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Leadership Strategies for Increasing Employee Productivity in the Banking Industry

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Abstract

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Thiquita Ward

MS, Belhaven College, 2007

BA, Mississippi State University, 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Investing in employee engagement is beneficial to ensuring an organization's ability to sustain and improve productivity and performance. The purpose of this single case study was to explore effective leadership strategies leaders used to increase employee productivity. The population for this study were 6 bank leaders from Mississippi with a minimum of 5 years of experience implementing effective strategies to increase employee productivity. The conceptual framework for this study was Bass's transformational leadership theory. Data were collected using semistructured interviews, observations, and a review of company documents. The data analysis process involved Yin's 5-step approach, methodological triangulation, and member checking to identify common patterns, develop themes, and verify data for accuracy. The 4 emergent themes in the study were lead by example, encourage, promote teamwork, and implement rewards. The findings indicated that bank leaders improved employee productivity using transformational leadership by maintaining active employee engagement, communicating clear goals, and building positive leader–employee relationships. The implications of this study for positive social change include the potential for leaders in the banking industry to improve employee engagement, which may lead to a higher level of employee performance and commitment, reduced turnover, and enhanced organizational profitability. Organizations that are profitable can help stimulate the local economy by contributing earned profits to the community in areas such as schools, housing development, and community centers.

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<div align="center">Dedication</div>

I dedicate this doctoral study to the one who made it all possible, which is my Lord and Savior. I am grateful for His guidance, grace, and mercy over the course of this journey. The road was not easy but reflecting on His word provided me with the strength, faith, and courage to keep moving forward and to realize giving up was not an option. I thank you Lord for it all.

I also dedicate this study to my two uncles, Will Branch and Hansbourgh Meeks, who passed over the course of this journey. Their passing was difficult for me. However, I had the opportunity to share the pursuit of my doctoral degree with my uncle Hans, but not Will. My uncle Will always wanted the best for me, reminded me of my potential, and encouraged me to be who God called me to be. I will never forget our conversations, his faith in me and what I had to offer the world. He was right. Thank you so much for believing in me, and I love you dearly.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Leaders need to understand the significance of implementing effective leadership strategies in the workplace to increase employee productivity. The small business sector in the United States accounted for 63% of new job creation in 2014 (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2014). Because of the relevance of the small business sector on the performance of the workforce, providing information on best practices is essential. In this study, I intended to bridge the ideas between academia and industry, so small business practitioners could understand the relevance of leadership strategies.

Background of the Problem

Leadership is the act of motivating individuals to work toward a common goal (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). In business, leaders influence followers or employees to achieve desired outcomes in the workplace; however, scholars characterize effective leadership by ideas (Dartey-Baah, 2015). To be effective, leaders must clearly communicate ideas to engage employees and evoke action to accomplish an organization's desired outcome (Porter, Riesenmy, & Fields, 2016). According to Bin (2015), organizations with poorly engaged employees experience 52% lower profits than companies with engaged employees. Leaders recognizing the importance of employee engagement and implementing employee engagement strategies can increase performance and productivity (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015).

Employee performance is the efficiency of labor efforts measured by worker output (Kamphorst & Swank, 2018). Leaders can measure worker output by observing employee behavior and the level of engagement toward achieving business objectives

(Gambardella, Panico, & Valentini, 2015). Burns, Diamond-Vaught, and Bauman (2015) explained that ineffective leadership strategies affect sustainability. The lack of effective leadership strategies reduces employee productivity (Shin, Sung, Choi, & Kim, 2015), identifying a gap in academic literature surrounding leadership.

Leaders must value employees and create effective leadership strategies to ensure productivity, sustainability, and profitability (Galpin, Whittington, & Bell, 2015). Human capital is vital to the growth and success of an organization. Joo, Lim, and Kim (2016) reported that engaging with employees and establishing positive leader-employee relationships resulted in a reduction in turnover and profit loss. Employee engagement, loyalty, satisfaction, and trust improve when leaders demonstrate transparency in the workplace (Blattner & Walter, 2015). In the results of this study, leaders might find effective leadership strategies they can use to increase employee productivity.

Problem Statement

The annual cost of lost productivity in the United States is approximately $450 billion, which indicates that organizations need strong leadership strategies that can stimulate employee performance (Iqbal, Anwar, & Haider, 2015). Organizations with poorly engaged employees experience 52% lower profits than companies with engaged employees (Bin, 2015). The general business problem was leaders have problems with employing effective leadership strategies, resulting in low employee productivity and loss of profits. The specific business problem was that some banking leaders lack the leadership strategies to increase employee productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore the leadership strategies some banking leaders use to increase employee productivity. In this study, I collected data from banking leaders implementing leadership strategies to increase employee productivity. The study population included six branch leaders from a bank in Mississippi. The implications for positive social change are that the implementation of effective leadership strategies will increase employee productivity, which in turn will increase the amount of profits put back into the community through contributions to local economic and living conditions and the environment as well as reduce unemployment rates in the community.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative research method in this study. Exercising a qualitative research method provides researchers an opportunity to collect data and ask participants questions in a familiar and comfortable manner (Yin, 2015). Using the qualitative method, researchers can directly interact and observe the behavior of individuals (Yin, 2015). Employing a qualitative research method allowed me to explore leadership strategies that increase employee productivity through obtaining and analyzing multiple types of data including interviews, observations, and reports. In a quantitative method, researchers examine the relationship between independent and dependent variables and analyze numerical data (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Use of this method would not have allowed me to focus on identifying and exploring the strategies leaders use to increase employee productivity. When using a mixed method approach, researchers

include both quantitative and qualitative research methods in the study (Franco & Matos, 2015). The mixed method approach was not appropriate for this study because of the lack of any element in this study requiring hypothesis testing about relationships or differences between variables.

I employed a case study design in this study. Researchers use the case study design to explore and collect data for real-life phenomena (Yin, 2015). After assessing the ethnographic and phenomenological approaches, I found that these designs would not have been beneficial to my study. Scholars seek to understand the process of organizational culture in an ethnographic study (Kimmel, 2013). An ethnographic study was not suitable for understanding the business strategies that a group of bank leaders use to increase employee productivity. Wilson (2015) described the phenomenological design as the study of the human aspects of a situation through lived experiences. In a qualitative case study, the strategies employed to achieve a purpose are ongoing. In a phenomenological design, researchers use a less structured approach and explore the core meanings of an individuals' experiences (Wilson, 2015). A qualitative case study design was most appropriate for this study because I conducted an in-depth analysis of different leadership strategies that increase employee productivity in the banking industry.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study was: What leadership strategies do some banking leaders use to increase employee productivity?

Interview Questions

1. What leadership strategies do you use to increase employee productivity?

2. What leadership strategies do you find most effective to increase employee productivity?

3. How did you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?

4. What key barriers did you face implementing leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?

5. How did you overcome the key barriers?

6. What additional information would you like to share regarding your leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework I chose for this study was the transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership is the process of motivating, encouraging, and inspiring followers to excel beyond their personal best (Northouse, 2016). Burns (1978) originated the concept of transformational leadership, and Bass (1985) later extended the concept by creating the transformational leadership theory. Bass's model of transformational leadership divided the theory into four components: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. Transformational leaders help increase the performance of company-wide goals and the capacity of employees to go beyond personal interests to improve productivity in the workplace (McCleskey, 2014). Past scholars have addressed the significance of transformational leadership and how transformational leaders emphasize organizational commitment and not behavior compliance when increasing employee

productivity (Atmojo, 2015). Transformational leaders possess a high level of charisma while focusing on the morals, values, and needs of their followers creating a greater sense of self-worth, motivation, and strong work ethic (Northouse, 2016). In this study, I focused on the topics of leadership strategies and workplace productivity. The goal of this study was to explore how transformational leadership elicits positive behavior among employees keeping them engaged and maintaining high levels of productivity.

Operational Definitions

To ensure the readers of this study understand the content presented, I provide the following definitions:

Employee engagement: Focused energy evident to others revealed through a display of progressive initiative, effort, and diligence toward company goals (Iqbal et al., 2015).

Idealized influence: The process in which leaders lead by example and help employees build self-confidence and find a sense of purpose (Boies, Fiset, & Gill, 2015).

Individualized consideration: This process involves a coaching and consulting technique with followers by nurturing the needs of an employee to obtain the desired company outcomes (Boies et al., 2015).

Inspirational motivation: The process in which a leader inspires and articulates a vision to employees (Boies et al., 2015).

Intellectual stimulation: The process in which leaders challenge the status quo, encourage employee creativity, and nurture innovation (Boies et al., 2015).

Transactional leadership: A type of leadership in which the leader offers rewards, gifts, or compensation guided by an exchange practice or negotiation between leader and follower to accomplish the desired outcomes (Northouse, 2016).

Transformational leadership: The process of motivating, encouraging, and inspiring followers to excel beyond their personal best (Northouse, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In the next three subsections of this study, I focus on the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. In this section, I attempted to help readers understand the scope and possible factors impacting the outcome of the study. The assumptions, limitations, and delimitations subsections allow researchers the opportunity to identify potential biases strengthening or limiting the research.

Assumptions

An assumption is an unverified fact that researchers cannot control (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). The banking industry leaders in the city of Mississippi under study provided candid information regarding the effective leadership strategies they employ to help eliminate individual bias. Leaders were willing to share their knowledge and answer open-ended questions in semistructured, individual interviews.

Leaders provided in-depth data regarding (a) leadership strategies, (b) employee engagement, (c) employee productivity, and (d) positive or negative leadership strategies impacting the banking industry. I anticipated leaders would cooperate by answering questions with accuracy without providing misleading information. My goal was to collect enough information to achieve data saturation.

A case study allows researchers to speak with participants, conduct direct observations, and use other sources, such as surveys and archival information, to help support the findings (Yazan, 2015). I chose semistructured interviews, observation, and documents to conduct the research. By interviewing leaders implementing effective leadership strategies, I assumed leaders would offer in-depth data toward future research and business practices to help improve employee engagement and productivity.

Limitations

Limitations are potential weaknesses or conditions restricting or affecting the external validity of a study (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Factors that might have limited this study included time constraints, sample size, and geographic location. To avoid these limitations, I created a timeline containing interview dates and times to correspond with the case study completion deadline. Participants selected for the study resided in the geographical area of Mississippi, limiting the sample size for collecting data to conduct the study.

The participants each had at least 5 years of experience in a leadership role in the banking industry. My presence as a researcher might have influenced their responses or behaviors. By securing a familiar location or observing the participant in their natural environment, I created a more comfortable setting for them to answer interview questions open and honestly. I used cross-checking to review participant responses to help decrease the possibility of bias in the research.

Delimitations

Yin (2015) defined a delimitation as the beginning and end of research, representing what the researcher can control within the boundaries of a study. The geographical location of the bank chosen for the study was in the state of Mississippi. Focusing on one geographic location limited the information on how leaders exercise leadership strategies to exclude other banks outside the area of research.

I selected participants responsible for implementing effective leadership strategies that increased employee productivity. In this study, each branch contained fewer than 50 employees, creating a small sample size on which to conduct research. I did not include larger financial institutions or banking entities in this study. I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews; observed participants; and collected company documents.

Significance of the Study

The focus of this study was to explore leadership strategies for increasing the productivity of banking employees. Leaders might use this study as a means to reevaluate current practices used in the workplace. The results of this study could help leaders implement effective leadership strategies, improve employee performance, and reduce turnover.

Contribution to Business Practice

Organizations can operate more efficiently if employees are actively engaged in their work responsibilities, rather than exhibiting minimal participation because of the lack of strategies leaders use to increase employee productivity. Although leaders attempt to optimize growth within a business, some fail to understand individuals seek job

satisfaction and continuous personal growth (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013). The findings of the study could offer leadership strategies that increase employee productivity and help contribute toward improving the local economy through job retention and reductions in the cost of lost productivity in the Mississippi area.

Implications for Social Change

The implications of this study for positive social change involve leaders investing in human capital by practicing effective leadership strategies. Leaders who improve employee awareness could help reduce the disparities among employees, create a productive atmosphere, and increase revenue while contributing to the economy (Shukla & Shukla, 2014). Improving employee engagement could provide businesses with a competitive advantage over competitors and help create a sustainable business enabling employees to support their families and community's economy (Galpin et al., 2015).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

I reviewed a diverse set of resources to explore leadership strategies increasing employee productivity, including (a) peer-reviewed articles, (b) seminal books, and (c) academic journals and papers written by scholars demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In my research, I investigated past and current resources to examine how leadership strategies impact employee productivity in the workplace. The academic literature review was necessary to introduce and define the purpose of my research. Furthermore, with the results of this study, I added to existing literature from past scholars who made positive contributions to the field of leadership.

I identified effective leadership strategies increasing employee productivity in the workplace from various sources throughout the extant academic literature. The literature review covers key components from theorists and scholars discussing common topics relating to this study, such as leadership styles, employee engagement, leader-employee relationships, employee satisfaction, employee motivation, and contributing factors increasing employee productivity. In the literature review, I also address the overall effectiveness of leadership strategies increasing employee productivity.

I used various databases to collect the recommended number of references to complete the literature review, including (a) Science Direct, (b) ProQuest, (c) Emerald Insight, (d) Business Source Complete, and (e) Google Scholar. Keyword searches were performed using the following terms: transformational, transactional, leadership styles, employee engagement, organizational productivity, employee motivation and satisfaction, leader-employee relationships, sustainability, and employee performance. I included 170 references, of which 153 (i.e., 89%) were published within 5 years (2015–2019) of my graduation completion date or chief academic officer approval. Ninety-five percent of the sources reviewed were peer reviewed. The academic literature review contains 101 references, which exceeds the required minimum of 60, per Walden University guidelines.

In the literature review, I address eight significant points corresponding to leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. These focal points are (a) transformational leadership theory, (b) transformational leadership, (c) transactional leadership, (d) employee engagement, (e) leader-employee relationships, (f) employee

satisfaction, (g) employee motivation, and (h) factors contributing to an increase in employee productivity. For example, allowing open-communication, transparency, employee empowerment, recognizing employees value, employee engagement, reward systems, and creating a positive business culture are leadership strategies scholars deemed effective (Atmojo, 2015, Bin, 2015).

The purpose of this study was to explore effective leadership strategies increasing employee productivity in the banking industry. Blomme, Kodden, and Beasley-Suffolk (2015) defined leadership as the process of influencing followers and stated that leaders are essential agents to accomplishing organizational goals. A leader's conduct affects the atmosphere in the workplace, in turn influencing employee behavior, work performance, level of motivation, and attitude regarding the job (Saleem, 2015).

The academic literature review contains peer-reviewed articles pertaining to the research question: What strategies do some leaders in the banking industry use to increase employee productivity? I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this study and a guide to exploring common concepts and theories. In the literature review, I also provided supporting and contrasting theories, such as transactional leadership theory, Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation, and Gilbert's behavioral engineering model (BEM), in which theorists investigated transformational and transactional leadership strategies, employee engagement, and ways to increase employee productivity from a different perspective.

Leaders can use effective leadership strategies to accomplish business objectives and increase productivity by improving leader-employee relationships (Boies et al.,

2015). Gambardella et al. (2015) associated increasing employee productivity and performance to human capital strategies. Leaders optimize human capital in the workplace using employee motivation as a leadership strategy (Fiaz, Su, & Saqib, 2017). Leaders who recognize the importance of human capital and the implementation of effective leadership strategies apply positive approaches to ensuring success and sustainability (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

A leader's application of effective leadership behavior impacts employee productivity and business profitability by identifying the difficulties of repetitive, negative business practices and procedures (Fiaz et al., 2017). Leadership behavior positively or negatively impacts the sustainability of a business (Galpin et al., 2015). Atmojo (2015) addressed the significance of transformational leadership and how it increases organizational commitment and employee performance.

