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Strategies for Meeting Local Workforce Policy Requirements in Developing Countries

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Abstract

Foreign companies operating in developing countries are losing competitive advantage due to local workforce policies and restrictions that governments issue to foster the development of indigenous businesses and people. Maintaining a competitive advantage is essential to foreign business owners long term sustainability. Based on Argyris and Schön's organizational learning theory, the purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The population comprised of 5 foreign managers who implemented effective strategies to increase the profitability of their company while meeting local content requirements in Kazakhstan. The data collection process included semistructured interviews and review of company documentation and artifacts. Through thematic analysis, the following primary themes emerged: training of local personnel, cultural and communication competence, and personnel retention. The implications for positive social change include the potential for foreign managers who want to develop business in developing countries to become them profitable. Leaders of profitable businesses can create positive social change by increasing employment opportunities for local personnel and enhancing the social welfare of local communities.

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Dedication

I dedicate my doctorate degree in business administration to my beloved grandparents, Benedetto and Giusi, who loved me unconditionally and encouraged me since the beginning of my life. I dedicate this study to my creative daughter, Benedetta, and to my smart son, Francesco; may this journey be an example of how the quest for learning and improvement in life should be a permanent objective. Last, I dedicate this research to my wife Rebecca, who sacrificed her personal and professional life for my career.

Acknowledgments

"Those who are in love with practice without science, are like the steersman who enters the canal without a rudder or a compass, who never knows where he is going. The practice must always be built on good theory, which provides the perspective to guide and to lead, and without this, nothing is done well." – Leonardo da Vinci

I want to thank my chair, Dr. Bethany Mickahail, for the continuous support and inspiration during this doctoral journey. I am also thankful for the precious and valuable feedback from my second chair, Dr. Jorge Gaytan, because thanks to his adamant academic approach, I learned how to improve my doctoral skills. I also acknowledge the support and feedback from Dr. Matthew Knight for his added-value observations. I want to thank all my scholarly colleagues who shared this path with me, in particular my very good friends LeRoy Jr Fontenette and Alvin Moton. Lastly, I would like to thank Malena Fuks, who supported me at the very beginning of the doctoral study to enter this prestigious university. And I cannot forget all my colleagues, who worked with me in harsh environments, shared challenges and satisfactions, and worked ethically towards a better world.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The saturation of local markets and consequent low profitability have pushed corporations and local firms to explore new foreign markets. Consequently, numerous oil-producing countries have begun to implement regulatory policies to foster job creation and the engagement of local labor, resulting in the so-called local content policy or requirement (Hansen, Buur, Mette Kjær, & Therkildsen, 2016). The local content policies issued by developing countries have forced multinational companies to select, recruit, and train local people to be part of international corporations, impacting their efficiency and profitability (Stone, Messent, & Flaig, 2015). This heterogeneity of cultures and beliefs in such organizations have had several pros and cons, as discussed in this research. Although the local content policy has an important impact on foreign direct investments, it has received little attention in the literature.

In this case study, the aim was to explore successful strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements in Kazakhstan. I used organizational learning theory as the conceptual framework for this study. The findings from the study may contribute to positive social change by increasing multinational corporate leaders' confidence in hiring local people, leading to a decrease in the unemployment rate.

Background of the Problem

Since the 1980s, the integration and interconnection of the world economy have dramatically increased. The result has been massive capital flows and technology transfers between developed nations and resource-rich developing countries. In most

developing countries, the current wave of globalization has caused increased concern about its impact on employment and income distribution. Globalization, together with an inadequate international policy to achieve sustainable economic expansion in developing countries, has resulted in new forms of protectionism by local governments. Some governments require a certain percentage of intermediate goods and services to be sourced from domestic manufacturers to encourage local growth (Hansen et al., 2016). The local content requirement is a popular government regulation applied to foreign direct investment. This regulation is mainly designed to increase the involvement of indigenous firms in the oil and gas business, transferring technology through participation with multinational enterprises (MNEs; Hale & Xu, 2016). Emerging economies in Asia recently started to issue rules and regulations forcing international oil and gas companies (i.e., petroleum-related enterprises) to adhere to strict parameters regarding the utilization of local resources (Owusu & Vaaland, 2016). These stringent requirements have a severe economic impact on the performance of foreign companies working in developing countries (Korinek & Ramdoo, 2017).

Problem Statement

Foreign companies operating in developing countries are losing competitive advantage due to local workforce policies and restrictions that governments issue to foster the development of indigenous businesses and people (Kafouros & Aliyev, 2016). Governments of developing countries impose restrictions through the application of local policies which impact on foreign companies' business profitability with a magnitude of 10%-20% of contracts' annual values (Stone et al., 2015). The general business problem

is that foreign companies have lost business profitability in developing countries due to stringent local workforce policy requirements. The specific business problem is that some foreign company managers lack strategies to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The target population consisted of five foreign company managers working in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan with successful experience in using strategies to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The implications for positive social change included the potential for increasing jobs for local people, leading to a decrease in the unemployment rate. Possible benefits for local people included access to better jobs in international companies and an increase in their standard of living.

Nature of the Study

Three research methodologies are available to researchers: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). The qualitative research method is a precise, inductive approach to learning about and describing business problems (Lewis, 2015). With the qualitative method, researchers can focus on the information derived from specific participants and their experiences (Chong & Yeo, 2015). The qualitative research method was the most appropriate for this study because I sought to explore strategies that some managers use to achieve profitable business performance that

satisfy local workforce policy requirements. Quantitative researchers engage participants with closed-ended questions (Reuter & Spielhofer, 2017). Quantitative researchers use data collection to focus on precise and objective measurements of numerical data and measurable variables to support or refute one or more hypotheses (Park & Park, 2016). In this study, the use of statistical analysis was not a requirement because the purpose was to capture the actual experiences of participants.

In contrast, the use of open-ended questions enabled the discovery of new facts or evidence to address the study's purpose. Several researchers have claimed that a mixed-methods research methodology is suitable for integrating qualitative and quantitative data (Molina-Azorin, Bergh, Corley, & Ketchen, 2017). The mixed-method research methodology was not appropriate for this study because there was no need to integrate statistics or examine variables' relationships or differences.

Lewis (2015) concluded that qualitative researchers typically use the following research designs: (a) case study, (b) phenomenological, (c) ethnographic, and (d) narrative. Other researchers have posited that the case study research design involves developing an in-depth description and analysis of a case to provide an exhaustive understanding of the phenomena (Nagata & Suzuki, 2017; Runfola, Perna, Baraldi, & Gregori, 2017). Therefore, the case study research design was appropriate for this study because I explored strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. Gentles, Charles, and Ploeg (2015) posited that phenomenological design is suitable for describing the meanings of participants' subjective lived experiences of a phenomenon.

