation (Foote & Halawi, 2018). Yin (2018) opined that the triangulation of relevant and convergent data, taken from multiple sources including interviews and a review of documents, strengthens the validity and accuracy of collected data. I used member checking to validate and triangulate the data gleaned from participants, improving the accuracy and synthesis of the research data.

Data Organization Technique

Researchers organize the results of their data collection techniques into raw and refined data, allowing for further contribution to scholarly research while also protecting the participants (Yin, 2016). I maintained a database to organize the data collected from the semistructured interviews and review of organizational documents. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) noted that the use of a database enhances reliability by separating raw data from participants and the researcher's translation of the data. I further organized the data collection through a set of themes that were previously identified in the review of the literature. Researchers organize their raw data and codify the collection against predetermined themes for improved articulation (Zardini et al., 2016). I used NVivo 12 for the organization and qualitative analysis to provide a comprehensive examination of data incorporating all data collection efforts.

Researchers are expected to comply with ethical guidelines identified in the *Belmont Report* (United States, 1978) and focusing on the protection of research

participants through informed consent and the protection of their identities. I collected data from participants and organizations through transcription, audio recording, and field notes. This data was organized and coded to increase the validity and reduce the potential for bias or errors. Researchers may code their raw data to improve the quality and robustness of their analysis, preventing a misinterpretation of the collected data (Sudheesh et al., 2016).

I secured the collection of data, which will be retained for 5 years, according to IRB requirements. The data is stored on an encrypted external storage device which was placed into a combination safe, limiting availability while still allowing access if necessary. Individuals who maintain sensitive data with information technology solutions balance the need for availability of the contents while ensuring protection from internal and external corruption (Yang et al., 2016). Researchers risk the trust of the participants when they fail to protect the privacy of those individuals through the safeguards (Benaroch & Cherbonai, 2017). After the required 5 years of data retention, I will destroy the hard drive to prevent the spillage of any personal data.

Data Analysis

There were significant resources associated with the use of the interview technique and the document review in data collection methods. Geraghty and Oliver (2018) identified that the cost of automating surveys and other tools could save resources compared to conducting interviews. Migliorini and Rania (2017) mentioned that interviews take place at one point in time rather than actively gaining data over an extended period. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) specified that a review of organizational

documents could suffer from relevancy concerns if the review focuses too much on past processes or is limited to a narrow scope of participants, reducing the ability to triangulate data accurately. I managed the environment and resources used in the conduct of this study while mitigating concerns of relevancy by focusing on contemporary processes and activities.

The method of triangulation for this study focused on the analysis of data from multiple sources. Yin (2018) stated that data triangulation is used by researchers to corroborate the research of multiple sources rather than risking reliability based on a single source. Lee, Arthur, and Morrone (2017) reported that the triangulation of data from multiple sources strengthened the credibility of research while reducing the likelihood of discrepancies. Researchers may also improve the veracity of their research by focusing on themes identified by in multiple sources (Pinnick, 2017). I increased the credibility and reliability of the study by triangulating data from multiple sources.

I analyzed the data derived from the collection techniques to achieve results for the research question. The data analysis process includes the compiling, disassembling, reassembling, clarification, and development of a conclusion as components (Yin, 2018). This five-step process begins with the compilation of data from multiple sources, followed by the development of themes and coding for consistency, and concludes with a determination of data saturation (Ajjan et al., 2016). Researchers use the data analysis process to identify common themes and render them into a framework supporting the conceptual theory (Sepasgozar & Davis, 2018). I identified multiple themes from the review of literature that provided an azimuth for the triangulation of data.

NVivo 12 is a data analysis tool that I used to organize and classify the data from the research. Researchers can use NVivo 12 as a flexible tool that supports the development of themes and codes for various types of data collection methods including open-ended questions (Sepasgozar & Davis, 2018). Foote and Halawi (2018) mentioned that NVivo 12 supports the management of knowledge identified in organizational documents and research-based literature. Researchers can manipulate their data within NVivo 12 as a mechanism to achieve data saturation and improve the validity of the results (Ajjan et al., 2016). I used NVivo 12 to organize and code the collection of data, as well as provide a comprehensive visualization in response to the research question.

Reliability and Validity

The measure of quality varies in qualitative research based on the interpretation of the scholar, but generally incorporates a certain level of rigor. Leung (2015) referenced multiple authors in his determination that validity and reliability were two key components of quality. Jordan (2018) also mentioned several contrasting theories about the characteristics of quality, but that reliability and validity provided a foundation for accuracy in research. Reliability and validity also increase quality through transparency and the reduction of bias (Mohajan, 2017). I reviewed, member checked, and triangulated the information gleaned from semistructured interviews and the review of organizational documents to achieve reliability and validity from the research.

Reliability

The reliability of a study refers to a researcher's ability to replicate the results within a similar set of parameters. Researchers follow procedures from past studies to

achieve reliability in their research, minimizing errors and bias in their study while ensuring similar results (Yin, 2018). Yang et al. (2016) determined that reliability requires a common set of criteria when researching to prevent a misinterpretation of data. Sepasgozar and Davis (2018) mentioned that a prompt analysis of interview data by the researcher could contribute to the development and incorporation of new components in the research while improving the reliability of the study. The reliability of research was enhanced through member checking, which led to a dependable interpretation of data.

I strengthened the reliability of my study through the employment of multiple tools relating to dependability, including a review of organizational documents and member checking with the participants. Member checking allows for increased understanding and an improved conceptualization of the data (Netcoh, 2017). The researcher and participant reviewed and verified correctness through the process of member checking. A review of the organizational documents allows for the identification of information, areas of interest, or data trends that may be of importance to the researcher (Mohajan, 2018). I established trust with the participants as a means of gaining reliable data. Pinnick (2017) mentioned that researchers could improve the reliability of their research by establishing trust and displaying professionalism in their interactions with participants. My use of multiple control measure resulted in a study that met the scholarly standard for professionalism and reliability.

Validity

A researcher determines validity through the implementation of tools, processes, and information that is appropriate for answering the research question (Leung, 2015).