Northouse (2016) explained that businesses need leaders that motivate employees, are attentive to their needs, and capable of applying important elements in the workplace to engage employees. Leaders must be innovative thinkers and problem-solvers and must exert sustainable efforts (Mitchell & Walinga, 2017). According to Teece, Peteraf, and Leih, (2016), leaders risk failure if they lack innovation, ignore change and market demands, avoid new challenges, or do not recognize the significance of human capital or promote a high level of performance. Leaders should use encouragement as a leadership strategy to motivate employees to meet company objectives given the increasingly challenging environments, industry competition, and technological changes (Atmojo, 2015).

Transformational and transactional leadership are two of the most common leadership styles that businesses practice in today's workforce (Deichmann & Stam, 2015). Transformational leaders inspire and motivate employees to exceed day-to-day work expectations and sell the vision to employees to help accomplish business goals (Kim, Liden, Kim, & Lee, 2015). In contrast, transactional leadership offers rewards or compensation guided by the practice of exchange between leader and follower (Northouse, 2016). Leaders must be flexible and exercise adaptive leadership strategies to maintain a competitive edge to be successful (Teece et al., 2016). Saeidi, Sofian, Saeidi, Saeidi, and Saeidi (2015) explained the connection between leadership strategies and employee productivity positively affects company performance.

However, questions remain regarding the essential ideologies surrounding employee productivity. Albrecht et al. (2015) suggested that ethical leadership is a key factor in employee productivity and retention, adding that internal and external factors equally contribute to employee productivity. Blanz's (2017) demonstrated that job satisfaction creates a positive working environment, securing employee commitment and increasing productivity. One valuable aspect of increasing employee productivity is employee engagement (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015).

Employee engagement is a vital element affecting company performance (Joo et al., 2016). Employee engagement is the focus of energy evident to others revealed through a display of progressive initiative, effort, and diligence toward a specific goal (Iqbal et al., 2015). According to Kumar and Pansari (2016), engaged employees perform at a higher level and are likely to meet company-desired expectations. Transformational

leaders help individuals excel beyond their normal potential, allow open communication with employees, and establish a positive leader-employee relationship, transforming the employee's behavior and performance level (Porter et al., 2016).

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this doctoral study was to explore leadership strategies banking industry leaders use to increase employee productivity. Leaders who exercise open communication, motivate employees, and build positive leader-employee relationships create a positive atmosphere in the workplace (van der Weijden, Belder, Van Arensbergen, & Van Den Besselaar, 2015). Reijseger, Peeters, Taris, and Schaufeli (2017) explained employees are more engaged and productive working in a positive environment. Saratun (2016) professed leaders must understand the significance of employee engagement to maintain sustainability.

Transformational theory. Bass (1985) theorized individuals are more apt to follow leaders who encourage and use motivational techniques to initiate action toward desired goals. Lanaj, Johnson, and Lee (2016) described transformational leaders as individuals who recognize follower needs and inspire followers to excel beyond standard expectations. Leaders who encounter difficulties or challenges should use effective leadership strategies to achieve positive results and accomplish desired goals (Bass, 1985).

Transformational leaders initiate change and possess the ability to transform an employee's mindset and behavior. Bass (1985) identified transformational leadership using four components. The four elements of transformational leadership are intellectual

stimulation, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence (Boies et al., 2015).

Transformational leadership. Bass (1985) defined individualized consideration as the process leaders use to develop and nurture follower individuality. Boies et al. (2015) extended the definition of individualized consideration to include coaching and consulting techniques. Bass's original definition referencing the importance of nurturing the needs of an employee supported the techniques introduced by Boies et al. Leaders mentoring and supporting employees in the workplace represent the individualized consideration category (Kim et al., 2015). The art of negotiation discovered in transactional leadership is not characteristic of leaders nurturing or developing positive leader-employee relationships (Deichmann & Stam, 2015).

Qabool and Jalees (2017) posited that through building employee self-confidence and providing developmental training in the workplace, employees could increase self-sufficiency, realizing their self-worth and potential to be future leaders. Leaders recognizing and making efforts to enhance employee skills equip the workforce for achieving success and positive business outcomes (AlHaddad & Kotnour, 2015).

The next element Bass (1985) introduced from the transformational theory was intellectual stimulation. Intellectual stimulation is the process leaders use to encourage employee creativity, promote critical thinking, and nurture innovation (Bass, 1985). A transformational leader transforms or changes the way an employee thinks, behaves, and shapes how employees respond to new challenges or change (Maheshwari & Vohra, 2015). Leaders inspiring employees to exceed the status quo and work to achieve higher

goals personally and professionally are exhibiting the qualities of intellectual stimulation (Vargas, 2015).

Scholars connect transformational leadership attributes, such as motivation, to positive company outcomes (Nguyen, Mia, Winata, & Chong, 2017). Leaders using motivational strategies to promote employee engagement discovered an increase in employee productivity (Blattner & Walter, 2015). Conversely, Carasco-Saul et al. (2015) suggested that leaders who fail to connect with employees or establish a positive leader-employee relationship demonstrate a lower level of employee engagement and productivity. Leaders continue to practice transactional leadership in the workplace although some scholars view transformational leadership as the most effective leadership style (Martin, 2015).

Transactional leadership. In 1947, Max Weber introduced the transactional leadership theory, and later, Bass (1985) extended upon Weber's research. Bass theorized transactional leadership as a reciprocated agreement between leaders and followers, in which existing parties trust the other will fulfilling the obligations or terms of a contract to achieve company expectations. According to Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2016), leaders practicing transactional leadership possess short-term planning, organizing, and controlling characteristics. Transactional leaders focus less on employee needs and more on the needs of the business or personal self-interest (Saleem, 2015).

Holten and Brenner (2015) explained transactional leadership involves a leader-follower exchange in which leaders often use corrective behaviors or measures to achieve desired company objectives. Transactional leaders practice the process of exchange or

bargain relationship (Katou, 2015). Leaders reward followers meeting specific criteria or company objectives. Bass's transactional leadership theory, unlike the transformational leadership, used a reward system to achieve desired company expectations. Bass (1985) introduced four components of transactional leadership, which are (a) contingent reward (exchange for effort with reward or recognition for exceptional performance), (b) management by exception (enforcing corrective behavior (Holten & Brenner, 2015) for not adhering to company objectives), (c) passive management by exception (interceding only when company objectives are not met), and (d) laissez-faire (relinquishing responsibilities and decision-making (Bass, 1985).

According to Deichmann and Stam (2015), transactional leaders motivate individuals by introducing a satisfying reward contingent on need such as salary increase, promotion, or other rewards to elicit employee performance. Although employees meet company obligations through exchange or reward, incorporating transactional leadership in the workplace does not guarantee employee commitment or increased productivity (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Transactional leaders focus on the bottom line and make the necessary efforts to meet company obligations (Afsar, Badir, Saeed, & Hafeez, 2017), which is not often in the best interest of the employees. In fact, leader-employee relationships can be temporary and lack any long-term emotional connections or commitments.

Transactional leaders are goal-oriented driving employees toward reaching the company's mission through exchange processes or reward systems to meet company directives (Tremblay & Gibson, 2016). Dartey-Baah (2015) explained the exchange

process as a leader and employee equally influencing each other to gain something of value. The role of leadership and management is important to understanding transformational and transactional leadership strategies leaders use to increase employee productivity (Fiaz et al., 2017).

In the workplace, leaders and managers may view employees differently. Leaders refer to employees as followers and managers perceive employees as subordinates (Nienaber, Romeike, Searle, & Schewe, 2015). Managers exhibit the behavior of a transactional leader by concentrating on meeting goals and issuing directives, whereas leaders exhibit a transformational style by recognizing employees independently. Employees often perceive transactional leaders as authoritative figures exercising a managerial style of leadership versus developing a leadership-employee relationship (Dartey-Baah, 2015). Transactional leaders issue directives for employees to follow, which employees achieve through a company designed rewards system (Kim et al., 2015). Conversely, transformational leaders encourage employee creativity and innovative ideas (Lin, Ma, Zhang, Li, & Jiang, 2018). Bass (1985) explained transactional leadership produces short-term satisfactory outcomes whereas transformational leadership produce more long-term organizational results leading to higher employee commitment, performance, creativity, self-confidence, and increased productivity.

Transformational leaders, unlike transactional leaders, are nurturers (Ali, Jangga, Ismail, Kamal, & Ali, 2015). Transformational leaders build and strengthen the self-confidence of employees and change employee perceptions in the workplace (Kossek et

al., 2018). Using transformational leadership, leaders and employees work together to accomplish company goals and create positive leader-employee relationships. Transformational leaders motivate, inspire, and maintain positive working environments in which employees feel valued, experience growth, and trained to become potential leaders (Khalili, 2016). In contrast, transactional leaders do not openly engage with employees in the workplace. Employees simply conform to company directives and perform the necessary tasks delegated by management instead of being creative or openly engaging with leaders.

Transactional leaders are the decision-makers and require little input or ideas from employees. According to Burns (1978), transactional leaders simply enter into an agreement with employees outlining company expectations. Employees rewarded for meeting company expectations are participating in a leader-employee exchange (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Although effective, transactional leadership is often viewed as an ineffective leadership style compared to transformational leadership (Jing & Avery, 2016). Transactional leaders use extrinsic rewards to drive or motivate employees to produce desired business outcomes (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Some leaders find bargaining to be beneficial, but not a long-term solution. Negotiation is not a necessary requirement for transformational leaders to achieve company desired outcomes or long-term results.

According to Bass (1985), effective leaders display both leadership styles on certain occasions in varying quantities. Bass explained transactional leaders practice social exchange with employees, whereas transformational leaders generate a strong level of commitment from employees. To support Bass's assumption, Breevaart,

Bakker, Demrouti, and van den Heuvel (2015) investigated transactional and transformational leadership on work engagement. Breevaart et al. explored leadership behaviors in the work environment and how leadership styles influence employee engagement. Over a span of 34 days, 61 naval cadets completed questionnaires at 5 p.m. each day and rated the behavior of the nearest leader in command to collect data for the study. Researchers used a multiregression analysis to measure employee engagement, transformational leadership, and contingent reward. Breevaart et al. concluded both transformational leadership and contingent reward are positively related to employee engagement indicating leadership behavior effects employee engagement.

  Vroom's expectancy theory. The concept of motivation, motivational theories, or varying perceptions of motivation is applicable in today's workforce. Baakeel (2018) described motivation as the ability to achieve organizational performance outcomes. Vroom (1964) mentioned three theories of motivation, which included consolidation, content, and process theories. The consolidation theory is the relationship between an individual's performance and anticipated outcome, but the content theory argues individuals behave in a certain way contingent on a specific need. However, the process theory describes how motivation happens, the factors influencing motivation, and the correlation among those factors.

  Although the academic literature on the theory of motivation was not formally recognized by scholars, Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation stemmed from earlier findings. Vroom combined the elements of needs, equity, and reinforcement theories and extended the individual capacity ideology beyond preferences relating to a specific goal.

Vroom explained that individuals will accomplish desired outcomes and behave in a manner derived from motivational cues (Vroom, 1964) and believed that an individual's level of motivation is goal oriented. The choices an individual make can determine the course of action an individual might pursue (Vroom, 1964). Vroom identified cognitive processes as a motivating factor to human behavior. In the expectancy theory, Vroom introduced three determining factors of motivation: (a) expectancy, (b) instrumentality, and (c) valence. Expectancy reflects the effort plus performance relationship and an individual's belief toward achieving the desired outcome (Furlich, 2016). Instrumentality is the process linking outcomes and combining performance plus rewards. Valance represents the value of the reward or the desired outcome (Baakeel, 2018). A positive valance reflects an individual's preference for obtaining the reward versus a negative valance in which the individual's level of motivation or need to obtain the reward decreases. The reward lacks value; therefore, the value of the reward changes the psychological perception (emotional stability, life experiences, personal character) of the individual toward attaining (performance) the goal. Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation would require leaders to make assumptions regarding the value of a reward.

Although many scholars support the expectancy theory of motivation as a rational explanation for individual decision-making, Vroom (1964) based the model on perception. To be effective, leaders must decide what motivational force drives the employee. Implementing Vroom's expectancy theory in the workplace could be challenging because numerous motivational forces or rewards independently drive employees (Barba-Sanchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2017). Vroom believed motivational

forces driven by new internal or external experiences change from day-to-day altering employee perceptions of future probabilities about the company and motivation to accomplish company goals.

In contrast, the expectancy theory of motivation also received criticism from other scholars after the theory's formal introduction. One common criticism among scholars regarding the expectancy theory is simplicity. In fact, Vroom (1964) discussed limitations in the expectancy theory of motivation addressing the individual decision-making model suggesting the theory would benefit from new research. Critics attempted to extend the expectancy theory of motivation although the deviations made were not far from Vroom's original theory yet failing to clarify the individual's performance level. Another criticism targets the assumption employees will exert a greater effort if the reward is desirable or viewed as positive reinforcement, thus discarding the question a reward could negatively impact the employees.

Behavioral engineering model. Gilbert's (1978) behavioral engineering model is one element of human performance technology design identifying workplace performance by concentrating on external factors impacting employee productivity. In the BEM model, Gilbert addressed employee performance in the workplace consisting of three notable leisurely theorems: (a) comprehend the meaning of worthy performance, (b) distinguish between exemplary and typical performers then analyze the gap (potential for improved performance), and (c) identify performance deficiencies and determine how to produce worthy performance. Gilbert proceeded by dividing the issues of performance

into two categories, person and environment, to further explain the reason for lack of performance levels in the workplace.

In the study, Gilbert (1978) introduced six strategies for improving employee performance. The six strategies included data, instruments, incentives, knowledge, capacity, and motivation. The strategies for improving performance occupy the following categories, which are information, instrumentation, and motivation. Gilbert's BEM included a diagram detailing where companies should exhaust energy and resources to help leaders avoid incorporating ineffective strategies to correct existing issues and improve employee performance in the workplace. The value of the company's tasks or goals should exceed the sacrifice of the behavior to accomplish the goal. Leaders measure the accuracy of Gilbert's BEM by applying the model to a business environment in which studies report positive results if executed correctly. Gilbert believed measuring performance cannot be absent of competence when determining the criteria for performance worthiness. In fact, past scholars linked transformational leadership and employee engagement to positive business outcomes.

Employee engagement. Since 1990, employee engagement has gained the attention of scholars who have linked employee engagement to positive business outcomes such as increased employee productivity. Iqbal et al. (2015) defined employee engagement as focused energy evident to others demonstrated by progressive initiative, effort, and diligence toward company objectives. In past studies on employee engagement, scholars discovered common topics such as worker burnout, fatigue, workplace safety, and inadequate resources available in the workplace to complete

required company tasks. Kumar and Pansari (2015) conducted a study focusing on the benefits of employee engagement. Kumar and Pansari explored the practice of employee engagement in the workplace using a qualitative research methodology. The study contained 52 participants from companies in five countries. Kumar and Pansari interviewed over 200 human resource and marketing managers to collect data regarding the study. The results revealed that a company's level of employee engagement impacted by several factors such as employee loyalty, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and performance or a combination of the following factors. Keeping employees engaged positively or negatively impact a company's profit margin and growth (Kumar & Pansari, 2015). Engaged employees feel valued, have a clear understanding of company expectations, and exhibit higher levels of satisfaction (Menguc, Auh, Katsikeas, & Jung, 2016) and personal commitment toward their job.