Phenomenological design was not suitable for this study because it was not necessary to describe the meaning of participants' lived experiences.

Scholars use ethnographic design to describe and interpret the shared patterns of a group's culture (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Because culture was not the focus of this study, ethnographic design was not appropriate. Using a narrative design, researchers focus on the lives of individuals as told through their own stories (Pearson, Albon, & Hubball, 2015). The emphasis in such approaches is on the story, typically both what and how is narrated. The narrative design was not suitable for this study because I did not seek to explore individuals' stories related to lives and individual experiences.

Research Question

The overarching research question for this study was the following: What strategies do foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements?

Interview Questions

1. How do you identify and evaluate a potentially profitable business in developing countries?

2. What administrative and operational constraints have you faced in order to comply with local requirements?

3. What strategies do you use to better the performance of projects and satisfy local workforce requirements?

4. What is the process of retrieving information related to local workforce requirements and regulations in terms of the utilization of local resources?

5.   What are the metrics that the local government uses to address and measure local workforce requirements?

6.   How do you assess local workforce capability and availability?

7.   What are the key types of barriers you have faced in implementing your strategies for satisfying local workforce requirements?

8.   How did you address the key barriers to implementing your successful strategies for satisfying local workforce requirements?

9.   How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies to better the performance of projects and satisfy the local workforce requirements?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was organizational learning theory. Argyris and Schön (1978) developed organizational learning theory as a model to describe how personnel in organizations learn to achieve better results. Organizational learning is a social process. Members of an organization interact to build and expand meaning and knowledge about relationships inside the organization and the interaction of the learning environment outside the organization (Berta et al., 2015). Individuals in an organization learn in a social context with other individuals, assimilating knowledge embedded in that context and re-elaborating it; therefore, organizational learning is more than the sum of what individuals know and learn (Berta et al., 2015).

Some researchers have argued that employees interacting within the organizational context create knowledge and identify factors that affect knowledge retention and knowledge transfer (Wang, Xi, Xie, & Zhao, 2017). Having both explicit

knowledge (i.e., learning encoded as formal policies and procedures in information and data collection systems) and tacit knowledge (i.e., less explicit forms of knowledge such as organizational memory, culture, informal communication, and behavioral norms) of the organization and work processes, employees have a framework to achieve shared goals (Ranucci & Souder, 2015).

Learning is a never-ending process that contributes significantly to organizational growth, performance, and sustainability (Zappa & Robins, 2016). Managers interested in increasing the efficiency and performance of the organization must include organizational learning as part of a complex system of employees' exchange of explicit and tacit knowledge. Organizational learning theory was relevant to my effort in this study to understand how expatriates can effectively transfer their knowledge to local employees. This action has the potential to generate a positive impact on the organization's overall performance and competitiveness.

Operational Definitions

Absorptive capacity: Managers and researchers usually refer to absorptive capacity as the organization's capability to recognize the value of external knowledge, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial purposes (Khan, Shenkar, & Lew, 2015). It is the organization's ability to discover, adapt, and learn new knowledge to improve overall innovation performance (Darawong, 2015).

Business strategy: A business strategy is a set of decisions within an organization determining a firm's product and market domain, which allows the factual utilization of resources and capabilities to reach economic and sustainable growth (Lim, Chalmers, &

Hanlon, 2018). The activities involved in business strategy include setting up objectives, planning and implementing necessary changes, establishing a suitable organizational structure, and measuring outcomes (Daniel, 2015).

Change management: With this term, managers refer to a business process in which transformational needs force organizations to develop new capabilities, ways of doing work, and organizing and managing people, eventually leading to substantial improvements in both productivity and outcomes (Altamony, Tarhini, Al-Salti, Gharaibeh, & Elyas, 2016). This process often results in a profound change in the organization's structure (Hornstein, 2015).

Developing resource-rich countries: Developing resource-rich countries (DCs) are nations rich in materials and natural resources that are often governed by flawed institutions or regimes providing little or intermediate levels of democracy, usually with internal conflict, and having low levels of socioeconomic development (Kolstad & Kinyondo, 2017).

Foreign direct investments: In a dynamic international market structure, researchers and managers use the term *foreign direct investment (FDI)* to refer to a form of cooperation between a local company and an international enterprise in which the latter invests significant equity, technology, or managerial participation in the former (Erdal & Göçer, 2015). In the oil and gas industry, the purpose of FDI is to exploit the natural resources of the host country and export product to third countries, leveraging the availability of resources and low local costs (Nguyen-Huu & Nguyen-Khac, 2017).

Local content: The governments of DCs implement a local content (LC) policy to increase economic benefits from natural resource exploitation, forcing foreign companies to hire local personnel and to purchase a certain percentage of goods and services locally (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016). Local governments set penalties for noncompliance with LC policy, which undergoes periodic reviews (Macatangay, 2016).

Multinational enterprises: Multinational enterprises (MNEs) are firms that have subsidiaries and exploit significant business activities in two or more foreign countries, often operating with a local partner (Darawong, Igel, & Badir, 2016).

Organizational performance: With this term, organizations refer to the results of the correspondence between a company's strategy, utilization of internal resources, and external environmental factors. Managers use this word to describe the ability of a firm to effectively achieve desired targets in compliance with internal and external requirements (Atiyah, 2016).

Sustainability: Managers and researchers refer to sustainability as a business strategy in which companies recognize the importance of the society and the environment in which a firm operates to balance firm growth and stakeholder expectations over the long term (Wan Ahmad, Rezaei, de Brito, & Tavasszy, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This section contains descriptions of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of this study. It is essential that researchers address the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of their research to prevent misrepresentation of their research data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I assumed that the selected foreign managers

in this study were aware of LC; this assumption was fundamental to my effort to acquire useful information about strategies for meeting local workforce requirements in DCs. This study was limited to an MNE working in Kazakhstan. A delimitation of this study was the use of a purposeful sampling of foreign managers, which reduced the number of participants.

Assumptions

Schoenung and Dikova (2016) described assumptions as beliefs that are essential to research but are neither verifiable nor supported by theory. The first assumption in this study was that the data gathered would be enough to respond to the research question. Additionally, I assumed that the participants in the study had a sufficient understanding of their business scope, their operating environment, and their capabilities and resources. Therefore, the data gathered had to provide an accurate reflection of the participants' honest opinions and responses to the interview questions. Ethical and unprejudiced interpretation of the interviews was another important assumption, in that interviewing, coding, and discussion of results may involuntarily introduce bias. Finally, another assumption was that the geographical area targeted in this study was suitable to provide useful information.

