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The Influence of Leadership Engagement Strategies on Employee Engagement

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Elyssa Green

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Walden University
2019

Abstract

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by

Elyssa Green

MS, Excelsior University, 2009

BS, Regent University, 2000

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

June 2019

Abstract

The influence of leadership engagement strategies on employee engagement affects the retail distribution industry in the form of lower productivity, decreased profitability, and reduced sustainability. In 2017, the retail distribution industry lost more than $50 billion annually due to leader's inability to develop and implement robust leadership strategies to engage employees. The purpose of this single case study was to explore the influence of leadership strategies on employee engagement used by leaders in the retail distribution industry in Florida. Transformational leadership was the conceptual framework for this study. Participants were purposefully selected because of their experience implementing leadership engagement strategies that engaged employees. Data were collected from face-to-face semistructured interviews with 8 leaders in the retail distribution industry with 2 of years leadership experience and the review of organizational documents on employee engagement and productivity. Data analysis comprised coding archival documents, reassembling journal notes, and interpreting semistructured interviews. Three themes emerged from the analysis of data: adopting a supportive leadership style, encouraging employee ownership of task, and continuous knowledge sharing. The findings of this study might contribute to social change by providing retail distribution leaders with fact-based insights that can lead to increased productivity, enhanced sustainability, and improved organizational growth, which might promote prosperity for local families and the community.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my husband Arron and my wonderful children, Nate, Nalyssa, Gabrielle, Adonis, and Christina. My husband was a significant supporter who provided unwavering encouragement throughout my journey. To my children, I know that through dedication, determination, focus, and intestinal fortitude if you dream it, it can happen. Thank you for being so supportive and understanding when I was grouchy, emotional, and too busy to participant in family activities due to completing my work. To my husband and children, words cannot explain how thankful I am that God placed you in my life. My Handsome husband, I love you endlessly! You are my rock. This doctoral study is also dedicated to my mother, Patricia Poindexter and my father, William Poindexter. Mother and Father, although you are not here on this earth with me the confidence and resolve that you instilled in me was the blanket that comforted me during challenging times. I am so blessed to have had you as my parents you worked assiduously without regret to give me and my brother and sisters better opportunities. Regardless of the challenge before you, you were steadfast in faith and family; I am forever grateful for the sacrifices you made to ensure I had better opportunities than you did. Furthermore, to my sisters and brother; the sky is the limit, continue to believe to achieve your goals; most of the time the only thing stopping you is you; it is never too late, and you are never to old. Finally, and most importantly, to God be the Glory! Thank you, God, for giving me strength and peace of mind to make it through the difficult times of the doctoral study journey.

Acknowledgments

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

A leader's engagement strategies drive employee engagement and productivity (Engelbrecht, Heine, & Mahembe, 2016). Saleh (2017) stressed the importance of engagement for the increase of productivity. In the retail industry, the attribution for the projected decline in employee productivity by 17% was potentially a leaders' lack of employee engagement (Schmitt, Hartog, Belschak, 2016). Moreover, Hicks, O'Reilly, and Bahr (2014) noted that leaders who do not focus on implementing strategies that engage employees potentially face decreases in employee determination and motivation that directly and indirectly affect productivity.

What separates organizations in any industry are the quality of the employees (Taneja, Sewell, & Odom, 2015). Leaders of organizations need to include strategies that engage employees to increase productivity in the workplace during day to day operations. The retail industry faces several challenges with employee engagement. A primary challenge is the development of informal leaders when formal leaders lack strategies that engage employees to increase productivity (Rao, 2017). Informal leaders may not embrace the company vision or mission (Anitha & Gayatri, 2014). Furthermore, the presence of leaders not identified as a formal leader by an organization may be damaging to employee engagement because they may not practice effective leadership styles that engage employees and increase productivity (Rao, 2017). Kopperud, Martinsen, and Humborstad (2014) explained that when leaders incorporate leadership styles such as transformational leadership in the development of engagement strategies, they are more likely to successfully engage employees. However, leaders are often unaware of

effective strategies to use to engage employees and increase productivity (Joo, Lim, & Kim, 2017).

Joo et al. (2017) noted that there was a dearth of research regarding the success and failure of leadership strategies intended to engage employees to increase productivity. This lack of research was a considerable limitation. To prevent further issues surrounding leadership engagement, further research on leadership strategies to engage employees is needed (Anitha & Gayatri, 2014). In the current study, I explored successful strategies that leaders use to engage employees and increase productivity. Anitha and Gayatri (2014) suggested that additional research investigating leadership strategies that engage employees would add value to an organization's operation. This research contributes to improved understanding of the importance of devising and implementing leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and assist in creating an environment that promotes an increase in employee productivity.

Background of the Problem

According to Rao (2017), leaders face challenges with developing leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity. In addition, Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017) revealed that there are challenges when executing leadership engagement initiatives that engage employees and noted that scholars are ambivalent as to whether employee engagement successes or failures are the result of proper leadership engagement strategies. Under these preconceived notions and ideas, leaders are facing a battle when approaching the topic of strategies that engage employees to increase productivity. Kang and Sung (2016) expressed that when developing leadership strategies

that do not support employee engagement, there is the potential for reduced productivity and internal challenges for both experienced leaders and new leaders.

When leaders lack leadership strategies that engage employees, the organization's productivity may suffer (Biermann, Kearney, & Marggraf, 2015). Leaders that lack attentiveness in creating strategies to engage employees can potentially create an unstable work culture environment. An organizational leader's lack of attentiveness may also decrease employees' sense of value within the organization. According to Rao (2017), companies with an engaged workforce experienced 6.5 fewer days absent, 41% lower retention risk, and 3 times higher operating margins. Previous research indicated that leaders have an important role in enhancing job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Biermann et al., 2015). Further, previous managerial studies identified leadership engagement strategies for employee engagement crucial to building a relationship and developing trusts that increase the engagement levels of the organization (Kang & Sung, 2016).

Scholarly research is critical to understanding what leadership strategies engage employees and increase productivity. Literature that exists on leadership engagement strategies is vital and can be used to assist organizations in the development of strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Taneja et al., 2015). However, scholars did not specifically identify leadership strategies that affect employee engagement. Although there is ample research that focuses on leadership styles that are instrumental to employee engagement, these studies do not present an in-depth analysis of how

leadership engagement strategies impact employee engagement (Galeo, Houkes, & Di

Rijk, 2014).

Problem Statement

In the United States, companies lose more than $50 billion annually due to the

leader's inability to develop and implement robust leadership strategies to engage

employees (Samnani, Salamon, & Singh, 2014). The lack of leadership engagement

strategies to engage employees in the retail distribution industry lowered productivity by

at least 4.8% in 2017(Bureau of Labor & Statistics, 2017). The general business problem

is that disengaged employees can lead to company productivity loss. The specific

business problem is that some retail distribution industry leaders lack strategies to engage

employees and increase productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that

retail distribution industry leaders used to engage employees and increase productivity.

Data derived from leaders in the retail distribution industry located in Metro Jacksonville,

Florida, who have had success in implementing leadership strategies that engage

employees to increase productivity in the retail distribution industry. The findings from

this study contributed to retail distribution business practices through leadership

engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity among

companies in the retail distribution industry. In addition, the results from this study could

enhance the understanding of effective employee engagement strategies such as

employee learning and development, employee absenteeism management, and an

employee rewards program. Further, the results of the study might positively impact society and social change by providing leaders with successful strategies that engage employees and increase productivity resulting in a reduction in unemployment, job stress, and mental health challenges.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative approach was most appropriate for this research. When investigating cultures, routines, interpersonal perspectives, social interaction, and cognitive views, a qualitative method can be applied (Sergio, 2014). Qualitative methods provide a detailed research framework and allow for thorough interpretation of the content and context of participant responses (Noble & Smith, 2015). Anyan (2013) suggested that qualitative methods give researchers the capacity to collect comprehensive data from a sample population. The quantitative method is suitable for a researcher looking to quantify a measurement of data in a numerical or statistical analysis of surveys and polls by the manipulation of pre-existing computational formulas (Jervis & Drake, 2014). Quantitative research involves testing a theory and hypothesis, and analyzing statistical data (Goertz & Mahoney, 2013), which were not the intent of this study. Mixed methods research involves using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the phenomena in conjunction with examining supportive statistical data (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). Sadan (2014) stated that researchers who used a mixed research method found the method research to be complex and time-consuming. Mix method utilizes both quantitative and qualitative methods. I did not test hypotheses.

For the current study, the complexity of mixed method research was not necessary to answer the research questions.

Qualitative research designs considered for the current study include: (a) narrative, (b) phenomenology, (c) ethnography, and (d) case study. In a narrative design, the researcher works with a significant amount of data collected about a single person's experiences (Stake, 2010). I determined that narrative research can pose a challenge due to the requirement of having to obtain specific and detailed information about the study participant, which could present issues when collecting and analyzing data. In a phenomenology study, researchers work with a streamline of information collected from several participants lived in-depth experiences with the studied phenomenon (Gill, 2014). This design is not an optimal choice given the current study does not require the analysis of detailed lived experiences of participants. Ethnography involves the exploration of cultures, including cultural beliefs, language, and behaviors (Safari & Thilenius, 2013). I concluded that ethnography is not a suitable design for this study because the purpose of this study is not to explore the beliefs, language, and behaviors of a culture. In case study research, the fundamental objective is to explore a program, event, activity, process, or individuals by collecting detailed information about individuals or groups using a variety of data collection procedures (Yin, 2014). A single case study design was the optimal choice for the current research. According to Yin (2014), a single case study design is an optimal choice when exploring specific and complex phenomenon within a real-world context. Using the single case study design, I explored the strategies that retail distribution industry leaders used to engage employees and increase productivity.

Research Question

Developing a research question was the first step when conducting scholarly research (Zhu, 2015). The central research question was as follows:

RQ: What strategies do leaders in the retail distribution industry use to engage employees and increase productivity?

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies do you use to engage employees?

2. What are some successful methods you have taken as a leader when developing leadership engagement strategies that increase productivity?

3. How do you implement leadership strategies that help engage employees and increase productivity?

4. How did your employees in the distribution centers respond to these strategies?

5. What are some of the challenges you face when implementing leadership engagement strategies?

6. What are some of the benefits you have seen as a result of implementing leadership strategies that engage employees?

7. How do you measure the effectiveness of your engagement strategies?

8. What else can you share with me on your successful strategies for engaging employees and increasing productivity?

Conceptual Framework

The theory I used as a conceptual framework for this study was the transformational leadership theory. It was in 1978 when James McGregor Burns developed the transformational leadership theory. Bass in 1985 provided an extension to the transformational leadership theory to include political leaders and organizational psychology (Richardson, 2013). McGregor Burns (1978) identified a leadership approach to assessing motivation, engagement, and value of followers. In 1985, Bass extended the transformational theory by identifying behaviors from leaders that inspired followers to begin working towards obtaining similar goals, aspirations and higher morality (Graham, Ziegart, & Capitano, 2015). Bass (1985) argued that the basis of redesigning perceptions, values expectation, and aspiration of the employees surround the leaders' ability, traits, and personality that act as an example in the articulation of the goals. Moreover, the key constructs forming the theory are: (a) inspirational motivation, (b) idealized influences, (c) individualized consideration, and (d) intellectual stimulation (Graham et al., 2015).

Transformational leadership theory provides a lens through which I used to explore the success of leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity. Recent literature suggested that transformational leaders are effective in the workplace and bring value to change in an organization (Herman, Huang, & Lam, 2013). Using transformational leadership in the framework gave focus to the role of a leaders influence on the actions of their employees, including the engagement of their employees (Kovjanic, Schuh, & Jonas, 2013; Schmit, DenHartog, & Belschak,

2016). Recent literature suggested that transformational leaders are effective at bringing positive change into an organization (Schmit et al., 2016). Moreover, researchers have used the transformational leadership framework when investigating leadership strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Herman et al., 2013). Herman et al. (2013) and Schmitt et al. (2016) used the transformational leadership theory as the theoretical framework in their studies on work engagement. The researchers found that transformational leadership behavior had a positive impact on employee engagement and productivity. Some researchers used the transformational leadership theory to understand how leadership strategies were valuable in reducing turn over in the work place (Case, Todd, & Kral, 2014; Kovjanic et al., 2013). According to Alok, Raveendran, and Prasuna (2014), transformational leaders can influence overall engagement of employees to increase productivity and meet or exceed expectations.

Operational Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used throughout the research study.

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is a workplace approach used to get positive results and commitment from members in the organization (Pohler & Schmidt, 2015).

Leadership engagement: Leadership engagement is the act of leaders emotionally stimulating and connecting to the success in an organization (Nasomboon, 2014).

Sustainability: Sustainability refers to an individual or organizational activity that includes social and environmental dimensions as well as economic considerations (Parrish, 2014).

Transformational leadership: Transformational leadership is a leadership style used by leaders when focusing on elevating followers' interest that encourages them to focus on the organization vision, mission, and goals while developing interpersonal relationships, and positive feedback (Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014).

Transactional leadership: Transactional leadership is a leadership style used by leaders to motivate followers to expand knowledge, significant exchange information, and obtain goals (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

The identification of assumptions, limitations, and delimitations assist in exposing the reader to the research assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. The following section presents descriptions of study assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Assumptions

Study assumptions included the viewed perspectives or suppositions that are valid but are not solidified (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). For this study, I assumed the retail distribution leaders were involved in the implementation of strategies that engaged employees. Secondly, it was assumed that all respondents were unbiased and fully willing to participate in the research. Thirdly, I assumed that the participants would respond honestly and accurately to the interview questions. The final assumption was that the interviewees would provide truthful information to assist with answering the central research question.

Limitations

Limitations add challenges to the research that present situations that are not within the control of the researcher (Kumar, 2014). This study had a few limitations. First, the study sample was confined to a single geographical location. Second, leaders of the study came from the distribution area of the organization. Leaders and employees from another department may have different perspectives surrounding leadership strategies. The Third limitation was participants may withhold information in fear of leadership repercussions. Lastly, information given was unique to the participating organization and limited to the culture and mindset of the organization. Maskara (2014) stated that participants' mindset surrounding the organizations culture could influence their information provided to the researcher.

Delimitations

Delimitations are boundaries within the study provided by the researcher (Svensson & Doumas, 2013). The first delimitation was target population. Only leaders who have had success with implementing engagement strategies participated in the study. Secondly, a delimitation applied in conducting this study was geographical location; all participants were in the Jacksonville Florida area. The third delimitation was sample size of 8 leaders. A restriction of a qualitative study is that researchers may use a small sample size to have more time to collect qualitative data (Yin, 2015). The last delimitation was industry. I only investigated leadership engagement strategies that engaged employees in the retail distribution industry.

Significance of the Study

Balo (2014) referenced that the significances of the study add value to the researchers work and the relevance to the researcher's findings. In a successful, productive environment, leadership engagement strategies encourage the creation, learning, and organizational productivity (Kale & Karaman, 2012). The study may be of value to the business and organizational leadership development as the results could provide insight into business leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement leading to increases in productivity (Vij & Farooq, 2014).

Contribution to Business Practice

Organizations use leadership to attain their business goals, competitive advantage, enhance employees' productivity and reduce staff turnover (Karp, 2015). The influence of leadership engagement strategies was part of the organization's achievement that involves employee engagement focus to achieve the integration of productivity, innovation, proactive solutions, and personal initiatives (Gayal, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2015). Leadership engagement strategies are therefore vital and critical to the success or demise of the organization. Due to increased demand for organizations to be more productive and competitive, leaders are compelled to develop engagement strategies that influence employees (Marini, 2013). Most of the disconnection with employee engagement was the lack of influence of leadership engagement strategies (Marini, 2013). This study added considerable knowledge to the research field by presenting how essential leadership engagement strategies are when engaging employees and promoting productivity.

Implications for Social Change

The results of the study may influence positive social change through the provision of a framework for leadership engagement strategies influence on employee engagement. The endorsement of the strategies contributed to employee engagement and inducement of productivity that facilitates a business's market advantage (Kumar & Panasari, 2014). If leaders possess and promote engagement strategies that influence employee engagement, the effects may provide positive outcomes that are influential to improved productivity and community well-being (Hicks et al., 2014). Effective engagement of employees stimulates self-confidence, determination, and job satisfaction amongst the workforce. It improves individual work performance and the workplace atmosphere (Kumar & Panasari, 2014). This study increased awareness of the influence of leadership engagement strategies toward employee engagement.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity. The absences of leadership engagement strategies affect many United States industries (Nasomboon, 2014). The literature review consisted of recent and early secondary sources with research on leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity, as well as critical concepts for the stimulation of market advantage. Additionally, through my evaluation of the literature in the review, I identified gaps in existing research and seek to fill them through extrapolation and further development of the scholarly work. Further, the literature review provided a framework and foundation

for the study. The research question: *What strategies do leaders in the retail distribution industry use to engage employees and increase productivity?* The presented scholars in the review have contributed time, effort, and knowledge to inform the business industry on what strategies are contributing factors to leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement.

This literature review entailed a broad spectrum of research on the dynamics of leadership engagement strategies. I organized the literature review to focus on themes that are relevant to the development of leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity. The first theme of the literature review encompassed discussion on the transformational leadership theory and supporting and rival leadership theories (transactional leadership, and contingency theory) to provide a sound basis for the study. The second theme contained information on employee engagement strategies in the retail distribution industry and recent studies on leadership strategies that engage employees. The third theme encompassed evidence of effective employee engagement strategies that engage employees. The last theme of the literature review encompassed the effects of employee engagement and the impact on productivity.

The literature review entailed the search of peer-reviewed and full- text articles content from reputable databases. Databases include Google Scholar, Thoreau Multiple Database, Business Source Complete, Science Direct, and Psychology: A Sage Full-Text Collection, PsycINFO, Emerald Management Journals, Ulrich, and ProQuest Central. Keywords used for the database search included: *employee engagement, self-determination, motivation, turnover, training, employee engagement, qualitative*

research, case study, leadership engagement, disengagement, transformational leadership, pay incentive motivators, pay for performance, communication. Information from the literature review included more than 349 journal articles, book, and dissertations. A total of 235 articles are in the research published between 2014 and 2019 consisting of 225 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 10 seminal books. Out of 235 references 225 (95%) are published within after 2014, in 2014-2018, 10 references out of 235 (5%) are published before 2014. 225 references out of the 235 (95%) are peer-reviewed, and 10 (5%) are seminal books published between, 2014-2018.