Leaders who recognize the importance of employee engagement and implementing employee engagement strategies can increase employee performance and productivity (Albrecht et al., 2015). Moreover, leaders improve employee engagement by encouraging open dialogue, welcoming employee input regarding company matters, and nurturing employee innovative ideas (Khalili, 2016). Mokhtari (2016) explored the effect of transformational and transactional leadership on employee's creativity. Mokhtari selected eight managers and directors from SAIPA automobile manufacturing site. To collect data, Mokhtari used open coding to interpret responses from managers and directors during the face-to-face, semistructured interviews. The findings revealed

transformational leadership had a greater impact on employee creativity than transactional leadership.

Embracing creativity and nurturing innovative ideas from employees, is one of the most effective ways for a company to gain a competitive advantage over industry competitors (Vargas, 2015). Furthermore, leaders should practice leadership strategies promoting intellectual stimulation by motivating, inspiring, and encouraging the employee to perform at a higher level (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Leaders empowering and encouraging personal growth among employees develop a positive working environment in which employees commit to achieving a company's mission (Han, Seo, Yoon, & Yoon, 2016).

Leaders with employees exhibiting strong confidence and communication levels report an environment in which leadership strategies are conducive to inspiring and motivating employees to pursue more leadership roles (Porter et al., 2016). According to Boise et al. (2015), leaders possessing inspirational qualities use instrumental or motivational techniques with employees to help increase performance and productivity.

Leaders who promote a positive organizational culture, build strong leader-employee relationships and welcome open communication with employees can cause their organizations to flourish and successfully execute company goals by remaining productive (Mikkelson, York, & Arritola, 2015). According to Porter et al. (2016), effective communication increases employee performance and commitment levels. Auh, Menguc, Spyropoulou, and Wang (2016) reported engaged employees to demonstrate a stronger commitment, work ethic, and are important to business success. Furthermore, as

an employee's level of commitment increases so does an employee's level of accountability toward meeting company desired outcomes.

Employee loyalty contributes to the success of a company. Atmojo (2015) revealed loyal employees demonstrate a higher level of commitment and organizational performance increasing employee productivity in the workplace. Employees who do not feel like they are a part of an organization exhibit a lower level of commitment. However, supportive leaders have employees willing to reciprocate commitment to the company by engaging in positive work behavior (Breevaart et al., 2015). In fact, effective communication, transparency, employee engagement, rewards, and recognition are positive drivers of employee performance (Taneja et al., 2015) and sustainability.

Employee engagement and sustainability are two important concepts scholars link to employee performance. Merriman, Sen, Felo, and Litzky (2016) observed that high levels of employee engagement impact sustainable desired outcomes. Although relatively new, employee engagement is a common concept that scholars find influencing sustainability in today's businesses (Galpin et al., 2015). Satisfied employees exhibit higher levels of productivity and engagement benefiting the company by increasing cultural and financial stability, consumer loyalty, and stakeholder security (Lasrado & Pereira, 2018).

Employee engagement is a significant component of organizational culture (Huhtala, Tolvanen, Mauno, & Feldt, 2015). Leaders should build a strong foundation in which a company's top-level to low-level leadership recognize and develop strategies supporting employee engagement (Boehm & Dwertman, 2015). Moreover, companies

should invest in systematic practices identifying how employee engagement increase employee productivity. Taneja et al. (2015) explained employee engagement should be the core driver to reaching desired company outcomes, which leaders improve by communicating a clear vision, fostering positive leader-employee relationships and workplace environment.

Leader-employee relationships. A positive work environment is conducive to a leader's ability to lead and influences how individuals respond to the leadership. On average, employees spend a minimum of eight hours a day at work making the workplace environment important to ensuring a company's success. Studies reveal satisfied employees are more productive (Taneja et al., 2015), and flourish when working conditions are favorable and leader-employee relationships are strong. Leaders taking the proper measures to ensure or create a positive, supportive work environment comprise employees demonstrating a higher level of commitment, engagement, and productivity (Zayas-Ortiz, Rosario, Marquez, & Colón Gruñeiro, 2015). Leaders encouraging open communication and inviting employees to participate in the decision-making process build stronger leader-employee relationships (Boies et al., 2015).

Leadership is the process of motivating individuals to work towards accomplishing a common goal (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Effective leadership is initiating a group of individuals to work toward a common goal and having the capacity to actively engage the individuals long-term (Kriger & Zhovtobryukh, 2016). Schuetz (2017) discussed effective leadership and its impact on an organization's success. Schuetz included common approaches to leadership, the concept of positive leadership,

and factors that influence leadership effectiveness. Schuetz concluded that while leaders manage processes necessary to complete tasks, effective leaders encourage employees to follow the path to the goal and complete the task.

Employees are more likely to contribute to the success of a business after establishing strong leader-employee relationships. Transparent leaders build a workplace environment of trust and loyalty among their employees (Nienaber et al., 2015). When leaders establish trust with employees, employees are more apt to buy into the company's vision and mission thus raising the level of employee engagement and commitment (Nienaber et al., 2015). An employee who feels valued and like a vital part of the company is often a product of leaders who exercise positive leadership strategies. Furthermore, implementing positive leadership strategies can affect employee productivity and how companies achieve company desired outcomes.

The first theory addressing leader-employee relationships originated with the vertical dyad linkage theory (VDL) (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). The VDL theory supported the assumption that employees possessed the same characteristics and leaders interacted the same with each employee (Dansereau et al., 1975). By the 1980's, theorists Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) expounded on the works of the vertical dyad linkage theory, which today is commonly known as the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX). Graen and Uhl-Bien demonstrated leaders develop a shared exchange relationship with their employees and the dynamics of the relationship impact the employees' behavior and workplace outcomes. The LMX theory differs slightly from the VDL theory recognizing leaders and employees independently and focusing more on job and task domains.

Scholars later added two additional theories to the LMX theory, organizational citizenship behavior and perceived organizational support. Past researchers linked the LMX theory to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and task performance (Mesu, Sanders, & Riemsdijk, 2015). When leaders establish a sound relationship with employees, employee engagement increases, and overall organizational effectiveness.

The type of leadership strategies a leader uses impacts how an employee perceives their workplace responsibilities. Establishing a positive leader-employee relationship can optimize employee performance and productivity (Choi, Goh, Adam, & Tan, 2016). In past studies, scholars identified more positive leader-employee relationships between transformational leaders than leader-employee relationships with transactional leaders (Diechmann & Stam, 2015). The leader-employee relationship is vital to the growth of an organization. Transformational leaders are nurturing and attentive to employee needs allowing employees to comfortably connect with leaders by developing a deeper level of trust (Nienaber et al., 2015).

By nurturing personal growth, transformational leaders produce a stronger leader-employee relationship and a more effective work environment leading to an increase in employee productivity. Arnold, Connelly, Walsh, and Martin Ginis (2015) observed that transformational leaders who exhibit positive leadership behavior provoke intellectual stimulation, communicate a clear vision regarding organizational goals, and display open concern for the well-being of their employees building employee self-confidence and increasing productivity. Leaders who exercise a transformational leadership style create

an empowering work environment (Breevaart et al., 2015) thus limiting employee stress or burnout and increasing employee retention.

Transactional leadership is an agreement between a leader and employee in which leaders initiate directives to achieve the status quo within the workplace (Afsar et al., 2017). Leaders use negotiation strategies with employees such as providing an increase in salary, opportunities for advancement, and reward recognition for meeting performance or production quotas to meet the company's mission or goals (Saleem, 2015). To achieve organizational goals, leaders and employees exchange gratifications and establish agreements designed by the leader in which employees work to meet the agreement terms for compensation (Martin, 2015). If employees agree to adhere to the agreement, the leader and employees enter into a social contract to fulfill company obligations.

Transactional leaders are not likely to personally connect with employees or establish a strong leader-employee relationship. Scholars identify relationships developed through transactional leadership as bargaining or negotiation measures to achieve the company's desired outcomes, without a focus on the well-being of the employee (Choi et al., 2016). In fact, Schuetz (2017) revealed transactional leaders do not engage with employees like transformational leaders. Transactional leaders and employees serve an independent level of purpose and importance. To demonstrate leader-employee relationships, Breevaart et al. (2015) revealed an individuals' basic needs of autonomy can influence the relationship between transformational leadership and company desired outcomes, personal achievement, employee job satisfaction, and commitment to organizational leadership.

Bass (1985) indicated a strong positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction in the workplace. If a strong leader-employee relationship exists and employee satisfaction is high, leaving the organization would make resigning difficult and costly for the employee. Leaders creating positive leader-employee relationships help decrease turnover and increase revenue (Nienaber et al., 2015) caused by dissatisfied or disengaged employees in the U.S. workforce. Studies reveal that employees experience greater satisfaction on the job when working under a transformational leadership creating a positive impact on employee performance and productivity. In fact, Saleem (2015) discovered transformational leadership was more positively related to employee satisfaction than transactional or *laissez faire* leadership.

Laissez-faire leadership. Laissez-fair is a leadership style in which leaders take a hands-off approach and allow employees to participate in the decision-making process (Yang, 2015). Scholars also refer to laissez-faire as delegative leadership (Chin, 2015). The laissez-faire leadership style can be beneficial to a business if used in the right environment. Laissez-faire leadership is most effective in a business with a highly skilled workforce possessing the capabilities to work independently with minimal guidance (Yang, 2015). Employees may find the laissez-faire style satisfying because of the autonomy and power to use their knowledge and expertise to make decisions about business objectives and increasing productivity (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). Monitoring performance and sharing feedback with employees on a routine basis adds to the effectiveness of laissez-faire leadership.

However, scholars report problems with using the laissez-faire leadership style in the workplace. If a leader has an unskilled workforce lacking knowledge or expertise to meet daily tasks, the result can negatively impact business outcomes such as employee performance, productivity, satisfaction, and leader effectiveness (Aldousari, Robertson, Yajid, & Ahmed, 2017). In fact, some employees lack the necessary skills to work independently such as problem-solving, time-management, team-building, or being a self-starter (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). According to Yang (2015), laissez-faire leadership is the hands-off approach leaders use that allow employee freedom in the workplace with minimal instruction or guidance from the leader. Leaders using the laissez-faire style may exhibit the following characteristics, all of which can affect an employee's perception of the leader and decrease employee performance: (a) lack of role awareness and employee involvement, (b) low accountability, and (c) passivity and avoidance (Mathieu & Babiak, 2015). A business requiring a leader to exhibit high attention to detail and preciseness will struggle with executing the laissez-faire leadership style in the workplace. In contrast, a leader working in a creative environment nurturing originality and innovativeness will be conducive for producing positive results and satisfaction from an employee using the laissez-faire leadership style (Amanchukwu et al., 2015)

Employee satisfaction. Another concept scholars link to leader-employee relationships and effective leadership is employee satisfaction. Employee satisfaction is the measure of content an employee feels with their position or work environment (Blanz, 2017). Leaders who maintain employee satisfaction and high company morale can help

improve employee productivity or performance (Zayas-Ortiz et al., 2015). Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes, and Griffiths (2015) identified a significant relationship between employee satisfaction and performance. Companies revealed an increase in revenue, employee productivity, and customer satisfaction.

Employees who experience job satisfaction are happier, which positively contributes to the overall success of the organization (Blanz, 2017). Asencio (2016) conducted a study focusing on the relationship between transformational and transactional leadership, and employee perceptions of trust in leaders and job satisfaction. Asencio investigated the significance of leadership, trust, and job satisfaction of U.S. Federal employees in the public sector by using a quantitative research method to conduct the study. To collect data, Asencio obtained a secondary data analysis from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's 2010 Federal Viewpoint Survey (FedView Survey), which measured employee perceptions regarding job satisfaction, leadership, organizational performance, and compensation. Asencio (2016) distributed an electronic survey to a probability sample of full-time employees containing demographical questions such as gender, age, and ethnicity. Small and large agencies were invited to participate in the study with 263,475 returning the survey out of 504,609 yielding a 52% response rate.

Asencio (2016) revealed that both employee perceptions and transformational leadership behaviors are positively related to employee perceptions of job satisfaction. Leaders exercising a transformational leadership style reported employees with greater job satisfaction than a transactional style (Choi et al., 2016). Furthermore, the public

sector cannot solely rely on a transactional approach to motivate employees (Asencio, 2016). The study contained limitations such as bias due to variables are drawn from the same survey. Additionally, the FedView Survey Ascencio used to measure transactional leadership did not measure employee perceptions of their leader's behavior, but only the perceptions of their agencies.

Leaders should recognize the importance of exercising effective leadership styles, which support employee engagement and improve productivity (Albrecht et al, 2015). Conversely, Kumar and Pansari (2015) determined dissatisfied employees display characteristics such as low morale, increased absenteeism, reduced quality of work, productivity, and lost revenue. Leaders are vital contributors to ensuring employees understand and meet business expectations. A leader must effectively communicate with employees and create harmonious work relationships that foster a positive environment where individuals can work independently and experience growth (Boies et al., 2015). Employee satisfaction is a significant component to consider when developing the most applicable leadership style to align with a company's mission or desired outcomes.

By listening and allowing employees to express workplace concerns, leaders develop strong leader-employee relationships and trust within the company (Breevaart, 2015). To accomplish desired outcomes leaders must effectively lead and understand employee behavior. The quality of leadership can determine the success or failure of a company (AlHaddad & Kotnour, 2015). A positive or negative mindset can impact how an employee feels or responds toward meeting company directives and maintaining higher levels of productivity. Atmojo (2015) explained satisfied employees exhibit a

higher level of job satisfaction, productivity, and an increase in company profits. Scholars associate job satisfaction with the way an employee feels about workplace obligations or conditions (Choi et al., 2016).

Leaders are vital contributors to ensuring employee satisfaction and increasing productivity (Hanaysha, 2016). Leaders must clearly communicate company goals to avoid dissatisfied employees. A lack of communication and employee dissatisfaction can have a negative impact on employee engagement and productivity leading to a loss of revenue. Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough (2015) expressed leaders lacking effective communication skills are less efficient than effective communicators. An employee understanding and working to achieve the company's vision and mission displays a higher level of organizational commitment (Mesu et al., 2015). Leaders execute the vision by communicating company expectations and motivating employees to meet company directives.

A leader's ability to motivate or inspire employees to accomplish company obligations impacts job satisfaction. Mayfield et al. (2015) revealed leaders continuously exercising inspirational and motivational practices in the workplace improves employee engagement and organizational performance. In past studies, scholars discovered employee satisfaction is a valuable component for increasing organizational performance (Choi et al., 2016). Leaders exhibiting a high moral compass, are trustworthy, and transparent increases an employee's level of commitment (Han et al., 2016).

Democratic leadership. Democratic or participative leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles producing positive company outcomes such as increased

employee engagement, productivity, and morale (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). In a democratic process, teams can openly communicate and offer ideas, but the leaders make the final decisions (Iqbal et al., 2015). Employees working under democratic leadership are more productive, experience a higher level of job satisfaction and reward because the company values their contribution in the decision-making process (Amanchuku et al., 2015). Democratic leaders inspire followers, value creativity, and support innovativeness (Jha, 2017).

According to Fiaz et al. (2017), democratic leadership is a positive contributor to helping employees create and achieve innovative goals. Although effective, democratic leadership does encounter criticism. The accuracy of democratic leadership may be challenged during times of crisis when time efficiency is important (Amanchukwu, 2015). Moreover, teams can risk losing valuable time collecting information. However, allowing teams to develop a plan of action contributing to the final decision ensures inclusion of all team members. Leaders failing to communicate with employees and establishing clear directives cause difficulties among team members attempting to accomplish company goals (Fiaz et al., 2016). Moreover, like laissez-faire leadership, some employees may not possess the skills or expertise required to contribute to the decision-making process.