Limitations

Researchers consider limitations to be constraints that place restrictions on a research study and include the potential weaknesses of the study (van der Vaart, Weaver, Lefebvre, & Davis, 2015). Limitations are restrictions that are beyond the researcher's control that may weaken the study (O'Connor et al., 2016). The qualitative methods used

in the interviews to collect specific information may have introduced researcher and participant biases. The experiences of the participants led to meaningful interpretations concerning viable strategies to implement the local content and maintain the profitability of the company. However, a limitation of a case study was the low capability to provide a reliable ground for generalization of the study (i.e., conclusions from the study may not be applicable to all industries in the same context; Mariotto, Zanni, Salati, & De Morales, 2014).

Delimitations

Delimitations are factors within a study that can limit its scope and define its boundaries (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Delimitations result from specific choices made by a researcher, such as the selection of research questions, theoretical framework, and participants. A delimitation of this study was the geographic location, which was the Kazakhstan region. An additional delimitation was the method of choosing participants: I selected five managers with extensive experience in LC and employed in a foreign company that had been working for years in Kazakhstan. Only members of senior management participated in the study.

Significance of the Study

Very few managers working for MNEs in foreign countries put in place effective strategies to follow the requirements of the local workforce policy and actively contribute to the performance of the company (Li, Easterby-Smith, Lyles, & Clark, 2016). LC requirements mainly imply the substantial use of the local workforce (Dosumu, Hussain, & El-Gohary, 2017). However, in DCs, local workforces and contractors may not be

skilled enough to comply with the requirements of their work assignment. The same concept applies to most of the local contractors. Scholars have noted that providing an effective system to transfer the organizational and personal knowledge of local workforce requirements might positively affect the business performance of employees, workgroups, and companies (Khan et al., 2015).

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings and conclusions from this study may help foreign managers working in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan in planning efforts to fulfill local workforce policy requirements while enhancing the productivity of the company. Maintaining or enlarging a market position fulfilling local workforce policy requirements may lead to an increase in competitive advantage and the attraction of competent local resources. Entrepreneurs and managers willing to enter into developing countries' markets or already operating in these markets may benefit from understanding the strategies that some foreign company managers used to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. Lastly, the local economy may benefit from having both international and skilled local companies in the market that are capable of providing indirect improvement of ancillary service companies throughout the business pipeline.

Implications for Social Change

This study has implications for positive social change, in that foreign company managers working in developing countries who use successful strategies can increase employment opportunities for local residents. Managers can stimulate positive social changes through organizational activities (Stephan, Patterson, Kelly, & Mair, 2016).

Organizations whose leaders want to maintain or improve their market positions have to develop the capability of local resources despite the regional context (Neffke, Hartog, Boschma, & Henning, 2018). Therefore, foreign company managers may use the findings from this study to provide, either directly or indirectly, positive support to local communities, including stimuli for the development of local entrepreneurial competence and job creation. Related to social welfare, researchers have reported that improving local economies (i.e., through employment opportunities, salary increases, and competence among people) may lead to decreasing rates of criminality (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Scholars develop literature reviews to provide critical analysis of expansive bodies of information related to specific phenomena. Haupt and Pillay (2016) argued that to enhance knowledge of a specific phenomenon, research should be supported by an appropriate literature review. Studying the effect of the LC requirements on foreign companies working in DCs, some researchers have made alternate arguments about how international firms have approached LC regulations with success (Erdal & Göçer, 2015).

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore business models and strategies applicable in DCs, with a particular focus on the Kazakhstan region. This section addresses literature pertaining to the conceptual framework used in this study as well as background information on LC policy, which was the focus of the research. Researchers develop literature reviews to summarize, compare, and contrast various academic and managerial sources that relate to their research topic and provide support to their research (Adedayo, 2015; Haupt & Pillay, 2016). A scholar develops a literature

review by selecting sources, reading and extracting information from texts, and synthesizing concepts into writing through citations (Badenhorst, 2018). To support the development of a literature review, I searched for academic resources through the Walden University library, using databases such as ProQuest, Emerald Management Journals, Business Source Complete, and Sage Full-Text Collections. Other search engines that I used included Google Scholar and Social Science Research Network.

The following are the keywords I used in my searches: *organizational learning theory*, *local content*, *sustainability*, *foreign direct investment*, *MNEs*, *local resources development*, and *change management.* The literature review includes 107 references, out of which 105 are peer reviewed, with 92 references published in or after 2015. Therefore, a total of 92 of 107 (86%) references used in the literature review are peer reviewed references published in or after 2015. Table 1 includes numbers of references for the major topics presented in this research.

Table 1

References Used in the Literature Review

Research topic	Articles	Scholarly books	Government documents
Organizational learning theory	23	1	0
Foreign direct investments	10	0	0
Overview of MNEs and local contractors in DCs	6	0	1
Local resource development	13	0	0
LC requirements	15	0	3
Overview of Kazakhstan's LC and local regulations	6	0	3
Human factor in multicultural projects	4	0	0
Multicultural management	8	0	0
Change management	14	0	0
Total	99	1	7

Organizational Learning Theory

In the globalization era, with conditions of rapid change, intense competition, and increased expectations from customers, the sustainability of any organization depends on its ability to learn and to adapt to a challenging environment. Scholars use organizational learning theory as a conceptual framework to describe how organizations assimilate, process, use, and retain knowledge. The foundation of this theory was a study performed

by Argyris and Schön (1978). Argyris and Schön argued that organizational learning is a process of inquiry that occurs when organizations operate in unfamiliar contexts. This process occurs because organizations operating in an unstable and unknown environment may not be able to predict what will happen. Within the context of this study, organizational learning theory is applicable to foreign companies operating in DCs, where they must work in an unstable and unpredictable environment.

To overcome discrepancies between expectations and actual results concerning performance, organizations must promote learning between expatriate staff and a transition team consisting of local personnel (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Those in management need to increase knowledge in the organization about the environment and create organizational developments to create a sustainable setting and improve. Fernández-Mesa and Alegre (2015) defined organizational learning as a framework that organizations use to improve performance through the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Scholars and managers consider learning organizations to be systems that allow expansion of knowledge capacity among employees. In such organizations, people have the opportunity to develop new ideas and achieve desired results, as learning enables the development of new ideas, innovation, and new thought patterns (Fernández-Mesa & Alegre, 2015). With this framework, organizations can enhance their absorptive capacity and consequently develop and maintain their competitive advantage.