Transformational Leadership Theory

The influence of leaders has always affected organizational changes and behaviors (Hamstra, Yperen, Wisse, & Sassen, 2014). Since Burns presented the transformational leadership theory in 1978, his work has received a significant amount of attention with a few researchers suggesting that transformational leaders bring positive organizational change (Holten & Brenner, 2015). Burns (1978) used transformational leadership theory to inform how leaders can galvanize employees to exceed the common goals of an organization. Over time, scholars used transformational leadership theory to understand different organizational phenomena such as leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Sanda & Okpoti, 2016). Scholars found that transformational leadership theory is a full range leadership model well suited for investigating phenomena such as leadership engagement strategies that engage employees. The transformational leadership theory has acceptance in scholarly leadership literature and receives support from empirical research (Paladan, 2015). The key

constructs or propositions underlying the transformational leadership theory are: (a)

individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and

(d) idealized influence (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leaders induced their followers' behaviors and values by

offering incentives that created psychological ownership (Hamstra et al., 2012). The

ownership stimulates synergy that promotes responsibility, belongingness, self-identity,

and personal interactions between leaders and followers (Graham, Ziegert, & Capitano,

2015). Furthermore, leaders that used the transformational leadership style was effective

in implementing solid leadership engagement strategies and providing a positive

environment, expectations, and trust for psychological ownership (Effelsberg et al.,

2014).

Ineffective leadership strategies influenced engagement over time, but it is not

visible due to the employees' social responsibility to meet job expectations. Thus, there is

a need to construct strategies that will influence employee engagement and subsequently

affect customer relation, productivity and service performance (Wright, Moynihan, &

Pandey, 2014), regardless of employee performance. A transformational leaders' most

valued asset is the capability to stimulate employee commitment and respect (Hays,

2013). It is evident that enhanced communication in an organization influence the

engagement levels established between leadership and employees. For example, Pleu and

Shauman (2013), found that transformational leader's strategies towards employee

engagement increased by 3% when leadership communicated regularly. Bushra et al.

(2011) used a questionnaire consisting of 35 items measured on a Likert-type scale,

which illustrated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee

engagement, where productivity increased when employees committed to the

organization. Patton (2015) explained that leaders that use transformational leadership to

influence employee engagement to incorporate effective communication, interpersonal

relationships, and empathy resulting in reduced job risk that fosters psychological

ownership. The resulting psychological empowerment supports higher employee

engagement. However, Taneja et al. (2015) explained that current trends show that, there

was a lack of leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement

resulting in lower productivity by at least 17%.

     Bhat, Rangnekar, and Baura (2013) explained that James MacGregor Burns a

theorist and scientist in 1978 conceptualized leadership as transactional or

transformational. Bass (1985) explained how transformational leadership surrounded the

psychological mechanisms of an individual. Transformational leadership is a style of

leadership based on ethics, motivation, and self-efficiency that promotes intellect and

inspires stimulation of the followers (Choudhary, Akhatar, & Zaheer, 2013).

Transformational leaders influence and motivate employees through several mechanisms

of leadership engagement strategies that reinforce existing values (Wright et al., 2014).

Researchers have viewed transformational leadership as a prominent theory focusing on

organizational behavior (Wright et al., 2014). The intensified trust between a follower

and a leader magnifies work ethic and performance (Effelsberg et al., 2014).

     Mackie (2014) explained that the demand from business operators for successful

leadership engagement strategies influence necessitated the development of methods that

cultivate the skills and knowledge needed to implement successful strategies.

Nevertheless, Mackie (2014) identified that leaders endorsing transformational leadership

style tactics are increasingly facing criticism due to the antiquated methods that surround

the leadership style. The alteration of business objectives test the willingness of followers

to satisfy the goals of the transformational leader market challenges (Wright et al., 2014).

According to Grant (2012), leaders need mentoring and coaching to establish engagement

skills to receive willingness from followers despite the challenges they face in raising

awareness of organizational goals. The current study will assist in ascertaining what

leadership engagement strategies influence employee engagement by looking at how

transformational leader's expansion of knowledge and skills in developing engagement

strategies affect employee engagement to increase workplace productivity.

Researchers refer to transformational leadership as a fostering approach to

follower's behaviors that transcends instant self-interest (Effelsberg et al., 2014).

Researchers have linked transformational leadership to motivation, employee creativity,

and engagement (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2013). Wright et al. (2014) explained that

transformational leadership is dynamically important. It indirectly influences the mission

valences that clarify an organizations' mission and objectives that assist in successfully

increasing productivity (Wright et al., 2014). A study on leadership conducted by Hays

(2013), focused on the overall performance of leaders that use transformational

leadership methods to develop engagement strategies. The authors identified those

leaders who used transformational leadership approaches to engagement and found that

they faced challenges with job demands and resources. Furthermore, the scholars found

that if leaders do not have solidified methods and skills that help to develop successful engagement strategies, employee engagement for workplace productivity and the transformational leadership approach might fail. Bass and Steidlmeire in 1999 theorized that transformational leadership was composed of four behavioral attributes (Wang et al., 2013). According to Wang et al. (2013), the identifying behaviors were the idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

      Intellectual stimulation. Refers to a leaders' ability to stimulate followers to become innovative while challenging the beliefs of everyone in the organization and improving the institution (Northouse, 2013). Leaders' behavior associated with intellectual stimulation supports subordinates and creates an environment where workers can take the initiative to solve organizational challenges (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders' actions and demeanors inspired subordinates to think outside the box, which leads to an increase in employees' productivity (Gul et al., 2012; Simmons & Culbertson, 2013).

      Researchers found that increased job satisfaction resulted in a reduction of employee turnover intentions (Paladan, 2015; Patton, 2015). In addition, leadership behaviors linked to intellectual stimulation promote creativity, foster an environment where employees collaborate with one another to find solutions to organizational problems, and help employees become valuable members of the organization (Northouse, 2013). Pohler and Schmidt (2015) found that transformational leaders' ability to influence followers promoted creativity and helped employees feel empowered. Leaders

who can stimulate or inspire subordinates can provide organizations with the following benefits: (a) increased productivity, (b) improved job satisfaction, and (c) decreased employee turnover (Haile, 2015). Haile (2015) agreed with the previous work of Aiswarya and Ramasundaram (2014); Aishwarya and Ramasundaram found that when leaders motivated or inspired subordinates, employees experienced an increase in job satisfaction, which resulted in a reduction of employee turnover intentions and growth in productivity. Other researchers found similar findings as Aiswarya and Ramasundaram (2014), which suggested that engaged workers were not likely to quit their job compared to employees who experienced disengagement (Alsaraireh, Quinn-Griffin, Ziehm, & Fitzpatrick, 2014; Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere, & Raymond, 2015). Overall, the literature indicated that workers with leaders who had effective leadership strategies that influenced employee engagement experienced a reduction of employee turnover intentions (Alsaraireh et al., 2014; Mathieu et al., 2015; Pohler & Schmidt, 2015).

Inspirational motivation. It is the second factor in transformational leadership that motivates and inspires the employees (Jandaghi et al., 2009). It referenced to the level that the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and aspiring to the employees. Specifically, these leaders provided clear meaning of current goals and optimism for future goals. According to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013), leaders have a continuous task of stimulating employees to pursue new ideas, particularly when conducting transformational change in an organization. In this regard, they motivate and inspire the employees through the expression of implicit enthusiasm and optimism for employees while stimulating teamwork, emphasizing aims, and highlighting positive results.

Jandaghi et al. (2009) argued that inspiration motivation is a capability of transformational leadership, with the role of introducing leaders as inspirational figures for encouraging the employees to conduct proper behaviors because of increases in productivity. The individuals who value this approach talks about the objectives while expressing them in their attainments. In this view, the leaders create engagement strategies that are an exciting image by establishing general enthusiasm and encouraging team spirit, particularly in difficult situations. It is evident that this factor is pertinent to the social sector due to the difficult nature of the retail distribution industry that requires motivation and enthusiasm for the maintenance of optimism in levels of the organization. Simić (1998) indicated that leaders that have effective engagement strategies have stimulating characteristics, and continuously encourage their employees to accept new ideas. The leadership engagement strategies that influenced employees tend to promote teamwork and promote a shared vision of the organization for both leaders and employees.

The inspired leadership engagement strategies stimulate employees' commitment to performing organizational goals while allowing the leaders to create a shared insight. However, Jandaghi et al. (2009) presented that employees learn to pursue factual vision from their commitment to the organizational goals as opposed to the guidance from the leaders when engagement strategies lack credibility. Further, when leadership engagement strategies lack inspirational motivation that entails enthusiastic perspectives of the company vision, employees hold off on perceiving the future optimistically,

pursuing challenging problems, and expressing confidence in the ability to increase

productivity (McCleskey, 2014).

      Idealized influence. Shibru et al. (2011) described the idealized behavior of the

character of the leaders who show charismatic personality. The degree to which a leader

displays conviction and behaves admirably puts forth established values and acts that the

followers can identify themselves with (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). According to Akar

(2010), leaders are trusted, respected and admired due to the conviction to pursue the

followers' needs, as opposed selfish interests. Transformational leaders have consistent

regard for ethics, principles, and values. Due to their amiable, charismatic, and trusting

nature, employees believe that transformational leaders have the competence and

character to obtain goals relevant to the company vision.

      Transformational leaders with the charismatic attribute expressed a sense of

confidence and power to the employee by assuring them they can overcome inherent

obstacles (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). Leaders tend to talk about the importance of

trusting one another in addition to their important values and beliefs. According to Akar

(2010), leaders have a strong emphasis on collective mission and a sense of purpose.

Thus, the employees perceive the leaders as having extraordinary persistence,

capabilities, and determination that represents the highest perspective-taking capacity and

levels of moral reasoning. In this regard, the employees in an organization consistently

emulate the leaders with idealized influence, due to their concern for the leaders as the

charismatic personification of the mission and values of that organization (Hughes,

2014).

According to Mesu (2013), employees are highly influenced by the leaders to exploit their full potential for the advantage of the individual and the organization. The bestowed duty of a role example ensures the leaders have the charisma to stimulate commitment and confidence in the organizational vision among the employees. Leaders sacrifice their actions and values consistently for the corporate benefits enabling them to work towards building good in others first (Avolio, 2005). Therefore, the contributions and efforts of the employees validate the charismatic presence in the workplace. The gift of charismatic personality and behavior can be acquired through formal and informal learning and can spread throughout an organization with mutual vision and mission.

Individualized consideration. The individualized consideration is the fourth and final transformational leadership behavioral attribute, and it involves understanding and distinguishing the needs of the employees (Graham et al., 2013; Hughes, 2014). The transformation leaders that exhibited individualized consideration spend their time promoting self-development through coaching and teaching their followers (Wang et al., 2013). Additionally, leaders focus on mentoring employees and nurturing self-determination attributes where they treat others as individuals as opposed to group members (Tse & Chui, 2013). According to Hughes (2014), these leaders concentrated on identifying the differing aspirations, abilities, and needs of individuals. In addition, Wang et al. (2013) indicated that the people that incorporated a transformational leadership style in their engagement strategies are prone to encouraging feedback, igniting intrinsic motivation, and promoting novel approaches.

Criticisms towards the transformational leadership theory. Pleau and

Shauman (2013) argued that the transformational leadership style lack the leadership

engagement skills necessary to bridge the engagement gap between employees. The

Franken et al. (2009) case study sought to understand the contribution of leadership skills

to a successful implementation of transformational leadership approaches in the

development of engagement strategies that influence employee engagement. Findings

suggested it is imperative to create a framework for coaching and mentoring leaders to

implement effective leadership strategy initiatives. Additionally, the individuals who

used the transformational leadership style lack the skills to engage employees and tend to

develop incomplete strategies (Pleau & Shauman, 2013). Nevertheless, Kopperud et al.

(2014) noted that several studies are focusing on the various motivational variables

emphasizing the association between transformational leadership, work engagement, and

organizational productivity. Therefore, the concept was a catalyst for commitment while

assisting in the articulation of the organization's vision and stimulating the aspiration to

create a workplace environment where employees can discover their insight, which

supports their growth (Kopperud et al., 2014; Kuntz & Gomes, 2012).

Transformational leaders have a creative influence on employees that promotes

novel ideas and practical solutions when building problem-solving resolutions (Bangari,

2014). They stimulate self-efficacy in employees and ultimately assist in the

determination of an employee's measure of individual creativity, and behaviors that are

successful in nature and goal oriented (Attari, 2013). However, Pleau and Shauman

(2013) argued that the skills and knowledge are imperative in the development of an

inclusive model that supports a leader's engagement strategies. Graham et al. (2015) considered the style as a controversial issue regarding ethics, due to its enhanced focus on social behaviors. Additionally, Effelsberg et al. (2013) indicated that the employees who are committed to the standards are more ethical and are less likely to engage in the approach despite their identification with the organization. With this perspective, Effelsberg et al. (2013) considered the discussion on the ethicality and perceptions towards the approach as a matter of personality characteristics, and attitudes toward leadership engagement that lead unsuccessful strategies.

Braun et al. (2012) indicated that whenever transformational leaders fail to foster the shared perception of trust, the teams become less productive due to declining motivation. The transformational style of leadership is under constant criticism, and due to the use of this style in the development of engagement strategies it is often perceived as being in its infancy stages, or underdeveloped (Hays, 2013). Furthermore, several theorists identified the style as running a risk to employee unethical pro-organizational behavior (Graham et al., 2015). There was research that suggested that transformational leadership potentially stifles employee well-being (Holstad, Korek, Rigotti, & Mohr, 2014). Findings showed, there was an elevation of employee stress levels, and work ethics were compromised causing potential negative consequences for the future (Holstad et al., 2014). However, according to Tse and Chiu (2013), the style may enhance innovation and creative behavior.

Although transformational leadership remains the most researched leadership style to date, research suggests that there is limited evidence of its use among leaders to

initiate an inclusive model on the development of engagement strategies (Braun et al., 2012; Grant, 2012;). Braun et al. (2012) regarded the concept as the primary leadership style to reference when investigating ideas relating to employee empowerment and behaviors. Therefore, the enhanced productivity, which leaders receive from employees when using transformational leadership in the maintenance of ethical standards in uncertain environments, enables them to harness innovations and reliance for consistency in productivity (Hamstra et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the leaders can transcend strategies by engaging and stimulating intrinsic employee motivation, job satisfaction, development, and reception in essential communication and self-interest for the team, organization, and society (Grant, 2012). However, there was limited research solidifying what causes the gap between the continuous criticism toward leaders that used the charismatic style of leading and fail to establish engagement strategies that affect workplace productivity (Pleau & Shauman, 2013). In the study, the researcher addressed the gaps that exist with leaders who use the transformational leadership style to create engagement strategies by exploring the development and effectiveness of engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity.

Transactional Leadership

According to Sudha, Shahnawaz, and Farhat (2016), the transactional leadership foundation involves transacting between the followers and the leader to ensure attainment of mutual tendencies. Conversely, the dimension of the concept focuses on personal gain from the relationship between the leader and the followers. Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) believed the approach is profit-oriented where the exchange of favors and things is

prominent. Similarly, Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) indicated that the follower is motivated to expand knowledge to exchange significant information to obtain goals. It means the approach emphasizes the importance of mutual advantages and relations between leader and follower generated through communication. The leader's communication with the follower grants the follower cognition and incentives in exchange for their loyalty and commitment. Moreover, Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013) believed the transactional leadership is the standard style in organizations where the leaders shift simulations and incentives to gain the support of the subordinates. The aim of the leader in such context is to ensure the action taken will meet the goals of the supporters and the organization.

The transactional leaders focus on work ethics, standards, and utilizing authority to interact with employees (Clarke, 2013). Consequently, Bhat et al. (2013) argued that the leaders who deploy the approach are not looking to change the future of the organization but to maintain the current workplace environment within the organization. Researchers have presented an expectation of transactional leadership as being less empowering and innovative as transformational leadership (Zhu et al., 2013). Moreover, leaders that used transactional leadership methods were non-sustaining when engaging employees to influence productivity (Grant, 2012). According to Tyssen et al. (2014) leaders that used transactional leadership methods, produced negative outcomes that impacted workplace productivity. Moreover, a leader that used the transactional leadership style complies with followers by rewarding performance and punishing lack of performance (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). In a case study by Epitropaki and Martin

(2013), the researchers showed that rewarding employees and punishing them for lack of performance depleted self-confidence and upset morale in the workplace. Leaders suggested that this concept potentially impedes leadership engagement with staff members (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013).

In 1947, Max Weber introduced transactional leadership theory. The preceding researchers refocused the theory to be a motivational style of leadership, which assists in employee performance and engagement (Hamstra et al., 2012). According to Bass (1997), the motivation of leaders that used transactional leadership methods was to satisfy the needs of followers by ensuring satisfaction, and in return, the followers expected to be rewarded or punished by the leader. The study by Antonakis and House (2014) revealed that one-third of studies that focus on leadership success surround transformational leadership methods, due to transactional methods being aggressively task-oriented in nature. In this context, the leaders used transactional leadership approaches to appeal to their cohorts in exchange for complying with standards and procedures (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). Additionally, transactional leaders displayed formal authority empowered by organizational formalities and adhered to by followers, due to the formalities of the organization (Clarke, 2013). Thus, the attainment of employee engagement was through the bureaucratic system of the organization indicating that the leaders who used transactional leadership were effective particularly when the organizational chart was clear, and the chain of command was defined (Tsu & Chiu, 2013).

Bass (1995) researched transactional leadership and developed a questionnaire that consisted of 73 items that targeted leader characteristics. The researcher concluded that transactional leadership was comprised of three attributes (Zhu et al., 2013). The behaviors included contingent reward and management by exception, considered as active behaviors, and management by exception considered as a passive behavior (Zhu et al., 2013).

Contingent reward. The first practice identified was contingent reward. The characteristics allowed followers to receive rewards for performance (Clarke, 2013). The rewards come in several forms other than monetary. A leader that focuses on non-financial rewards builds legitimacy in the workplace (Zhu et al., 2013). Rewards other than money may consist of paid time off, extended vacations, longer lunch breaks, praise at team meetings and assemblies' recognition (Graham et al., 2013). In this regard, leaders presented clear goals, clear objectives, and solidified organizational vision, offered followers appropriate tools to accomplish workplace tasks (Zhu et al., 2013). Followers found by using these approaches they were able to avoid poor performance and ensure compliance (Graham et al., 2013).

Management by exception (active). The second behavior of transactional leaders is management by exception (active) (Zhu et al., 2013). Characteristics of this behavior were active exceptions due to leaders ensuring followers have clarity of expectations and the followers clarifying their expectations of the organization (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). Leaders observed performances closely to address mistakes (Hamstra et al., 2012).