Employee motivation. Intrinsic or extrinsic factors can impact an employee's behavior and the level of motivation an individual has toward meeting company expectations and productivity (Gilbert, Horsman, & Kelloway, 2016). A leader can strongly influence the attitude and behavior of an employee. To create a culture of loyal

employees, leaders must adopt leadership strategies encouraging positive behavior and motivating employees to execute tasks that align with the company's vision and mission (Atmojo, 2015). Keeping employees motivated is a challenge many leaders encounter when trying to increase productivity in the workplace (Osabiya, 2015).

Choi et al. (2016) explained motivating employees improves engagement and commitment. Transformational and servant are two forms of leadership researchers conclude demonstrates a positive influence on employee trust and organizational performance by using motivational techniques (Harwiki, 2016). Through motivation and empowerment, leaders strengthen employee confidence and create more self-sufficient employees. According to Han et al. (2016), companies should make a conscious effort to motivate employees to help increase workplace productivity. Motivated employees make positive contributions to a company's success. A leader using motivational techniques in the workplace empowers employees and increases employee productivity (Choi et al., 2016).

Employee empowerment is the capability of uplifting an individual, promoting independence, and allowing individuals to partake in the decision-making process leading to positive employee performance outcomes (Taneja et al., 2015). Open communication and the provision of feedback are necessary components empowerment process and allow employees to engage and assume responsibility for meeting workplace obligations (Prasad & Junni, 2016). Leaders must understand employees are an asset and major contributor to the success of an organization. Leaders making an investment in the well-

being of employees experience a higher level of commitment, organizational

effectiveness, and performance from employees (Holten & Brenner, 2015).

Wong, Nerstad, and Dysvik (2014) investigated the relationship between

empowering leadership, employee goal orientations, and work performance. In this study,

Wong et al. provided an alternative explanation to inconsistent findings in past literature

and further argued that empowering leadership may not be beneficial or seem difficult to

some employees. Wong et al. obtained a random sample of 655 certified accountants

from Norway. Participants received a web-based survey generated from the Norwegian

Association of Authorized Accountants database creating a total of 2,194 potential

individuals for the study. Instruments used in the study consisted of a 5-point Likert scale,

9-point item scale, and 10-point item scale, which measured leader empowering behavior,

goal orientation, and work performance. Wong et al. revealed that an employees'

performance level increased when an employees' perception of a leader exhibiting a high

empowering behavior versus a leader exhibiting low empowering behavior. Limitations

mentioned in this study included the use of a cross-sectional design, which inhibits casual

interpretations. Wong et al. contributed to past literature written by scholars on the

understanding of relationships between empowering leadership, work performance, and

challenging previous inconsistent findings.

Self-confident employees are aware of their potential and perform at higher a

level when empowered by leaders (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). Effective leaders realize why

employees are vital assets. The sustainability of a company is contingent on employee

productivity (Taneja et al., 2015). Human capital is a leader's most valuable resource

(Choi et al., 2016). Some leaders do not recognize the value of employees thus limiting the opportunities, which empower them to succeed (Massingham & Tam, 2015). Empowering employees is not a short-term solution. Leaders must find effective solutions to sustain employee performance to increase productivity. Choi et al. (2016) observed that employee empowerment positively impacts an employee's level of commitment. The empowerment process not only is the sharing of power but the enhancement of employee confidence and performance ability in the workplace (Lan & Chong, 2015).

Boies et al. (2017) argued leaders encouraging open-communication and innovative thinking experience higher productivity among employees. The innovative behavior of employees is also reflective of effective stimulation managed through organizational leadership (Vargas, 2015). Although using empowerment evokes positive behavior and increases employee productivity, the empowerment process is difficult to measure, and leaders fail to adopt the process as a means of leadership (Wong et al., 2014). Empowerment is a new term often affiliated with servant leadership (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

Servant leadership. Servant leadership is a leader's natural willingness to serve followed by a conscientious choice to lead (Harwiki, 2016). The moral basis of servant leadership derives from an individual's desire to serve. Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) introduced three core dimensions of servant leadership, which are (a) empowerment, (b) accountability, and (c) stewardship. In the empowerment process, leaders' mentor and encourage followers. Leaders teach employees to be

self-sufficient, decision makers, and nurture creativity to increase employee performance (Mittal & Dhar, 2016). The leaders provide guidance for employees, acknowledge their needs and contributions, and enhance self-awareness by helping employees learn to accept responsibility for achieving business desired outcomes (Cheng, Bartram, Karimi, & Leggat, 2016).

Stewardship is the most substantial dimension of servant leadership reflecting the good of the whole or the vision of the business (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) demonstrated that the three dimensions show the action-oriented side of servant leadership to facilitate business tasks. Flynn, Smither, and Walker (2016) explained leaders who create a culture of service among employees reduces turnover and increase employee and organizational performance. In fact, the association between servant leadership and performance expectations reveal leaders who encourage employee creativity and self-efficacy improve employee engagement, satisfaction building trust (Flynn et al., 2016). Saleem (2015) revealed practicing a specific leadership style can impact organizational performance in the workplace. The absence of effective leadership in the workplace causes difficulties in sustaining profitability, productivity, and maintaining a competitive advantage (Albrecht et al., 2015).

Organizational productivity. Organizational performance is the behavior individuals exhibit toward reaching specific outcomes or goals in the workplace influenced by company resources (Atmojo, 2015). Company resources impacting organizational performance include tangible or non-tangible resources such as company

protocol, directives, and procedures. The term organizational performance also represents the services companies provide to consumers and how the company measures against competitors and toward meeting productivity (Saeidi et al., 2015). Leaders can affect a company's success and must ensure employees are continuously performing at a high level thus improving the quality of work performed in the workplace (AlHaddad & Kotnour, 2015).

Anitha (2014) conducted a quantitative study exploring the determinants of employee engagement and their impact on employee performance. Anitha described engaged employees as individuals who commit to completing or exceeding company expectations to accomplish organizational goals. Additionally, Anitha defined employee performance as the outcomes achieved or accomplished in the workplace. To collect data, Anitha distributed 700 questionnaires with 383 valid responses used to conduct the study. Anitha selected a random sample of employees from lower and middle-level management to collect information needed to evaluate employee engagement and performance. Instruments utilized in the study measured the working environment, leadership, team building, training and career development, compensation, policies and procedures, employee well-being and engagement (Anitha, 2014). Anitha found a significant relationship existed between employee engagement and employee performance. The determinants of employee engagement suggest a healthy working atmosphere reflecting on the social impact created by the organization (Anitha, 2014). Implications involved a significant impact for organizations regarding improvement in productivity and signified important economic impact for organizations (Anitha, 2014).

Although leadership is important to an organization's performance, internal and external factors such as an individual's economic status, demographics, political preference, or technological capability can impact how an employee meets productivity in the workplace (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas, & King, 2015). In the business world, leaders often use the term performance and assessment interchangeably to measure if the leaders, employees, and teams are achieving organizational expectations (Kim et al., 2015). Furthermore, defining organizational performance in this context identifies performance as a tool. According to Valmohmmadi and Roshanzamir (2015), organizational performance is to question whether a company's current structure, culture, rules and regulations, leadership, infrastructure, and resources align with the vision and mission created to achieve the desired performance outcome.

Organizational commitment. A leader can measure organizational effectiveness, performance, and commitment by the following (a) do employees meet company goals, (b) are expectations clearly communicated by leaders and executed, (c) do product and services meet consumer expectation, and (d) is the process controlled, and (e) is an organizational development plan in place (Mesu et al., 2015). Leaders expressing concern for the development of employees or how an employee progresses in the workplace are characteristics of transformational leadership (Jyoti & Dev, 2015). Transformational leaders inspire, motivate, and value employees. As a result, employees develop trust, respect, and a sense of loyalty toward leaders practicing transformational leadership (Kossek et al., 2018).

Transforming how employees think and feel is an ongoing process. However, leaders who motivate employees help increase employee commitment and empower them to accomplish organizational goals (Choi et al., 2016). Furthermore, transformational leaders increase the level of commitment by selling the company's vision, mission, and upholding positive core values (Boehm, Dwertman, Bruch, & Shamir, 2015). Whereas transactional leadership is the exchange of rewards for achievement, transformational leaders appeal to an employee's intellectual psyche impacting employee behavior, performance, and attitude about the company and strengthening employee commitment toward accomplishing the company's goals or mission (Boies et al., 2015).

Comparing Theories

The two most common forms of leadership discussed by scholars are transactional and transformational leadership styles. Transformational leaders are visionaries, make employees feel valuable to the organization, and clearly communicate the importance of being on the company's team allowing employees to internalize their contribution to the company's success (Bass, 1985). Employees are more likely to remain working in an environment in which leaders maintain positive leader-employee relationships, are attentive to the needs of employees, supportive, and strongly identify with the company's leadership (Khalili, 2016; Mikkelson et al., 2015; Nienaber et al., 2015).

Transformational leaders establish a personal connection with employees and develop relationships increasing employee trust levels, which employees find to be a

desirable behavior (Asencio, 2016). Transformational leaders create a strong LMX with employees stemming from trust (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2016). In contrast, transactional leadership is contractual and based on reward. A contingent reward is an agreement between leaders and employees that focus on employee performance and achieving organizational desired outcomes (Arnold et al., 2015). Leaders exercising transactional leadership exchange rewards for meeting company objectives and employees receive negative reinforcement or punishment for not fulfilling the contractual agreement (Afsar et al., 2016).

While conducting research on the effect of leadership styles on employee productivity, Zhang, Avery, Bergsteiner, and More (2014) explored additional leadership styles, relationships between leadership paradigms, and employee engagement (EE). The article highlights four leadership styles, which are classical, transactional, visionary, and organic. In the study, Zhang et al. identified three additional components of employee engagement: "*say*," "*stay*," and "*strive*." Zhang et al. conducted the study using the following hypotheses: (a) employee perception of a classical leadership style in his or her direct supervisor tends to be negatively associated with employee engagement, (b) employee perception of a transactional leadership style in his or her direct supervisor tends to be negatively associated with EE, (c) employee perception of a visionary leadership style in his or her direct supervisor tends to be positively associated with EE, and (d) employee perception of an organic leadership style in his or her direct supervisor tends to be positively associated with EE (Zhang et al., 2014). Zhang et al. distributed questionnaires to 439 retail sales associates at various malls to collect data and conduct

face-to-face interviews. The results revealed transactional and classical leadership negatively affected employee engagement whereas visionary and organic had a positive effect. Zhang et al. mentioned a limitation, which demonstrated high reliability and validity in conducting the study. However, Zhang et al. recommended direct supervisors should practice visionary and organic leadership styles in the workplace.

In contrast, Mehmood (2016) revealed a significant relationship exists between transactional leadership and organizational commitment. Mehmood investigated the impact of a transactional leadership style on organizational commitment in the banking industry. Transactional leaders demonstrate leadership by focusing on personal self-interest and operating under a give-and-take relationship (Mehmood, 2016). To conduct the study, the Mehmood distributed Bass's Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire questionnaires to employees, which included questions asking employees to rate their supervisor's leadership behavior on a 5-point Likert scale. The results of this study contributed to existing scholarly academic literature supporting transactional leadership in the workplace. However, Mehmood used a cross-sectional design and recommended exercising a longitudinal or experimental design for future studies.

AlAsfour and Lettau (2014) conducted a study to investigate the multi-generational workforce and the leadership styles aligning with each generation. AlAsfour and Lettau addressed the importance of adopting the most effective leadership style in an organization to maintain a productive workforce. Leaders must recognize and understand that generational differences do exist and can positively or negatively influence the work environment. AlAsfour and Lettau explored the characteristics, lifestyles, principles, and

attitudes of each generation. The workforce generations examined (a) veterans, (b) baby boomers (born between 1946-1964), (c) Generation X (1965-1981), and (d) Generation Y.

Although there is minimal research on generational diversity, the AlAsfour and Lettau (2014) discussed leadership styles for each generation and how leaders exercise a leadership style in their organization. Leaders learning to communicate with each generation to help improve the culture in the organization (AlAsfour & Lettau, 2014). Veterans leaned toward a directive style where employees respect authority assimilating a transactional approach. However, baby boomers are more passionate about the spirit of the workplace and exhibit a consensual style.

Martin (2015) revealed traditionalists prefer a more directive style of leadership and baby boomers prefer inclusion, which supports the research conducted by AlAsfour and Lettau (2014). Generation X like a challenge and reveal less respect for authority. Generation Y believes in collective efforts preferring a polite relationship with authority mirroring a transformational approach. Leadership strategies introduced in this study defined a positive approach to communicating with each generation. AlAsfour and Lettau revealed the possible legal ramifications of treating employees differently in the workplace. Leveraging generational diversity and creating an environment fostering teamwork can be an alternative for developing a positive organizational culture.

Boies et al. (2015) explained communication and trust are important to unlocking the relationship between leadership, team performance, and creativity to complete day-to-day operations in the workplace. Servant leadership prioritizes

follower needs over organizational needs (Chinara & Bentein, 2016). Investing in a culture of human capital and development is necessary for retaining the most skilled millennials (1980-1996), which will represent half of the workforce by 2020 (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). According to Weber (2017), millennials are more self-focused unlike leaders from the late 80's or 2010.

In studies focusing on transformational and transactional leadership, scholars found that transformational leadership positively impacts leader effectiveness, satisfaction, extra-effort behavior, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Caillier (2016) explored transformational leadership, goal clarity and how the concepts work together to influence attitudes or behaviors in the workplace. Caillier selected employees from the public sector and distributed questionnaires using SurveyMonkey, which is a Web-based survey. Caillier sent an e-mail containing a survey of 3,500 government employees from the database where employees had seven days to complete.

Out of 3,500 employees, only 1,106 responded yielding a response rate of 26.1%. Caillier (2016) revealed goal clarity facilitated the relationship between transformational leadership, workplace attitudes, self-efficacy, extra-role behaviors, and turnover intentions. According to Deichmann and Stam (2015), transformational and transactional leadership both are contributing factors, which motivate employees to commit to their goals. As reported in Caillier's study, employees have a clearer understanding of tasks or goals working with a transformational leader.

Furthermore, employee capabilities improve under transformational leadership through goal clarity (Caillier, 2016). However, some scholars found transactional

leadership has a greater impact on organizational effectiveness. Ali, Jangga, Ismail, Kamal, and Ali (2015) explored the influence of leadership styles in creating a quality work culture. Caillier (2016) revealed a significant relationship equally exists between transactional and transformational leadership and quality work culture. In fact, the study revealed transactional leadership had a greater impact on quality work culture than transformational leadership.

Transition

Employee productivity is a current research topic discussed by scholars in today's business world. Past studies and academic literature contained significant background information regarding employee productivity and scholars made necessary recommendations to extend the research to understand the dynamics of leadership strategies related to increasing employee productivity. In Section 1, I discussed leadership theories, styles (transformational and transactional), employee engagement, satisfaction, and motivation, leadership-employee relationships, and organizational productivity.

Based on the academic review of literature, leadership strategies leaders used in the workplace was an appropriate research topic to explore today's fast-paced and continuously changing business world. In the United States, the annual cost of lost productivity is approximately $450 billion, which indicates that organizations need strong leadership strategies that can stimulate employee performance (Iqbal et al., 2015). However, some banking leaders lack the leadership strategies to increase employee productivity.

Companies experiencing low performance levels among employees may benefit from implementing positive leadership strategies increasing employee productivity in the workplace. A transformational leader can transform or change the way an employee thinks, behaves, and shapes how employees respond to new challenges or change (Maheshwari & Vohra, 2015) making transformational leadership the ideal strategy by scholars to increase employee productivity. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore what leadership strategies leaders in the banking industry use to increase employee productivity.