Organizational learning is also related to organizational performance. Berta et al. (2015) stated that improving an organization's absorptive capacity enables the organization to discover, adapt, and learn new knowledge to improve overall

performance. In their research, Berta et al. advocated that companies can adapt and improve their work routines in difficult environment if they are able to capitalize their experiences in the organization. Consequently, it is possible to achieve performance improvement through adaptive learning. Unstable environments are conducive to adaptive learning, as adaptive learning enables organizations to increase their potential and perform closer to their objectives (Berta et al., 2015).

Factors influencing the learning process. The aim of adaptive learning is to acquire the necessary knowledge to complete a given task; however, adaptive learning is not sufficient to allow an organization to grow. Managers should invest time to ensure that learning and knowledge management are permanently assigned as a daily organization activity at all organizational levels (Saadat & Saadat, 2016). Researchers have argued that knowledge management is positively related to organizational performance and is a major contributor to organizational success, helping the organization to overcome market uncertainties (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). One effective way to improve the organization's knowledge is to provide necessary training (Ranucci & Souder, 2015). Other researchers have argued that performing training is one of the main factors that enables organizational learning and, consequently, the individuals' personal and professional development (Oelze, Hoejmose, Habisch, & Millington, 2016). Another essential element to consider is the work environment, which facilitates the learning process.

Hanaysha (2016) argued that the work environment has a significant positive impact on organizational commitment and the effects of employee engagement and

organizational learning. Managers providing a facilitative and safe work environment enable individuals to succeed, increasing levels of employee commitment and motivation, ultimately leading to improved performance (Hanaysha, 2016). Various variables and different circumstances influence organizational learning within organizations, and efficiency in organizations is essential to performance (Golmoradi & Ardabili, 2016). Organizations are created to achieve particular goals and profits. In this respect, some leadership styles positively influence organizational learning and facilitate the achievement of the goals of an organization (Golmoradi & Ardabili, 2016). Managers can improve organizational learning through the adoption of different leadership styles and can increase self-confidence, innovation, and mental stimulation for the personnel in their teams (Golmoradi & Ardabili, 2016).

Some researchers have argued that managers with strategic leadership facilitate learning and innovation to boost their company's overall performance (Wu, 2016). Other researchers have argued that managers who adopt transformational leadership influence organizational learning through different mechanisms (Shao, Feng, & Hu, 2017). By using transformational leadership, leaders can motivate and inspire followers through vision and value, while influencing organizational learning by fostering an organizational learning culture (Shao et al., 2017). Managers with transactional leadership tend to operate within the existing culture and support the status quo, basing their leadership on rewarding mechanisms and managing exceptions, directly influencing the learning behaviors of employees (Shao et al., 2017). Certain leadership styles, such as transactional leadership, directive leadership, and aversive leadership, have been found to

act as barriers to innovation (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018). Therefore, it is essential for organizations to identify and promote leadership styles that facilitate organizational learning.

Learning organizations and agility. Learning organizations are also able to improve their agility. There are four dimensions of organizational agility (Bahrami, Kiani, Montazeralfaraj, Zadeh, & Zadeh, 2016): (a) responsiveness, which is the ability to identify changes and respond quickly to them, reactively or proactively; (b) competency, which is the extensive set of abilities that provide productivity toward the aims and goals of the company; (c) flexibility, which is the ability to process different products and achieve different objectives with the same facilities; and (d) quickness, the ability to carry out tasks and operations in the shortest possible time. At the same time, learning organizations can improve their organizational intelligence. Bahrami et al. (2016) defined organizational intelligence as the mental capacity and ability to perform an important task. Organizational intelligence has seven components: (a) strategic vision; (b) shared fate; (c) desire to change; (d) heart (i.e., the willingness to give more than required); (e) alignment; (f) knowledge application; and (g) performance pressure. Therefore, there is a link between the learning organization, the organizational intelligence, and the agility of an organization. Organizational leaders and theorists increasingly view organizational learning as a key element in developing and maintaining a competitive advantage. Conversely, learning can increase the effectiveness of management to attract opportunities (Bahrami et al., 2016).

Learning organizations and performance. Two factors that have pushed toward organizational learning are the rate of change and the increase in competitive pressure. There is a relationship between certain learning organization characteristics and adaptation, innovation, and organizational performance, which pave the way toward the sustainability of an organization (Oelze et al., 2016). Organizational learning is a dynamic process of creation, acquisition, and integration of knowledge to develop resources and capabilities enabling the organization to achieve better performance (Oelze et al., 2016). Therefore, organizational learning is a key strategic requirement for building and sustaining present and future competitiveness. This finding is important in the creation of a virtuous cycle of talent selection and retention inside the organization.

Kontoghiorghes (2016) claimed that learning organizations positively encourage and stimulate employees toward positive attitudes and superior performance. The superior performance attracts high-quality performers to join the organization (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Therefore, as organizational culture has a significant effect on performance, it is important to understand what type of culture can help create high-performance organizations. Kontoghiorghes classified the winning characteristics of organizational cultures as follows: (a) adaptability to the external environment through flexibility and change, to meet customer needs; (b) clan, focusing on employee involvement and participation; (c) mission, defining the organization's vision, purpose, and goals; and (d) bureaucratic, which involves an internal focus and is best suited for stable environments. The appropriate type of culture for an organization is the one that embodies those characteristics that assist the organization in being effective within the

environment where it operates (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Thus, the advantage of learning organizations is that they can adapt and perform in harsh environments, being flexible and effective even under endogenous and exogenous changes. Some researchers and managers have noted that organizations that are capable of learning more quickly than their competitors and adapting better to a changing environment have more opportunities to survive in the market arena (Saadat & Saadat, 2016). Other academics have argued that companies with effective learning organization processes encourage innovative behavior and have better capabilities to adapt to external changes than companies with limited organizational learning skills (Wu, 2016).

The absorptive capacity. In the body of knowledge about learning theories, several researchers have reported that learning is a continuous process for an organization and positively contributes to organizational performance and sustainability (Zappa & Robins, 2016). In particular, Zappa and Robins (2016) argued key aspects of learning organizations include learning from the experience of others, knowledge transfer, and interpersonal interaction among heterogenic individuals. These aspects of learning organizations are emphasized in multinational organizations where it is common to find people who represent diverse cultures, contexts, and personal or professional experiences. In foreign countries, the natural heterogeneity of individuals inside organizations has the potential to enhance attitudes favoring innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness (Zappa & Robins, 2016). Managers define absorptive capacity as an organization's ability to learn from previous strategic decisions, which allows the accumulation of experiences by operating in a certain environment (Andreou, Louca, & Petrou, 2016).