Lee et al. (2017) included credibility as a characteristic that strongly paralleled validity. Transferability is another characteristic of validity that is manipulated as a means of expanding a pool of participants and improving the accuracy of data (Saravo et al., 2017). A third characteristic, confirmability, includes a researcher's ability to audit and improve the data as an input into the triangulation process (Harvey et al., 2015). A fourth and final component in achieving validity for a study is data saturation, maximizing the amount of information available for the analysis (Ajjan et al., 2016). I used credibility, transferability, confirmability, and data saturation as important benchmarks in the process for validating the parameters of my study.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 of this qualitative case study included a restatement of the purpose, a discussion on the roles of the researcher and participants, as well as the research method and design. The section also included descriptions of the population, ethical considerations, and the tools used for the collection and analysis of data. I concluded Section 2 with a description of the framework that ensures the reliability and validity of the study. Researchers analyze the data and support a conclusion of the research.

After the IRB approval, I completed the requirements for Section 3 including the interview process and a review of organizational documents. I presented my findings through a qualitative analysis, which incorporated these data collection techniques. I presented these findings with an interpretation of how the research applied to real-world business operations as well as their social impact. I concluded Section 3 by presenting recommendations for future research and a reflection on the achievements of this study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify the strategies that leaders use to develop effective succession plans for future information technology executives. Section 3 includes a presentation of the findings based on the identification of themes derived from the data collection process. This section also includes an overview of the study, the presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, discussion of implications for social change, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, reflections, and a conclusion to the study.

Overview of the Study

I conducted a qualitative single-case study to explore the challenges associated with the development and implementation of succession planning for information technology executives. I conducted semistructured interviews with three executives from a corporation headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. Each of the three participants held responsibilities for different departments within the organization but had direct involvement in succession planning related to information technology professionals. Although each was in an information technology-related position, not all had a technical background. All participants, as indicated by their positions, had a strong business acumen, but only one personally identified himself as a traditional information technology professional. The interviews yielded a broad understanding of the processes, experience, and knowledge of executive roles.

Each of the executives whom I interviewed for this study had a strong interest in succession planning for information technology executives. The three participants were executives who actively participate in the succession planning process. Throughout the presentation of findings, they are identified as P1, P2, and P3. The participants identified many interesting topics related to the development of a succession planning process and individual professional development.

The participants provided a significant amount of consistent data that I molded into themes using NVivo 12 for a detailed analysis. All three participants mentioned that it was important for potential successors to have multidisciplinary backgrounds with experience in both business and technology. The importance of developing young information technology professionals through the identification of goals and mentorship was another area on which the participants agreed. The participants also shared the opinion that multiple candidates from internal and external sources provided for greater diversity within the organization. In a broader sense, much of the interview data points reference back to the review of literature in Section 1. Through these responses and the subsequent analysis, I identified several major themes and subthemes (see Table 1).

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question was, What are the strategies that organizations use for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives? I determined that a qualitative, single-case study was the appropriate method for conducting this study. I made this determination due to the scope of the case study being a single organization and my goal of understanding the real-life

phenomenon, namely the challenges related to succession planning for information technology executives.

Table 1

Frequency of Major Themes and Subthemes in Interviews and Literature

Theme	Interviews (f)	Reviews of literature (f)
Theme 1: Diversity of Backgrounds		
Business Experience	3	74
Technology Experience	3	51
Theme 2: Professional Development		
Identification of Goals	3	46
Mentorship Opportunities	3	28
Theme 3: Sourcing of Executives		
Internal Sourcing of Employees	3	33
External Sourcing of Employees	3	25

I used Yin's five-step model for data analysis which included the compiling, disassembling, reassembling, clarifying, and concluding of data. In applying this model to my study, I completed the data analysis process through the following steps: (a) collected, transcribed, and reviewed data; (b) imported the data into NVivo 12; (c) coded the data the data; (d) defined the major themes and subthemes; and (e) concluded the analysis. I identified three major themes with two subthemes each through the data analysis process.

I identified three major themes and two subthemes related to each. The first major theme that I identified during data analysis was diversity of backgrounds. In an executive role, an individual is required to understand not only technology but how technology contributes to the organization's strategic vision. Business and information technology experience were the two subthemes for the diversity of backgrounds theme. My second

theme was professional development, with subthemes explaining how information technology professionals identify long-term goals and how mentorship supports their preparedness. The final theme was the sourcing of executives supporting the importance of finding the right individual. The subthemes of executive sourcing were internal and external sourcing, denoting the importance of internally sourced individuals who have a firm grasp on the organization's mission as well as externally sourced individuals who have broader experiences across the industry. I achieved data saturation after conducting three semistructured interviews and reviewing organizational documents. The major themes for this study were the diversity of backgrounds, professional development, and candidate pools.

Theme 1: Diversity of Backgrounds

The three participants each described the importance of a diverse set of skills that transcended just a business or a technical background. P3 stated, "Employees have to have a business and technical background. This gives employees a different perspective on how to move a company or project forward when systems are complex." Reinforcing this point, P2 mentioned, "I mentor people from our business unit even though I run our IT organization. The other thing we do is that we look for special challenges and special assignments that we can get people that are outside of their day to day so that they can learn from them." The importance of a broad background held significant support with regard to the review of the literature as well. As discussed in Section 1, the organizational leaders evaluate their information technology professionals by measuring them against a set of attributes that includes their education, strengths, and their development needs.

Benaroch and Chernobai (2017) identified how senior executives who populate corporate boards prevent strategic failures that occur when business leaders do not understand how to manage their information technology capital. Information technology executives strongly benefit their organization when they can apply technical capabilities as a part of the strategic opportunity.

Business Experience. Information technology professionals who wish for promotion into an executive role require the ability to think strategically. P2 provided the several competencies that the organization uses to measure success including, “how well do they foster collaboration, how do they manage the organization’s vision, drive business plans, influence others, and drive accountability.” P1 offered that, “we are probably missing opportunities to prepare people to do more that will be required of them in the future” but that “many technology professionals who step away from the keyboard understand how business and technology can drive positive business results.” Using the organization’s developmental process, leaders gauged the strengths and opportunities of direct reports in several areas including technical acumen, financial acumen, collaboration, and the ability to meet deadlines. Mazolla et al. (2017) concluded that in the future, a purely technical background would not provide the right set of experiences needed to boost an information technology professional into an executive role. An executive who has an extensive business background enhances his or her business unit’s strategic vision and sustainability through the incorporation of technology.