They made changes accordingly to ensure the followers do not encounter the same errors in performance again (Zhu et al., 2013).

Management by exception (passive). The third behavior in transactional leadership was management by exception (passive) (Zhu et al., 2013). The prominent characteristics of these leaders was enforcing punishment and corrective action for performance (Bhat et al., 2013). The principal focus was on the routine operations and task emphasis to avoid changes that potentially may cause a delay in obtaining job goals in the organization (Clarke, 2013).

In contrast, leaders who showed concern or emotion for an individual's needs may present limited leadership or weak leadership (Bono et al., 2012). The study conducted by Deichmann and Stam (2015) investigated the commitment level of followers to leaders that use transactional methods. The researchers found that 35% of followers wanted more structure, discipline, and unfiltered direction that most transactional leaders display. Moreover, the leaders that use transactional leadership potentially show a strong controlling base of objectives (Clarke, 2013). Leaders are firm in supporting organizational goals and vision by hypothetically avoiding passive implications or seeking assumed agreeableness (Bono et al., 2012). Although Moody (2012) argued that researchers have little understanding of the positive influences of transactional leaders. Clark (2013) revealed that there were implications in research indicating that active transactional leadership can play a decisive role in the work environment.

According to Odumeru and Ifeanyi (2013), the leaders who used this approach scrutinize the followers' work to find faults and deviations making them concerned with processes as opposed to future-oriented ideas. The leader using leadership concepts to manage crisis, emergencies, and projects with established strategy are effective. However, the transactional leader that stressed specific task performances stimulated a lower level of needs and avoids an approach to punish the followers whenever problems arise in the system. Besides, the extrinsic motivation brings minimal compliance from followers making the transactional leaders dependent on the existing organizational structure, goals, and culture in the attainment of specific tasks through the independent management of each portion. According to Mesu (2013), this leadership approach is passive and facilitates the maintenance of the status quo through intrinsic thinking specifically when solving organizational problems. Additionally, the tendency of the leaders to be directive and action-oriented hindered innovation and creativity among their followers, as they were subjects of executing stipulated management orders and tasks.

In a study conducted by Deichmann and Stam (2015), there was speculation of a gap within the transactional leadership models. The theoretical gap recognized leaders that do not undertake motivational behaviors or support actions of social lifestyles. According to Antonakis and House (2014), there is limited research on the reasoning for the growing divide amongst leaders that do not incorporate transactional or transformational leadership style methods. In this study, I aimed to contribute to the literature that provides evaluation for the gap amongst leaders without the capacity to

utilize formal leadership styles to create leadership engagement strategies that engage

employees. This study was critical in establishing successful engagement strategies.

Contingency Theory

Researchers have theorized that the styles of leadership are difficult to define

within any context of the retail distribution industry due to the dynamic characteristics of

leadership (Waters, 2013). Fiedler (1964) created the contingency theory to illustrate

leadership relationship dynamics, the different context incorporating versatility, and the

assistance of the leadership style in measuring various leadership strategies. Waters

(2013) noted that Fielder developed the contingency theory by observing and studying

strategies, relationships, and styles of leaders. In gathering significant amounts of data,

the scholar established a generalization of the instances where styles of leadership are

influential in building an accomplished strategy for business (Grandien, 2015).

Additionally, Walter argued that the contingency theory presents the importance of

managers in the accomplishments and success of leadership strategies in organizations

(Van de Ven, Genco, & Hinings, 2013). However, Krogh et al. (2012) conducted a case

study on the organizational framework of leadership and explained that there are

challenges with gaps in the contingency theory. Organizations struggle with internal and

external concepts, which alter the structure of the leadership engagement strategies.

Moreover, Krogh et al. (2012) suggested that there were limited views surrounding

processes to increase knowledge and skills for leaders and that organizational knowledge

was limited to elected leaders. The limitations impede the growth and expansion of

leaders' skills in their attempt to create engagement strategies that encourage increased productivity.

According to Waters (2012), the contingency theory enables scholars and businesses to examine the strategies that build relationships between the organization and the operation through the collection of factors on leadership styles that can lead to successful strategies. Muller, Geraldi, and Turner (2014) argued that various types of leadership are suitable in different context in addition to supporting the discoveries, which contribute to the contingency theory foundation. Moreover, Al-Temimi et al. (2014) utilized research on the theory to present the factors of influential contingency base in the retail distribution industry. In this context, the leaders who are potentially using the contingency theory have a strong knowledge base on effective leadership (Noble & Smith, 2015). Nevertheless, there is a gap in the knowledge sharing amongst leaders regarding building appropriate skills in the development of engagement strategies (Krogh et al., 2012).

The reference to contingency theory will be an essential guide to performance outcomes that influence organizations relationship between internal structure and external context (Van de Ven et al., 2013). Muller et al. (2014) suggested that leaders approach organizational strategies from a transformational leadership perspective within complex environments and a transactional leadership perspective in simplistic environments. The gradual replacement of scale by innovation and stability was continuously stimulated by the leaders to seek enhanced strategies to increase productivity (Van de Ven et al., 2013). Al-Temimi et al. (2014) noted that researchers present the contingency theory in separate

orientation to identify a leadership style that will be effective in certain situations.

However, with contingency theory research had also discovered a breakdown of

leadership development in building the needed skills to become an effective leader with

consistent strategies that engage employees and increase productivity.

Critics of the contingency theory attack the foundation of the theory because the

scholars of the theory failed to present why certain leadership styles are more influential

than others (Battilana & Casciaro, 2012). Fielder (1993) explained that the make of a

leader's motivation to pursue tasks gives context to leadership. A leader's motivation

comes from their leadership style and indicated where employee control was more

prevalent by leaders to build effective strategies and sturdy relationships. However,

leaders with a strong relationship orientation were not influential due to the possession of

exaggerated control that potentially influences reactions in situations where the leaders

have little control (Waters, 2012). In addition, Waters (2012) was less convinced that the

contingency theory can assess the efficiency of the leader's strategy and approach,

particularly when encountering a delicate situation. Similarly, Van de Ven et al. (2013)

continued to criticize the theoretical foundation of contingency theory by stating that the

theory lacks complexity and substance in its explanations, evaluations, and

implementations. Therefore, this study assisted in identifying gaps in knowledge sharing

amongst leaders on how to build strategies that engage employees to increase

productivity of internal and external organizational structures.

Employee Engagement

In the organizational context, Memon, Salleh, Baharom and Harun (2014),

consider engagement as something that employees obtain from the organization through

discretionary efforts, advocacy, commitment, dedication, and the maximum usage of

talents in support of the company's goals and objectives. The employees' engagement

varies with personality, seniority, occupation, organizational length of service and

biographical characteristics, for example, extroverts and younger employees find it easier

to adapt to joining a new organization. However, engagement is a choice that is

dependent on individual's consideration of what they presume as a critical or important

investment. In addition, there were drivers of engagement that determine whether

individuals will become sincerely committed. Memon et al. (2014) considered the nature

of work undertaken, leadership strategies, communication systems, the rewarding

programs, and purposeful learning and development as the critical determinants of

whether employee engagement will aggravate or decline. Robinson et al. (2015) indicated

that there was a lack of consensus on the definition of employee's engagement due to an

overlap with more exhaustively researched concepts of learning and development,

rewards programs, and organizational commitments.

Robinson et al. (2015) optimistically stipulated that employee engagement

stimulate a positive attitude towards the organization that is necessary for self-motivation

of the workforce. Further, when leaders engage employees, the employee becomes

encouraged in the belief of the company's mission, vision, and product, making the staff

sincere and passionate about promoting the interests of the firm. Thus, the belief that the

organization promotes the welfare of the employee makes them more productive and

resilient in the pursuit of goals and objectives, while also stimulating them to be a good

team player and behave altruistically.

Reilly (2014) suggested that actively disengaged employees are consistently

pursuing the damage of the company, in addition to being unhappy at work, they are

encouraged to drive away customers and monopolize the managers' time. Nonetheless,

the Chartered Management Institute (2015) considered engaged employees in the

workplace as the greatest potential for businesses to enhance their profitability and

productivity. Although the non-engaged individuals were difficult to identify due to

concealed hostility and lack of concern about safety, quality, profitability, productivity,

and customers, the individuals lack motivation and inspiration.

The Chartered Management Institute (2015) indicated that organizations should

access their operational environment to identify weaknesses and strengths in stimulating

employee engagement. However, most organizations considered accessing their

environment through an employee survey. The Harvard Business Review (2013)

indicated that this option is time-consuming, expensive, and requires substantial expertise

for careful consideration. In addition, the organization's executives should dedicate

resources and make certain the employees understand the purpose of the survey to

facilitate confidentiality and reliability. Further, Reilly (2014) indicated that when

organizations collect data from employee's they expect action to follow up, but mistakes

in data gathering sometimes lead to irrelevant or unattainable results that do not impact

change or action. Survey data must be relevant, accurate, and actionable to enable the

organization to attain the engagement objective. However, employee engagement at the

organizational level starts at the individual level and is subjective.

Reilly (2014) posited that engaged employees are rare across the globe. In

Reilly's evaluation of the Gallup report on The State of The Global Workplace, he found

only 13% of the global labor force is engaged in their current workplace (Reilly, 2014).

Reilly (2014) explained that the focus on employee engagement takes place at the

organizational levels while change occurs at the workgroup level but happens only under

the auspices of corporate leadership. Thus, an enterprise will attain the maximum benefit

whenever the executives have appropriate strategies to link employee engagement with

performance expectations while setting the goals and objectives of the firm with the

limits of those expectations. Reilly (2014) argued that the employees and the managers

should be motivated to stimulate significant difference with the immediate work

environment. It means the business leaders and managers should cooperate with their

employees to identify the emerging opportunities to effect positive change and the

barriers to engagement. Furthermore, Reilly (2014) suggested that by enhancing

leadership engagement strategies that surround learning and development may deliver

improved performance, better workplace experiences, creative business innovation, and

employee engagement to successfully increase productivity.

According to Ladyshewsky (2017), leaders need to be good coaches and engaging

mentors when igniting employee engagement initiatives. With this strategy, the

employees became familiar with the firm's customers, products, systems, and processes

to increase productivity (Allen, 2014). Allen (2014) found that the emotional connection

the employees feel towards their organization effected the actions they pursue to facilitate the success of the organization. She further indicated the individuals express their organizational engagement through accountability, enthusiasm, dedication, care in the workplace, and productivity.

According to Baumgartner (2014), employee learning and development can be an effective engagement strategy. In fact, 71% of leaders concur that engaged workers exposed to strategies involving learning and development are distinct from non-engaged employees due to their discretionary effort consistently exerted in their organizational roles (Reilly, 2014; Chartered Management Institute, 2015). In this context, the employees were willing to work with passion while expressing pride in their company. Implementing sustainability in activities that enhanced employee learning and development can minimize a leader's challenges when developing strategies that engage employees (Connor, 2014). The willingness of top leadership to implement an engagement strategy such as employee learning and development is an essential prerequisite to employee engagement (Jonsson & Rancano, 2013). Olive and Cangemi (2015) explained that when leaders established learning and development strategies to engage employees, they support increased employee productivity. However, if top leadership is not interested in establishing learning and development employee engagement strategies, the disinterest can possibly become challenging when attempting to develop strategies that engage employees to increase productivity (Tromp, 2015).

Baumgartner (2014) found a direct relationship between learning and development strategies, employee engagement and productivity. In addition,

Baumgartner showed that an organizations business practice is often the catalyst for the creation of new initiatives launched on leaders and that strategies used by leadership to engage employees to learn and develop help focus on the organization's initiatives. In this situation, leaders identify the contextual factors to create learning and development strategy opportunities to engage employees (Baumgartner, 2014). An important aspect was to enable feedback on the learning and development loops between the employees (Baumgartner, 2014).

Employee engagement learning and development strategy required strategic engagement planning surrounding leadership engagement opportunities, and risks that result from external developments, strengths, and weaknesses of the company (Brandi & Iannone, 2017). Brandi and Iannone (2017) eluded, that leadership learning and development strategies if focused on employee competencies and motivation will return more success when engaging employees and increase productivity. In addition, Brandi and Iannone (2017) indicated that mentoring of employees when leaders implement a learning and development engagement strategy could result in effective employee engagement that increases productivity.

In contrast, if leaders were not clear on the future state through the organization's vision or mission, leaders were left with limited engagement strategies that surround learning and development (Cox, 2014). A leader that promoted learning and development employee engagement strategies may base their idea of defining strategy outcomes on the present and potential future state to achieve their desired result (Lasyshewsky, 2017). Lasyshewsky (2017) indicated that a leader is not investing in employee engagement

strategies that promote learning and development if clarity is lacking in the organization's future state, but more on first creating a desirable organizational gain. Leaders displayed this action by investing more into examining how to achieve desirable organizational gain before defining and planning strategies that engage employees to increase productivity.

Effective Employee Engagement Strategies

Implementing an effective employee engagement strategy was critical in the retail distribution industry; engaged employees are the most important resource business managers need to operate a business (Kamalzaman, Zulkeflee, Hamid, Sahari, & Halim 2015). Human resource managers agreed that the success of an organization depends on managers' ability to engage employees and increase productivity (Mandhanya, 2015). As a strategy to engage employees, Mandhanya (2015) recommended that leaders offer learning and developmental opportunities for their subordinates. Kamalzaman et al. (2015) found that implementing effective learning and developing leadership strategy increases employee engagement and promotes increased productivity. Other researchers discovered that workers who dream of advancement opportunities through development enjoyed increased opportunity and responsibilities (Fisher, 2015; Park, 2015). In addition, learning and developmental leadership strategies challenged performers; keeping employees engaged and helped to improve productivity (Fisher, 2015).

Brandi and Iannone (2017) stated that enterprises today recognize the value of leadership strategies that focus on employee learning and development that engage employees to increase productivity. Learning and development engagement strategies played a key role in addressing if there were gaps with engaging employees and their

skills sets to increase productivity in operation (Rooij & Merkebu, 2015). Surprisingly, the United States has the highest engaged employees with average rates being 24% to 30% of the entire labor force followed by Australia and New Zealand respectively (Ladyshewsky, 2017). According to Harvard Business Review (2013), United States business leaders had high regard for high performing workforce survival, resilience, and growth in the competitive market. In this rapid economy, United States business leaders recognized the role of highly engaged employees in stimulating performance, innovation, and creativity while simultaneously reducing the organization's expenses on the acquisition of new staff.

Learning and development in the retail industry operation was a strategy that enhanced business performance goals and is a strategy that leaders can incorporate into their strategies to engage employees to increase productivity (Rooij & Merkebu, 2015). Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017) found that leadership learning and development strategy concepts include employees lasting feelings, beliefs, and behavioral tendencies toward various developments of the job. The scholars concluded that learning and development employee engagement strategies come from the leader's actions in day-to-day operations. (Shanafelt & Noseworthy, 2017). In addition, Penn and Thomas (2016) explained, that work-related attitudes towards strategies involving learning and development have a profound effect on the way employees perform but also on the quality of life employees experience while at work. Similar to Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017), Rao (2017) found that the leaders learning and development strategies were essential to employee workplace behaviors that promote productivity. In addition, leaders that implemented

learning and development employee engagement strategies may also create avenues that assist with the future growth of the employees' initiatives, which may improve employee productivity. The findings of Eldor and Vigoda-Gadot (2017) and Rao (2017) indicated that learning and development employee engagement strategies is vital to leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity.

While conducting a study on the relationship between leadership strategies and employee engagement, researchers found a correlation between supportive learning and development leadership strategies and employees' that were engaged in the organizational objectives and increased productivity (Shukla & Rai, 2015). Shukla and Rai (2015) recommended that organizations' leaders provide employees with adequate learning and development strategies to engage employees to increase productivity. In a similar study, scholars also linked perceived supervisor support, perceived organizational support, and organizational commitment to employee engagement; the researchers found that managers could increase employee engagement by committing themselves to implement learning and development strategies (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015). Based on these findings, followers with supportive leaders experienced a higher level of job satisfaction than workers who had less supportive leaders that implemented employee engagement learning and development strategies (Shukla & Rai, 2015). The findings of Shukla and Rai (2015) and Einolander (2015) also highlighted supportive leaders that create an operational environment that promotes organizational commitment to learning and development employee engagement strategies in turn increases employee engagement and productivity. Based on their findings, researchers recommended using

leadership strategies that support learning and development to engage employees and increase productivity (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015; Shukla & Rai, 2015).

Kang and Sung (2017) conducted a study on leadership employee learning and development engagement strategies. Findings showed a correlation between leaders that used learning and development as an engagement strategy and employees that had increased productivity. The researchers recommended that company leaders provide the tools and avenues to employees for learning and development as a strategy to engage employees and increase productivity. Joo et al. (2016) conducted a similar study and linked learning and development leadership employee engagement strategies that were engaged and had increased productivity. The researchers concluded that leaders that applied strategies that assisted employees with learning and development did engage employees and increased productivity.

Researchers found that leaders face challenges in the retail industry with employee learning and development strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). Ferreira and Alemeida (2015) also found that leaders' failure to employ learning and development strategies were due to low levels of contribution to employee engagement strategies to increase productivity. Moreover, leaders did not recognize the balanced approach to learning and development strategies to engage employees and keep them excited about increasing the organization's productivity. Overall, employees that have an avenue to learn and develop have high job satisfaction and are more productive. The results of Shanefelt and Noseworthy (2017) and Schmitt, Hartog, and Blechak (2016) also suggested when leaders established an

operational culture and environment that presents a positive image of the company's

vision and mission through learning and development strategies, employee engagement

and productivity increases.

Community social initiatives were another employee engagement strategy to

increase productivity (Bode, Singh, & Rogan, 2015). Community social initiatives

brought foundation to an organization structure that leaders used to assist with effective

employee engagement strategies (Bode et al., 2015). Bode et al. (2015) explained that

leaders who have company initiatives that focused on local communities used those

company community initiatives to create effective employee engagement strategies.

According to Penn and Thomas (2017), an employee gains a great deal from strategies

that involve the organization's community social initiatives. Based on the findings of

Bode et al. (2015), workers enjoyed sharing stories of organizations that support the local

communities; the researchers also discovered that businesses that contributed to their

communities had a better image than institutions that did not. Moreover, employees in

organizations with a good image displayed a higher level of commitment and pride to

their organizations (Bode et al., 2015). The findings of Patro (2014) were similar to the

findings of Bode et al. (2015); Patro (2014) stated that workers' perception of a business

affected employee engagement and productivity. The findings of Patro (2014) and Bode

et al. (2015) indicated that employees were proud of being a member of organizations

that have a positive image; workers' pride increases, employee engagement increases and

productivity. Furthermore, Pen and Thomas (2017) and Bode et al. (2015) suggested that

employees of organizations enjoy informing others of the organization's involvement

with community social initiatives. Rooij and Mekebu (2015) conducted a study on leadership strategies and organization community initiatives and found that businesses had an advantage when engaging employees in community social initiatives. Moreover, employees that learn and develop socially were more engaged and productive when involved in community social initiatives that display a good image of the organization.