Through their absorptive capacity, learning organizations improve subsequent strategic, financial, and operational decision-making processes, resulting in a competitive advantage and higher firm performance.

Organizations develop absorptive capacity by codifying knowledge into processes, and afterward using this capability to elaborate synergies and innovation (Andreou et al., 2016). Managers can effectively accumulate experience in the creation of processes and systems through which they identify, transfer, use, and store knowledge to improve practices and make better decisions (Andreou et al., 2016). Without absorptive capacity, organizations cannot use external knowledge to exploit their competitive advantage. Absorptive capacity allows organizations to quickly understand and use external information and knowledge to effectively transfer that knowledge into a competitive advantage (Forés & Camisón, 2016). Scholars have argued that absorptive capacity is essential to assimilate external knowledge and to increase innovation performance and competitive advantage (C. H. S. Liu, 2018). Other researchers have provided evidence on how leadership interacts with absorptive capacity and organizational learning culture to provide disruptive innovation capabilities (Naqshbandi & Tabche, 2018).

Organizational learning and mergers and acquisitions (M&As). Wang et al. (2017) advocated cross-border M&As as an effective way to acquire external knowledge for MNEs. When MNEs inject valuable knowledge through cross-border M&As, they can ensure expected synergies; conversely, outdated knowledge and procedures compromise knowledge transfer in cross-border M&As. Another factor influencing the

effectiveness of knowledge transfer in M&As is knowledge compatibility. In the

international M&A environment, knowledge compatibility (i.e., compatible behaviors,

standard procedures, management styles) significantly influences the effectiveness of

knowledge transfer (Wang et al., 2017). Managers see organizational learning as the

process of creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge within an organization (Chao,

2017). In the context of M&As, MNEs become familiar with the process of

acquisitions—selecting and evaluating potential partners, performing the required dual

diligence processes, negotiating the deal, and integrating the two combined organizations

to achieve potential synergies (Chao, 2017). This is one of the main reasons that

organizational learning theory is of utmost importance in M&As with local firms working

in difficult environments, such as in DCs. Further, the acquisition experience allows the

acquirer to absorb the knowledge of the target, improving the acquirer's absorptive

capacity.

   Knowledge transfer and innovation. Brix (2017) argued that employees within

the organizations create, communicate, and use two types of knowledge: explicit and tacit

knowledge. The explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that individuals can transfer

orally or communicate in documents, while tacit knowledge refers to the experience,

thinking, and feeling of the individual (Brix, 2017). Therefore, managers who aim to

increase the efficiency and performance of the organization must include organizational

learning as part of a complex system of employees sharing explicit and tacit knowledge.

In particular, Brix focused on the role of the organizational context in organizational

learning and analyzed the processes and outcomes of knowledge creation, retention, and

transfer. Brix argued that the knowledge individuals acquire would have to be embedded in a supra-individual repository for organizational learning to occur. Therefore, the individual's knowledge has to be shared in the organization so that other members can access it, even if the individual leaves the organization.

Several authors have suggested that learning occurs on three levels (Brix, 2017; Tafvelin, von Thiele Schwarz, & Hasson, 2017): (a) individual, creating knowledge by using his or her educational backgrounds and experiences; (b) group, sharing information, providing collaboration, empowerment, and leadership for learning; and (c) organization level, embedding knowledge in the organization's culture, creating collective knowledge. The employee-organization learning relationship enables the deep engagement of the individuals, which improves the effectiveness of the organization. Scholars have provided insightful explanations about the positive relationship between effectiveness, innovation and workplace learning environment (Islam & Tariq, 2018). Organizations facilitating learning environments enhance the employee's engagement, which stimulates knowledge sharing, creativity and ultimately innovation (Abubakar, 2018). Accordingly, organizations with a high innovation rate require a high and effective organizational learning capability (Sutanto, 2017).

Foreign Direct Investments

Several economic theories supported the concept that countries can benefit from capital investments, leading to an efficient allocation of resources to boost productivity and economic growth (Ahmed & Zlate, 2014). Furthermore, as described by Ahmed and Zlate (2014), together with large capital inflows also policymakers adapted to regulate

the inflow capital in emerging market economies. Asia has become the fastest growing

country, demanding 25% of global consumption (Lu, Goh, Garg, & De Souza, 2014).

Foreign investors are influenced in their investment decisions by three broad groups of

factors (Zait, Warter, & Warter, 2014): (a) the profitability of the projects, (b) the ease

with which subsidiaries' operations can be integrated into investors' global strategies, and

(c) the overall quality of the host country's enabling environment.

Other authors argued that international activities are influenced by three main

factors (Lu et al., 2014): (a) host country-specific factors, (b) contractual risk, (c) ability

to produce differentiated products, (d) market size, (e) country risk, and (f) location

familiarity. However, organizations do not often consider social, cultural or political

factors that might influence international investments, as the growth of MNEs' activities

regarding FDI has accelerated at a faster rate than most other international transactions

(Zait et al., 2014). FDI can have both positive and negative economic effects on host

countries. While technology transfer and other investments are positive for local

economies, negative effects can arise from the market power of MNEs, their associated

ability to generate very high profits, and by interference on domestic political issues (Zait

et al., 2014).

MNEs play an important role in FDI in DCs, especially those countries rich in

resources, as typical foreign entrants are MNEs from developed economies. MNEs have

continued to rearrange their strategies and organizational schemes, to relocate their

subsidiaries, and to align their product or service to the requirements of their geographic

markets (Gilbert & Heinecke, 2014). Gilbert and Heinecke (2014) argued that MNEs

should analyze and determine their competitive strategies for each region and not generalize it. When companies pursue such a selective strategy, respective regions become the primary organizational focus of their activities. Therefore, management is required to recognize the nature and changing conditions of the host regions. That is one of the main reasons MNEs' general management usually deploy management in the host country, which is autonomous to create a favorable organizational context in the region.

Several scholars researched the reasons MNEs are interested in M&As from other economies (Deng & Yang, 2015). Most of the information retrieved show that it is a matter of expansion strategies. Deng and Yang (2015) advocated that MNEs invest overseas to increase their power by acquiring alternative sources of resources and thereby alleviates resource dependences on the external environment in which it is embedded. The main reasons for MNEs to invest in M&As in a resource-rich DC are (Deng & Yang, 2015): (a) to exploit the abundant natural resources, (b) to acquire intangible or strategic resources which are either costly or unavailable in the home country, and (c) firms may expand internationally due to a limited domestic market that may be insufficient to reduce their environmental uncertainty. Therefore, MNEs transfer domestically produced innovations in a foreign production location with a vertical production strategy, which minimizes the costs of each production stage in a foreign country. Erdal and Göçer (2015) claimed that due to the increasing international competition, it is inevitable for MNEs to develop new technologies and new products or acquire new resources.