Technical Experience. Due to the strategic nature of executive roles, some organizations may prefer a nontechnical employee to fill roles such as the chief

information or technology officer. Although this is an option, executives without a technical background may struggle to mesh technical capabilities with a strategic vision. P1 supported the importance of having a technical background by mentioning that “most senior information technology professionals have demonstrated their potential and have effectively served under another information technology executive.” To support this, P2 exclaimed that these technical skills could be bolstered by the executive exercising soft skills in the management of “multiple projects, multiple technologies, and then allowing them to the opportunity to manage multiple different types of people.” Although academic training and business experience are an important part of an information technology executive’s development, Ball and Anderson (2017) concluded that the executive’s previous experience in technical roles provided the greatest combination of skills for future success. Although business experiences provide a great boost to an information technology professional’s repertoire, the need for technical expertise and experience cannot be discounted when determining readiness for succession to an executive role.

Theme 2: Professional Development

I identified professional development as the second major theme of the study, focusing on the development of goals and providing opportunities for mentorship to information technology professionals. P1 confirmed that the organization “deployed the succession planning process for the good of the company and the growth of individuals,” while “individual leaders take the necessary actions to develop talented information technology professional.” P3 noted, “a strong talent assessment program can help leaders

identify employees with strong multi-disciplinary skills while also incorporating their goals into the development process. Chlebikova et al. (2015) mentioned that the assessment of individual skills, identification of goals, and the mentorship towards an increased level of preparedness could improve an employee for the future needs of an organization. The development of information technology professionals has a positive effect for not only the individual but the strategic success of the organization.

Development of Goals. Information technology professionals and their leaders support the sustainability of an organization through the development of common goals. P2 identified the importance of goal development to the organization by stating, “the first thing we do is make sure that leaders have had career goal conversations with individuals because the last thing you want to do is steer someone and groom them for a successor if that is not in line with their goals.” According to P3, understanding goals is important because “we lose people who say that they are not getting the experience they need fast enough for the next level and must be continually managed.” De Tuya et al. (2017) noted that information technology executives play an important role in establishing a strategic vision for the organization, but also in translating the goals of the organization into the development of their functional professionals. Succession planning considers the goals of the organization and the individual, support long-term success and sustainability.

Mentorship. Mentorship allows information technology professionals to gain knowledge about future opportunities and responsibilities through the experiences of others. P2 noted, “we look for special challenges and assignments that we can get for people that are outside of their day to day.” P3 also mentioned that through a mentorship

program, “you have to identify those people and you give them enough to stay curious so that they do not leave or go looking for something else.” Huang et al. (2016) contributed that effective mentorship displayed the commitment of an organization to their employees and the mission. Organizations with interest in longevity contribute the time and resources necessary to mentor their information technology professionals so that they have the skills to transform the organization in a manner that best suits the strategic mission.

Theme 3: Sourcing of Executives

Information technology executives require not only a strategic background, but skills that cannot always be developed within their current organization. P3 stated that leaders require a broad set of skills that come from working “in multiple companies, multiple industries, gone through a couple of enterprise resource planning implementations, maybe an acquisition or two.” P2 went further in saying that a “key challenge of succession planning is getting the right mix of internal and external candidates for when we need a successor, when someone needs to be promoted, or when a vacancy happens.” Tichy (2015) claimed that continually filling executive roles with outsiders could mean that an organization’s development program is failing. On the other hand, Ma et al. (2015) posited internally source employees do not drive change and may become too comfortable with the way that things are, rather than how they could be. A balance of internally and externally-sourced executives can help to ensure that organizational processes do not become too stagnant or progressive but achieve some semblance of harmony when developing the strategic vision.

Internal Sourcing of Employees. The internal sourcing of an executive is important for organizations because there are fewer challenges to integrating someone who already understands the strategic vision. Information technology professionals who already work within an organization can be “identified as high-performing with high-potential” and mentored to meet the needs of the organization,” according to P1. P3 mentioned that the leaders must ensure that information technology professionals “have multiple experiences relatively quickly in their career to make sure that they are prepared for what we are going to ask them to do later.” P2 went further by offering that “it is a lot easier to coach, mentor, and lead people through succession planning when they know where the company is pointed. McKee and Froelich (2016) described an internal management program as being beneficial to the continuity of an organization and the retention of strong employees. Executives who are developed internally reduce the time required for a transition of leadership and strengthens the cohesion of an organization’s staff.

External Sourcing of Employees. Leaders incorporate externally-sourced executives into their succession plans to achieve a diversity of skills and for the incorporation of differing ideas that may not be achieved from internally-sourced employees. P3 noted that the internal sourcing of candidates caused several shortfalls including a “shortage of people in the market” and that hiring people from inside an organization may not allow for the greatest creativity. P2 claimed that the external sourcing meets a need for “employees who have gained experience somewhere else and may have a more open-minded way of doing things. Ward et al. (2018) identified some of

the benefits of external development as exposure to different business processes, networking, and the skills to develop cooperation between organizations. Sourcing executives and professional from outside of the organization helps an organization to understand more closely align their strategies and processes with other companies, enhancing their competitiveness within their industry.

Relationship of Findings to the Conceptual Framework

The principles of the transformational leadership theory provide a strong foundation for the major themes of this study. Each of the major and minor themes has aspects that can be linked back to inspirational motivations, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration. Through professional development and their experiences, executives can gain the skills to motivate their employees by understanding different perspectives and alternative solutions to problems (Jiang et al., 2018). Similarly, organizations that have a strong balance of internal and external leaders can help create a program for succession where employees are properly stimulated and prepared for their future roles (Ramsey et al., 2017). Employees are more likely to support executives when they understand the reasons for their actions to influence or foster change, often through the sharing of goals and a common vision for the future (Mencl et al., 2016). An executive may also be able to exercise individualized consideration by interacting with employees through the diversity that they share and their background with similar projects or organizations (Valeriu, 2017). A strong executive becomes a transformational leader by collecting knowledge from their previous

business and technical experiences, the understanding of goals and mentorship towards them, and the execution of activities and roles in both current and previous roles.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of this study apply to the improvement of business practices because strategies for succession planning allow information technology executives to develop business and technical skills, maximize professional development opportunities, and gain experience from internal and external sources. The participant information technology executives held positions within different departments, but all felt that their organization had an adequate program for selecting talented individuals and professionally developing them. P3 mentioned that there is a shortage of talented individuals, not only internally, but in the market in general. P2 also noted that getting these information technology professionals earlier in their careers could improve their performance or identification as a high-performing individual. According to P1, the quality of an executive's development could improve their ability to coach, mentor, and lead employees which are all beneficial to influencing a strong vision across the organization. Although the partner organization was considered small by all participants, they each mentioned that the attributes in a succession plan were scalable to organizations of all sizes.