Another strategy to help leaders with employee engagement is using a rewards program that acknowledges employees for their accomplishments (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). The findings of Ferreira and Almeida (2015) indicated a positive relationship between professional recognition and employee engagement. When leaders rewarded followers for superior performance, employees' organizational commitment increased, resulting in a more engaged employee (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). The findings of Mandhanya (2015) were similar to the findings of Ferreira and Almeida (2015), Mandhanya found that a reward program was an essential component of an effective organization's employee engagement strategy. In addition, implementing a rewards program as an employee engagement strategy provided influences for the employee to be more productive which improved job satisfaction and reduced the cost associated with employees that lack engagement. The findings of Ferreira and Almeida (2015) and Mandhanya (2015) indicated that professional recognition was a viable employee engagement strategy.

Researchers identified the reduction strategy as being an effective employee engagement strategy. Leaders used this strategy to invest in employee well-being initiatives (Cangemi, 2015). Investing in employee well-being initiatives had positive

effects including engagement of employees and increased productivity eliminating

unnecessary organizational medical costs in the retail distribution market due to lack of

employee well-being. Gosselin, Lemyre and Corneil (2013) posited that ensuring

employee well-being could result in positive effects on employee engagement. The

elimination of an unengaged employee may not be 100% possible, but organizations

report an increase in positive employee disposition and a decrease in costs associated

with an unengaged employee when leadership use employee engagement strategies that

support the health and wellness initiatives that target the reduction of workplace bullying,

stress, alcohol, and tobacco use (Devonish, 2014; Olive & Cangemi, 2015). Leaders that

used employee engagement strategies to encourage healthy dietary changes and to

improve physical fitness for employees help to increase employee engagement and

productivity (Arena et al., 2013). Establishing measurable health metrics including

health-related program costs, health-related program participation, biometric screenings,

utilization of medical care and preventative care, lost time from work, lost productivity,

and employee engagement for reporting workplace health will enable organizations to

encourage employee wellness; thus, increasing employee engagement and productivity

(Patton, 2014; Tromp, 2015).

Mubanga and Nyanhete (2013) discovered that helping employees balance work

and family life by providing employee well-being initiatives, allows employees to be

flexible with work arrangements, and educating employees on integrating work and

family life as a well-being initiative to prevent the necessity of working overtime

contributed to a reduction in employees that were not engaged in the organization's goals.

Gabbidon and Higgins (2012) added that employee well-being initiatives included more personal time to devote to spending time with their spouse and children. Shukla and Rai (2015) expanded on Gabbidon and Higgins' findings and posited that employees tend to be more stressed when work and family priorities conflict. Preventing an increase in stress levels for employees by assisting with employee well-being assist with work and family balance helped with employee engagement and the increase of productivity (Mubanga & Nyanhete, 2013).

Employee Engagement and Productivity

The survival of a business depends on the leaders' ability to engage employees (Mohr et al., 2012). Leaders in the retail distribution industry continue to struggle with identifying strategies that engage employees to increase productivity (The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2015). Moreover, leaders in retail distribution facilities continue to face challenges in predicting which employee engagement strategies were most effective (The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2015). In 2013, there was a moderately high percentage of employees that were less engaged in company objectives, and productivity decreased by 2.8% (Hathaway, 2013). More recently, the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (2017) reported, that labor productivity for the retail distribution industry fell 4.4% in the third quarter of 2017, as output decreased 1.1% and hours worked increased 3.5%. The reported productivity was the largest quarterly decline in the retail distribution sector productivity since the fourth quarter of 2008.

Retaining top employees is critical to the survival of an organization (Hom et al., 2012). In 2014, retail organizations lost over $11 billion in tangible and intangible assets

because of non-engaged employees and resultant low productivity (McManus & Mosca, 2015). James and Mathew (2012) noted that an unengaged employee hurts productivity and sustainability. Other scholars concurred with James and Mathew (2012) by reporting that unengaged employees continue to threaten organizations' profitability and sustainability (Baldwin & Lafrance, 2014; Bothma & Roodt, 2012). The success of a business depends on leaders' ability to implement sustainable employee engagement strategies that increase productivity (McManus & Mosca, 2015).

Retail leaders are concerned about leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity because of the effects of low employee engagement on productivity (Wang et al., 2015). Employees that are not engaged can be up to 75% less productive than inexperienced workers (Duda & Zurkova, 2013). Although employees can increase their engagement and become more productive, through leadership engagement strategies such as learning and development, an unengaged employee can take more than 90 days to achieve a 75-100% proficiency level of a currently engaged employee through learning and development strategies that incorporate the organization's objectives (Duda & Zurkova, 2013).

The lack of leadership engagement strategies to engage employees in the retail distribution industry may lower productivity by at least 17% (Taneja et al., 2015). Leadership engagement strategies that engage employees are vital to workplace productivity (Brandi & Iannone, 2017). Allen (2014) explained the reduction in employee engagement had a negative impact on company productivity. Scholars that concurred with Allen (2014) explained that the development of company leadership employee

engagement strategies continue to support the increase of workplace productivity (Brandi & Iannone, 2017). A leader's ability to engage employees to increase productivity depends on a leader's success in implementing effective employee engagement strategies (Kang & Sung, 2017).

Researchers reported that managing employee engagement was critical to the survival of an organization because employee engagement led to sustainable productivity, which is an essential component of organizational success (Akkas, Chakma, & Hossain, 2015; Wahyuningtyas, Sule, Kusman, & Soemaryani, 2015). Business leaders who understand the nature and consequences of unengaged employees have a better chance of implementing effective strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Leon, Bellairs, & Halbesleben, 2015; Prasannakumar, 2015; Savaneviciene, Vaitkevicius, Ciutiene, & Meiliene, 2015). Managers who are knowledgeable of the effects of leadership strategies that engage employees can also develop policies and procedures to minimize the consequences of reduced productivity (Prasannakumar, 2015). Moreover, Prasannakumar (2015) discovered that strategies that do not engage employees have an adverse effect on productivity and recommended that business leaders can increase productivity by presenting effective employee engagement strategies.

Scholars argued that the engaged employee should be aware of the business contexts and work with leadership to enhance employee engagement strategies and build a two-way relationship between employee and the employer (Kusman & Soemaryani, 2015). Overall, these measures will support an increase of productivity. Strategically, the outcome of leadership strategies reflected the engaged employee's performance that

translated into the organization achieving an increase in productivity (Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan, & Hashim, 2014). Moreover, Ladyshewsky (2017) and Schmitt et al. (2016) found that leaders in the retail industry are concerned that leaders in the industry that do not use an employee engagement strategy promote a negative impact on industry productivity.

Given that several scholars concluded that the lack of employee engagement strategies could have an adverse effect on an organization's productivity, it is imperative that businesses strive to build engagement and commitment among employees to increase productivity (Cox, 2015; Leon, Bellairs, & Halbesleben, 2015). Furthermore, leaders implementing strategies to reinforce employee engagement are more effective in increasing productivity than those leaders who do not. The findings of Cox (2015) and Allen (2014) indicated that leadership engagement strategies are an essential factor to the success of employee engagement and productivity.

The overarching organizational environment that supports and promoted leadership strategies invested in the foundation of employee engagement and increased productivity of the organization (Connor, 2014). Furthermore, leadership strategies that engage employees activated employee knowledge sharing and supported the increase of organization's productivity (Choi, 2014). Closing the gap on leadership strategies to engage employees is a critical area for organizations (Tahir et al., 2014). Sung and Choi (2014) explained that building leadership strategies for the organization is imperative for employee engagement to increase productivity. Continued research on leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity is necessary to highlight the use of new strategies that engage employees and increase productivity (Connor, 2014).

Implementing effective leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity can be vital to a business's survivability and sustainability in today's competitive retail distribution market (McManus & Mosca, 2015).

Transition and Summary

In Section 1, I introduced the need to explore leadership engagement strategies, and their influence on employee engagement to increase productivity. This qualitative single-case study will help leaders become more cognizant of the relationship between leader and follower (Yin, 2011). The awareness may assist leaders with identifying leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement. The literature review included a comprehensive description of the origin of leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement resulting in increased productivity.

The review included several constructs and attributes regarding engagement drivers, motivation drivers, effective communication, and positive social change within the work environment, team building, contingency theory, transformational leadership theory, transactional leadership, and employees' engagement. By highlighting the attributes that build a strong leadership engagement strategy, I presented that leaders approach engagement differently and utilize engagement traits and leadership styles based on the engagement challenge. In the review, I provided a historical overview and created a foundation for the case study. In section 2, I discussed the research design and research methodology used to investigate the research study problem statement. I further presented information on the research study protocol, participant specification and data

collection in the study. Finally, in section 3, I presented the findings and summarize study

conclusions and implications.

Section 2: The Project

In the second section, I discussed the specifics of how I will accomplish researching the qualitative single case study. I presented the essential aspescts of the study such as: (a) the purpose statement, (b) role of the researcher, (c) participants in the study, (d) research method and design of the study, (e) population and sampling, (f) the process of ensuring ethical research, (g) data collection, (h) data analysis, and (i) the plan to ensure reliability and validity of the study's findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that retail distribution industry leaders used to engage employees and increase productivity. Data derived from leaders in the retail distribution industry located in Metro Jacksonville, Florida, who have had success in implementing leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity in the retail distribution industry. The findings from this study contributed to retail distribution business practices through leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity among companies in the retail distribution industry. In addition, the results from this study could enhance the understanding of effective employee engagement strategies such as employee learning and development, employee absenteeism management, and an employee rewards program. Further, the results of the study might positively impact society and social change by providing leaders with successful strategies that engage employees and increase productivity resulting in a reduction in unemployment, job stress, and mental health challenges.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the role of the researcher is to be the primary data collection instrument (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2012). My goal was to collect information and record situations that identified with everyday life experiences of the study participants (Pettigrew, 2013). Thus, a qualitative case study investigator according to Yin (2014), needs to gather data from several resources including: (a) face-to-face interviews, (b) recording, (c) analyzing artifacts, (e) documenting, and (f) reporting findings. By using the aforementioned qualitative data gathering techniques, the researcher becomes a critical device in collecting data in a qualitative study (Houghton et al., 2013).

I chose to research leadership engagement strategies because of my history in senior leadership roles within the retail distribution industry. To ensure unbiased perspective when conducting the study, I selected a distribution facility where I do not have a working relationship with the leaders who participated in the research. Given my experience in the retail distribution industry, I was very enthusiastic about identifying and understanding various ways leaders can engage employees to increase productivity. As a leader in the retail distribution industry, I am interested in strategies that engage employees to increase productivity. Moreover, I am enthusiastic about implementing and sharing effective strategies with other industry leaders. According to Bhatti, Janjua, Akhtar, and Azad (2014) researchers choose a research topic based on their personal interest and a review of the literature surrounding the topic.

The protection of the human subject requires alignment with the ethical guidelines found in the Belmont Report principles (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013). Establishment of the Belmont Report principles occurred in 1974 at the Belmont Conference, resulting in the creation of the National Research Commission Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (Belmont Report, 1979). The signing of the Belmont Report principles into law was in 1979 (Belmont, 1979). The report provided basic ethical guidelines for the protection of human subjects during research (O'Mathuna, 2012). I adhered to the following ethical principles outlined in the report, including (a) respect for persons, (b) beneficence, and (c) human justice. As a researcher, it is a priority to enforce respect and fair treatment of participants. Furthermore, to ensure that study participant's did not encounter situations or settings that may cause physical, reputational or emotional harm. Moreover, the handling of participant information and experiences was very delicate. The respondents had equal and humane treatment to ensure that they did not experience any exploitation, discrimination, or prejudice. Moreover, the interview included guided questions to maintain a similar thread throughout participant interviews (Patton, 2015).

In qualitative study, researchers must take the initiative to minimize errors and biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Moreover, researchers must eliminate personal biases that may potentially affect the reliability of the study data collection and analysis process (Cairney & St. Denny, 2015). To minimize potential interviewer influence, Childers (2016) recommended that, researchers conducting a qualitative study should engage in epoche. When a researcher engaged in epoche the researcher eliminates personal

perspectives, views, and beliefs on the research topic and accepts the information the

participant is presenting (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). Furthermore, scholars can

maintain a journal to assist with keeping track of all actions surrounding the study to

assist with reducing personal biases (Childers, 2016). To minimize biases, I used a

journal to keep track of all activities related to the data collection and analysis process

and asked each interviewee the eight interview questions approved by the IRB (10-16-18-

0363619). In addition, using open- ended questions during the interviews enabled

participants to openly share their experiences, allowing me to collect information on

leadership engagement strategies from the perspective of the interviewees. I also

practiced epoche as recommended by Moustakas (1994), which allowed me to be aware

of my personal biases and keep my judgement and biases under control.

As the researcher, I was responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the

information presented by participants. Covell et al. (2012) explained that the investigator

conducting interviews is obligated to protect the information presented by the interviewee

ensuring data confidentiality. Interview protocols contain process guidelines to follow

during the interview (Alby & Fatgante, 2014). The interview protocol (Appendix B)

provides additional information about the interview process guidelines. I selected the

interview protocol based on the work conducted by Jacob and Furgerson (2012), these

scholars created an interview protocol that was effective and increased consistency

during the interview process. Finally, before conducting my research, I obtained all the

necessary approvals from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (10-

16-18-0363619).

Participants

Researchers must make certain that the participants of the study have sufficient experience to provide quality information about the study phenomenon (Hoyland, Hollund, & Olsen, 2015). Ibrahim and Sidani (2014) recommended that researchers should recruit experienced participants in the field or topic of the study, which will help to bring quality and knowledge to the study. Failure to select suitable participants for the study can affect the reliability and validity of the study findings (Barry, Chaney, Piazza-Gardner, & Chavarria, 2014). Inclusion criteria for this study included current leaders in an enterprise with at least a 2-year tenor in a retail distribution organization. The leaders participating in this study met the following criteria: (a) have leadership experience in the retail distribution industry, (b) work as an operations manager in the retail distribution industry in Jacksonville, Florida, and (c) have experience implementing effective strategies that engaged employees and increased productivity.

Regarding participant recruitment, there were multiple avenues to use for contacting potential companies. For example, Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013) suggested that researchers reach out to the businesses through calling, visiting the site, or email to obtain permissions to collect data. Gandy (2015) also suggested that visiting the prospective business facility and communicating to leadership via email can be effective means, as it allows the researcher to give details about the study, and help leadership make an informed decision. Maskara (2014) also concluded email is a successful avenue for contacting leadership. For this study, I contacted executive management of a retail distribution center in Jacksonville, Florida via email, explained the study, requested

permission to speak with leadership, and collected data. After explaining the study to

senior management and obtaining permission to contact potential study participants, I

asked the senior manager for the names and contact information of the potential study

participants. I then sent those individuals an email describing the study and what they

were being asked to do. Attached to this email was the study consent form (See Appendix

A). I asked the participants to indicate their enrollment in the study via agreement

indicated through email, and the participants were given a copy of the consent form. I

established rapport with the senior managers and participants and provided them detailed

information about the study, I built trust and a positive relationship that aided in the

recruitment of study participants.

Researchers must gain the trust of their study participants to establish a working

relationship before starting the data collection process (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013).

Using a consent form or agreement may potentially provide the foundation for building a

working relationship and trust with the study participant (Holland, Browman, McDonald,

& Saginur, 2013). Further, Angelos (2013) stated that building a rapport with the study

participants was critical when attempting to establish trust and in the relationship. A

failed relationship between the researcher and participant may result in negative

consequences; therefore, it is important that researchers be clear on the consent processes,

privacy protections, the storage of data requirements and the scope of data sharing (Brett,

O'Neill, & O'Gorman, 2014). Moreover, Pettigrew (2013) explained that a healthy

researcher-participant relationship creates an environment where both researcher and

participants feel comfortable and can willingly share experiences. I established a

working relationship with participants by providing the participants with information on the purpose of the study, their rights to withdraw from the study at any time (See Appendix D), and reassured them that their information was anonymous, private, and confidential.

<p align="center">**Research Method and Design**</p>

In this section, I presented the qualitative research method and case study design selected for the research approach. Utilizing a qualitative research method allowed for in-depth discovery of perceptions, cultures, and drivers of an individual (Yin, 2012). A qualitative single case study enabled the researcher to explore detailed experiences, such as the use and development of leadership engagement strategies (Stake, 2010).

Research Method

There were three methodologies to conduct research (a) qualitative, (b) quantitative, and (c) mixed-method (Zivkovic, 2012). Kahlke (2014) noted that qualitative research includes theoretical assumptions, inquiry strategies, methods to data collections, and detailed approaches to investigation and interpretation. Researchers that conducted qualitative case studies find advantage in modifying and improving concepts as the research proceeds. The study participants experience and practice enabled the researcher to identify concepts that evolved from other studies (Oc & Bashur, 2013). Analyzing human experiences was the basis of the qualitative method, which served as a valid means for exploring and better understanding specific study phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Qualitative method explores how an individual or group contributes to a social or human problem by obtaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon

(Stake, 2010). Qualitative researchers gather information that pertains to experiences associated with the phenomena to increase their knowledge on the topic (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011).

By using the qualitative method, my study illuminated participant perceptions and experiences related to the research topic phenomenon (Applebaum, 2013). It was imperative as the researcher to ask questions that assisted in addressing the research phenomenon (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained that the framework for completing qualitative research was to connect real issues through discussion that assist in the development of concrete solutions to the research problem. Therefore, using a qualitative method to complete my research study was the best option.

Yin (2014) indicated that a mix-method approach to research was combining or associating both qualitative and quantitative forms. Mixed methods research focuses on decreasing the weakness and incorporating the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research methodology. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), the combination of semi-structured interviews, surveys, and participant personal experiences are tools researchers, use to present the findings of the research phenomenon. Researchers can use the qualitative method to gather data that create new theories and add perspectives to existing theories on studied phenomena (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

Researchers that used mixed-method faced limitations with outcomes due to time-constraints and cost inefficiency (Kipo, 2013). Although there was an increase in popularity, researchers that used a mixed-method must decide on various modifications relating to partial or full approaches, which may decrease the simplicity of the research

and convolute research outcomes (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). In using a mixed-method, researchers attempt to create hypotheses and research tools while triangulating qualitative and quantitative data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The mixed-method was not suited for my research given that I did not need to incorporate a quantitative approach.