DCs require domestic firms with the ability to design and produce high-tech products and qualified workforce to attract MNEs using FDI inflows (Erdal & Göçer,

2015). FDI inflows take capital accumulation, know-how, high-tech production, marketing skills, R&D and innovation that are strengthening the country's technology infrastructure (Erdal & Göçer, 2015). MNEs provide high-tech and value-added products that increase the competitiveness of the host country in foreign trade and help to achieve the sustainable economic growth of the country (Erdal & Göçer, 2015).

The quality of FDI and a better institutional environment in the host country have positive effects on FDI (Alashwal & Pirzada, 2015). Corporate failures are a common problem of developing economies, and one of the main reasons for the failures is related to the local concerns and requirements (Alashwal & Pirzada, 2015). This concern includes examining the impact of tax policies and uncertainty regarding regulations and government policies (Bekaert, Harvey, Lundblad, & Siegel, 2016). Bekaert et al. (2016) described the political risk for a given country as including the risk that the country's government actions or imperfections of the country's executive, legislative, or judicial institutions adversely affect the value of an investment by a foreign firm in that country. Bekaert et al. also valued the instability of relevant government policies as well as the strength of the legal system, especially concerning the enforcement of property rights. Kumari and Sharma (2017) described how the FDIs are a vital source of foreign fund inflow since most of the developing countries lack technological proficiency; FDI provides a way of facilitating the transfer of new technology, thus minimizing the technological gap. Kumari and Sharma tried to identify the key determinants of FDI inflows in Asian developing countries. A significant result was that government regulations are considered one of the main factors that influenced the perception of

foreign affiliate performance (Kumari & Sharma, 2017). Another critical factor that can attract FDI in DCs is the human capital, defined as the physical, social, and economic contexts of society. Human capital encourages FDI inflow while a lack of it discourages FDI in DCs (Kumari & Sharma, 2017).

Similarly, Nguyen-Huu and Nguyen-Khac (2017) advocated that MNEs productivity is affected by factors such as the power of trade agreement and the third market size, as well as the LC regulations. The concept noted in Nguyen-Huu and Nguyen-Khac's research is that LC regulations, considering the widespread use of this policy in the global economy, has a permanent impact on multinational firms' global business pipeline. MNEs can employ the following FDI strategies (Nguyen-Huu & Nguyen-Khac, 2017): a horizontal FDI strategy when the organization envisages selling only in the host markets or a vertical FDI strategy to export back the product to the MNEs' markets, or a combination of the two. The last option is usually used in the oil and gas market.

Overview of MNEs and Local Contractors in DCs

Many strategies are driving MNEs to globalize by expanding their entrance to the foreign markets. There is a plethora of theories supporting the strategy in entering foreign markets. However, there is little literature on how MNEs can build and sustain a competitive advantage in foreign markets. Dabic, González-Loureiro, and Furrer (2014) explained how the globalization of both markets and competition forces companies to move into the global arena and to become MNEs. Dabic et al. argued the trend toward increasing internationalization brings new challenges to researchers studying MNEs

strategies, especially to those concerned with how MNEs implement their strategy to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage. The relationship between multi-nationality and MNEs' performance also depends on both environmental and firms' specific characteristics. MNEs could achieve and maintain a competitive advantage over time based on the co-evolution of firms and their environment. Scholars advocated that employees play an important role in contributing to the performance of a company (Dabic et al., 2014). The result of this study shows how human capital is essential for the sustainability of an MNE in a foreign environment.

DCs are attracting an important amount of FDI. Giuliani and Macchi (2014) stated that governments of such countries often compete for attracting MNEs in the expectation of advantages they will bring to their economies, as MNEs are considered important sources of employment and valuable channels of technology transfer. However, this deregulated attraction often prioritized economic goals over fundamental human rights (Giuliani & Macchi, 2014). In recent years, economists have started to analyze the economic impacts of MNEs' operations on human rights, with a parallel in political science, business ethics, and international law. Giuliani and Macchi addressed how MNEs are improving the level of economic and social development of the host country. Giuliani and Macchi argued there is a community of researchers, practitioners, and policymakers who believe that large corporations can improve the living conditions of developing countries through the adoption of voluntary codes of conduct and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, the CSR standards concerning workers' rights and natural resources management do not adequately address important

issues relevant to people in developing countries, such as a living wage and freedom of association.

Buckley and Strange (2015) argued that not all stakeholders in DCs have gained benefits since the development of the globalization. The complex strategy that emerged is the primary objective of MNEs is to reduce the operating costs, with global value chains linked together by international flows of intermediate products. In their model, Buckley and Strange suggested that knowledge has been increasingly internalized in the company, while operations have been increasingly externalized. The following factors influence the MNEs strategies (Buckley & Strange, 2015): (a) the role of the host country government, (b) the challenge of going abroad in the absence of superior technological and managerial resources, and (c) the rapid adoption of merger and acquisitions as a primary mode of entry in the host country. By entering into foreign markets, MNEs will generate profit from these overseas ventures in the long term, even considering the risks they incur in making the capital investments in the host countries (Buckley & Strange, 2015). The overall impact on income in the host emerging economies is limited, providing global inequalities in the distribution of income, although many host countries view such inward FDI as a key element of their economic development strategies (Buckley & Strange, 2015).

From a similar viewpoint, Suwandi and Foster (2016), analyzed the historical reasons for MNEs to grow, finding that the initial factors that triggered companies to become international were: (a) the different endowments of labor and capital among countries, (b) the risk premiums in international equity markets, and (c) the need to

expand firms' markets using internally generated surplus funds. However, a more modern

and critical view highlights that MNEs relied on opaque processes of unequal exchange

between their profits and the host DCs, especially exploiting the pools of labor in the

third world to create a vast low-wage workforce (Suwandi & Foster, 2016). Kafouros and

Aliyev (2016) focused on a study related to how the institutions (i.e., regulative,

normative, cultural, and cognitive features) can be determinant on foreign firms'

performance in emerging economies. Kafouros and Aliyev found as institutional reforms

are implemented and as international openness increases, these changes weaken the

competitive advantages of MNEs and decrease their profitability, improving the

competitiveness of domestic firms. International openness allows the DCs to create new

opportunities regarding demand and supply; on the demand side, opens export markets

and provides firms with new opportunities to expand (Kafouros & Aliyev, 2016).