Modern information technology executives require a strong grounding in best business practices. These leaders have technical skills, an understanding of the industry, but more importantly can influence others with a strategic vision and towards common goals (Beck, 2018). The participants each referred the importance of an information technology executive having a broad range of skills that were relatable to the industry and

their leadership role, not just a single path of education focused on information technology management.

Professional development opportunities for information technology executives are an important output of succession planning. According to Ward et al. (2018), the assessment of executive development and subsequent training opportunities improve the services that an organization can provide as well as their wide-ranging financial performance. The executive-level participants agreed that the development and mentorship of information technology professionals have led to stronger performance and improved financial results within their industry. An interactive succession plan assesses talent and then develops it can have a direct impact on the strategic and financial success of an organization within their market and as measured against other industrial metrics such as Fortune 500.

In more recent decades, the longevity of executives in the same organization has decreased due to the alignment of business process across all industries. Rivolta (2018) described an almost frictionless environment for executives to transition from organization to organization or industry to industry, although candidates with similar experience require less transition time due to their understanding of the already-existing process. The participant each felt strongly that the succession plan required a combination of internal and external candidates because they brought an understanding of the industry with them. The partner organization has a strong alignment with the process in their industry so the results of the study and their measure could likely be transferred across organizations of all size, in any location, or any industry.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study will contribute to the professional development of information technology executives as we as an understanding that all executives and organizations were not created the same. Professional development opportunities for individuals should not be limited due to current resources because advance training and mentorship can lead to an increase in strategic and financial viability in the future (Lopez et al., 2017). From the responses to my interview questions, the participants were very supportive of succession planning in the partner organization because there were benefits to an employee's career, but also improved the morale and sustainability of the organization. P2 went so far as to state that selecting an individual for a role based on the needs of the organization was not enough. The executive should be happy in the new position that you are grooming them for or else they may cause morale problems, possibly leading to discussions of replacing the newly minted success.

Another aspect of social change was that the themes could be applied across any demographic background. Whether in the United States or abroad, the professional development of information technology executives does not require one defining path for education or a specific demographic. Naim and Lenka (2017) offered that talent development could be improved through tools such as social media and training opportunities, further enhancing the potential pool of executive candidates. None of the three executives mentioned demographics specifically in the interview, but P2 and P3 offered that the sooner leaders were able to identify high-performing professionals, the stronger their understanding of the organization's vision will be through training and

mentorship. The educational opportunities and mentorship of a young professional as part of succession planning or talent management much better indicator of their quality than any demographic where they may fall.

Recommendations for Action

Business leaders should create broadening opportunities for information technology professionals that include strategic planning and other subsidiaries of business, such as finance and acquisitions training. Hickman and Akdere (2018) stated that professional development should leverage opportunities which improve behavior and cognitive skills, rather than learning simply business and information technology. Saravo et al. (2017) mentioned that few studies have pinpointed how to be successful, but common strategies include postgraduate education, refined communication skills, and experience in leadership positions. In information technology executive's job requires the management of technology, personnel, acquisitions, and many more skills that can be incorporated into their development. Sometimes the development of these skills may come from experience in other organizations, but they do need to be counted. Leaders should conduct a talent assessment of information technology professionals to determine their knowledge gaps and assess their suitability for future roles within the organization.

Recommendations for Further Research

The scope of this study was a single company with a verifiable succession program. In identifying an organization suitable for this study, many companies declined participation due to a lack of succession program or talent management. Future studies may expand to other organizations within the region, like several that declined

participation were Fortune 500 companies. Does the lack of succession plans exist for some reason such as the regional market for talent having developmental shortfalls? In contrast to the findings of the study, some organizations do not appear to have strong support for their information technology professionals.

Another recommendation for future studies may be the identification of metrics for which skills an organization could focus on to ensure the success of their information technology executives. Many references can be found to say that there is no single common denominator ensuring the success of a professional, yet a broad developmental program can offset the effects of education, job opportunities, mentorship, and a host of other experiences. Identifying the needs or responsibilities of a position and then the experiences of those deemed successful would be a challenge but would require an extensive analysis.

Reflections

My time in the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) program has been both challenging and enlightening. Unlike many others in the program, I did not hold an undergraduate degree in a Business-related field or a Master of Business Administration (MBA). On the other hand, my Master of Information Technology Management (ITM) degree and instruction for Business undergraduate courses has helped me to understand the specialization I have chosen.

I chose the topic of my study based on my experiences within the Department of Defense (DoD) and opportunities to work with information technology executives. From my experiences, I have worked with information technology executives who are skilled

in strategic thinking or technology, but rarely both aspects. My interest has always been to identify how to prepare young professionals for future roles where they may fill information technology leadership positions, whether the specific responsibilities are project management, acquisitions, innovation, or any of the other broad topics.

I felt that the major themes would be education, job opportunities, and mentorship. As I conducted the participant interviews and review of organizational documents, I realized that the original topics were only subthemes of much broader topics. The participants were very open with me about shortfalls in their organization and opened my eyes to activities I had not been privy to from my own experiences. I learned tremendously from each of the interviews, all holding executive positions that line directly to information technology and as part of the succession planning process. The information gleaned from this study will contribute to my future development and my options in developing others for higher-level positions.

Conclusion

Organizations across the United States and around the globe struggle to identify exactly what characteristics to focus on when developing information technology professionals. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to answer the overall research question: what are the strategies that organizations use for the development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives? Leaders often struggle to understand the impacts that strong information technology and business backgrounds, goal-setting and mentorship, as well as the experiences from both internal and external to the organization can have on strategic opportunities for a

company. The three participants in this study provided their responses through a set of semistructured interview questions in conjunction with a review of organizational documents relating to the partner organization's program for succession.