Researchers that used a quantitative method sought a scientific or analytical approach by incorporating hypothesis statements to illustrate numerical and objective data (Jivani, Patel, & Jivani, 2012). A quantitative analysis was appropriate if establishing association between a controlled variable and dependent variable (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The scientific approach in quantitative research is to analyze statistical data. An example of this approach is ascertaining means of on measuring and testing information obtained from study participants (Wang et al., 2014). In sum, using a quantitative method only presented a quantification of the data (Jivani et al., 2012). Neither quantitative nor the mixed-methods approach incorporated or considered the unique, lived experiences of the participants (Glense, 2011).

Research Design

Using multiple sources in a case study offers the researcher with the ability to explore a range of historical and behavioral issues (Yin, 2014). A significant advantage to utilizing a case study was that there were direct paths of inquiry, which allowed for the collection of an abundance of data related to the specific phenomenon (Hutchison et al., 2012). Moreover, a case study design was more accurate and insightful when using multiple resources for data collection (Hicks et al., 2014). By utilizing a case study design, I acquired information from multiple sources such as archival documents and

interviews. The case study design was the best fit for the research study because the design offered margins, and rich contextual data (Stake, 2010).

A single case study design suited the research study. Rich contextual data and research depth were attractive aspects for using the case study design (Yin, 2014). Paco and Nave (2013) used a case study design to explore the formulation of corporate enterprise concerning social responsibility, and how social responsibility influence corporate profitability. Hicks et al. (2014) used a case study design due to the rich contextual and in-depth data provided through conceptual validity to explore the development of employee engagement drivers in a large retail organization.

Ethnographic researchers collect data to devise strategies about the conditions under investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The ethnographic qualitative design consisted of the researcher's interpretation of shared and learned behaviors influences on a group's culture (Stake, 2010). This type of research involved extensive observation over a significant period of time. According to Yin (2014), ethnographic research requires extended time in the field, given that researchers are needed to obtain significant observational and interview data. Thus, this approach was inappropriate for my research study.

The phenomenological research design, like the case study design, involved the understanding of different human perspectives (Stake, 2010). Phenomenological research consisted of collecting data from specific participants who have experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Stake, 2010). Researchers utilizing a phenomenological design created an in-depth analysis of participants' views and comprehensions (Chan,

Fung, & Chien 2013). Although the phenomenological design was the initial study consideration, the case study design provided rich context and was more useful in obtaining data on specific research questions (Yin, 2014).

The narrative design encompassed the study of the experiences of a single individual embracing life stories and exploring the learned significance of those individual experiences (Kahkle, 2014). Additionally, narrative design was difficult to access in an objective manner since it was subjective to personal bias (Bligh & Kohles, 2014). The narrative design was not appropriate for my research study because there was not a narrow focus offered to the researcher through story-telling experiences of the participants (Adorisio, 2014).

According to Yin (2014), when conducting qualitative research, the scholar must achieve data saturation. To achieve data saturation, researchers collect additional data until the data collected does not result in new information, coding or theme (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, and Reid (2014) explained that saturation happens when the data collected does not submit new findings or validation through study participants. Walker (2012) explained that data saturation occurs when the information presented does not offer discovery of new themes. I obtained data saturation, by collecting data until there was no new information.

Population and Sampling

The population of my study consisted of leaders located in Metro Jacksonville, Florida that worked in the retail distribution industry. The selected company had more than 300 employees. Thus, recruiting 8 leaders within this company was highly feasible.

These leaders had a tenor of 2 or more years in their leadership position and a mix of

knowledge and experience. Olubunmi (2014) suggested that study populations with a mix

of knowledge and experience are most suitable for a qualitative study. Berg, Kossek,

Misra, and Belman, (2014) explained that the study populations experiences drives the

focus of the investigation. Further Imrie (2013) alluded that the study population gives

researchers the foundation to draw their samples. To align the population with the central

research question, I only collected data from managers from the retail distribution

industry who met the criteria for this research.

The purpose of sampling was to select a population sample that identified and

represented the parameters of the research phenomenon (McMillan, Morris, & Atchley,

2013). Through utilizing purposeful sampling, the researcher can identify and select

participants that will address the objectives of the study (McCabe, Stern, & Dacko,

2013). Purposeful sampling was an appropriate sampling technique selected for the study

to enable the collection of rich data (Stake, 2010). Tan and Manca (2013) recommended

researchers doing a qualitative case study to use purposeful sampling to assist with the

data collection process and to identify different study themes. I used purposeful sampling

to explore leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increased

productivity to gain a deeper understanding of business practices, growth, and strategic

techniques used in the retail distribution industry.

Olubunmi (2014) explained that sample sizes as small as 12 can make an impact

on qualitative research. Conversely, Morse (2015) suggested that, a small sample size

between 2-10 participants with a mix of knowledge and experience is suitable for a

qualitative study. Bernard (2013) recommended that a useful sample size is one that continues to bring new information. However, a qualitative researcher's goal during sample size planning is not how large the sample size; it is rather the reliability of the data to gain a clear understanding of the research topic (Colombo, Froning, Garcìa, & Vandelli, 2016). The sample size of this case study consisted of 8 company leaders from the retail distribution industry.

The view of data saturation varies from study-to-study (Fush & Ness, 2015). Walker (2012) explained that researchers obtain data saturation when the data received does not present new information or themes. Marshall et al. (2013) indicated that data saturation happens in qualitative research when interviews continue until participant responses are redundant. Harvey (2015) explained that in a case study the collection of multiple sources of data assists with obtaining data saturation. I achieved data saturation, by conducted interviews with leaders in the retail distribution industry who had experience with leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity. I also reviewed company archival documentation such as team training meetings, employee handbooks, and leadership meetings. The study participants participated in face-to-face interviews, until achieving data saturation.

When selecting participants researchers must make certain that the study subjects have experience in the study field and topic (Yin, 2015). Furthermore, researchers should select participants that have experience and can give new perspectives on the study topic (Heywood et al., 2015). The selection of experienced participants assists in finding a unified answer to the study questions (Hoyland et al., 2015). Researchers should use

strategies that ensure that the participants will be of use to the study and align with the central research question (Yin, 2015). I explored leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity. I interviewed leaders that had experience implementing strategies that engaged employees and increased productivity. The interview setting was in a safe environment to reinforce confidentiality. Moreover, I established confidence, integrity, and comfort, participants had the option to choose an appropriate interview setting. Alshenqeeti (2014) explained that an interview is a conversation with an aim to collect the description of the interviewee's world. Jacob and Furgerson, (2015) posited that interviews with the study participants should take place in an appropriate setting consisting of conference rooms or a comfortable and quiet environment. Further, Jacob and Furgerson (2015) recommended that the researcher should choose a reserved, semi-private area such as a library. Namagey-Funa et al. (2015) recommended that the researcher choose several business areas to conduct interviews. I provided several options for the participants to choose as a semi-private, and comfortable space to conduct their interviews.

Ethical Research

Data collection began after receiving IRB approval (10-16-18-0363619) from Walden University. Scholars must wait for approval from the IRB before starting data collection (Fiske & Hauser, 2014). Moreover, before collecting data, the researcher must request permission from the organization and provide a consent form to the study participants (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014). The consent form is a mechanism that protects the researcher and participants of the study (U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services, 2014). Bristol and Hicks (2015) suggested that to ensure that the study participants are not at risk, contributors will provide consent to participate in the study (See Appendix A). Further, during the informed consent process, the researcher must make certain that all have an opportunity to ask questions (Bristol & Hicks, 2013). The data collection process did not start until I received a letter of cooperation from the partner organization. After receiving a letter of cooperation from the leadership of the partner organization, prospective participants who met the criteria for this study received an e-mail (See Appendix F) inviting them to participate in the study. Participants also (a) received a consent form, (b) had adequate time to read and understand the document and ask questions if necessary, (c) received information on their rights to withdraw from the study, and (d) signed the consent form. Participants also received a signed copy of the consent form for their personal record.

Research subjects have the right to withdraw from a study at any time (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). When a participant asks for withdrawal from the study, the researcher must stop all communication with the study subject and destroy any data collected from the participant (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). Research participants were able to withdraw from the study by notifying me by e-mail or telephone call. Before starting the interviews, participants received information on the withdraw process and the importance of requesting to withdraw prior to the data analysis stage begins. My goal was to make certain participants had the opportunity to withdrawal from the study prior to the beginning of the analysis process.

Participants did not request to withdraw from this study, all collected data was included in the data analysis and findings.

Researchers can offer incentives for participation in the study. They can be in the form of a gift card, vouchers, or items that hold a monetary value; however, the researcher must have a high level of confidence that the incentive does not impact the reliability of the study (Bouter, 2015). Furthermore, if the researcher does offer incentives, recruitment of participants may increase which may assist in the reliability and validity of the study findings (Mduluza, Midzi, Duruza, & Ndebele, 2013). The offering of incentives can assist the researcher in reaching data saturation (Bouter, 2015). However, there were not incentives or monetary offering to the volunteer participants in this research study.

Seppet, et al. (2013) explained that researchers are obligated to utilize ethical conduct when conducting research with human participants. Su (2013) described ethical values and conduct as a means of successfully building trust that forms an interactive environment. Moreover, Alu-Samaranayake (2014) suggested that to maintain ethical standards a researcher must continuously review data and information. Scholars must establish adequate measures to secure the collected data, data analysis, and data storage process to protect the rights of the participants and preserve the participant's privacy (Yin, 2015). Further, researchers should make sure to consider the safety and protection of the participant by securing confidential information even when no expected harm is apparent (Amdur & Bankert, 2013). Bailey (2014) also suggested that researchers can provide ethical protection to study participants by sharing all information needed to make

an informed decision. To ensure ethical protection for the participant I (a) disclosed all information related to the study individuals participating in the research, and (b) provided all the participants with copies of the consent form (see Appendix A), and the interview protocol (see Appendix B), and (c) Interviews took place in a confidential location which allowed me to safeguard participants' information and guarantee privacy during the interview.

Cliggett (2013) explained that researchers should maintain collected data for five years after the study completion. I stored all data collected on a DVD and uploaded the information on a Dropbox Cloud account using password protected zip files for organizational documents and audio from the interviews. I will secure the DVD files for five years in a secured safe at my home office. Hanish (2012) emphasized the importantance of properly destroying research documents and recommended shredding data in paper format, DVD, or CD. According to Yin (2015) shredding documents is a reliable way to destroy research documents and media. After five years I will destroy the research documentation stored on Dropbox Cloud account and shred DVD media pertaining to the study.

Researchers must make certain to safeguard all information surrounding the participants and study. Further, the researcher must take every measure to palliate any potential harm to the participants (Rodrigues et al., 2013). Mitchell and Wellings (2013) explained that to safeguard participants and company's information the researcher should use coding to identify participants and their data. To protect the names of participants, I assigned aliases to the participants of the study. The aliases consisted of numbers rather

than their names. I coded all information that identified the participants by labeling

information of participants and company with a numbering sequence of 1-10.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument. According to Denzin and Lincoln

(2011) in a qualitative case study, the researcher is the primary instrument. The

researcher becomes an infused part of the data collections process in a qualitative study

by being the primary instrument (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Rowley (2012) suggested

that if the researcher is the primary instrument the researchers' knowledge of the study

topic is convincing and insightful. When the primary instrument is the researcher, the

quality of the collected data depends on the researchers' experience and preparation

(Bailey, 2014). Further, if the researcher is the data collection instrument, they must be

unbiased and display experience in the study topic. The researcher's experience and

remaining unbiased will assist in producing a study that has substance and quality (Porter,

2015).

In this qualitative case study, I used two means of data collections: semistructured

interviews and the review of documents relating to company leadership engagement

strategies, employee engagement to increase productivity, and documents relating to

learning and development. Yin (2015) stated that qualitative researchers using case study

design must collect data from at least two sources. I interviewed leaders in the retail

distribution industry and reviewed archival documents until the achievement of data

saturation; documents on employee engagements and productivity helped validate data

from the interviews.

The data collection started after IRB approval. The first step of the data collection process began with an e-mail to the prospective business in Jacksonville Fl. to request permission to collect data from leaders in the organization. Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013) recommended that researchers e-mail prospective businesses or visit the business and talk senior managers to request permission to collect data. After approval from senior leadership, I requested a letter of cooperation as proof of authorization. A letter of cooperation from leaders of the organization serves as a contract between the researcher and the institution (Bailey, 2014). After receiving the letter of cooperation from senior leadership, participants received an e-mail invitation requesting participation in the study. Ziebland and Hunt (2014) noted that inviting participants through e-mail reduces the time it takes to receive replies, is inexpensive, and allows scholars to keep electronic proof of acceptance. If a participant does not reply within a week, I went to the location and provided him or her a copy of the invitation in person. After prospective subjects agreed to be part of the research, I contacted participants to schedule the interviews.

The four main types of interviews are face-to-face, focus group, e-mail, and telephone interviews (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). Researchers can use different types of interviews to collect qualitative data, but face-to-face is the most popular data collection method for qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). A face-to-face interview is the most utilized data collection method for case study research because interviewers have more control over the interview (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). In addition, when using semistructured face-to-face interviews, researchers can be more personal with the participants and ask follow-up questions. I used face-to-face interviews and reviewed

archival documents on leadership strategies as the two sources of data collection for this study, as recommended by Yin (2015). The reason for choosing semistructured interviews with open-ended questions is because open-ended questions provide participants with more flexibility when sharing information. Reviewing archival documents such as, leadership meeting notes, newsletters, training documents and employee engage outcomes on leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity provided new insight into the effectiveness of current leadership strategies that engage employees to increase productivity shared by leaders during the interviews.

The semistructured interviews consisted of questions prepared before the interview to use as a guide, and a probe to prompt the participants' responses (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Collecting data through semistructured interviews, with in-depth and open-ended questions assisted in gaining an informative perspective of the participant's views. When supported by archival documents, the investigation presented more reliability and credibility (Koelsch, 2013). Tsede (2015) noted that semistructured interviews include the utilization of questions that are both prepared and unstructured. Additionally, Bernard (2013) explained that interview questions that are in-depth, open-ended, and semistructured are an appropriate tool for gathering information and viewpoints from the participants in a qualitative study. Using interview questions in conjunction with historical documentation furthers the credibility of the study responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

According to Yin (2014), archival documents give substance to the data collection process. However, Tsede (2015) stated that researchers using archival documents for

their investigation might experience participant bias that could potentially cloud the study outcome. Furthermore, Ziebland and Hunt (2014) explained that archival documents may give structure to the investigation by showing different strategies used to engage employees to increase productivity. I used the data collected from the archival documents on leadership strategies that engage employees, productivity and learning and development initiatives, and combine them with the participant's semistructured interview responses.

Jacob and Furgerson (2015) explained that interview protocols are important when attempting to mitigate research reliability and transferability, and Yin (2014) indicated that there is a need for inclusion of an interview protocol. According to Yin (2014), a case study protocol is a useful tool that guides the researcher and assists in enforcing focus on the research topic. Moreover, Houghton et al. (2013) concluded that establishing an interview protocol ensures reliability, transferability, and validation, of the research information gathered from the participants. I developed the interview protocols that I followed to ensure reliability, transferability, and validity (see Appendix B). In addition, I asked follow-up questions to ensure participants were providing information pertinent to the research problem.

Researchers use member checking to ensure credibility and prevent misinterpretation of the research (Ketefian, 2015). Weiss (2016) recommended that researchers use member checking to establish a reliable and credible investigation. Further, Harvey (2015) suggested that researchers should use member checking as a quality control process to improve the reliability and validity of the study. When using

member checking researchers provide a copy of the transcribed data from the interview to the participants to verify accuracy (Houghton et al., 2013). Houghton et al. (2013) conducted a case study using multiple, forms of data collection instruments including recording devices, peer debriefings, meeting documents, and observations. They also used member checking to assist with establishing reliability and validity of the study. Wahyuni (2013) argued that the foundation of qualitative research relies on reliability and validity to be certain the content of the study is replicable and transferable. Transcript checking allows for the study participants to check for accuracy and enforces credibility (Jonsen & Jehn, 2009). Further, Koelsch (2013) recommended that by reviewing the study topic themes, the researcher is achieving reliability of the study. Moreover, Wahyuni (2013) recommended that researchers should utilize a data collecting method that establishes data triangulation to address research validity and reliability. The member checking process took place in a comfortable location of the participants. The participants received a copy of the interpretations of the interviews to validate for errors.

Data Collection Technique

To collect sufficient data to answer the central research question, the data collection strategy included semistructured face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions and reviewing documents on leadership engagement strategies from the partner organization. When collecting qualitative data, Ziebland and Hunt (2014) recommended face-to-face interviews because researchers can ask follow-up questions and observe for verbal and nonverbal expressions. There are four different types of interviews including: (a) face-to-face, (b) focus group, (c) e-mail, and (d) telephone interview (Cleary,

Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Although scholars can use any of the four interview approaches to collect data, face-to-face interviewing is the preferred method for collecting qualitative data because researchers have better control over what information the participants provide (Ziebland & Hunt, 2014). Interviewing is also an effective data collection technique for a case study design (Yin, 2015). I used semistructured face-to-face interviews as the primary data collection technique. Further, I used a digital recording device to record participants' voices to transcribe to text. Participants were provided a copy of the consent form for the use of a recording device before the individual interviews. Other data collection techniques included a review of company archival documents relating to leadership strategies, employee engagement, productivity and learning, and development. For more information on the interview process refer to the interview protocol (Appendix B).

Some of the advantages of face-to-face interviews were: (a) enhanced screening, (b) increased opportunity for capturing verbal and nonverbal cues, (c) improved control of the interview, and (d) optimized for observing emotions and behaviors (Krall, Wamboldt, & Lohse, 2014). There were also some disadvantages of face-to-face interviews including: (a) time consumption, (b) participants' experiences, and (c) sample size limitations (Krall et al., 2014). Some of the benefits of reviewing documents were: (a) collection process is inexpensive, (b) access to detailed data from official documents, and (c) data collection does not rely on participants' willingness to provide information (Yin, 2015). There were also disadvantages associated with reviewing documents such as: (a) can be subjective, (b) can be time-consuming, and (c) can deter leaders from

participating in the study for fear of sharing official documents with researchers from outside the organization (Zhang et al., 2014). I requested permission to review documents on leadership strategies that engage employees and increase productivity from senior leadership of the partner organization by email (Appendix F), which was included in the consent form (Appendix A).