In Section 2, I will provide a thorough explanation of the research design I used to collect and analyze data to understand what leadership strategies leaders used in the banking industry to increase employee productivity. Furthermore, I highlight my role as a researcher and conducted a qualitative case study using population and sampling, followed the code of research ethics, reliability and validity, and concluded with a transition and summary. Section 3 will contain a summary of findings, implications for social change, application to professional practice, recommendations for action and future research, and a reflection on my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) journey at Walden University. To conclude, Section 3 will include an informative narrative of my doctoral case study and the existing outcomes.

Section 2: The Project

The information in Section 1 included a thorough background. I identified the conceptual framework, leadership theories, and styles surrounding the research topic of leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. In Section 2, I present the research methodology of the study, including the role of researcher; participants; research method and design; population and sampling; ethical research considerations; data collection, organization, and analysis; reliability; and validity. Moreover, Section 2 contains a discussion of the privacy guidelines and retention period required by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Bank leaders may find the results of this study beneficial and choose the most effective leadership style for their organization, which I identify in the data analysis and case study findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership strategies some banking leaders use to increase employee productivity. In this study, I collected data from banking leaders implementing strategies to increase employee productivity. The study population included six branch leaders from a bank in Mississippi. The implications for positive social change are that the implementation of effective leadership strategies will increase employee productivity, which in turn, will increase the amount of profits put back into the community through contributions to local economic and living conditions and the environment as well as reduce unemployment rates in the community.

Role of the Researcher

In this study, I employed a qualitative, single case study approach and design. Qualitative researchers use common techniques to collect data, such as conducting semistructured interviews by asking open-ended questions, distributing questionnaires, analyzing data, and identifying themes, to avoid bias and unethical practices (Mittal, 2015; Nelson, London, & Strobel, 2015; Smollan, 2015). Researchers interpret and verify information obtained from participants through the data collection method (Ali et al., 2015). I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews and participant observations as well as reviewed company documents.

My interest and experience with leadership strategies increasing employee productivity originates from working in the banking industry for 7 years and observing the strategies bank leaders used to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals. As an employee, I often thought about how a bank leader's leadership approach impacts productivity (i.e., sales goals). After receiving a master's in business management, I wanted to explore how leadership strategies impact employee productivity in the workplace. Building positive relationships, nurturing personal growth, and the desire to be an effective leader influenced my decision to pursue my DBA with a focus in leadership.

As a researcher, I had a personal responsibility to all individuals agreeing to participate in the case study. According to the *Belmont Report*, a code of ethics must be followed to ensure the protection and privacy of individuals participating in the study (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research, 1978). Participants received a consent form explaining the interview protocol (see Appendix) to help ensure an adequate understanding of the research process.

Researchers have a responsibility to ensure the elimination of personal bias (Bengtsson, 2016), which can arise at any stage of the research process. In fact, researchers' personal experiences, viewpoints, beliefs, or opinions will impact areas of the research process, such as data collection and analysis, if precautions are not taken (Quick & Hall, 2015). Researchers need to be conscientious of the participants' time, secure an ideal location for participants, and ask for clarity if the participant's response is unclear to alleviate bias (Middleton, Harvey, & Esaki, 2015). Listening carefully to the participant's responses, repeating the information back to the participant, and asking if the researcher's interpretation of the response was correct helps improve accuracy and eliminate bias (Yin, 2015).

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) explained that quality interviewers are observant and attentive, maintain accurate transcripts, and triangulate data from different sources. Data triangulation is a common option that researchers' use to examine the consistency of information collected from multiple data sources (Amankwaa, 2016). In this study, I was objective and eliminated potential bias by working to understand the research process and maintaining an open mind about the research topic and possible outcomes without imposing my personal view. I used the triangulation method to collect data, which included semistructured interviews, observation, and the review of documents. According to Ranney et al. (2015), researchers use interview protocols to stay organized during the

data collection process. Furthermore, interview protocols increase the reliability of a case study (Yin, 2015).

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix) and asked the participants questions that aligned with the overarching research question. I executed the interview protocol in the same manner with each participant. Asking open-ended questions during the interview is necessary to generate in-depth data to achieve saturation (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2016). Researchers collect valuable data, identify biases, and improve the reliability of a study by following sound interviewing protocols (Amankwaa, 2016). The participants and I had no existing relationship prior to conducting the study, which helped alleviate bias.

Participants

The background knowledge or viewpoint from a participant's experiences is important in conducting research and collecting data. Positive relationships between researchers and participants can be achieved through the inclusion of ethical practices when conducting studies (Enosh & Ben-Ari, 2016). Accessing participants can be difficult, but according to Silverman (2016), a participant's role is essential for a researcher to interpret and analyze data. Walden University guidelines require researchers to begin the interview process after receiving approval from the IRB. I contacted a banking executive via telephone and scheduled a meeting to discuss the research topic. I asked permission to access leaders to conduct my doctoral case study, after receiving IRB approval to proceed. I followed the example of Jiang, Gu, and Wang (2015) who met

with human resource managers and gained permission to conduct their study before entering the firms.

I obtained permission verbally from an executive and gained access to interview leaders of the company, following the example of Saleem (2015) who received permission from the head of the department before conducting a study. My dialogue with the senior executive included a description of the research process and protocols as well as how the outcomes might benefit future business practices in the company. Bernerth and Hirschfield (2016) solicited leaders via e-mail. A letter of recruitment was sent after gaining verbal permission and receiving documentation from the executive to access leaders. Lamm, Tosti-Kharas, and King (2015) accessed firms through a recruitment e-mail to solicit participants for the study. To be included in this study, participants had to (a) work in Mississippi, (b) serve in a leadership capacity at the bank, (c) have worked in a leadership position a minimum of 5 years, (d) currently be managing three or more employees, and (e) have implemented leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. I obtained an employee contact list from the bank's human resources department to solicit possible leaders for the study before scheduling interviews.

I initiated the recruiting process by e-mailing the company's leaders to participate in the case study. The conversation or e-mail included information regarding the research topic, the purpose of the study, procedures, and protocols. Leaders that expressed interest in the study and met the qualifications received a follow-up e-mail containing the consent form and interview protocol, clearly defining research expectations. The interview protocol included a list of questions aligning with the study's overarching research

question. Ranney et al. (2015) explained that an interview protocol begins the discussion about the research topic and should use open☐ended questions to avoid short *yes* or *no* participant responses. Enosh and Ben-Ari (2016) observed that through personal interaction with participants researchers gain a clear understanding of a phenomenon. An individual's willingness to participate in a study results from their understanding, knowledge, or experience surrounding the research topic (Palinkas et al., 2016).

The executive and participants received a summary of the study results via e-mail. I extended gratitude to the bank executive for allowing me to conduct the study and leaders for volunteering their time to participate. I established a positive relationship and build trust with the participants by accommodating their needs, securing a private location, providing a comfortable environment, maintaining an awareness of their time, and protecting their confidentiality. Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that establishing positive relationships with participants is important. Enosh and Ben-Ari (2015) stated that participants share personal experiences and exhibit honesty in a comfortable environment. Effective communication and transparency are important in gaining the trust of the participants and building positive relationships (Nienaber, 2015).

Research Method and Design

The research method and design component were extensions of the nature of study. Selecting an appropriate research method aligning with the proposed research question is important (Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Lewis (2015), researchers use the research question to help determine the appropriate research method or design to employ in the study. In this study, I employed a qualitative research methodology with a

single case study design. The intent of qualitative research is to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and achieve data saturation (Palinkas et al., 2015). Galpin et al. (2015) explained the lack of effective leadership strategies in the workplace negatively affect the sustainability of a business. The purpose of the study was to reveal effective leadership strategies increasing employee productivity and add to existing academic literature exploring leadership strategies.

Research Method

Researchers use one of three common research methods to conduct a study, either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. In a qualitative study, researchers can make assertions based on constructivist viewpoints (Drisko, 2016). I chose a qualitative methodology for this study to help identify and understand effective leadership strategies used in the workplace to increase employee productivity. Qualitative researchers collect and analyze data from participant experiences, whereas quantitative researchers analyze numerical data (Smith, 2015). The qualitative methodology affords researchers the opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Conducting semistructured interviews was an important qualitative technique that I used to collect data about the phenomenon under study. Participants provide valuable data researchers might find useful to the study outcomes by engaging in open dialogue (Frontiera, 2010). Moreover, the environment in which the phenomenon occurs is fundamental to understanding qualitative research (Ilac, 2018). In summary, the qualitative research method was the most appropriate choice to conduct my study and explore leadership strategies in the banking industry. Using this method, I collected

detailed data to help understand the influence of effective leadership on employee productivity by using a qualitative approach. Ranney et al. (2015) explained qualitative research allows interviewers to gain an in-depth understanding of participant data. Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) reported participants share lived experiences that allow researchers to capture firsthand information.

McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) defined quantitative research as the relationship between independent and dependent variables, which includes hypotheses testing and making predictions researchers expect the findings to reveal. Barnham (2015) formed inferences using statistical data and compared relationships between variables following a cause-and-effect type logic to test hypotheses. Unlike the qualitative approach, the quantitative research method does not include themes or require researchers to ask open-ended questions (Yin, 2015). A quantitative approach is appropriate when analyzing numerical data but not to gain in-depth knowledge of a phenomenon (Barnham, 2015). Yin (2015) revealed the true meaning of a phenomenon is difficult for researchers to explain or understand using statistical data; therefore, the quantitative approach was not the most appropriate choice to explore and understand leadership strategies in this study.

The mixed method is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods merged together to reinforce each other or expand the findings of a study (Yin, 2015). Using a mixed method approach require researchers to incorporate hypotheses and a research question, which broadens the research making the process more extensive (Franco & Matos, 2015). Limitations to qualitative and quantitative research methods prompted researchers to combine the two approaches to eliminate bias using a single

research method (Palinkas et al., 2015). The mixed method or quantitative approach would not benefit this study because I did not measure statistical data, identify how one variable impacted another, or asked structured questions to generate the type of data required to clearly understand leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. The goal of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how leaders in the banking industry motivate employees to meet business expectations. I accessed existing data from participant experiences through semistructured interviews, observations, and documents by using a qualitative method.

Research Design

Researchers choose one of the following research design types to conduct case studies, which are single, multiple, exploratory, and explanatory (Oyelami & Olivier, 2015). I used a single case study design to collect data from bank leaders. Researchers understand how or why an event, phenomenon, or activity happened from the participant's point-of-view using a single case study design (Yin, 2015). Researchers can gain data or insight by conducting semistructured interviews, observations, and obtaining documents (Franco & Matos, 2015).

Alternate qualitative research designs include phenomenological and ethnography. Lancaster and Di Milia (2015) explained a phenomenological approach is a subjective point-of-view describing real-life experiences of how an individual experience a phenomenon. Researchers derive conclusions from an individual's lived experiences through a series of interviews to establish common themes (Ilac, 2018). The phenomenological design is individuals' lived experiences versus abstract knowledge

(Berglund, 2015). I did not examine individuals' lived experiences to explore leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. Accordingly, a phenomenological design was not appropriate for this study.

Ethnography is another qualitative study research design. Ethnography is the process of understanding a participant's environment such as the culture or traditions of a group (Madden, 2017). Berglund (2015) concluded researchers use an ethnographic approach to examine the environment. Observing the culture of a group can take months or years to understand because of time (Yin, 2015), which was not practical to completing this doctoral case study. I did not observe the culture of a group over time, which was why the ethnographic approach was not appropriate for this study. However, I engaged with participants daily in their environment to observe and asked participant questions about leadership strategies used in the workplace.

Triangulation and member checking are two data instruments researchers use to ensure rigor and trustworthiness of participant data (Amankwaa, 2016). Member checking allows participants to review and correct inaccuracies found in the researcher's transcripts whereas triangulation compares multiple data sources to identify common themes (Ranney et al., 2015). According to Amankwaa (2016), triangulation enhances the understanding of a phenomenon using multiple data collection methods such as conducting semistructured interviews, observations, and documents. Using member checking and triangulating data sources help researchers achieve saturation (Palinkas et al., 2015). Furthermore, asking open-ended questions and engaging in opendialogue allowed participants to provide more in-depth responses. Silverman (2016) explained

conducting interviews increase the accuracy of data and provides a genuine, real-life knowledge of participant experiences about a phenomenon.

Data saturation is a term used to indicate the point in the research process that no new information emerges to enhance the study (Ranney et al., 2015). To ensure data saturation, I used member checking to verify the accuracy of participant responses and allow participants an opportunity to elaborate or share additional information about leadership strategies implemented in the workplace. I continued member checking until no new information emerged, which Quick and Hall (2015) indicated is the occurrence of saturation. Triangulation is the constant comparison of multiple data sources to increase the credibility and validity of research (Bengtsson, 2016). Quick and Hall (2015) demonstrated triangulation by comparing multiple data sources to achieve data saturation. I compared participant responses from the semistructured interviews, observation, and documents to identify common themes and validated no new emerging themes occurred to ensure data saturation.

Population and Sampling

Sampling is a significant element of qualitative research. Purposeful sampling is the identification and selection of data revealing an in-depth understanding, similarities, disparity, and framework of a phenomenon (Palinkas et al., 2015). Selecting a suitable number of participants, which can be difficult to determine in advance, depends on the scope of the research topic and volume of data collected (Yin, 2015). The technique I used to select participants was purposive sampling. Michel and Tews (2016) acknowledged researchers use purposive sampling to identify or select potential

participants who meet the study qualifications to begin conducting their research. Participants must meet the recommended qualifications to participate in this doctoral case study. A bank leader's knowledge and expertise about leadership strategies increasing employee productivity addressed this study's overarching research question.

The target group I solicited to participate in this case study were leaders in the banking industry. Patton (2015) asserted understanding the central issues of a phenomenon and obtaining rich and in-depth data is the logic of purposeful sampling. Yin (2015) explained researchers can produce rich data from a small sample size, which can increase the credibility of the study findings. Selecting the appropriate sample size depends on the research question and what the researcher is seeking to understand (Palinkas et al., 2015).

I selected six banking leaders, a small sample size, to participate in the study. Frontiera (2010) conducted a qualitative case study using six participants and used semistructured interviews to achieve data saturation. I used semistructured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of how leadership strategies increase employee productivity. According to Atmojo (2015), selecting an adequate number of participants is important; not enough participants limit depth and too many may produce unnecessary amounts of data. Frontiera reported there is no specific number of interviews or participants recommended by theorists required to achieve data saturation. Furthermore, Yin (2015) proposed researchers could achieve data saturation from a small sample size. Palinkas et al. (2015) revealed researchers not only achieve data saturation from large sample sizes but can generate the information needed to meet saturation using smaller samples. The

number of participants I chose aligned with a past case study conducted by (Frontiera, 2010) who achieved data saturation using a small sample size.

According to Ranney et al. (2015), data saturation transpires when information or data becomes repetitive and no new information emerges from participant responses or other data sources. The target population in this study were leaders in the banking industry. I conducted semistructured interviews by asking open-ended questions, took notes using reflective journaling, and reviewed documents to generate information to help achieve data saturation. By asking open-ended questions, researchers could thoroughly address the research question allowing participants the flexibility to extend their responses (Jit et al., 2016). Member checking proceeded the semistructured interviews, which I scheduled the following week to verify interpretations and accuracy of participant responses. I developed themes by identifying the commonalities between the participant responses, which followed the member checking process. Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, and Walter (2016) explained member checking is the method of examining the credibility of research findings. Triangulation is the process of examining multiple data sources expanding the possibility to explore different data collection methods (Amankwaa, 2016). I used triangulation to combine and compare common themes developed through the data collection process using semistructured interviews, observation, and documents.