I identified three main themes from the data collection and analysis, including (a) diversity of background, (b) professional development, and (c) sourcing of executives. The findings indicated that information technology executives require skills which cannot be gained from focusing solely on the information technology side of the spectrum. The results of the study can also provide an understanding of how to improve succession processes for organizations. Executives, human resource managers, and other leaders with a stake in the organization's succession planning model should understand how to assess and improve the readiness of their information technology professionals.

Each of the participant executives understood that there are several layers of development required for an information technology professional to achieve success, although there was no magic bullet guaranteeing it. They each shared the importance of information technology executives having a background providing a comprehensive understanding of technology and business principles. The collective participants also spoke strongly on the importance of assessing the talents of information technology professionals and subsequently, how to improve their development opportunities. The final theme derived from the interviews was that employees could and likely should have experience within multiple organizations and from various activities. An information technology executive should have a diverse range of skills from their educational background, professional experiences, and activities across the industry. Information

technology executives use their extensive collection of experiences that they have gained through years of development to enhance the technical capabilities and strategic success of their organization.

References

- Abdelkader, B., & Abed, B. (2016). The effect of information technology on competitive advantage of firms: The role of environmental uncertainty. *International Journal of Management Science & Technology Management*, (22), 16-38. Retrieved from <http://www.naisit.org/>
- Ackerman, E., & Arbour, B. K. (2016). I have ten peer reviewed articles. Now what? How political science research methods textbooks teach students about scholarly context. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 42, 612-619.
doi:10.1016/j.acalib.2016.06.009
- Adserias, R. P., Charleston, L. J., & Jackson, J. L. (2017). What style of leadership is best suited to direct organizational change to fuel institutional diversity in higher education? *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20, 315-331.
doi:10.1080/13613324.2016.1260233
- Ajjan, H., Kumar, R. L., & Subramaniam, C. (2016). Information technology portfolio management implementation: A case study. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 29, 841-859. doi:10.1108/JEIM-07-2015-0065
- Akhavan, P., Shahabipour, A., & Hosnavi, R. (2018). A model for assessment of uncertainty in tacit knowledge acquisition. *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 22, 413-431. doi:10.1108/JKM-06-2017-0242
- Apostolopoulos, N., & Liargovas, P. (2016). Regional parameters and solar energy enterprises. *International Journal of Energy Sector Management*, 10, 19-37.
doi:10.1108/IJESM-11-2014-0009

- Arnold, K. A., Loughlin, C., & Walsh, M. M. (2016). Transformational leadership in an extreme context. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 37*, 774-788. doi:10.1108/LODJ-10-2014-0202
- Arnold, P. (2015). Evidence and leading indicators of change success. *Strategic Direction, 31*(10), 1-5. doi:10.1108/SD-08-2015-0128
- Ball, N. L., & Anderson, J. E. (2017). The CIO skill set, and how CIOs obtained the skills. *Issues in Information Systems, 18*, 31-43. Retrieved from <http://www.iacis.org/>
- Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Beck, M. (2018). Ensuring tomorrow: The four stages of successor development. *Journal of Property Management, 83*, 16-19. Retrieved from <http://www.irem.org/>
- Benaroch, M., & Chernobai, A. (2017). Operational IT failures, IT value destruction, and board-level IT governance changes. *MIS Quarterly, 41*, 729-762. Retrieved from <http://www.aisnet.org/>
- Berkovich, I. (2016). School leaders and transformational leadership theory: Time to part ways? *Journal of Educational Administration, 54*, 609-622. doi:10.1108/JEA-11-2015-0100
- Bills, K. L., Lisic, L. L., & Seidel, T. A. (2017). Do CEO succession and succession planning affect stakeholders' perceptions of financial reporting risk? Evidence from audit fees. *Accounting Review, 92*(4), 27-52. doi:10.2308/accr-51567
- Bloom, P. J., & Abel, M. B. (2015). Expanding the lens - Leadership as an organizational

- asset. *Young Children*, 70(2), 10-17. Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/>
- Blumentritt, T. P. (2016). Bringing successors into the fold: The impact of founders' actions on successors. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 40, 1261-1267. doi:10.1111/etap.12245
- Boden, A., Muller, C., & Nett, B. (2011). Conducting business ethnography in global software development project of small German enterprises. *Information and Software Technology*, 53, 1012-1021. doi:10.1016/j.infsof.2011.01.009
- Bozionelos, N., Kostopoulos, K., Van der Heijden, B., Rousseau, D. M., Bozionelos, G., Hoyland, T., ... Van der Heijde, C. V. (2016). Employability and job performance as links in the relationship between mentoring receipt and career success: A study in SMEs. *Group & Organization Management*, 41, 135-171. doi:10.1177/1059601115617086
- Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.
- Charki, M. H., Jossierand, E., & Boukef, N. (2017). The paradoxical effects of legal intervention over unethical information technology use: A rational choice theory perspective. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems*, 26, 58-76. doi:10.1016/j.jsis.2016.07.001
- Cheung, G., Wan, K., & Chan, K. (2018). Efficient use of clickers: A mixed-method inquiry with university teachers. *Education Sciences*, 8, 1-15. doi:10.3390/educsci8010031
- Chlebikova, D., Misankova, M., & Kramarova, K. (2015). Planning of personal development and succession. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 26, 249-253.

doi:10.1016/S2212-5671(15)00828-X

- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14. doi:10.3102/0013189X019005002
- Dash, S., & Chaudhuri, M. (2015). Examining factors of transformational leadership in large Indian banks: A study of Delhi NCR. *International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*, 6(9), 31-33. Retrieved from <http://ijrcm.org.in/>
- De Massis, A., & Kotlar, J. (2014). The case study method in family business research: Guidelines for qualitative scholarship. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 5, 15-29. doi:10.1016/j.jfbs.2014.01.007
- De Tuya, M., Cook, M., Sutherland, M., & Luna-Reyes, L. F. (2017). The leading role of the government CIO at the local level: Strategic opportunities and challenges. *Government Information Quarterly*, 1-9. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2017.01.002
- Easter, T. H., & Brooks, S. (2017). Our leader is gone, now what? Creating the foundation for stable transitions. *People & Strategy*, 40, 28-32. Retrieved from <http://www.hrps.org/>
- Edenfield, S. (2015). Meeting the succession plan challenge. *Georgia Bar Journal*, 20(6), 6-7. Retrieved from <https://www.gabar.org/>
- Fernandez-Araoz, C., Roscoe, A., & Aramaki, K. (2017). Turning potential into success: The missing link in leadership development. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(6), 86-93. Retrieved from <http://www.hbr.org/>
- Foote, A., & Halawi, L. A. (2018). Knowledge management models within information technology projects. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 58, 89-97.