Besides, less developed institutions create market imperfections and institutional voids in

product, capital, and labor markets and inhibit the diffusion of technology (Kafouros &

Aliyev, 2016).

Amendolagine, Presbitero, Sanfilippo, and Seric (2017) investigated the

advantage of technology spillovers from foreign enterprises, which can be transferred to

local DCs' firms. The spillover effect is the result of the intentional transfer of

knowledge, technology, and managerial capabilities by multinationals, which assist their

local suppliers in ensuring that their requirements are met. MNEs can also contribute by

providing training for the local labor force, as required by the LC requirements

(Amendolagine et al., 2017). All these actions improve the capabilities of domestic firms,

as they are exposed to stronger competition, more intense work requirements and a higher production standard. Based on this evidence, Oke, Aghimien, and Adedoyin (2018) studied the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of indigenous and foreign contractors in DCs to understanding the pursuit of improving local companies' service delivery. Oke et al. argued that, for years, local governments had developed foreign companies neglecting the development of their contractors. In most DCs local contractors are far behind in the areas of financial, technical, and management capabilities compared to the international competitors. However, the technology spillover and training of the local workforce have enabled the development of local contractors and lead to be competitive also in international markets (Oke et al., 2018).

Local Resource Development

Scholars identified culture as one of the key determinants of the success and business sustainability of economic exchanges among countries (Nguyen & Aoyama, 2015). Nguyen and Aoyama (2015) found that culture is a particularly significant factor in the expansion of manufacturing activities from developed to developing countries through technology transfer channels, as cultural difference has been found to have a negative impact on efficient technology transfer. In particular, Nguyen and Aoyama debated on which management practice factors reduce the adverse impact of cultural differences on efficient technology transfer. Management practice, including management commitment, quality practice, team-based work, training, and frequent interaction, can effectively minimize the impact of cultural differences on efficient technology transfer (Nguyen & Aoyama, 2015). Therefore, cultural conflicts, cultural

misunderstandings, and communication barriers rooted in cultural differences are an obstacle to the flows of information and technology transfer.

Human resource management (HRM) practices can create a comparative advantage for organizational performance when organizational commitment matters (Kadiresan, Selamat, Selladurai, & Ramendran, 2015). Managers employ HRM to gain competitive advantage. Organizations utilizing HRM practices may gain the commitment of the employees and while positively affecting personnel's attitudes and behavior, providing a significant positive impact for organizations in attaining competitive advantage (Kadiresan et al., 2015). Specifically, Kadiresan et al. (2015) argued that training and development deal with increasing and updating the skills, knowledge, competencies, and experiences of an employee through a series of training and development programs. This action will promote effective performance in an activity or range of activities.

Khan et al. (2015) studied the role of socialization in knowledge transfer from international joint ventures. Khan et al. found that formal socialization mechanisms (i.e., scheduled plant visits, the systematic sharing of technological designs, and technical training) enhance the technology transfer (Khan et al., 2015). Knowledge transfer is essential to the sustainability of companies in emerging economies. Other authors found that knowledge transfer and management allow companies to reduce operational risks (AlHussaini & Karkoulian, 2015). To minimize operational risks, organizations seek to obtain advanced technology assets, employ smart people, and build effective business processes. In addition to this, managing knowledge is considered a cornerstone for the

effectiveness of organizations in responding to risks while operating in a fast and turbulent changing environment, as in most DCs (AlHussaini & Karkoulian, 2015). Specifically, AlHussaini and Karkoulian (2015) found that one important barrier to knowledge transfer is the lack of communication between employees; other limitations are the absorptive capacity of the organization and lack of rapport between the employees. Organizations sometimes see the transfer of knowledge as a time-consuming process and a danger to the individual employee's sustainability (AlHussaini & Karkoulian, 2015).

Unless the management promotes an environment that rewards and encourages knowledge sharing, the effort to institutionalize a knowledge transfer structure will fail. In DCs, organizations also face cross-cultural communication issues between foreign and local personnel, exacerbated by the rapid pace of socio-economic changes (Darawong et al., 2016). Expatriates and local managers may experience resistance, friction, and misunderstandings in communications due to cultural differences (Darawong et al., 2016). This fact can create relationship conflict or task conflict among the personnel (Darawong et al., 2016). Expatriates often feel communication with locals is distorted due to differences in language; conversely, local managers find expatriates lack sufficient local knowledge of the host country culture and cannot communicate with them (Darawong et al., 2016).

Li, Easterby-Smith, Lyles, and Clark (2016) defined local knowledge as knowledge that is specific to a host country. In their seminal work, Li et al. exposed how MNEs can reduce the local knowledge disadvantage by the use of host-country

subsidiaries, domestic suppliers, and local joint venture partners. To realize the full

exploitation of local knowledge, MNEs have to employ both knowledge transfer and

knowledge integration approaches (Li et al., 2016). The MNEs' ability to reduce local

knowledge disadvantage, especially in emerging markets, eventually improves the firm's

competitive advantage. Scholars noted that the contributions of diversity management are

assumed to motivate individuals to achieve the best possible performance (Atiyah, 2016).

This contribution can be summarized as follows (Atiyah, 2016): (a) exchange of ideas

and cultures, (b) learning and growth, (c) effective communication, (d) diverse expertise,

and (e) improvement of performance.

MNEs should invest in developing talented managers who are willing to mentor

local managers to compete globally. Morris, Snell, and Björkman (2016) argued that the

two main characteristics of an international enterprise are that it is geographically

dispersed and it has culturally differentiated workforce. These characteristics provide the

opportunity to develop talents to achieve a competitive advantage. Scholars have found a

link between the development of human capital and competitive advantage (Morris et al.,

2016). Similarly, Napathorn (2017) advocated that when a company is about to develop

its internationalization strategy based on organic expansion, the organization can

overcome the liabilities of foreignness by the exploitation of an HRM strategy that relies

on the research and development of local labors. Napathorn argued that MNEs adopt

organizational learning strategies using the home country-based knowledge or

international best practices and adapting that knowledge or practices to local markets.

Therefore, to gain a competitive advantage, an organization should develop its talents

through an efficient HRM process. Norasyikin and Rozailin (2017) also described the

positive effect an efficient HRM process could provide to MNEs' competitive advantage

and their sustainability. In particular, the key to the success of a company is based on the

capacity of the organizations to incorporate knowledge (Norasyikin & Rozailin, 2017).