Researchers must understand the research question, ensure participants meet the study qualifications, and have first-hand knowledge about the research topic before selecting participants (Quick & Hall, 2015). Qualifying participants can share existing

experiences on leadership strategies in the workplace increasing employee productivity. I selected participants from a bank located Mississippi. Participants met the research study requirements to participate in the study, which included (a) a bank leader who implemented leadership strategies increasing employee productivity, (b) the bank leader had 5 years' experience in the banking industry, and (c) managed three or more employees. Setting specific guidelines for selecting participants improves the quality pool of individuals participating in the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). I informed potential participants that participation in the study was voluntary. Han et al. (2016) informed individuals' participation in the study was voluntary and not a requirement using surveys as a data collection technique. Participants not meeting the study qualifications cannot participate in the research. I conducted interviews with bank leaders possessing a minimum of 5 years' leadership experience in the banking industry. Participants who volunteered to participate in the study shared their work responsibilities and examples of the leadership strategies used in the workplace over the past 5 years. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to understand how effective leadership strategies in the banking industry increase employee productivity.

I conducted a 45-minute face-to-face, semistructured interview with each participant. Participants requested more time without restrictions, if needed. I was conscientious of the participant's time and maintained flexibility to meet the participant's work schedule. Gordon and Gordon (2017) conducted a study in which participants signed up for a time convenient to their schedule. According to Ranney et al. (2015), a quiet or comfortable environment enhances an individual's willingness to openly and

freely express personal experiences. Furthermore, Boies et al. (2015) explained

researchers can observe nonverbal cues from participants by conducting semistructured

interviews. However, ensuring the comfort of participants and selecting an ideal space

free from disturbances is important (Ranney et al., 2015). Participants selected a

conducive location on-site to participate in the semistructured interviews requiring

unnecessary travel. Participants and I agreed on an available space in the workplace with

a limited influx of people, loud machinery, and disturbances. I verified if the space met

minimum requirements such as electrical outlets to accommodate computer and recording

devices, chairs, and a desk before conducting the interviews. I ensured confidentiality and

maintained privacy by locking the door while conducting participant interviews.

Ethical Research

As the researcher, ensuring the protection of each participant and following the

code of ethics was imperative to conducting research. Gordon and Gordon (2017) coded

participant names to protect the confidentiality of the participants. Soane et al. (2015)

used coding to identify participant responses addressing leadership effectiveness. The

Walden University IRB helps ensure doctoral students follow the code of ethics by

reviewing proposed research topics and authorizing approval to proceed with the research

providing the study meets ethical guidelines. Researchers must not minimize the

importance of maintaining participant confidentiality and conducting ethical research

(Bengtsson, 2015).

The participants received a consent form describing the research topic and

explaining the research guidelines. According to Ilac (2018), the consent form is a

document signed by participants before the interviewing process in accordance with the
ethical guidelines of research. Participants read, acknowledged understanding, and
accepted the research protocols outlined in the consent form. Moreover, the consent form
contains clear expectations of the research that participants can understand (Yin, 2015).
In the consent form, I included a statement informing the participants the study was
voluntary and participants reserved the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
Bengtsson (2016) expressed researchers must guarantee research confidentiality and
inform participants participation is voluntary. Per Walden's IRB guidelines, participants
must provide a written statement agreeing to the research guidelines. Participants
volunteering to participate in the study did not receive any incentives for participating in
this study.

I submitted a letter of cooperation to an executive of the bank seeking permission
to conduct interviews and collect data from bank leaders. The letter of cooperation
contained a request to access bank leaders, conduct interviews, confidentiality
requirements, and a brief description of the research process and protocols. In the letter of
cooperation, recruitment letter, consent form, and interview protocol, I solicited
participants, obtained consent, and identified the intent of my doctoral case study. The
consent form included a comprehensive description of the research process. According to
Yin (2015), a signed consent form means the participant understands the research process
and their role. I abided by the code of ethics and conducted myself professionally during
each encounter with participants. Robinson et al., posited informing participants of
potential risks is equally significant to conducting research. The IRB initiates approval to

begin the study and ensures the researcher follows the code of ethics. The IRB follows

ethical guidelines issued by the U.S. Public Health Service (Yin, 2015). Participants

received a letter of recruitment, which contained a description of the research procedures,

the consent form, and the interview protocol (see Appendix).

Following the code of ethics and ensuring participant confidentiality, helps

researchers maintain the quality of the research by improving validity (Bengtsson, 2016).

According to Walden University requirements, data remains in a secure location for a

minimum of 5 years to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participant data. I

used the participant's personal information solely for the intent of this case study. I kept

the identity of the participants confidential and identified participants using labels such as

L1 and L2. Labeling safeguards the identity of the participants and the data (Smollan,

2015). I notified participants and explained research procedures, allocation of time, level

of commitment required to participant in the study, and confidentiality clause. According

to Mittal (2015), researchers must guarantee the confidentiality of a participant as written

in the consent form.

I followed the code of ethics by ensuring the confidentiality of participant data

such as the company or leaders' name identifying the business or individual to ensure

confidentiality as suggested by Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015). Lin et al.

(2016) coded questionnaires to match participant responses to ensure confidentiality. The

code of ethics is not only applicable to researcher conduct, but research process such as

participant selection, data collection, forms of data, and research guidelines, which

Ranney et al. (2015) suggested should concern researchers. The data I obtained was

primarily for the intent of this case study. I placed data transcripts, flash drive, and digital recording device in a locked filing cabinet. According to the Walden University guidelines, the data retention period is 5 years. I will destroy or delete all existing data following expiration of the retention period. I received the approval number (03-19-19-0640041) from Walden IRB to conduct this study.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument in this qualitative single case study. The secondary means for collecting data contained the following instruments, which were semistructured interviews, observations, and examine company documents. To begin data collection, Ranney et al. (2015) recommended researchers develop a detailed strategy, clearly identify the target population, and collect the data. I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews, which allowed me to engage with participants, observe participant behavior, and office setting. Semistructured interviews are common techniques researchers use to seek a deeper understanding of a study construct (Graca & Passos, 2015). According to Jit et al. (2016), researchers gain additional knowledge about the participant's personal experiences surrounding the research topic by asking open-ended questions.

In a semistructured interview, asking open-ended questions allow participants to extend dialogue (Goodell et al., 2016) and the researcher to ask follow-up questions based on participant responses (Middleton et al., 2015). In the interview process, I took notes, digitally recorded conversation, transcribed participant responses, identified common themes, and asked follow-up questions. By following an interview protocol (see

Appendix), researchers can ask participants questions addressing the research question and other data sources that relate to the research topic (Arnold et al., 2015). After asking questions in the first interview, I scheduled a second interview to verify the accuracy of my interpretations from the participant's responses. I used Mac dictation to convert dialogue into text and digitally recorded the interviews after receiving permission from the participants. I reviewed transcripts from participant responses and crosschecked for accuracy using the digital and iPhone recorder, which helped improve the validity and reliability of the data. Conducting semistructured interviews can improve the reliability of the study and ensures participants receive the same line of questioning (Bengtsson, 2016). During the interview, I used reflective journaling to document non-verbal cues or visual information beneficial to the study.

I observed participants engaging in routine day-to-day activities in the workplace by maintaining a reflective journal. Researchers can avoid disrupting the normalcy of the work environment by conducting research in a convenient area on-site (Smollan, 2015). Positive interactions with participants help enhance researcher-participant relationships, improve communication, and interaction with participants (Bass, 1985). Through reflective observation, I gained additional information from another data collection instrument to generate themes. I observed leaders in the workplace and journaled leadership behavior, office setting, and employee daily interactions. Yin (2015) explained, researchers can collect meaningful data by observing participants in their natural setting.

Using the documentation method, I accepted company documents leaders provided or considered beneficial to the case study. By reviewing documents, researchers can acquire more information relevant to the research topic (Yin, 2015) and determine common themes from the information provided. The data collected aligned with the overarching research question for the study: What leadership strategies do leaders in the banking industry use to increase employee productivity? As the interviewer, establishing a positive relationship and gaining the trust of the participants is important (Boies et al., 2015). Effective interviewers possess good listening and communication skills, avoid using biased data (Goodell, Stage, & Cooke, 2016), and positively engages with participants. I used member checking to ensure an accurate interpretation of participant responses. According to Quick and Hall (2015), researchers use member checking to reduce discrepancies found in data transcription. In fact, member checking improves the validity of the research findings (Chaimongkonrojna & Steane, 2015). Researchers should always allow participants the opportunity to verify and confirm the interpretation of their responses (Amankwaa, 2016).

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques I used to conduct this qualitative single-unit case study were semistructured interviews, observation, and documents. Advantages to conducting interviews were (a) the ability to interact with participants' face-to-face, (b) opportunity to expand dialogue by asking open-ended questions, and (c) gain an in-depth understanding of a participant's first-hand experiences (Yin, 2015). Silverman (2016)

explained researchers gain factual accounts of participant experiences by conducting interviews.

I contacted a bank executive and met face-to-face to request permission to conduct my case study and gain access to bank leaders. The executive received a letter of cooperation detailing the requirements to initiate the research. Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Frey (2013) emailed invitations with a cover letter, which included the purpose of the study, confidentiality clause, and a statement that participation was voluntary. After receiving permission to access leaders, I invited leaders to participate in the study using a letter of recruitment. Participants received the letter of recruitment via email containing the qualifications needed to participate. In the email, I addressed the following (a) identified the research topic, (b) explained the purpose of the research, (c) criteria to participate, and (d) contact information. Selecting quality participants is vital to research and helps improve the validity of a study (Quick & Hall, 2015). I determined if the bank leaders met the requirements to participate in the study. Qualifying participants signed a consent form, which was an acknowledgment of their understanding regarding the research process. Stephens-Craig, Kuofie, and Dool (2015) required all participants to sign consent forms before participating in the interview process. I conducted interviews after obtaining signed consent forms.

To conduct interviews, I secured a location on-site with minimal noise or potential interruptions. The location was verbally and mutually approved by the participant. I was conscientious of the participant's availability and scheduled interviews at a date and time suitable for the participant. Middleton, Harvey, and Esaki (2015)

scheduled interviews convenient for the participant. The interviews lasted 45 minutes to ensure the participant had time to answer interview questions indicated in the interviewing protocol (see Appendix), verify transcripts for accuracy, and make corrections if needed. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggested aligning interview questions with the overarching research question. The semistructured interviewing technique included open-ended questions, note taking, and digitally recorded participant responses. Zayas-Ortiz, Rosario, Marquez, and Colon Cruneiro (2015) used the semistructured interview process to explore the relationship between organizational commitments and citizenship behavior of private banking employees. According to Sun and Yu (2015), a strong employee commitment can increase employee productivity. Using the semistructured interviews, allow researchers to collect in-depth information about a phenomenon (Palinkas, 2015).

I initiated the semistructured interviews by asking six open-ended questions. Yin (2015) explained asking open-ended is beneficial to qualitative research allowing participants to engage in open dialogue with researchers. Participants can extend their responses and provide pertinent information, which researchers could miss by asking closed-ended questions (Yin, 2015). Asking close-ended questions can limit the possibility of acquiring new information with simple *yes* or *no* responses (Ranney et al., 2015). I asked follow-up questions based on participant responses to gain further insight or understanding about positive and effective leadership strategies.

A digital recorder and iPhone were the two devices I used to record participant interviews. With acquired permission from the participant, I recorded interviews,

transcribed participant responses, and transferred information to a Microsoft Word document. The Mac dictation transcribed the data input from the recordings. Digitally recording interviews allow researchers to transcribe participant responses verbatim to improve interpretation accuracy (Jit et al., 2016). Digital recorders can capture significant data researchers may not capture through note taking (Ranney et al., 2015). I uploaded participant recorded responses to the computer and manually transcribed data through Mac dictation. I used the iPhone as a backup recording device. Merriam and Tisdell (2015) posited recording devices can help improve accuracy and prevent the loss of spoken data.

In addition to the primary data, I conducted participant observations as a secondary data collection technique. Participant observations happened during the scheduled interviewing session. Observing participant behavior during the interviewing process is important (Ranney et al., 2015). I used reflective journaling to document participant behavior or routine activities exhibited in their natural workplace environment. According to Yin (2015), researchers can collect valuable data by observing participants in their natural environment. Document review was the third data source I used to collect information to support this case study. I requested to review company documents to help understand or measure how effective leadership strategies increase employee productivity. In the data collection process, researchers can encounter challenges that can affect the reliability and validity of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

The advantages to conducting semistructured interviews were (a) researchers can generate more information by asking open-ended questions (Ranney et al., 2015) and (b) observe participant's nonverbal cues during the interview (Bengtsson, 2016). The advantage of observation is researchers can observe participants in their natural environment and journal behaviors or workplace routines (Amankwaa, 2016). Examining company documents can provide additional information not openly revealed in the semistructured interviews or the observation process (Yin, 2015).

The disadvantages to the semistructured interviews and observations included (a) researcher inaccuracy interpreting participant data and (b) researcher bias (Mohamad, Ramli, Hashim, & Zakariah, 2015). Bias can occur if researchers include their personal opinions, which can negatively affect the credibility of the research findings (Quick & Hall, 2015). A disadvantage of the document technique is collecting company documents can be time consuming and researchers may view the data collected as subjective (Kossek et al., 2018). Researchers should refrain from leading participant responses, maintain good notes, or use member checking to help improve the validity of interpretations (Leung, 2015). I avoided the disadvantages by not leading participant responses and used member checking by asking participants to review, clarify, and correct response interpretations.

Researchers use member checking to help ensure the accuracy of the data collected during the research process (Amankwaa, 2015). Furthermore, member checking enhances the trustworthiness of data interpretation in the case study findings (Birt et al., 2016). According to Birt et al., 2016, member checking is an opportunity for participants

to verify the accuracy of data interpretations obtained during the interview. I avoided transcribing inaccurate information from participant responses by using member checking to verify data interpretations. I chose a qualitative methodology to conduct this research; this is not a pilot study.

Data Organization Technique

Another aspect of collecting data for research was the organization technique. Important steps to executing the organization technique include ensuring appropriate tracking and labeling systems are in place to sustain privacy and securely safeguard all raw data obtained in the data collection process (Mittal & Dhar, 2015). I could easily identify and access information in the future, by properly organizing data. My responsibility as the researcher was to properly organize, store, and secure all information obtained in the data collection process.

Yin (2015) explained researchers need to demonstrate consistency during the organization and data interpretation process. According to Palinkas et al. (2015), constant comparison of data improves the effectiveness of research outcomes and the achievement of data saturation. Arnold, Loughlin, and Walsh (2016) used the comparison technique using archival documents (training material) and transcripts to explore transformational leadership in an extreme context. I reviewed, identified, and documented commonalities between the research data sources. Lub (2015) explained researchers use interviewing transcripts to determine reoccurring patterns from participant responses. To remain consistent and organized, I followed the interviewing protocol (see Appendix). I introduced the research, explained the interview protocol, assigned participant codes,

took notes, activated recording device, asked questions, and followed with probing questions if needed. To achieve saturation, I continued interviewing participants until data became redundant.

To conduct the semistructured interviews, I used two recording devices to collect data and improve the accuracy of participant responses gained during the interview. Researchers can protect the integrity of data and reduce bias, by using digital recorders to collect participant data (Frontiera, 2010). I thoroughly listened to the digital recordings and transcribed participant responses verbatim. According to Yin (2015), researchers use recording devices to help improve the accuracy of data transcription. However, researchers must receive prior approval from the participant to use a recording device before conducting the interview (Graca & Passos, 2015). I used Mac dictation to transcribe participant responses then categorized keywords from the interview. I manually transferred keywords or phrases from the digital recorder to a Microsoft Word document and reviewed transcripts to identify common themes. By listening to the recordings, I replayed participant responses from the interview and accurately interpreted the information provided.