doi:10.1080/08874417.2016.1198941

Geraghty, S. S., & Oliver, K. (2018). In the shadow of the ivory tower: Experiences of midwives and nurses undertaking PhDs. *Nurse Education Today*, *65*, 36-40.

doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2018.02.017

Germain, J. (2017). Reflections on leadership: Theory, experience, and practice. *Quest*, *69*, 169-176. doi:10.1080/00336297.2017.1302347

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Goss, B. (2017). Thoughts: The Nuremberg veil. *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health*, *3*, 452-459. doi:10.1016/j.jemep.2017.09.011

Gozukara, I., & Simsek, O. F. (2015). Role of leadership in employees' work engagement: Organizational identification and job autonomy. *International Journal of Business and Management*, *11*, 72-84. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v11n1p72

Guha, S., & Chakrabarti, S. (2016). Differentials in attitude and employee turnover propensity: A study of information technology professionals. *Global Business & Management Research*, *8*, 1-17. doi:10.1177/0972150916631086

Haines, D. (2017). Ethical considerations in qualitative case study research recruiting participants with profound intellectual disabilities. *Research Ethics*, *13*, 219-231.

doi:10.1177/1747016117711971

Haislip, J. Z., Masli, A., Richardson, V. J., & Sanchez, J. M. (2016). Repairing organizational legitimacy following information technology material weaknesses: Executive turnover, information technology expertise, and information

technology system upgrades. *Journal of Information Systems*, 30, 41-70.

doi:10.2308/isys-51294

Hall-Ellis, S. D. (2015). Succession planning and staff development - A winning combination. *Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, 28, 95-98.

doi:10.1108/BL-05-2015-0007

Hansen, L. K., Kræmmergaard, P., & Mathiassen, L. (2017). IT project portfolio governance practice: An investigation into work design problems. *Journal of Information Technology Case and Application Research*, 19(2), 81-101,

doi:10.1080/15228053.2017.1338072

Harvey, G., Marshall, R. J., Jordan, Z., & Kitson, A. A. (2015). Exploring the hidden barriers in knowledge translation. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25, 1506-1517.

doi:10.1177/1049732315580300

Hickman, L., & Akdere, M. (2018). Effective leadership development in information technology: Building transformational and emergent leaders. *Industrial & Commercial Training*, 50, 1-9. doi:10.1108/ICT-06-2017-0039

Huang, C., Weng, R., & Chen, Y. (2016). Investigating the relationship among transformational leadership, interpersonal interaction and mentoring functions. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 25, 2144-2155. doi:10.1111/jocn.13153

Hummel, J. (2016). From founder to successor: 8 areas to consider when planning for succession. *Journal of Financial Planning*, 29, 20-22. Retrieved from <https://www.onefpa.org/>

Jakubik, L. D., Weese, M. M., Eliades, A. B., & Huth, J. J. (2017). Mentoring in the

- career continuum of a nurse: Clarifying purpose and timing. *Pediatric Nursing*, 43, 149-152. Retrieved from <https://www.pediatricnursing.net/>
- Jiang, J., Gao, A., & Yang, B. (2018). Employees' critical thinking, leaders' inspirational motivation, and voice behavior: The mediating role of voice efficacy. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 17, 33-41. doi:10.1027/1866-5888/a000193
- Jordan, K. (2018). Validity, reliability, and the case for participant-centered research: Reflections on a multi-platform social media study. *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, 34, 913-921. doi:10.1080/10447318.2018.1471570
- Judd, E. (2017). Patterns of change. *Independent Banker*, 67(9), 32-37. Retrieved from <http://independentbanker.org/>
- Kennedy, K. (2015). From one millennial to another: Advice on being the succession plan. *Journal of Financial Planning*, 28(12), 20-22. Retrieved from <https://www.onefpa.org/>
- Kinley, N., & Ben-Hur, S. (2014). Four questions every leader needs to ask about talent management. *Strategic HR Review*, 13(2), 63-68. doi:10.1108/SHR-09-2013-0092
- Knell, N. (2017). Sloughing off the government stereotypes. *Government Technology*, 30(5), 42-43. Retrieved from <http://www.govtech.com/>
- Krai, S. (2015). Who will lead when CEOs retire? *Mining Engineering*, 67, 104-104. Retrieved from <http://me.smenet.org/>
- Krinsky, R., & Hickson, J. (2014). Transformational leadership. In J. J. Fitzpatrick & G. McCarthy (Eds.). *Theories guiding nursing research and practice: Making nursing knowledge development explicit* (pp. 287-301). New York, NY: Springer.

- Krotov, V. (2015). Bridging the CIO-CEO gap: It takes two to tango. *Business Horizons*, 58, 275-283. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2015.01.001
- La Paz, A. (2017). How to become a strategist CIO. *IT Professional*, 19, 48-55. doi:10.1109/MITP.2017.2
- Lambert, S. (2015). The challenges of developing future leaders of community colleges and beyond. *Antistasis*, 5, 11-14. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/556166>
- Lee, D., Arthur, I. T., & Morrone, A. S. (2017). Using video surveillance footage to support validity of self-reported classroom data. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 40, 154-180. doi:10.1080/1743727X.2015.1075496
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4, 324-327. doi:10.4103/2249-4863.161306
- Lonnquist, P. A. (2015). Intergalactic leadership: Practical tips for leading where no one has gone before. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies*, 2, 1-27. doi:10.24926/ijps.v2i1.103
- Lopez, A. C., Viveros, J. M., & Melendez, A. R. (2017). Methodology proposal to determine project management maturity level in engineering companies. *Revista EIA*, 14(27), 85-95. doi:10.24050/reia.v14i27.808
- Ma, S., Seidl, D., & Guérard, S. (2015). The new CEO and the post-succession process: An integration of past research and future directions. *International Journal of*