The interviews took place in a comfortable location at a public library. The interview session began with personal introductions, and an overview of the research topic. Before the interview started, participants reviewed and signed the consent form. Interviewees received a copy of the consent form for their personal records and information about the member-checking process. Interviews lasted between 25-35 minutes. At the end of the interview, participants received verbal thanks for their participation.

After completing the interviews, leaders from the partner organizations complied copies of documents on leadership strategies, employee engagement and productivity. The purpose of reviewing these documents on leadership strategies, employee engagement and productivity was to use a secondary data source to validate insight to assist with answering the central research question. My objective was to review the documents and combine the data received with the data collected from the interviews. Yin (2015) stated that when conducting a qualitative single case study, researchers should use two independent sources of data collection such as interviews and document review; using multiple data collection sources promote credibility and enable scholars to reach data saturation.

Thomas (2012) indicated that member checking in studies establishes integrity and will include reviewing the entire wording and statements made by the participants. Additionally, White et al. (2012) suggested that member checking would include a check or patterns, consistency, and frequency of order to reinforce trustworthiness. Moreover, Koelsch (2013) explained that using member checking would support the translation accuracy of what the researcher recorded. After interpreting the interviews, the participants met me at the interview location and conducted member checking to validate the interpretations for accuracy. During the member checking process, each participant received a copy of the interviews. The member checking to validation process ended after participants reviewed their transcription for accuracy.

Data Organization Technique

In the study conducted by Bell (2014) the researcher found that, data organization techniques can act as a reliable contingency plan for data retrieval. Hicks et al. (2014) found that in creating a system of organization techniques, devising a matrix for the categories might assist with identifying patterns and themes from participant's comments during interviews. Further Koelsch (2013) suggested that organizing data for quick retrieval supports data retrieval contingency plans when doing an investigation. During the data collection process, researchers can use color-coding to assist with data organization and stimulate higher-order thinking skills, which is vital when conducting research (Cengiz & Karatas, 2015). The chronological color-coded data organization technique I used was a contingency plan for unforeseen encounters and proactive steps to possible loss prevention.

Coding involves denoting and categorizing participant data (Rowley, 2012). The coding describes process establishes categories, themes, and concepts from the data collected (Cengiz, Karatas & Yadigaroglu, 2014). Childers (2014) utilized a coding method in a qualitative research study to organize participant data collection. Zamawe (2015) explained that, qualitative researchers explore coding themes, patterns, and categories of data to provide intelligent insight into the information collected. Processing open-end questions for the participants, I devised a coding system to separate and gather collected data. When transcribing the structured interviews, I used color-coding to identify participant's responses. I color-coded the participant interviews to find commonalities and themes. I created a chronological and color-coded system for ease of retrieving data and obtaining information quickly through subtitles, notes, categories, dates, and time of administering data collection techniques. NVIVO© is a tool researcher use to organize research data (Zamawe, 2015). Using NVIVO© enables researchers to employ proper data management and storage techniques and improves the accessibility of the data. I used NVIVO© and a chronological color-coded system to create an efficient data organization strategy.

In a case study, collecting and reporting data in a sequential format presents a solid basis for case studies (Yin, 2014). Information collected in a case study is extensive when considering the data from in-depth interviews, field documentation, and notes. An important element of research is implementing an effective data storage strategy (Cengiz et al., 2014). Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested that researchers should devise a system to organize with a friendly retrievable format. Creating a storage system posed as

a valuable tool that assists in organizing data in a qualitative study. Thissen (2014)

mentioned that the data storage process is a useful tool enhanced when using multiple

storage options. Other scholars also recommended storing all notes from interviews as

part of the research data (Anyan, 2013; Yin, 2015). Harland and Holey (2012)

recommended researchers us backup storage methods for information collected from the

study investigation due to difficulty in information replication. I used an external hard

drive for storage backup of participant information. Furthermore, I stored the information

on my computer with password protection. I will maintain the external hard drive and

hard copy documents in a home safe with a key and numeric combination, including the

retention of all raw data collection for five years after the study. After five years, I will

delete all information pertaining to the study on the hard drive and shred any

documentation.

Data Analysis Technique

I used methodological triangulation for my case study research. In using

methodological triangulation, I gathered data from various sources such as archival

documents, journal notes, digital recording, and semi-structured interviews. According to

Bergin (2011), the data analysis in a qualitative study is a complex process that demands

clear and critical process thinking and strategies. Moreover, Yu et al. (2014) explained

that data analysis consists of identifying themes and organizing data collected by the

researcher on the study topic. Yin (2014) stated that by using diverse sources for data,

one might enhance the depth of the study. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) suggested that

researchers' data analysis technique presents and interprets research data. I used collected

data in the forms of (a) semistructured interviews (b) archival documents relating to employee engagement, policy, procedures, training, learning and development, and documents from company strategy meetings. The data analysis techniques will help to develop themes for the study that might highlight adequate strategies for the development of leadership engagement, which may stimulate company employee engagement and productivity.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explained that triangulation is an analysis process that connects the researchers' data sources to the study phenomenon. Additionally, Denzin (2011) suggested that using methodological triangulation supports the foundation and validity of the research. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained that there are four types of triangulations that a researcher can use (a) methodological triangulation, (b) investigator triangulation, (c) theory triangulation and (d) data triangulation. I used methodological triangulation for my study. In using methodological triangulation, I gathered data from various sources such as archival documents, journal notes, digital recording, and semi-structured interviews. Using methodological triangulation through various data sources enforces research conformability, credibility, and transformability (Yin, 2014).

In creating a well-constructed and critical thinking analysis for the study, I utilized open-ended interview questions to assist in the research investigation, and review organization archival documents. Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained that the delivery of the interview questions and verbiage in the interview questions would influence the analysis of the study, and organization archival materials will assist with overall company strategies and perspectives. Wahyuni (2013) stated that semi-constructed interviews and

review of company archival documents might contribute to establishing triangulation that in turn supports study validity and credibility. Similarly, Denzin (2011), recommended that using both semistructured questions and archival documents support the foundation and validity of the research.

To establish data flow and reliable outcome, I (a) use color-coding to find resolution to the research question to add to the body of knowledge, (b) categorize themes through analyzing interview questions, and archival documents, (c) spread sticky notes and butcher board on the home office wall while analyzing the data. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), a color-coded process helps to identify themes and categories. Color-coding also assists in supporting the credibility of the study. Carter et al. (2013) supported coding information retrieved from the participants that contribute to the phenomena of the study. Further, using a color-coding system to identify the relationship and patterns within the data will support the credibility of the study development (Chang & Graham, 2013). I compared findings to previous research and theories, by categorizing similarities and differences in previous research related to the study topic that will assist in identifying gaps in data. I recapitulated available analysis from previous studies focused on the research questions and the conceptual framework related to the transformational leadership theory. According to Nikookar (2013), by categorizing research information researchers can potentially discover themes and similarities to previous studies that support the research topic findings. Salijeghe et al. (2014) suggested that research analysis enhances by comparing findings to previous research through categorizing themes and concepts.

Several data analysis software programs exist including NVivo©, Atlas.ti, MAXQDA, Transana, and Excel. After reviewing the options, I chose NVivo© 11 because of its Microsoft Office interface, the ability to upload Microsoft Word documents (Castleberry, 2014) and the economical pricing. Zamawe (2015) discovered that researchers can use NVivo© to generate themes in seconds while reducing human error during the coding and theme selection process. Moreover, some scholars found NVivo© was an effective tool when identifying themes, coding of data (Edwards-Jones, 2014; Franzosi, Doyle, McClelland, Rankin, & Vicari, 2013). Chang and Graham (2013) noted that researchers that use software to extract themes and identify patterns discovered in the research support the building of evidence related to the study topic. Using NVivo© enabled me to efficiently create word clouds, which was beneficial for creating codes and themes.

Selecting themes is a fundamental task that case study researchers must conduct during the data analysis process (Emmel, 2015). According to Emmel (2015), researchers can use the following steps when choosing themes: (a) discover commonly used words by participants as main themes, (b) narrow down themes to a manageable quantity, (c) find subthemes if necessary, (d) create a hierarchy of themes based on importance, and (e) link themes to the conceptual framework and central research question. Furthermore, Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utrianinen, and Kyngas (2014) recommended that researchers organize themes by types. After arranging themes by types, scholars are more effective in identifying the main themes and subthemes (Noble & Smith, 2013). I used

the theme selection process recommended by Emmel (2015) to assist with the selection of themes and subthemes for this study.

Another important researchers' responsibility during the research process is staying current on their research topic (Yin, 2015). Researchers can sign up for search alerts to up-to-date on the topic they are researching (Gajewski, 2013). Using a search alert tool, the researcher receives automatic alerts via email or RSS feed when an article matching the search criteria requested is available (Wray, 2016). To stay informed on articles published after writing the proposal, I registered for alerts with Walden Library to receive updates on publications surrounding my research topic and conceptual framework.

Using NVivo© and following the five steps process of (compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding) recommended by Yin (2015) enabled me to manage the collected data effectively during the data analysis. One of the many benefits of using NVivo© was the word frequency feature in the software; this was a very useful tool that enabled me to find the frequency of words used during the interviews. Moreover, after completing the word frequency search, I was able to create a color-coded and a tree map scheme of recurrently used words. Once I familiarized myself with NVivo© I then used Yin's data analysis process and compiled, dissembled, reassembled, interpreted and mad conclusion from the data.

Reliability and Validity

Yin (2014) explained that, in any study, it is essential to establish reliability and validity that will assist in legitimizing the information obtained. Reliability and validity

are essential elements to consider when conducting quality research. According to

Wahyuni (2013), reliability and validity are estimations of a measurement of consistency.

Moreover, James (2014) alluded that by measuring reliability, the researcher is looking

for consistencies in the data collected, whereas validity measures the realism of the data

collected. To establish reliability and validity, I devised and utilized solid analysis

methods including member checking of data interpretation, and data triangulation.

Reliability

Wang, Waldman, and Zhang (2014) stated that reliability and dependability are

established through unbiased approaches when interpreting data. When analyzing a

qualitative methodology study, the researcher confirms the research findings by

establishing reliability through data interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Moreover,

Frels and Onweuegbuzie (2013) explained that approaching data interpretation in a

nonbiased manner increases the reliability of the study. To minimize data errors with

interpretation, I used coding methods to document interviews, establish reliability and

dependability by giving others the ability to replicate the study. Yin (2014) stated that in

a case study by documenting steps of events provide reliability and dependability by

reducing transcript and coding errors. Marshall and Rossman (2011) suggested reliability

in a qualitative study enables researchers to replicate and transfer the results of previous

studies to ensure dependability.

Anney (2014) described the dependability in research as the resilience of the data

when imposed to certain conditions and time progression. Thus, dependability is

equivalent to reliability as it ensures quality in theory generation, data analysis, and

collection techniques. According to Cook (2013), reliability and dependability can be

confirmed through conducting member checking of data retrieved from interviewees.

Wahyuni (2013) explained that to ensure study dependability, researchers could provide

extensive explanations of the study design and instruments utilized such as member

checking. Vicencio-Ortiz & Kolarik (2012) recommended that researchers include an

explanation outlining study data sources, coding methods, data organization techniques,

and data instruments such as member checking to achieve study dependability. To

conduct member checking, I met each participant at the local library close to the partner

organization; each participant had the opportunity to confirm or revised the interpretation

of the responses given during the interview to ensure accuracy and to help solidify the

data triangulation and build dependable transcription of data. All participants validated

the interpretations of the interviews during the first meeting; no additional meeting was

necessary.

Validity

To limit challenges to the study the researcher can establish validity to the study

and solidify credibility, by creating trustworthiness of the study findings (Marshall &

Rossman, 2011). When researchers ensure validity, they can improve the quality of the

research (Leung, 2015). To be certain there is a justification of the sample; the researcher

should implore an understanding of the potential variability of the population and

promote credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Stake, 2010). According to

Gandy (2015), using member checking and methodological triangulation helps to

improve the validity of the study findings. Moreover, there are other scholars that concur

that using member checking and methodological triangulation help with establishing the validity of the study (Leung, 2015). I established trustworthiness by having the participant choose a comfortable area to interview and reinforcing participant confidentiality. I used member checking and methodological triangulation to substantiate participant interviews and help develop transferability, confirmability, and credibility. I made certain to enforce integrity and credibility, which are essential components of validity by ensuring the quality of the study. To accomplish this, I viewed all information that would substantiate and corroborate findings and conclusions that address the research question. I validated data by providing each participant with a copy of his or her interview interpretation for accuracy.

Interviewing experienced leaders that are familiar with the study topic will support the credibility of the study (Glaser & Laudel, 2013). Gibbert and Ruigrok (2013) alluded that by obtaining organizational documentation, that supports the study and utilizing member checking tools, one can also establish the credibility of the study. Kantanen (2012) suggested that through probing interview questions and establishing data triangulation, the researcher could increase the credibility of the study. To ensure credibility, I recorded participant interviews and used member checking to confirm and make certain that the interpretation. During the member checking process, I asked the participants to confirm my interpretations of the interview for validation. I promoted credibility by conducting member checking and recording interviews that improved the study validity; established data triangulation through member checking, participant interviews, interview protocol, and archival documents.

Chenail's (2011) suggested researchers that are aware of study bias assist in establishing confirmability. According to Watkins (2012) to maintain confirmability rigor with the study, the researcher should establish a distance between the researcher and participant and maintain the distinction between participant and researcher value. Further, Casey et al. (2012) explained that to establish confirmability, a researcher can use a coding tool to check the rigor of the data and repeated instances. To ensure confirmability, I used member checking and coding method to check the accuracy of the data. I met each participant at a local library near the partner organization; each participant had an opportunity to validate and confirm my interpretations of the interviews for accuracy. Using a coding method assisted with checking for bias toward participants, experiences, or topics after conducting interviews. In addition, I documented my bias and reactions that potentially influenced data collection or data interpretation.

When a researchers' study findings can transfer beyond the borders of the study, the researcher has established transferability (Boffa, Moules, Mayan, & Cowie, 2013). Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012) explained that the data collection from participants that influences the demographics of the study might assist in establishing transferability. Researchers should present detailed information about the study findings to ensure transferability of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). O'Reilly and Parker (2013) explained that detailed information of the study findings can influence future research. According to Elo et al. (2014) participant demographics, location and population are important when looking at study transferability. Considering demographic information can generalize study context and findings to larger populations. Casey, Shaw, and

Murphy (2013) explained that the use of interview protocols and coding analysis techniques also helps to establish transfer of study data. Additionally, O'Reilly and Parker (2013) suggested that the use of multiple sources including participant interviews would help with transferring study findings. Due to me intending to explore leadership engagement strategies in the retail distribution industry that influence employee engagement in Jacksonville Florida, the boundaries of this study might affect the transferability to other sectors or geographical locations. To improve transferability, I provided a detailed description of the data analysis process, participants, and research context. In addition, I enforced the interview protocol and used coding techniques while using multiple data collection avenues.

Corbin and Strauss (2015) explained that obtaining data saturation includes the recruitment of new participants until data collection is complete. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2012), normally data saturation is to mean that data collection continues until no new discovered information. Moreover, Lakshmi and Mohidden (2013) suggested that data saturation assists with validation and occurs when coded themes are not new to the researchers' topic. When the collection of new data did not provide additional information on the study topic, saturation was then complete. To make certain to obtain data saturation, I continued to interview leaders in the retail distribution industry until no new data emerged and no additional coding attainable; data saturation occurred after interviewing 8 participants.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 encompassed the purpose of this qualitative, single case study, my role as the researcher, and the criteria for selecting research participants. In addition, I described how data collection took place and the inclusion of an ethical protocol. Moreover, I discussed how I gained access to the study participants. I presented the way I explored the study topic by using the qualitative method of research and a single case study design. I gave justification of the sample population and preferred sample method as purposeful sampling. I also explained data collection techniques and organization, utilization of participant interviews, documents, triangulation of the data, and finally, the use of software and a color-coding method to organize and analyze the data.

In section 3, I discussed an analysis of the information gathered from the study through the data collection instruments presented in section 2. Section 3 also detailed the study findings from the business industry, professional practices, influences on social change, suggestions for further research and construction of the research perspectives. I conclude Section 3 with my personal reflections and conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 consists of an introduction of the study, a presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, and the implications for social change. I provided discussion on recommendations for further research on leadership engagement strategies and give reflections on my experience during the doctoral study journey. I concluded with an overview addressing the importance of the influence of leadership engagement strategies on employee engagement.

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that retail distribution industry leaders used to engage employees and increase productivity. The influence of leadership engagement strategies on employee engagement was a complex business problem in the retail distribution industry that required leaders' involvement; the loss of leadership strategies that engage employees continues to have a negative effect on profitability, productivity, and sustainability (Guay, Choi, Mitchell, Mount, & Shin, 2016). Numerous scholars indicated that the retail industry experiences a higher turnover rate than other sectors (Hancock et al., 2013; Hom et al., 2012; McManus & Mosca, 2015). Since employee engagement effects profitability, retail distribution leaders need to implement effective strategies to increase employee engagement and productivity (Guay et al., 2016).

I explored leadership strategies that influenced employee engagement by interviewing 8 distribution leaders at a distribution facility in Jacksonville, Florida. Participants had experience implementing engagement strategies that influenced

employee engagement and increased productivity; all participants (P1-P8) were in leadership positions. During the data analysis, I compared transcriptions, interview notes, and archival documents on leadership strategies that influenced employee engagement and increased productivity to promote validity and reliability. The data analysis indicated that at this organization, leaders were able to influence employee engagement by adapting a supportive leadership style, encouraging employee ownership, and providing continuous knowledge sharing.

Presentation of the Findings

The overreaching research question in this study was: What strategies do leaders in the retail distribution industry use to engage employees and increase productivity? I used semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to enable participants to provide detailed information on leadership engagement strategies they used to influence employee engagement and increase productivity. In addition, I reviewed company archival documents on leadership strategies and employee engagement including memorandums, spreadsheets, and reports to enhance the triangulation of data for this research. Before starting the interviews, all participants received a copy of the consent form and email outlining the study details. Interviews took place in a private room in the local library and lasted 20-30 minute.

To protect the participants' identities, I created a labeling system when transcribing the participant interviews; where P1 means Participant 1. After completing transcriptions of participant interviews, the interviewees confirmed my interpretation by participating in member checking. Once the participant validated my interview

interpretation, I then processed the data using NVivo©. NVivo© was a valuable tool and using the tool helped me become familiar with the research data in a more efficient and effective manner. The primary use of NVivo© was to assist with establishing themes through word frequency searches. The data from the searches assisted with the identification of recurring terms participants shared during the interviews. In performing the data analysis with the NVivo© tool I focused on themes that were relevant and pertinent to the central research question and the conceptual framework. The data analysis revealed the following themes:

- Supportive leadership increased employee engagement.