Reflective journaling and note taking are two methods I used to document the daily activities of participant observations in the workplace. Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, and Morrow (2017) explained reflective journaling can assist researchers in identifying their assumptions. Labeling is a part of the cataloging process in which researchers distinguish data by letter, number, or both (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). I used labeling to safeguard the identity of the participants and the data. Girdauskiene and Eyvazzade (2015) labeled

participants alphabetically to maintain organization and confidentially. For example, I used L1 to represent leaders participating in the study. I labeled and placed all data obtained in a file folder to help identify or easily access participant information in the research process. The Microsoft Word document contained all keywords or themes identified from each data source.

Researchers must properly store and safeguard participant data (Quick & Hall, 2015). I placed the reflective journal, field notes, interview transcripts, and flash drive in a locked file cabinet. The Microsoft Word document and Mac dictations were in a password protected zip file. As required by Walden University guidelines, I stored all raw data collected for a minimum of 5 years. Labeling data reduces the probability of compromising participant data (Girdauskiene & Eyvazzade, 2015). I placed field notes, reflective journal, and digital recording device in a locked filing cabinet to safeguard documents and equipment. Frontiera (2010) digitally copied recordings to preserve the integrity of the participant's data. I informed participants the information obtained was for the purposes of this study. Information such as the name of participating company, participant's name, or title is private and unavailable to the public. No outside party is privy to the participant's information to ensure participant privacy and confidentiality following the code of ethics.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process involved exploratory methods in which researchers collect, examine, label, code, and categorize participant information (Saldana, 2015). I used Yin's 5-step approach to complete the data analysis process. Yin's 5-step approach

included collecting data, grouping data codes and themes, assessing themes, and developing conclusions. According to Yin (2015), analyzing data includes logical models, explanation building, or pattern matching. In this study, I analyzed data by collecting participant information, developing themes, and comparing sources to understand how leadership strategies increase employee productivity in the banking industry. Researchers must first analyze the information obtained in the data collection process to understand the meaning of data (Bengtsson, 2016).

To perform the analysis, I examined data such as transcripts from participant recorded interviews. I uploaded information from the digital recording device and manually transcribed data through Mac dictation. I entered information generated through Mac dictation in a Microsoft Word document and triangulated data from each data source. Yin (2015) used transcription to interpret and identify similar themes between data sources. I reviewed the participants' interview data and made necessary corrections if needed. However, listening to digital recordings help researchers interpret data accurately (Lancaster & Di Milia, 2015). Researchers improve the accuracy of deciphering participant responses by using digital recording devices (Ranney et al., 2015).

After completing interviews and transcribing, I allowed participants an opportunity to verify the interpretation of their responses and provide feedback to determine accuracy. Birt et al. (2016) explained member checking as participant validation or technique measuring the trustworthiness and credibility of the study findings. Documents and observations were the next data collection techniques I used to

analyze participant data, which included reflective journaling and field notes. Researchers use reflective journaling during observations to maintain a detailed record of ideas and behaviors (Amankwaa, 2016). I requested company documents and thoroughly examined the information provided to identify common themes. As emerging themes developed, I compared information from all data sources until no new themes emerge. Quick and Hall (2015) explained the data collection and analysis process is continuous until no new information emerges. After the research becomes repetitive and no additional data emerges, the researcher achieves saturation (Goodell et al., 2016). Researchers achieve data saturation by comparing data on a continuous basis (Hennink, Kaiser, & Marconi, 2017).

Categorizing was an important component of the data analysis process in which I used the coding method. Organizing data throughout the research process is beneficial to researchers making the process of coding and categorizing information more consistent (Bengtsson, 2016). Researchers can code participant data following theme development and categorization to identify information (Quick & Hall, 2015). Ranney et al. (2015) defined theme development as the commonality between data sources divided into categories through coding. Yin (2015) conveyed in a study that coding link participant responses to the study research theory. Soane, Butler, and Stanton (2015) used coding in a transformational leadership and performance study and coded two leadership constructs by reading and reviewing data. The conceptual framework of Soane et al. (2015) is relevant to the outcome of this qualitative case study. I consistently reviewed data and worked to identify keywords, patterns, or similarities in data sources. Coding is the

application of identifying common patterns and maintaining company or participant privacy (AlHussami, Hamad, Darawad, & Marhameh, 2017). I used the Microsoft Excel program to examine coded data and sort themes by comparing commonalities in data sources. The Microsoft Excel software has a sorting function that I used to organize data in the spreadsheet (Smith, Fowler-Davis, Nancarrow, Ariss, & Enderby, 2018).

There are four methods researchers can use to perform data analysis: (a) triangulation, (b) methodological triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) investigator triangulation (Joslin & Mueller, 2016). I used methodological triangulation to perform the data analysis. Amankwaa (2016) used triangulation to compare and identify patterns between data sources. The methodological triangulation approach involves using multiple data collection techniques (Franco & Matos, 2015) such as semistructured interviews, documents, observations, and questionnaires. I used semistructured interviews, observations, and documents. From the data instruments, researchers can acquire in-depth data from participant lived experiences, create themes, and maintain a reflective journal of workplace environment and behavioral cues exhibited in the interviews (Franco & Matos, 2016).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

To strengthen the reliability of a qualitative study, researchers recommend properly documenting data collection procedures. The reliability of research is contingent on the relatedness between data sources yielding the same results (Amankwaa, 2016). I asked open-ended questions during the semistructured interviews to avoid leading the

participant responses. According to Bengtsson (2016), researchers improve dependability by reducing personal bias and ensuring the accuracy of participate data interpretations. I transcribed information from participant interviews, maintained accurate records, conducted member checking, and used triangulation to compare data sources to achieve saturation. The dependability of a qualitative case study's findings increases when researchers use member checking and triangulation (Morse, 2016).

Dependability like reliability reflects the stability of data change over time (Bengtsson, 2016). However, scholars may not achieve the same results, but the content should yield similar results. To determine dependability, researchers must show or establish consistency with the research (Amankwaa, 2016). If the interpretations were inaccurate, I corrected transcripts to reflect the participant's feedback. The concepts of reliability and dependability determine the trustworthiness of a study (Bengtsson, 2016) in which researchers attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon.

Validity

Researchers validate the quality and accuracy of a study by the following factors (a) credibility, (b) confirmability, and (c) transferability (Lub, 2015). Researchers demonstrate credibility after participants recognize the context of the data (Lub, 2015). In a qualitative study, using triangulation to compare multiple sources of data, identifying common themes, and member checking improves research credibility (Joslin & Mueller, 2016).

Researchers consider credibility an essential factor of determining the adequacy of a qualitative study (Morse, 2015). Credibility ensures the authenticity of the

researcher's findings from the perception of the participants (Yin, 2015). Researchers allow participants to review data for accuracy using member checking, which reinforces accountability throughout the research process. Participants add to the credibility of a study by reviewing the data, correcting inaccuracies, and making necessary adjustments to the researcher's interpretation (Gordon & Gordon, 2017). Liao and Hitchcock (2018) attributed accuracy and accountability to research the credibility. Reporting accurate data improves the validity of the findings whereas accountability reflects the researcher's documentation of data. The purpose of this study is to understand effective leadership strategies in the banking industry. Selecting quality participants added credibility to the study findings by sharing 5 years of banking knowledge and expertise on leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. Researchers use triangulation to analyze data and improve the credibility of research findings (Quick & Hall, 2015).

I used methodological triangulation to help ensure credibility. Methodological triangulation is the comparison of multiple data sources, which researcher use to improve credibility of a study (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). Moreover, the triangulation method is a means for researchers to collect rich data, corroborate findings, and perform validity testing (Amankwaa, 2016). I thoroughly reviewed transcripts, identified common themes or patterns, and crosschecked data sources to ensure no new developing themes emerge. According to Amankwaa (2016), triangulation is an examination of consistency across data sources. Semistructured interviews, observations, and documents are the three sources I used to triangulate data. Researchers can obtain more information from

different perspectives by examining multiple sources (Lub, 2015). By using triangulation, I increased the credibility of the study and reduced the possibility of bias.

Transferability (external validity) describes how research conclusions are transferable to different conditions, demographics, groups, or study objects (Bengtsson, 2016). The conclusions drawn are applicable outside the study context enabling scholars to transfer data to other academic literature. Qualitative researchers gain transferability through in-depth examinations and documentation such as note taking, member checking, and digital recordings (Palinkas et al., 2015). Through documentation, I outlined a clear representation of findings other scholars can follow or duplicate. Research findings are transferable allowing future scholars to easily duplicate the research process by thoroughly documenting and analyzing participant data (Yin, 2015).

Replication of themes generated from multiple sources is important for achieving data saturation (Ranney et al, 2015). Participants volunteering to participate in the study can provide personal insight and experience implementing effective leadership strategies increasing employee productivity to help meet data saturation. The researcher's data must produce constant and unchanging results over time (Amankwaa, 2016). I continued conducting interviews until no new themes emerged and I achieved data saturation. I verified data from semistructured interviews, observations, and company documents and used member checking to ensure the accuracy of interpretations from participant responses. Triangulation is the method of comparing multiple data sources researchers use to achieve saturation (Yin, 2015).

Amankwaa (2016) described confirmability as the trustworthiness and congruence of a study. Reporting accurate data, verifying interpretations, and approving modifications help researchers achieve confirmability by improving the trustworthiness of the study conclusions (Amankwaa, 2016). To avoid bias, researchers must disregard any personal opinions, experiences, and perceptions that may influence the outcome of the study (Lub, 2015). Participants verified transcripts and confirmed the accuracy of the data interpretations from the interviews conducted. I updated the transcripts according to the participant's feedback to improve confirmability, if the interpretations of the participant responses were incorrect. Member checking affords participants the opportunity to verify and modify researcher interpretations for accuracy (Birt et al., 2016). Moreover, asking open-ended questions provides participants with an opportunity to extend dialogue about their experiences thus providing in-depth data to support the study (Yin, 2015).

The data saturation concept is indicative of the qualitative research methodology. Saturation is the comparison of data collection sources producing redundant information until no new information emerges (Ranney et al., 2015). To achieve saturation, I asked participants to verify and confirm my interpretations of the interviewing dialogue for accuracy, used member checking, and continued examining data until no reoccurring themes emerge. According to Hennink et al. (2017), data saturation identifies common themes among multiple data sources to help strengthen research findings. Using triangulation affords the researcher an opportunity to combine multiple data sources, create themes, code similarities, and achieve data saturation (Franco & Matos, 2015).

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I identified and discussed significant components of this qualitative study such as purpose statement, role of the researcher, participants, research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, technique, and analysis, and reliability and validity. The key components of the case study contain a comprehensive description of the research process and protocols. Each component of the research process aligns with the case study's overarching research question for this qualitative case study; which is, what leadership strategies do leaders in the banking industry use to increase employee productivity?

I selected three data collection methods, semistructured interviews, observation, and member checking, to obtain rich data from leaders employing effective leadership strategies in the banking industry. Participants will possess 5 years of management experience and knowledge in the banking industry increasing employee productivity. To achieve accuracy and data saturation, I compared multiple data sources using the triangulation methodology thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the study findings.

Section 3 of the study will include the following: (a) presentation of findings, (b) application of professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for further action and research, (e) reflections, and (f) conclusion. Furthermore, Section 3 will include a comprehensive summary highlighting my DBA journey at Walden University. The case study findings demonstrate the outcomes exploring leadership strategies and employee productivity in the banking industry.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore leadership strategies banking industry leaders use to increase employee productivity. I captured data from six bank leaders by conducting semistructured interviews, journaling observations, and reviewing company documents. The participants answered six open-ended questions regarding the leadership strategies used in the workplace. I used methodological triangulation to compare information from each data source. The leadership strategies revealed by the participants' aligned with Bass's (1985) transformational theory used as the conceptual framework. From the participants' responses, I identified common themes bank leaders use to increase employee productivity, such as leading by example, providing encouragement, teamwork, and rewards.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question for this single case study was: What leadership strategies do leaders in the banking industry use to increase employee productivity? I conducted semistructured interviews at locations the participants chose; journaled observations during interviews; and reviewed documents participants provided, such as the company handbook. I recorded all interviews after receiving permission from each participant. Participants in the study were leaders from a bank located in Mississippi. Each participant possessed a minimum of 5 years of experience working in the banking industry implementing effective leadership strategies to increase employee productivity.

The four themes I identified in the data analysis process were (a) lead by example, (b) encourage, (c) teamwork, and (d) reward.

I achieved data saturation at the point no new themes emerged from the semistructured interviews, journaled observations, and company documents. Following the data collection process, I coded the participants using a letter and number system. The letter L was used to represent each leader and paired with a number chronologically to maintain the order of participants interviewed. The participants' interviewed received the following labels: L1, L2, L3, L4, L5, and L6. I interpreted the data collected using a thematic approach. Researchers can identify similarities in data sources by using thematic analysis (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017).

The following three themes emerged under transformational leadership: (a) lead by example, (b) encourage, and (c) teamwork, while the fourth theme, (d) reward, was aligned with transactional leadership. All of these themes generated through the data analysis process can align with Bass's transformational leadership theory. Bank leaders use positive reinforcement, such as a reward, as a positive leadership strategy to increase employee productivity.

Theme 1: Lead by Example

Leading by example was a common strategy the participants mentioned during the interviews. The participants expressed leading by example demonstrates their willingness to be hands-on engaging in the same daily tasks required of the employees, which allow employees to easily identify with the leader. Bass (1985) associated the term, leading by example, with the idealized influence approach in the transformational

leadership theory. Employees value and admire leaders using the idealized influence approach, viewing them as role models emulating the leader's behavior (Wang, Meyer, & Jackson, 2013). In Interview Questions 1 and 2, I explored what leadership strategies leaders use and are effective to increase employee productivity. Participants L2, L4, and L5 expressed leading by example showed the leader's commitment to supporting their employees. L4 stated, "One of my strategies is to lead by example. I don't ask my team to do anything that I'm not willing to do. So, if we're shorthanded I'll just jump right in and do whatever needs to be done." L2 stated, "I feel that good communication is a very great aspect. You have to let your employees know what's going on. You lead by example. You have to be creative. And I'm very, very, very positive at all times."

Leaders should be good role models and attentive to follower needs (Aga, Noorderhaven, & Vallejo, 2016). L4 expressed, "being more involved and working with employees one-on-one allows me to monitor and evaluate their performance and success." Providing individual attention allows leaders to develop strong leader-employee relationships. Transformational leaders are attentive to employee needs giving employees an opportunity to connect and develop a deeper level of trust with the leader (Arnold et al., 2016). L3 posited, "face-to-face or periodic visits to discuss what is or is not working, quarterly conference calls, and how to improve employee participation are ways to help ensure increased productivity." The participants suggested working with employees hand-in-hand and providing encouragement keeps employees productive. L2 stated, "I will sell the benefits, not just describe the product, so they will see me actually do it leading by example."

I reviewed the organization's code of ethics, which indicated senior, corporate, or team leaders bear the special responsibility of promoting honesty and integrity as well as preserving the interest of the employee in both personal and professional relationships. Employees were valuable to the company. Leaders at the bank were committed to employees by being hands-on, available, and leading by example, which reflected an organizational culture of support through encouragement and creating positive leader-employee relationships.