Management Reviews, 17, 460-482. doi:10.1111/ijmr.12048

Mao, H., Liu, S., Zhang, J., & Deng, Z. (2016). Information technology resource, knowledge management capability, and competitive advantage: The moderating role of resource commitment. *International Journal of Information Management*, 36, 1062-1074. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2016.07.001

Mazzola, D. J., St. Louis, R. D., & Tanniru, M. R. (2017). The path to the top: Insights from career histories of top CIOs. *Communications of the ACM*, 60(3), 60-68. doi:10.1145/2959086

McKee, G., & Froelich, K. (2016). Executive succession planning: Barriers and substitutes in nonprofit organizations. *Annals of Public & Cooperative Economics*, 87, 587-601. doi:10.1111/apce.12129

Mencel, J., Wefald, A. J., & van Ittersum, K. W. (2016). Transformational leader attributes: Interpersonal skills, engagement, and well-being. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37, 635-657. doi:10.1108/LODJ-09-2014-0178

Michael, J., Martinkova, P., McFarland, J., Wright, A., Cliff, W., Modell, H., & Wenderoth, M. P. (2017). Validating a conceptual framework for the core concept of "cell-cell communication." *Advances in Physiology Education*, 41, 260-265. doi:10.1152/advan.00100.2016

Migliorini, L., & Rania, N. (2017). A qualitative method to "make visible" the world of intercultural relationships: A photovoice in social psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 14, 131-145. doi:10.1080/14780887.2016.1263698

- Milovich, J. M. (2015). Moving technology leaders up the influence curve. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 14, 39-49. Retrieved from <http://www.misqe.org/>
- Mohajan, H. K. (2017). Two criteria for good measurements in research: Validity and reliability. *Annals of Spiru Haret University Economic Series*, 17(3), 58–82.
doi:10.26458/1746
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development, Environment and People*, 7, 23-48.
doi:10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
doi:10.4135/9781412995658
- Nagasaka, N. (2016). Visualising historical trends in global maritime boundary delimitations since the 1940s. *Marine Policy*, 71, 29-37.
doi:10.1016/j.marpol.2016.05.017
- Naim, M. F., & Lenka, U. (2017). Talent management: A burgeoning strategic focus in Indian IT industry. *Industrial & Commercial Training*, 49, 183-188.
doi:10.1108/ICT-12-2016-0084
- United States. (1978). *The Belmont report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Bethesda, Md.: The Commission.
- Netcoh, S. (2017). Balancing freedom and limitations: A case study of choice provision in a personalized learning class. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 383-392.
doi:10.1016/j.tate.2017.05.010
- Nguyen, B., Yu, X., Melewar, T., & Chen, J. (2015). Brand innovation and social media:

Knowledge acquisition from social media, market orientation, and the moderating role of social media strategic capability. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 51, 11-25. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2015.04.017

Nissan, J., & Eder, P. (2017). Four dimensions of designing succession plans. *OD Practitioner*, 49(3), 79-81. Retrieved from <http://www.odnetwork.org/>

Nogueira, M. G., de Deus, F. E., Peixoto, H. P., & de Sousa, R. T. (2017). E-discovery as a mean to improve information security. *2017 Computing Conference*, 998-1002. doi:10.1109/SAI.2017.8252214

Office for Human Research Protections. (1998). *Informed consent checklist*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Retrieved from <https://www.hhs.gov/>

Olin, A., Karlberg-Granlund, G., & Furu, E. M. (2016). Facilitating democratic professional development: Exploring the double role of being an academic action researcher. *Educational Action Research*, 24, 424-441. doi:10.1080/09650792.2016.1197141

Parker, S. C. (2016). Family firms and the “willing successor” problem. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 40, 1241–1259. doi:10.1111/etap.12242

Pinnick, J. (2017). Exploring digital preservation requirements. *Records Management Journal*, 27, 175-191. doi:10.1108/RMJ-04-2017-0009

Pipatanantakum, K., & Ractham, V. V. (2016). Knowledge creation aiding family business succession plan. *International Journal of Business & Management Science*, 6, 63-84. Retrieved from <http://www.safaworld.org/ijbms/>

- Pontis, S., & Blandford, A. (2016). Understanding 'influence': An empirical test of the data-frame theory of sensemaking. *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology*, 67, 841-858. doi:10.1002/asi.23427
- Prufeta, P. (2014). Story theory. In J. J. Fitzpatrick & G. McCarthy (Eds.), *Theories guiding nursing research and practice: Making nursing knowledge development explicit* (pp. 239-250). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.
- Ramsey, J. R., Rutti, R. M., Lorenz, M. P., Barakat, L. L., & Sant'anna, A. S. (2017). Developing global transformational leaders. *Journal of World Business*, 52, 461-473. doi:10.1016/j.jwb.2016.06.002
- Rivolta, M. L. (2018). Worth the wait? Delay in CEO succession after unplanned CEO departures. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 49, 225-251. doi:10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2017.12.021
- Roberts, D., & Watson, B. P. (2016). Building a culture of leadership - And joy. *CIO*, 22-23. Retrieved from <https://www.cio.com/>
- Romero, A., Pare, M., & Khemici, N. (2017). The hot potato game: Roles and responsibilities for realizing IT project benefits. *Journal of Modern Project Management*, 72-79. doi:10.19255/JMPM01407
- Salim, A., & Arman, A. A. (2014). Development of assessment method for information technology and business. *Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (ICEECS)*, 53-58. doi:10.1109/ICEECS.2014.7045219
- Sammer, J. (2015). Teams must follow best practices in succession planning: Executive departures are inevitable, but your organization doesn't have to flounder during