- Encouraging employee ownership of task increased employee engagement.

- Continuous knowledge sharing increased employee engagement.

Theme 1: Supportive Leadership Increased Employee Engagement

Supportive leadership increased employee engagement was the first theme that emerged from a thorough analysis of participants responses and a review of organization's memorandums, spreadsheets, and charts on leadership engagement strategies. P2, P3, and P4 explained that by adopting a transformational type of leadership style that successfully engages employees has increased, employee satisfaction and employee productivity. Participants were expressive when explaining being very supportive of their team and having an open-door policy to make certain that they are always available for their team. Participant leaders expressed that their teams are motivated, focused, and committed to doing a good job; the open-door policy contributes to the teams' perspective. P3 and P4 stated that engaged employees show a deeper

commitment to accomplish the mission and goals of the department and the company. Moreover, leaders that use a transformational leadership style to encourage employees motivates employees to complete the task. P4 indicated that adopting a transformational leadership style that successfully approaches employee engagement is one of the main influences to engaging an employee to be more productive. P3 mentioned, "I influence employee engagement by identifying employees as stake holders in the company and addressing consequences surrounding any potential decisions of the company that impact employee engagement". Some participants also shared that leaders who use a supportive leadership style such as transformational leadership reported a higher level of employee engagement when compared to employees whose leaders were not supportive.

Overall, all eight participants emphasized that leaders who use a supportive leadership style as a strategy to engage employees increased employee productivity. The findings that supported leaders using supportive leadership styles to engage employees were similar to Kalidass and Bahron's (2015) and Sun and Wang's (2016), the researchers found that supportive leadership styles such as transformational leadership led to an increase in employee engagement. Leaders who elected to not use a style of leadership that was supportive to the employee decreased employee engagement and productivity. In another research, scholars discovered that leaders who used a supportive leadership style increased employee performance and commitment to the organization; which led to an increase in productivity (Frear, Donsbach, Theilgard, & Shanock, 2017).

Six participants said, that using a supportive leadership style was an effective strategy to increase employee engagement and increase productivity because employees

consider supportive leaders to be approachable and caring (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, and P8). P6 and P8 stated that supportive leaders increase employee engagement and productivity because employees consider a leader who is supportive of their goals as a mentor who has their best interest in mind. P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 expressed that they spend a considerable amount of time ensuring that employees receive outstanding leadership support. Based on a thorough analysis of participants' data and a review of organizational spreadsheets, charts, and memorandums on employee engagement and productivity, the findings that supportive leadership increased employee engagement and productivity were similar to the findings presented by Burns (1978) to explain the transformational leadership theory.

Based on the responses from participants, leaders at this organization increase employee engagement and productivity by using a supportive leadership style (P1, P2, P5, P7, and P8). When asked, what strategies were effective in engaging employees and increasing productivity, P2 made the following statement:

Supporting team members with any challenges they have is the most effective strategy I use to engage employees and increase productivity. I have been in a leadership role for over 20 years, I have come to the opinion that respect and trust is an absolute factor when engaging employees. I use a supportive leadership style to such as transformational leadership to engage my employees to help with increasing productivity.

Participants expressed that when a leader uses a supportive leadership style, they increase employee engagement and productivity. In addition, leaders who are not supportive of their employees is one of the leading causes for the absence of employee

engagement or productive (P4). P5 articulated, "In my experience, being a supportive leader increases employee engagement and productivity levels." leaders that use a supportive leadership style such as transformational leadership are more effective at increasing employee engagement than leaders who are not supportive; because employees want to work for leaders who are perceptive and care about their overall welfare(P3). New employees initially experience a high level of stress; leaders that dedicate themselves as being supportive and apply additional time to be a mentor, can improve development of employee engagement strategies and increase employee productivity(P6). Based on the data analysis, leaders using a supportive leadership style can improve employee engagement, which in turn increases productivity.

Participants stated that supporting employees was essential to the success of their organization because supportive leaders help team members become productive employees (P1, P2, P7, and P8). P7 mentioned that supportive leaders dedicate a significant amount of time to teach employees new skills that lead to employee engagement and increased productivity; engaged employees are important because workers' bonuses are production-based at this organization. Engaged employees are more productive and are less likely to quit their jobs when compared to workers who are less engaged and less productive (P2). A leader's goal is to provide support to their team and engage their team to assist with them becoming more productive (P1). Leaders expressed that by using a supportive style of leadership such as transformational leadership can enable employees to increase their chances of career advancement, increase bonus rewards, improve their job satisfaction, and help increase productivity (P8 & P7).

According to three participants, supportive leaders at this distribution center are effective at improving employees' weaknesses (P1, P2, and P6). Two participants stated that being a supportive leader enables team leaders to develop their team members because of their understanding of employees' strengths and weaknesses (P2 and P6). According to P1, supportive leaders are more perceptive of employees' strengths and weaknesses than leaders who are not supportive. Further, employees are more willing to share their potential weaknesses with supportive leaders. P6 explained, "Because I am a supportive leader and my employees feel comfortable approaching me." Two participants articulated that leaders are more in tune when using a supportive leadership style (P1 and P2). In addition, leaders are able to identify employees' strengths and weaknesses when developing employee training in specific areas of the operation (P1). Two participants mentioned that supportive leaders are successful at employee engagement because they identify and address employee weaknesses through training which assist the employee to reach their full potential (P4 and P7).

Other participants shared that when leaders are supportive of their employees that leaders gain the trust of their employees and are more effective with engaging employees because trustworthiness increases workers' confidence in their leaders (P3 and P7). Two participants stated supportive leaders who earn employees' trust, can gain a deeper understanding of their employees' strengths and weaknesses, in turn leaders develop effective engagement strategies that increase productivity (P4 and P1). P4 explained that adopting a supportive leadership style that gains employee trust is strategically influential when exploring leadership engagement strategies because employees perceive trusted

leaders as being sincere in their approach concerning employee professional development; which increases employee engagement and productivity. P1 was passionate when articulating that leaders who are supportive are more likely to have trusting employees. In addition, P1 expressed that most employees enjoy working for leaders who use a supportive leadership style and are more engaged and productive. Based on a systematic analysis of data from the interviews and a review of organizational spreadsheets, charts, and memorandums on employee productivity, leaders establishing a supportive leadership style such as transformational leadership provides a work environment where followers trust their leaders, which is an effective strategy to increase employee engagement and increase productivity.

I reviewed spreadsheets, charts, and memorandums on employee engagement and productivity for the last 4 years (2014-2017). The findings from reviewing organizational memorandums and spreadsheets named Store Inquiry Report, Top Selling Articles Report, DC Report Transactions and CRB MTD Top Sales Report on employee engagement and productivity confirmed the findings from the interviews. I reviewed document CRB MTD Top Sales Report posted on the information board with the leaders' signature block that emphasized the importance of leadership engagement and organizational productivity. Leaders who contributed to the development of the memorandums stated that to build a strong team a leader must engage the members of their team to create an effective employee relationship, develop, and mentor employees, and present supportive leadership to the team members through all the stages of team members' career paths. Further, in this memorandum, leadership revisited the importance

of leaders being supportive of their team as a strategy to engage employees and increase

productivity, which supports the findings from the interviews.

Based on a comprehensive review of organizational documents Top Selling

Articles Report, and DC Report Transactions productivity, leaders who were supportive

of their employees where effective in engaging employees and increasing productivity at

the organization. P8 said, "The organizations senior leadership started promoting

supportive leadership in 2014 as a form of employee engagement and to promote

organizational commitment and increase productivity." The information shared by P8

that senior leadership started promoting supportive leadership in 2014 correlates with the

findings I reviewed from organizational documents labeled Top Selling Articles Report,

and DC Report Transactions. Reviewing these documents, I found that leaders in the

organization reported a 15% increase in employee overall work performance following

the implementation of supportive leadership in 2014. This finding supports the findings

from the interview data that supportive leadership styles such as transformational

leadership had a positive influence on employee engagement and increased productivity.

In reviewing the organizational documents there was a spike in employee overall

work performance productivity in 2014 with the initial implementation supportive

leadership styles such as transformational leadership. There was a fluctuation from 2015

to 2017; employee work performance plateaued to 61% in 2014; order accuracy increased

from 31% in 2014 to 42% 2017, which is an 11% increase and customer service

performance increased from 7.8% in 2014 to 32% in 2017, which shows a 24% increase

in 4 years. These findings revealed a steady yearly increase in employee productivity in operational areas.

Leadership in the organization used spreadsheets and charts to track the yearly employee productivity rate for the company. The charts contained data that the organizations leaders used to track the monthly and yearly percentage of employee productivity; which was a representation of the spreadsheets. I reviewed spreadsheets and charts and identified that leadership was able to increase the distribution centers productivity in order accuracy by 11% and customer service performance increased by 24% from 2014 to 2017. Further, reviewing the organization's employee engagement and productivity memorandums and spreadsheets from 2014 to 2017 revealed an 11% increase in productivity, which correlated with the responses shared by P1, P2, P5, P6, and P8. Leaders in the distribution facility used excel and other software to assist with accounting for productivity tracking. Moreover, leaders used these tools in conjunction with their warehouse management systems to track employee engagement and productivity information to form supportive leadership engagement strategies that compliment a transformational leadership style. However, other participants reported that using the company's software tools to track productivity was helpful but was not sufficient (P3, P5, and P7).

Theme 2: Encouraging Employee Ownership of Task Increased Employee Engagement

Encouraging employee ownership of task increased employee was the second theme that emerged from an in-depth analysis of the participants' responses and a review

of organizational spreadsheets, charts, and memorandums on employee engagement and productivity. According to seven of the participant's encouraging ownership was a key factor. However, participants stated that encouraging employee ownership of task was difficult with employees who were not engaged in the company's vision (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, and P8).

As a strategy to engage employees, participants articulated that it was imperative that employees take ownership of task, and view leadership as a companion in the business. Moreover, that everyone in the organization has a stake in accomplishing the job. P5 articulated, that the most effective method a leader used was interacting with employees and giving encouraging words to assist with employees taking ownership of their task. However, participants expressed that leaders who failed to encourage employee ownership ultimately failed to engage employees and increase productivity (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8).Theme 2 also relates to the transformational leadership theory because Burns (1978) found that leaders who encouraged employees to take ownership of operational task were successful at influencing employee engagement and increasing productivity. Participants continued to express that by encouraging employees to take ownership of their task helped employees increase their quality of life, which in turn improved employee engagement and increased productivity.

Based on some participants' responses, building a relationship with the employees to encourage employee ownership is challenging in the retail distribution industry because leaders must understand an employees' perspective on leadership equality (P2, P3, P6, and P8). P8 said that for leader's strategies to increase productivity, they should

engage employees by encouraging them to take ownership to achieve their goals. P3 expressed, that by showing employees that there are benefits of taking ownership of their task minimizes the challenge of engaging employees. The findings that leaders encouraging employees to take ownership of task increases employee engagement and productivity were similar to Lei, Pinedo, Qi, Wang, and Yang's (2015) and Ng's (2016); the scholars found that leaders who encouraged employee to take ownership of task showed an increase in employee engagement and productivity.

The finding with interviewing P1 was that by empowering employees to take ownership could be challenging when dealing with a diverse staff. P1 stated that five out of 10 employees in his department were new to the industry and just graduated college; four of the 10 expressed interest in advancing to hiring positions while one of the 10 expressed their appreciation of leadership encouragement and wanted more duties. Further, P1's employee who appreciated leadership encouragement also expressed that by taking ownership of task and duties assisted with increasing their productivity and overall team engagement. Moreover, P1 stated, that by helping employees understand how taking ownership can assist with their goals affected his teams' employee engagement and increased productivity.

The finding from other participants were similar; P4 stated, that determining how to engage employee and increase productivity is challenging in the retail distribution industry due to the dynamics of department staffing. Encouraging task ownership to employees is an effective approach when attempting to engage employees. Encouraging employees to take ownership is an effective way for leaders to engage employees and

increase productivity (P4). While discussing strategies for engaging employees and increasing productivity, P2 made the following statement: "Employees like a leader who is approachable and inviting; this assist with reinforcing employee ownership. Company leaders should be mindful of how they approach implementing a way to encourage employee ownership."

Participants P3, P5, and P7 had similar findings stating that employees in the retail distribution centers work in an intense environment that is very high demanding and fast pace. Leaders cannot always be in the multiple areas of the center to ensure the completion of task. However, these participants stated that when leaders engage employees by encouraging ownership of task leaders improve the employee's quality of life that positively influences productivity. P3 said, "By encouraging my employees to take ownership in their task, my employees seem to have improvement in their quality of life and there has been an increase productivity." Participants P5 and P7 commented that by encouraging task ownership employees expressed a more meaningful quality of life, because they know what task they own to assist with them being more productive; which results in successful employee engagement. The findings that when leaders engage employees by encouraging ownership of task were similar to the findings of Stanczyk, Henly, and Lambert (2017); the scholars found that leaders who encouraged employees to take ownership in their operational task enjoyed a better quality of life because the employees were able to effectively plan around the completion of their task.

Three of the participants mentioned that the inconsistencies with the operational task makes it challenging for leaders to promote encouragement of ownership of task and

subsequently quality of life for their employees (P1, P7, and P8). Employees want to support their families, attend important and special occasions; As a leader to make sure to keep the employee engaged, leaders take employee personal issues into consideration; leaders that encourage employees to own their area of work and allow them the opportunity to improve their quality of life. This strategy will engage employees and increases their productivity (P8). Stanczyk et al. (2017) discovered that inconsistencies with employees' taking ownership of operational task had an adverse effect on employee engagement and productivity. The findings that by encouraging ownership of employee task leaders increase employee engagement resulting in successful increase in productivity; were similar to Lozano, Hamplova, and Le Bourdais' (2016) and Adisa, Osabutey, and Gbadamosi's (2016); the scholars found that encouraging employees to take ownership of operational task promoted satisfaction of quality of life and employees were more engaged in the company productivity goals.

P2, P5, P6, P7, and P8 stressed the importance of encouraging employees to take ownership of their operational task as a way to engage employees. P7 said that, employee ownership of task allows the employee an opportunity to have a decent quality of life such as planning and being able to attend, weddings, birthday parties, and graduations. This promotes good leadership strategies that engage employees. Researchers found that leaders who were effective at encouraging employee ownership of operational task improved workers' quality of life by reducing work family conflict, which had an influence on employee engagement and increased productivity (Lambert, Qureshi, Frank, Keena, & Hogan, 2017).

I conducted an in-depth analysis of participants' responses, organizational spreadsheets, and memorandums Store Inquiry Report & Top Selling Articles Report, on employee engagement and increased productivity. I found that by encouraging ownership of task leaders had improved workers' quality of life, which lead to successful employee engagement and increased productivity. The review of organizational spreadsheets, and charts on employee engagement and productivity revealed an 11% increase in order accuracy and 24% in customer service from 2014 to 2017, which indicates that by encouraging employee ownership of task, had a positive effect on employee engagement and productivity. Further, the analysis showed that by encouraging employee ownership of task employee's quality of life was improved, which led to successful employee engagement and increase productivity.

Based on the responses from all participants, encouraging employees to take ownership of operational task is difficult in the retail distribution industry but essential to improving workers' quality of life, which influenced employee engagement and increases employees' productivity. All participant agreed that a person's quality of life is important; it drives people's actions; encouraging employees to take ownership of their operational task to improve their quality of life is a top priority. Leaders must take care of their people and engaging employee's means making things as accessible as possible for them (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8). The finding that encouraging employee ownership of task assist with workers' quality of life, which influences employee engagement and increases employees' productivity, were similar to Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory. Burns proposed that transformational leaders focus on

engaging employees with the understanding that the employee is a resource and approaching employee ownership of task in a transformational leadership style will assist with achieving productivity goals.

Theme 3: Continuous Knowledge Sharing Increased Employee Engagement

Continuous knowledge sharing by leaders increased employee engagement and productivity was the third theme that emerged from a detailed data analysis of participants' responses and a review of organizational spreadsheets, charts, and memorandums on employee engagement and productivity. Participants explained that continuous knowledge sharing by leaders increased employee engagement and productivity. Further, all participants articulated that continuous knowledge of the organizations mission, vision and employee professional growth plans supported leadership strategies to engage employees and increase productivity.

In reviewing employees' production after taking knowledge sharing courses provided by the company, participants found that knowledge shared in the sessions was a valuable effective strategy when engaging employees and reaching productivity goals. Knowledge sharing is an essential way for leaders to engage employees and increase productivity (Ferreira & Almeida, 2015). Some participants articulated that they share knowledge with employees surrounding company goals and mission through company learning sessions or work groups (P1, P4, P7, and P8). Saleh (2017) found a significant relationship between employee engagement, company productivity and knowledge sharing. By sharing knowledge through offering learning courses, work sessions, or

trainings leaders can improve employee engagement and increase productivity (Saleh 2017).

Employees received motivation when they are engaged in work groups that provides them knowledge of the company goals and mission (P1 and P7). The sharing of knowledge reference operation, company goals or mission is not prevalent in the retail distribution industry. In this organization, leaders attempt to share as much knowledge to help their team grow and be productive (P8). Offering employees knowledge of operation and company mission is an effective strategy retail distribution leader can use to engage employees and increase productivity (P1, P4, and P7). Based on the responses from some participants, knowledge sharing at this organization is better than other organizations or their competitors (P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8). The findings that knowledge sharing increases employee engagement and productivity were similar to Muthusi-Nzyoka's (2016) and Aziz, Hasbollah, Yaziz, and Ibrahim's (2017); the researchers found a direct correlation between knowledge sharing of company mission and operation to employee engagement and productivity.

Some scholars discovered that the more leaders share knowledge of mission and operational intention, employees were more engaged and productive (Aziz et al., 2017; Muthusi-Nzyoka, 2016). Several participants conveyed that the leaders at this organization recognized employees who took the extra mile to share knowledge with their team members to be more productive (P1, P2, P4, and P8). The organization only offers bonuses to mangers and the challenge is to assist the employee with knowledge of

the company mission and operation for potential growth and advancement within the company (P2 and P3).