Theme 2: Encourage

Encourage emerged as the second theme that was generated through the data analysis process. Leaders in the banking industry reported that offering words of encouragement provided employees with an added push to meet or accomplish company-desired expectations. Pourbarkhordari, Zhou, and Pourkarimi (2016) explained positive leadership behavior accelerates an individual's way of thinking, improving employee and organizational performance. I observed and journaled about the Positive Pledge posted on the wall of L6's office, which reinforced and demonstrated the leader maintained an encouraging environment. The bank leaders used encouragement as a motivational tool to engage employees and achieve company-desired goals. In Bass's transformational leadership theory, scholars defined inspirational motivation as the process encouraging employees to accomplish set goals (Mahmood, Uddin, & Fan, 2019). Each of the participants used positivity as a tool to help build employee confidence and improve performance levels. L5 stated, "I notice the excitement when I am encouraging them. I let

them know that hey I got your back. You can do this. It makes them want to keep pushing because they feel like someone is fighting for them."

Transformational leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage followers to help achieve organizational success. Keeping employees motivated is a challenge many leaders face (Osabiya, 2015). L4 confirmed that keeping employees positive and motivated at all times is challenging. In Interview Question 4, I explored the key barriers leaders face when implementing leadership strategies. Leaders L2, L3, and L6 explained that negative attitudes and reluctance to change were major barriers they face when implementing positive leadership strategies. A positive or negative mindset can impact employee performance and the level of productivity in the workplace (Bin, 2015). Employees perform at higher levels and are more productive working in a positive environment (Zayas-Ortiz et al., 2015). L5 explained, "I've always said give me someone who has a great attitude and I can train them. I can make them be a good leader. They can grow." L2 stated,

> I have. Some of the barriers have been negative attitudes. Those who do not like change and they like to do things their way. But I have to let them know that this change is for the betterment of the company.

L3 stated, "The barriers seemed to be due to reluctance of change, old habits die hard. So not grasping the reason or the vision associated with the change that we were making."

Leaders would benefit from using Bass's inspirational motivation technique to maintain a supportive environment, employee engagement, and high productivity levels (Caniels. Semeijn, & Renders, 2018). I reviewed the employee handbook to triangulate

the statements of L2, L3, and L5 about encouragement. The participants repeatedly expressed the importance of encouraging their employees and promoting a positive workplace environment aligning with Bass's transformational leadership theory.

Theme 3: Teamwork

The third theme generated from data analysis was teamwork. Adopting a transformational leadership style in today's globalized world is becoming more prevalent (CITE). According to Alkahtani (2015), transformational leaders concentrate on motivating followers and developing teamwork. Leaders mentoring and supporting followers exemplify the fourth transformational leadership behavioral concept: individualized consideration (Martin, 2015). Individualized consideration involves leaders coaching, mentoring followers, and providing more individual support to achieve one common goal (Anthony, 2017). Following this concept, leaders encourage teamwork and work together with employees to accomplish company goals and team involvement is encouraged from top-level management down. L3 acknowledged, "The CEO sends weekly motivational quotes regarding service and participation goals; allowing employees to see that the executives are on board, and generating employee buy-in."

In Interview Question 6, participants added additional leadership strategies they use to increase employee productivity. L3 stated,

I want them to know that I am on their side. We're one team, again one team working together… I want them to know that I'm available to them. That you know we're working through this thing together and anything that I can do to actually help.

L5 observed,

I say team is because when you're working together as a team, I don't mind doing

their job. So, a lot of times a lot of leaders just has the title of leadership, but are

they really leaders? So, when it comes down to it, if they're in a dilemma where

they need some help, I'm willing to go in to help them. And that's why I think

that they work hard because they know that I'm willing to help them at any time.

Leaders not recognizing the significance of human capital risk failure (Gambardella,

2015). L5 posited, "In management you have to be a team player and remind employees

they are a part of the team." The company handbook referenced the team, and L2 showed

a product report on how goals are measured and employees work together to reach

individual and branch goals.

Theme 4: Reward

The final theme generated from the data analysis was reward. Four participants

stated that they used rewarding participants as a motivational driver to increase employee

productivity and achieve company goals. Scholars identified goal orientation and reward

as a concept of transactional leadership (Dartey-Baah, 2015). L6 posited, "We have

awards. There's been special recognition whether it be the champion award, responsible

award that sometimes come with monetary awards, plaques or just recognition." Reward,

recognition, and incentive were three different, but similar, approaches mentioned by the

participants. Rewards can be either intrinsic (i.e., praise/recognition) or extrinsic (i.e.,

monetary). In response to Interview Question 3, L3 acknowledged the following, "Some

of the strategies we use to encourage this includes incentives which are maybe some one-

on-one power lunches with the market president and recognition as star outreach employee for the quarter. No monetary awards are used."

I discovered that contingent reward was a preferred and practiced approach used by each participant, in which the leaders used positive reinforcement. Contingent reward is the process of goal clarification and awarding employees for their performance or achieving company goals (Ali et al., 2015). L1 acknowledged, "Recognition plays a key role in their performance. We get together, put up numbers, and leaders comment and encourage employees somewhat like a pep rally, no discouragement." I viewed a data board that allowed me to see how employees achieved their goals, their motivation, the numbers reported, and the reason for recognition or reward. Transactional leadership is a contractual agreement between leader and follower involving rewards or compensation (Northouse, 2016).

The final theme of reward aligned with Bass's transactional leadership theory but reflected the positive nature of a transformational leader. Transformational leaders are visionaries and positive; they set high expectations and encourage employees to exceed the status quo (Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschek, 2016). I concluded in the findings that both transformational and transactional leadership styles positively impact employee productivity aligning with the conceptual framework and academic literature.

Applications to Professional Practice

The results of this qualitative case study are significant towards understanding what leadership strategies can be used to maintain employee engagement and high performance. In this study, I explored effective leadership strategies bank leaders used to

increase productivity. The results and recommendations will serve as a guide to industry

leaders to improve the sustainability and profitability of their organizations. Moreover,

the leadership strategies mentioned by bank leaders provide optimal ways to improve job

satisfaction and engage employees. Disengaged employees demonstrate a lower level of

productivity in the workplace that can negatively impact organizational performance and

revenue (Bin, 2015). If considered, leaders can use the findings to implement effective

leadership strategies in underperforming areas of the organization to meet organizational

goals, eliminating potential gaps contributing to the professional practice.

Leaders must recognize the importance of integrating leadership styles suitable

for their employees that sustains employee engagement. Leaders using the

transformational leadership style motivate, encourage, and nurture employee needs

giving employees a sense of self-worth and feeling of value (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2016).

Bank leaders need to clearly define and confirm employees understand company

expectations and promote personal development to maintain a level of high productivity.

Employees are primary assets and listed as one of the top core values on the company

website. Leaders can increase their productivity level, by committing to the development

of human capital and investing in employee well-being.

The findings are relevant to professional practice, in which the study contained

first-hand solutions for leaders in the banking industry. Leaders can compare or

reevaluate the leadership strategies they currently use and incorporate the strategies

presented in the case study findings. Themes generated in the study were practical, cost

effective strategies leaders in the banking industry used to increase employee

productivity and maintain sustainability. Leaders can impact the overall effectiveness of a business by increasing employee productivity positioning the business at a competitive advantage over industry competitors.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change from this study involve effective leadership strategies bank leaders use to increase employee productivity. Leaders implementing effective leadership strategies can increase organizational productivity, profitability, and sustainability by investing in human capital. The leadership strategies identified in this study such as leading by example, encouragement, and reward are reflective and supportive of positive leader-employee relationships, team-building, and personal development, which improves employee engagement, commitment, and reduces turnover. One of the top three reasons employees leave companies is leadership behavior such as failure to establish positive or productive relationships, lack of support, and poor employee treatment and communication (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2018) predicted the United States businesses and industries will experience a 33% turnover of employees leaving the company, which continuously trended upward over the past three years. The turnover rate is a valid concern for not only the leaders in the banking and finance industry; all industries face this problem. Lack of employee engagement in the workplace is a strong explanation for high turnover rates in most organizations (Lu, Lu, Gusoy, & Neale, 2016). Leaders can reduce turnover costs and improve retention by implementing effective leadership strategies in the workplace that maintain high levels of employee engagement and

productivity (Karanges, Johnston, Beatson, & Lings, 2015). Active engagement impacts an employees' level of commitment and performance (Matthews, Stanley, & Davidson, 2018), thus generating long-term outcomes that could elicit positive social change by contributing gained profits from turnover back to the community. Leaders can make charitable donations that can help fund after school programs, housing development, food pantries, community centers, and potentially stimulating the local economy.

The findings of this study contain practical leadership strategies leaders can use to increase productivity in the workplace. As baby boomers leave the workforce, leaders must recognize the autonomy of the millennials, be attentive to employee needs, open to employee input, personal development, and encourage creativity (Kostanek & Khoreva, 2018). By taking a proactive approach to invest in human capital and maintaining employee engagement, leaders could improve retention levels and help reduce the high turnover rate, which is negatively impacting the banking and finance industry. These strategies could help strengthen the future of today's workforce and the U.S. economy.

Recommendations for Action

The data collected from participant interviews might enhance currently used leadership strategies or provide bank leaders with a positive new insight on how to increase employee productivity in the workplace. Scholars have noted how low employee engagement can negatively impact productivity and profitability (Bin, 2015). Bank leaders must recognize the significance of implementing positive leadership strategies that sustain employee engagement and high levels of productivity. My recommendations for action include establishing positive leader-employee relationships, being open to

employee input or ideas, acknowledging employee needs, offering encouragement, promoting personal development, and practicing transparency. Leaders can learn how to acquire or implement these cost-effective strategies through company leadership development events.

Leaders lacking the willingness to implement effective leadership strategies in the workplace risk low employee morale, high turnover, and low employee performance (Iqbal et al, 2015), which can negatively affect product sales and profitability. Moreover, leaders using ineffective leadership strategies can compromise the sustainability of the company. The data collected from bank leaders were valuable allowing me to add additional insight to scholarly research on leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. Bank leaders can improve employee retention, increase profitability, and maintain sustainability by using effective leadership strategies. Implementing effective leadership strategies allow leaders to build a positive organizational culture and working environment leading to higher employee satisfaction and desired performance outcomes.

The findings contained examples of effective leadership strategies leaders use to increase employee productivity. The results of this study could help bank leaders implement more effective strategies to maintain high levels of productivity in the workplace. The information collected in this case study would be beneficial for company training sessions, personal development meetings, or focus groups. I find these settings ideal for distributing results to stakeholders, executives, and leaders in the company. The participants will receive a copy of the study results and will be available to scholars on ProQuest. Conferences are another potential means of sharing material externally such as

brochures, pamphlets, or peer-reviewed articles to other industry leaders and business owners. I recommend bank leaders (a) invest in human capital, (b) provide support and encouragement, (c) establish positive leader-employee relationships, and (d) promote personal development.

Recommendations for Further Research

The intent of this qualitative case study was to explore leadership strategies leaders use to increase employee productivity in the banking industry. Bank leaders shared successful leadership strategies implemented at their company located in Mississippi, which aligned with the study's academic literature review and conceptual framework. The data collected from the bank leaders may serve as a sound resource for other financial institutions to help sustain employee engagement and high levels of productivity. Scholars could extend the research by selecting multiple companies to compare different leadership strategies, interviewing employees to gain a new perspective, considering a different geographic location, or conducting a quantitative study to test the correlation between leadership strategies and employee productivity.

Future scholars could examine training availability and personal development to enhance employee skill sets and performance, which could generate a positive long-term effect improving future desired company outcomes and reducing turnover. Participants mentioned the importance of training, employees desire to do and learn more, offering innovative ideas, and seeking advancement opportunities. A transformational leader encourages the personal development and growth of an employee (Henker, Sonnentag, & Unger, 2015). Collecting data from an employee's perspective could help reinforce and

determine the overall effectiveness of the leadership strategies used by leader in the banking industry.

I conducted this study in a town located Mississippi. Expanding the research in a metropolitan area may generate more in-depth data from a more diverse demographic or larger population of leaders in the banking industry. Moreover, the recommendations allow future scholars the opportunity to add new insight to this field of research and help develop a stronger foundation linking effective leadership strategies to increased productivity.

Reflections

I was grateful to have the opportunity to connect and interview six successful leaders possessing a minimum of 5 years of experience in the banking industry. I gained valuable insight and first-hand knowledge about the importance of using positive leadership strategies to maintain a high level of employee productivity in the workplace. The bank leaders participating in the study, I accessed through purposeful sampling. The willingness from the bank leaders to participate in the study and offer their expertise to help complete my doctoral degree was well received. The most challenging task I encountered was obtaining a signed letter of cooperation. I received approval. However, a few weeks passed before officially acquiring a signature to begin conducting interviews.

The participants were positive and committed to their role as a leader, which exuded during the interview. Listening to the participants experiences first-hand allowed me to gain a new perspective about the daily interactions with the employees and what leadership strategies keeps the employee motivated and engaged. A positive leadership-

employee relationship from top-level management down was described as a very key component to ensure organizational success.

The qualitative single case study included effective leadership strategies increasing employee productivity. My sample contained leaders from a bank located in Mississippi. The research involved conducting semistructured interviews, observations, and documents to collect valuable data and in-depth knowledge about leadership strategies leaders use in the banking industry. In the interview, I asked participant six open-ended questions, journaled observations, and obtained company document. The findings contained in-depth information that helped me realize the significance of implementing effective leadership strategies.

Conclusion

Scholars have demonstrated that the use of effective leadership strategies can improve employee engagement leading to enhanced performance (Jha & Kumar, 2016). Human capital is vital to the success of an organization (Muda & Rahman, 2016). Establishing strong leader-employee relationships, which often develops trust, loyalty, and involves open-communication, increases employee performance and commitment to achieving organizational goals. Leaders who use effective leadership strategies and maintain high employee productivity levels aid in the sustainability of the company thus increasing profitability (Nwaeke & Obiekwe, 2017). Moreover, leaders maintaining higher levels of productivity position the company at a competitive advantage.

The findings of this study may help leaders in the banking industry implement more effective leadership strategies that encourage positive leader-employee

relationships, promote personal development, and adopt a more supportive role of leadership to meet company expectations and adapt to change. In this study, I conducted semistructured interviews, journaled observations, and viewed company document to gain insight of the leadership strategies bank leaders use to increase employee productivity. The participants included six bank leaders from Mississippi. I identified four themes that emerged from the data analysis process, which were (a) lead by example, (b) encourage, (c) teamwork, and (d) reward.

I used the transformational leadership theory as the conceptual framework for this qualitative single case study. Bank leaders from Mississippi shared in-depth information during the semistructured interviews which aligned with the academic literature and conceptual framework. I used the participants responses from the interview questions to compare data sources using the triangulation method. Based on the research findings, I recommend leaders in the banking industry invest in human capital. The data indicated employees respond to positive reinforcement such as reward, recognition, and encouragement reflecting aa combination transformation and transactional leadership styles.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of how leadership strategies increase employee productivity in the banking industry.

Protocol:
- Interviews will be a maximum of 45 minutes.
- Interviewee responses will be transcribed, digitally recorded, and observations journaled
- All identifying information will be coded to ensure privacy and confidentiality
- At the end of the interview, I will schedule a follow-up meeting by phone or in person with interviewee to verify accuracy of data interpretations.
- Data obtained will only be used for the purpose of this study.
- Per Walden University guidelines, the interviewee may exit the study at any time.
- Interviewee must acknowledge understanding of the interview protocol by signing the consent form before conducting the interview.

Interview Questions:

1. What leadership strategies do you use to increase employee productivity?
2. What leadership strategies do you find most effective to increase employee productivity?
3. How did you measure the effectiveness of your leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?
4. What key barriers did you face implementing leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?
5. How did you overcome the key barriers?
6. What additional information would you like to share regarding your leadership strategies to increase employee productivity?

Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to participate in this DBA doctoral case study.

Date: _____   **Location:** _____

Interviewer: _____   **Interviewee:** _____

Participant Consent: Yes_____   No ____