- the transition. *Behavioral Healthcare*, 35(2), 40-41. Retrieved from <https://www.behavioral.net/>
- Saravo, B., Netzel, J., & Kiesewetter, J. (2017). The need for strong clinical leaders - Transformational and transactional leadership as a framework for resident leadership training. *PLoS ONE*, 12(8), 1-13. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0183019
- Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2015). *Research methods for business students* (7th ed.). Essex, England: Pearson Education.
doi:10.4135/9781412950589
- Saxena, S. (2016). Routinization of charisma in family-run firms. *Aweshkar Research Journal*, 21(2), 45-58. Retrieved from <http://www.welingkar.org/>
- Sepasgozar, S., & Davis, S. (2018). Construction technology adoption cube: An investigation on process, factors, barriers, drivers and decision makers using NVivo and AHP analysis. *Buildings*, 8(6), 74-105. doi:10.3390/buildings8060074
- Serrano, A., Gomez, B., & Juiz, C. (2017). Why the governance of projects, programs and portfolios (PPP) cannot be separated from the governance of IT standard. *National Information Technology Conference (NITC)*, 106-111.
doi:10.1109/NITC.2017.8285661
- Shao, Z., Feng, Y., & Wang, T. (2017). Charismatic leadership and tacit knowledge sharing in the context of enterprise systems learning: The mediating effect of psychological safety climate and intrinsic motivation. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 36, 194-208. doi:10.1080/0144929X.2016.1221461
- Sirisomboonsuk, P., Gu, V. C., Cao, R. Q., & Burns, J. R. (2018). Relationships between

- project governance and information technology governance and their impact on project performance. *International Journal of Project Management*, 36, 287-300. doi.org/10.1016/j.ijproman.2017.10.003
- Smothers, J., Doleh, R., Celuch, K., Peluchette, J., & Valadares, K. (2016). Talk nerdy to me: The role of intellectual stimulation in the supervisor-employee relationship. *Journal of Health and Human Services Administration*, 38, 478-508. Retrieved from <http://jhhsa.spaef.org/>
- Soebbing, B. P., Wicker, P., & Weimar, D. (2015). The impact of leadership changes on expectations of organizational performance. *Journal of Sports Management*, 29, 485-497. doi:10.1123/jsm.2014-0089
- Sudheesh, K., Duggappa, D. R., & Nethra, S. S. (2016). How to write a research proposal? *Indian Journal of Anaesthesia*, 60, 23-26. doi:10.4103/0019-5049.190617
- Takyi, E. (2015). The challenge of involvement and detachment in participant observation. *Qualitative Report*, 20, 864-872. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/>
- Tan, A. (2016). Talent challenges in times of disruption. *Computerworld Hong Kong*, 86-87. Retrieved from <https://www.enterpriseinnovation.net/>
- Tibben, W. J. (2015). Theory building for ICT4D: Systemizing case study research using theory triangulation. *Information Technology for Development*, 21, 628-652. doi:10.1080/02681102.2014.910635
- Tichy, N. (2015). Succession: The need for radical transformation. *People & Strategy*,

38(2), 8-10. Retrieved from <http://www.hrps.org/>

- Tyssen, A. K., Wald, A., & Spieth, P. (2014). The challenge of transactional and transformational leadership in projects. *International Journal of Project Management*, 32, 365-375. doi:10.1016/j.ijproman.2013.05.010
- Valeriu, D. P. (2017). The significance of emotional intelligence in transformational leadership for public universities. *Euromentor*, 8, 35-51. Retrieved from <http://www.ucdc.ro/en/>
- Venkitachalam, K., & Willmott, H. (2017). Strategic knowledge management-Insights and pitfalls. *International Journal of Information Management*, 37, 313-316. doi:10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2017.02.002
- Ward, A., Berensen, N., & Daniels, R. (2018). Creating a learning organization to help meet the needs of multihospital health systems. *American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy*, 75, 473-481. doi:10.2146/ajhp170533
- Wilkes, L., Cross, W., Jackson, D., & Daly, J. (2015). A repertoire of leadership attributes: An international study of deans of nursing. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 23, 279-286. doi:10.1111/jonm.12144
- Wilkin, C. L., Couchman, P. K., Sohal, A., & Zutshi, A. (2016). Exploring differences between smaller and large organizations' corporate governance of information technology. *International Journal of Accounting Information Systems*, 22, 6-25. doi:10.1016/j.accinf.2016.07.002
- Windeler, J. B., & Riemenschneider, C. K. (2016). The influence of ethnicity on organizational commitment and merit pay of IT workers: The role of leader

- support. *Information Systems Journal*, 26, 157-190. doi:10.1111/isj.12058
- Woodley, C. J., Burgess, S., Paguio, R., & Bingley, S. (2015). Technology mentors: Enablers of ICT uptake in Australian small business. *Education & Training*, 57, 658-672. doi:10.1108/ET-08-2014-0095
- Yang, C., Liang, P., & Avgeriou, P. (2016). A survey on software architectural assumptions. *The Journal of Systems & Software*, 113, 362-380. doi:10.1016/j.jss.2015.12.016
- Yates, J., & Leggett, T. (2016). Qualitative research: An introduction. *Radiologic Technology*, 88, 225-231. Retrieved from <https://tqr.nova.edu/>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yun, J. T., & Duff, B. L. (2017). Is utilizing themes an effective scheme? Choice overload and categorization effects within an extensive online choice environment. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 74, 205-214. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2017.04.038
- Zardini, A., Rossignoli, C., & Ricciardi, F. (2016). A bottom-up path for IT management success: From infrastructure quality to competitive excellence. *Journal of Business Research*, 69, 1747-1752. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.10.049
- Zdaniuk, A., & Bobocel, D. R. (2015). The role of idealized influence leadership in promoting workplace forgiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26, 863-877. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2015.06.008
- Zurga, G. (2018). Project management in public administration. TPM – Total project

management in maturity model. The case of Slovenian public administration.

Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences, 53, 144-159.

doi:10.24193/tras.53E.9

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Please describe your role in the development and execution of strategies for succession planning?
2. Please describe how your strategies for succession planning are documented and updated?
3. How do you identify and develop high-performing information technology professionals for future executive roles as part of your strategies for the effective development of succession plans?
4. How do you address the key challenges encountered for effective succession planning strategies?
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of your organization's strategies for the succession of information technology executives?
6. What additional information would you like to provide for the effective development and implementation of succession plans for future information technology executives?

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation

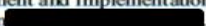
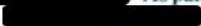


Letter of Cooperation



13 February 2019

Dear Michael Barr,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled 'Strategies for the development and implementation of succession plans for information technology executives' within . As part of this study, I authorize you to interview volunteers employed at  conduct follow-up teleconferences with the volunteers to verify their responses after transcription, and review organizational processes related to succession planning. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: 1) provide a list of employees who fill information technology executive and director roles or have experience in the development or implementation processes for succession planning that relates to those information technology roles and 2) provide access of approved succession planning documents and templates that support the purpose of the research. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

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

Sincerely,