P5 mentioned, "I enjoy working with my employees in this industry; they are dedicated but as a leader you have to show interest in them and willing to share knowledge so they can grow as professionals". Other participants mentioned that by sharing knowledge of company goals, mission, and operation employees displayed more commitment to the institution, which lead to engaged employees and increased productivity (P2, P3, P5, and P7). The findings that sharing knowledge with employees impacts employee engagement and increases productivity were similar to Nazir, Shafi, Qun, Nazir, and Tran's (2016), the researchers found that when leaders shared knowledge of the organization goals, mission, and operation with employees, employees were more engaged and there was an increase in productivity.

Two participants shared that most employees are more motivated to engage with leaders who are forthcoming with sharing knowledge of the company's operation and goals (P4 and P7). Although professional promotions are important, the sharing of knowledge to sustain the professional advancement are the most influential in engaging employees to increase productivity (P4). Participant P7 expressed that, professional growth, increased learning, and support motivates retail distribution employees; sharing knowledge of the retail industry standards is a sure way an employee can obtain professional growth; that is the main reason leaders decided to make a career in the retail distribution industry. The findings that leaders that share knowledge are more likely to engage employees and increase productivity are similar to Ferreira and Almeida (2015)

and Noland and Richards (2015); the scholars found that leaders who shared knowledge with employees to assist with professional advancement had a positive effect on employee engagement and employees where more productive.

Bryant and Allen (2013) found that by offering an avenue to obtain more knowledge of company mission and goals, increase employees' desires to engage more with leadership and where more productive (Bryant & Allen, 2013; Noland & Richards, 2015). Based on the findings from analyzing the participants' responses and documents on employee engagement and productivity, leaders that practice knowledge sharing with employees is an effective leadership strategy to engage employees and increase productivity. When answering what are some successful methods you have taken as a leader when developing leadership engagement strategies that increase productivity, P7 made the following statement:

I do not choose which employees will benefit from sharing the knowledge of the organization and the operation; I talk to employees to find out what is important to them; many of employees seem motivated when given knowledge to assist with them growing in the company. Managers who understand what motivates employees can better engage employees to achieve and higher productivity.

In addition to sharing knowledge of organization goals, mission, and operation, leaders at the participant's organization also engage in healthy exchanges of knowledge in a competitive setting, by allowing new members of the team to learn from their counterparts (P1 and P8). To engage employees at the organizations to participate in sharing and obtaining knowledge, leaders acknowledge employees who have achieved

new milestones such as completing significant trainings, obtaining higher education, and team members who take an extra mile to become work place mentors (P2, P5, and P6). P7 said, "I have been approached by employees who have expressed their appreciation of leaders caring about the employee's success by sharing knowledge and celebrating employee achievements and milestones." Two participants expressed that celebrating employees for their accomplishments improved employee engagement and productivity (P6 and P8).

Three participants shared that employees look to leaders to share knowledge of the organization operation goals (P1, P2, and P7). According to P2, when leaders in organizations are attentive to sharing knowledge with employees, leaders are more effective when engaging employees and increasing productivity. P7 stated, "For new employees, knowledge sharing is imperative to their survival in the retail distribution industry; young employees care about knowledge to assist them in growing professionally." Participants explained that when employees thirst for the knowledge needed to grow in the company, employees perceive that as being non-competitive in the industry, and the organization is at risk of losing top performers of (P2 and P7). Further, P1 shared, that as with most organizations top performers in any industry is a positive factor for the operation. It is essential that organizations engage employees through knowledge sharing to retain top performers and increase productivity (P1, and P7).

Other participants conveyed that knowledge sharing of organization goals, mission, and operation was important to the overall success of the organization's leadership employee engagement strategy (P6 and P8). Further, participants shared that

conversing with employees and acknowledging their interest, leaders get a better understanding of employees' perceptions as it relates to knowledge sharing as a leadership engagement strategy that increases productivity (P3). I found that when leaders made it a point to converse with employees by sharing knowledge they gained a perspective into what employees were thinking. In turn, leaders where successful in finding avenues to help with employees' professional growth in the organization.

According to P4, having a conversation with employees about knowledge sharing is an effective way to engage employees, but often leaders overlook the opportunity due to drowning operational demands. Based on the responses from some participants (P3, P6, and P8), by understanding employees' knowledge base it can engage top performers resulting in increased productivity. Since top performers are critical to the success of the retail distribution organizations, it is essential that leaders in organizations are engaging employees and sharing knowledge of organizations mission and goals. This type of leadership engagement will also increase productivity (P1, P4, and P8).

Three of the participants stated that leadership knowledge sharing was better at this organization than other businesses they worked for in the retail distribution industry (P3, P5, and P7). P5 stated, "When leadership shares knowledge with their employees about the organizations mission, goals, and opportunities it is a way to engage employees." Leadership sharing knowledge of the organization's goals, mission, and opportunities for professional growth engages employees and increases productivity. The findings that continuous knowledge sharing increased employee engagement and increases productivity were similar to Park (2015); the scholar found that leaders who

share knowledge of the organization's goals, mission, and opportunities engaged more employees and increased productivity. In addition, Park (2015) found that leadership who practiced knowledge sharing with their employees continuously engaged employees and noticed an increase in their area's productivity. Leaders who continuously shared knowledge with employee's engaged employees and increased productivity. Based on participants' responses and organizational documents on employee engagement and productivity, I was not able to confirm or disprove the transformational leadership theory.

<div align="center">**Applications to Professional Practice**</div>

Since employee engagement can adversely affect productivity, it is essential for leadership to implement strategies that engage employees to increase productivity (Ugoami, 2016). Employees that are not engaged affects more than productivity, it also creates a weaken state for the organizations mission and survivability strategy because of non-productive employees (Ahammad, Tarba, Liu, & Glaister, 2016). Leadership must take an active role implementing employee engagement strategies because failing to take steps to engage employees can be detrimental to the organization's survival (Gonzalez, 2016). Implementing effective employee engagement strategies helps leaders promote organizational productivity, which increases the chances of the organization's survivability (Ahammad et al., 2016; Gonzalez, 2016; Ugoami, 2016). A review of the literature showed that by implementing leadership strategies that engage employees, leaders could increase productivity, which leads to organizational growth as the result of increased performance.

Business leaders can implement leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity to help their organization expand the growth of employees and the organization (Wray, 2016). Although most leaders are aware that unengaged employees are not productive by acknowledging the gap in their strategy and gaining new insight on strategies can assist in constructing strategies that engage employees and increase productivity. While there are several strategies leaders use to engage employees and increase productivity, participants stated that being a supportive leader by using a supportive leadership style, encouraging employee ownership of task, and continuous knowledge sharing, were effective strategies to engage employees and increase productivity. Understanding the benefits associated with implementing effective leadership engagement strategies can save organizations financial burdens and valuable time. More importantly, leaders in the retail distribution industry can use the findings of this study to acquire new knowledge, which might be beneficial in the implementation of leadership engagement strategies that successfully engage employees and increase productivity.

The information shared by the research participants might provide leadership in the retail distribution industry, and other business professionals with information that is useful and valuable in helping with engaging employees and increasing productivity in their organization. Moreover, the strategies shared by the research participants are not financially burdening and improve the organizations sustainability and survivability. Employee engagement and productivity is lower in the retail distribution industry than in other sectors (Ahammad et al., 2016; Gonzalez, 2016; Ugoami, 2016), which is a main

reason I recommend leaders in the industry to consider the feasibility of implementing new strategies that engage employees and increase productivity. My goal is that the findings from this study assist leaders in the retail distribution industry with new avenues on successfully implementing effective employee engagement strategies that increases productivity.

Implications for Social Change

This qualitative case study on leadership engagement strategies is meaningful to social change because leaders in the retail distribution industry can use the findings to implement effective employee engagement strategies and increase productivity. The primary objective of this research was to explore leadership strategies that engage employees and increase productivity in the retail distribution industry. Employee engagement continues to be of increasing concern for leaders in the retail distribution industry because unengaged employees in retail distribution organizations are not productive which results in organizations having a decrease in profitability (Sharma & Pearsall, 2016). In addition to understanding the importance of implementing effective leadership engagement strategies, leaders must be able to identify which strategies are most effective to increase productivity (Schlechter, Hung, & Bussin, 2014). Leaders can use the strategies that emerged from the data analysis in implementing leadership strategies that engaged employees and increased productivity to promote organizational growth and survivability, which in turn might lead to new employment opportunities and promote prosperity for local families and the community.

Engaging employees assist leaders in the organization to create opportunities that bring positive social change for the communities they serve (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). Moreover, successful organizations are a driving force of social change in many ways, such as creating jobs, quality of life, contributing to non-profit organizations, and donating to programs and activities that can benefit the entire community (Steiner & Atterton, 2014). Leader that do not engage employees results in a decrease in productivity. These actions affect the organizations' profitability and sustainability, which affects companies' ability to contribute to their communities (Savaneviciene, Vaitkevicius, Ciutiene, & Meiliene, 2015).

Leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity positively affects company profit margins. Businesses in the retail distribution industry use revenues for organizational activities, facility expansions, team member growth, facility improvements, technology expansion, and future investments (Savaneviciene et al., 2015). Moreover, implementing leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity assist the organization with being a catalyst of positive social change. As a result, organizations have enhanced communication, organizational growth, and increased profitability, which in turn puts forth-new opportunities for employees and promotes prosperity for local families and communities.

Recommendations for Action

Leaders in the retail distribution industry can use the information in this study to implement effective leadership engagement strategies that engages employees and

increase productivity in their organization. By adopting some of the recommended strategies that where shared by the participants, leaders have a higher chance of engaging employees and increasing productivity, which might also improve the organizations profitability, and sustainability. The knowledge shared in this research may help contribute to the success of leadership in the retail distribution industry that experience unengaged employees and a decrease in productivity. In addition, the knowledge shared may provide leadership with new effective strategies that will also promote organizational growth and expansion.

The findings from this study also provide leadership in the retail distribution industry looking for strategies to engage employee and increase productivity with essential information, such as how to adopt a supportive leadership style, encourage employee ownership of task, and continuous knowledge sharing to engage employees and increase productivity. Implementing effective leadership engagement strategies that engage employees and increase productivity may assist leadership with the tools to influence employee growth, increase organizations profitability, and sustainability, which is challenging in today's market. I recommend leadership in the retail distribution industry to review the findings of this study and adopt some of the strategies that are relevant and feasible to apply to their businesses.

To promote distribution of the findings of this study, dissemination of this research will occur through numerous methods. Leaders from the partner organization and all participants will receive a 2-page summary of the findings to disseminate among peers and other business leaders. This study will also be available through the

ProQuest/UMI dissertation database for future scholars and other organizations. I will also seek opportunities to share the findings of this study with business related forums, organizational training, and leadership conferences.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Further Research**</div>

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies that retail distribution industry leaders in Jacksonville Florida use to engage employees and increase productivity. The findings of this study are based on existing information on leadership engagement strategies influence on employee engagement, employees' reasons for not being engaged or productivity are not always the same. Since employee engagement and productivity is a complex business problem, future qualitative researchers should explore leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity by exploring, supportive leadership approaches, ways leadership can encourage employee ownership of task, and ways leadership can provide continuous knowledge sharing.

Recommendations for further qualitative research also include exploring leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement in different geographical locations and different type of retail distribution center with in the industry (i.e. medical, electronics, clothes, foods, etc.). Moreover, interviewing employees who are new to the industry to explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of leadership engagement strategies might provide valuable insight on this topic. Further, by exploring leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement in different retail distribution centers with-in the industry and different geographical locations, scholars can

give additional insight into leadership engagement strategies influence on employee

engagement. Since the industry market is continuously changing, there are changing

variables that affect employee engagement.

Future quantitative researchers should consider examining the correlation between

leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and other

variables such as employees' quality of life, professional growth, leadership style,

organization's ethics, employees' recognition (rewards), and organizations' training and

developmental programs. Research in these areas might provide leaders in the retail

distribution industry with new insight into employee engagement and increase

productivity, which in turn might promote organization sustainability, and survivability.

Further, future research surrounding leadership engagement strategies that influence

employee engagement could add to the scarce scholarly knowledge and understanding of

leadership engagement strategies used by leaders to engage employees and increase

productivity.

Reflections

Reflecting on my doctoral journey provided me an opportunity to present the

various stages of the doctoral study process including the prospectus stage, proposal

stage, data collection and analysis stage. I found the proposal stage to be the most

challenging, and the analysis stages the most inspiring. Reflecting on the prospectus

stage, I built the study foundation and how to conduct I would conduct the study. At this

stage, I gained valuable knowledge that increased my understanding of the research

process. Although I had experience understanding some of the influences of leadership

engagement strategies on employee engagement from my current professional career and military career, it was imperative that I eliminated my personal biases to increase the reliability and quality of the findings.

Since I was the data collection instrument for this study, I faced the challenge of preventing my personal biases from effecting the results of the research. As a leader in the retail distribution industry, I had a preconceived outlook of leadership engagement strategies influence on employee engagement and increased productivity. Not entertaining personal biases, I adhered to ethical requirements and remained aware of my personal biases throughout the research process. I rehearsed the interview questions in front of the mirror to practice not interfering with participates when they were speaking during the interview process. Once I practiced, I felt confident in creating a comfortable, inviting, and professional environment where participants were able to share their experiences without interruption.

To eliminate biases and to be transparent during the participant collection process, I e-mailed an invitation to all leadership who met the criteria for the study; all leaders who volunteered to participate were able to share their experience freely. In addition, I incorporated an interview protocol and asked the approved questions in the same order as presented in the interview protocol structure to eliminate biases. By being aware of my personal biases, providing the same opportunity to all prospective participants who met the criteria for this study, and asking the approved interview questions in the same order during the interview, the findings of this study are the perspectives of participants.

The perspective that there would be challenges with in all stages of the doctoral study process was a factual realization. The initial stage of my journey, I had a lot of frustration with my progress or lack of progress. Although I was initially frustrated the doctoral journey was difficult, I quickly realized it was a rewarding experience. The one thing I had to come to understand is that conducting the research was not about me, but rather about exploring unbiased knowledge and sharing participants' experiences with the world to assist current and future leaders in the retail distribution industry. I also learned that creating a healthy researcher-participant relationship was essential during the data collection process and motivated participants to be open and honest during the interviews.

Establishing an open and healthy relationship with the participants increased the participant's excitement, and willingness to be a part of the study and complete the member checking process. I discovered that interviews were effective for collecting qualitative data and led to valuable discoveries and a deeper understanding of the research problem. In addition, the participant interviews assisted with broadening my perspectives and understanding that provided an unexpected learning experience. As proven from the participant's responses from the interviews, participants where engaged, interested, and excited to share their experiences more than I anticipated in retrieving from asking the eight interview questions. Although the experience was unexpected, the participants' willingness to participate in the study and openly share their experiences exemplified the need for organizations in the retail distribution industry to support and encourage employees to participate in research of the study topic.

Once I completed this study, there where changes in my thinking. I had the realization that leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity is a complex business problem that researchers need to continue to explore. Since there are several variables that influence employee engagement; leaders experiencing situation where employees are not engaged, and productivity is low must understand leadership engagement strategies that influence their employees to be more engaged and productive. Promoting a style of leadership that is supportive, such as transformational leadership, encouraging employees to take ownership of task and continuous knowledge sharing are effective and inexpensive strategies that leadership in the retail distribution industry can apply to their strategies to influence employee engagement and increase productivity.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The findings from this case study revealed that leaders in the retail distribution industry could influence employee engagement and increase productivity by using a supportive leadership style, encouraging employee ownership, and continuous sharing knowledge with employees. Based on the participants' experiences, leaders should implement the above strategies into their overall organization leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity. The findings of this study also indicated that by applying the leadership engagement strategies, adopting a supportive leadership styles, encouraging employees to take ownership of task, and continuous knowledge sharing that emerged from the participants' responses; organizational leaders can influence employee engagement and increase productivity.

Most importantly, since implementing the strategies is inexpensive, leaders in the retail distribution industry should integrate these recommendations into the overall organizational leadership strategies for employee engagement and increase productivity.

Since establishing leadership engagement strategies that influence employee engagement and increase productivity improves sustainability and profitability, the implementation of strategies that engage employees is critical to the survival of organizations in today's competitive marketplace. When organizations have employees that are not engaged, the future of the organization is at risk because leadership strategies that do not engage employees can lead to reduced productivity. As a result, organizations can have experience a loss in sustainability and profitability. I recommend that leaders in the retail distribution industry, scholars, and practitioners use the findings and recommendations of this study. The stated recommendation will assist leaders in gaining new insight on leadership engagement strategies influence on employee engagement and increased productivity.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What I(researcher) will do	What I (researcher) will say—script
I will ask the participant what is one of their favorite coffee places or lunch dining facilities that they will feel comfortable conducting the interview.	Hello "participant A", thank you for taking the time to participate in this study, where is your favorite coffee shop or lunch dining facility you would feel comfortable meeting me to do the interview? The day of the interview: Today we will be discussing a few leadership engagement strategies influence on employee engagement. I have just a few questions, please relax, and know there is no right or wrong response. This is a conversation between professional. Please let me know if there is anything, I can do to make you more comfortable.
• I will watch for non-verbal queues • I will paraphrase as needed • I will ask follow-up probing questions to get more in depth	1. What are some avenues that a leader should take when developing leadership engagement strategies that increase productivity? 2. How do you gather appropriate and required information to implement strategies that engage employees to increase productivity? 3. What are your leadership strategies for engaging employees? 4. What are some of the challenges you face when implementing leadership engagement strategies? 5. What are some of the benefits of implementing effective strategies that engage employees? 6. How does your leadership style influence your development of effective engagement strategies? 7. How do you measure the effectiveness of your engagement strategies?

8. What other information can you share about leadership engagement strategies?

Wrap up interview thanking participant	Thank you again for participating in the study. I appreciate your time and effort.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	There will be a follow up for you to review our discussion and make certain the transcript of our discussion has been annotated and transcribed correctly. I will reach out to you to schedule a goodtime to complete this process.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Leadership Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies do you use to engage employees?

2. What are some successful methods you have taken as a leader when developing leadership engagement strategies that increase productivity?

3. How do you implement leadership strategies that help engage employees and increase productivity?

4. How did your employees in the distribution centers respond to these strategies?

5. What are some of the challenges you face when implementing leadership engagement strategies?

6. What are some of the benefits you have seen as a result of implementing leadership strategies that engage employees?

7. How do you measure the effectiveness of your engagement strategies?

8. What else can you share with me on your successful strategies for engaging employees and increasing productivity?

Appendix C: Literature Review Sources

Sources	Literature review Sources 2014 or later	Literature review sources prior to 2014	Total
Non-peer reviewed or books	4	6	10
Peer-reviewed Articles	225	10	235
Dissertations	3	0	4
Total	236	16	349
Percentage of Total	95%	5%	100%