Other researchers theorized the importance of organizational learning on

knowledge transfer (Wang et al., 2017). The focus on the M&A led to the concept that

organizational change due to the incorporation of one or more subjects can be fatal to the

organization if the management does not take in proper consideration the contribution of

organizational learning and knowledge transfer (Wang et al., 2017). Peter-Cookey and

Janyam (2017) proposed a study debating on local workers' productivity and the

correlation with the processes of knowledge transfer. The study revealed that most of the

training performed is not efficient due to unavailable training tools, equipment, and

qualified trainers (Peter-Cookey & Janyam, 2017). Although there is a pessimistic

perspective about cross-cultural management and the idea of diversity as a liability, Stahl,

Miska, Lee, and De Luque (2017) argued that there are several advantages resulting from

team members' different perspectives, culture, knowledge bases, and decision-making

styles. These qualities, if properly managed, can enhance creativity and lead to

competitive advantage (Stahl et al., 2017).

LC Requirements

DCs' governments widely used LC requirements to stimulate the growth of

underdeveloped domestic industries. According to Nwapi (2015), with the introduction of

the LC requirements, the governments usually seek to promote local participation in FDI

by maximizing the utilization of indigenous companies, employment of locals, and the use of locally produced goods. LC policies are issued to (a) reduce inequalities faced by local companies compared to foreign companies, (b) improve the technological development thought the technical spillover, (c) provide specialized skills for nationals, and (d) to enable domestic companies to compete regionally (Nwapi, 2015). According to Ryggvik (2015), the Statoil national oil company case in Norway was the first clear example of the application and development of the LC requirements. Ryggvik explained how the Norwegian government in the late 1970s was able to develop both effective oil companies and an internationally competitive oil service industry applying strong LC requirements. Ryggvik described two distinct phases: the protectionist phase, and the phase of liberalization with a consequent inflow of FDI. Since then, almost all oil DC producers have imposed LC requirements on MNEs as part of their contribution to the local economy (Ryggvik, 2015).

The application of LC policies impacts on human capital development and sustainable business performance in several DCs (Monday, 2015). To achieve this result, it is essential for the participation of domestic firms in every stage of resource development (Monday, 2015). In fact, the technological spillover from MNEs local firms strengthens their absorptive capacities to internalize the technological and managerial skills (Monday, 2015). The governments of DCs adopt the LC requirements with the purpose of enhancing the capacity of the domestic industrial framework providing technology and practices comparable to international standards through the development of local personnel and management (Monday, 2015). Consequently, indigenous

companies can boost their business performance, profit growth, competitiveness, market share, and return on investment (Monday, 2015).

Other researchers described some African cases to show how the DCs' governments use the LC requirements as a framework for the development of local enterprises (Senoo & Armah, 2015). Senoo and Armah (2015) studied the effect of the petroleum law (i.e., LC policy) in Ghana, as the country did not have financial and technical resources to exploit the oil and gas resource discovered in 2007; therefore, the government sought foreign companies to develop oil fields. However, as the oil and gas industry is capital intensive, the adoption of the LC requirements was necessary to ensure the maximization of the benefits to various sectors of the Ghanaians economy (Senoo & Armah, 2015). Ocheni (2015) provided an outlook on the impact of the LC requirements on the growth of small and medium local enterprises working in the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. The result was the LC requirements had a positive impact on the development of the local contractors; conversely, these requirements posed a constraint on the foreign companies (Ocheni, 2015). In Saudi Arabia, the government designed and enforced the LC policy to reduce reliance on foreign workers through a program known as *Saudization*. However, the frequent lack of alignment of the Saudis' skills and training with the requirements of the private sector forced the private sector to invest in training and development. It emerged that banks have had to invest more heavily in training for their Saudi employees than for expatriates, as the former tend to be deficient in both soft and hard skills (Edgar, Azhar, & Duncan, 2016).

Abdulkabir, Sidique, Rahman, and Hook (2015) explained in more detail a theoretical relationship that is likely to exist among an effective LC policy, indigenous oil firms' participation, and job creation in the oil and gas sector. The focus is not on the empirical examination of this effect, but rather on the explanation of the conceptual relationship among these variables. To have a comprehensive analysis, Ramdoo (2015) focused on the policies put in place to foster LC development, and how this fits into the international trade and investment frameworks. Ramdoo presented evidence of what has or has not worked in different contexts and under different conditions, before turning to the global frameworks governing LC requirements. Further, Ramdoo provided some recommendations on how international regulatory frameworks could be improved to fit the needs of countries and companies, including a more equitable distribution of wealth.

Governments consider LC policies as a driver of industrialization for oil and gas producing countries, providing employment opportunities to the local communities, accelerating the transfer of skills and technologies, and strengthening entrepreneurship (Aoun & Mathieu, 2015). Aoun and Mathieu (2015) described how almost all oil and gas producing countries have been implementing local content policies, and the trend is toward strengthening these legal frameworks. Aoun and Mathieu argued that these policies have become a key element for MNEs in obtaining a social license to operate and in gaining local acceptance, although the outcomes can be very different, and success is not always guaranteed. Aoun and Mathieu also argued that the design of local content policies should take national development priorities into account, as well as the industrial basis, the local infrastructure, the regulatory and financial frameworks, and the quality of

the institutions. These policies should be developed with a long-term perspective, with the definition of realistic targets being adapted to the local context, to avoid substantial inefficiencies (Aoun & Mathieu, 2015). The result is that the regular dialogue between oil and gas companies and the governments of host countries is a key factor for success, in view of jointly assessing the needs and local potential and thus better designing local content strategies (Aoun & Mathieu, 2015). Owusu and Vaaland (2016) argued that the main vehicle in DCs for the development of indigenous companies is the application of the LC. This goal can be reached only if the local governments have the willingness to monitor their enforcement; achieving the LC will integrate the indigenous firms into the industrial framework and raise the living standard of the population (Owusu & Vaaland, 2016).

Acheampong, Ashong, and Svanikier (2016) advocated that successful LC policy should entail: (a) the development of local personnel and business, (b) the tools developed to benchmark the effectiveness of the implementation must be clearly defined and accepted by all industry players, and (c) the implementation rate of the LC depends on the availability of an industrial-supply base. Other researchers argued on how adopting LC policy can be beneficial to the economic growth of developing oil-rich countries, in particular, Nigeria (Adedeji, Sidique, Rahman, & Law, 2016). However, the level to which the LC policy can achieve this goal in some of these countries has not yet been determined, and this fact has generated divergent speculation. Eventually, Adedeji et al. (2016) found that the local value created in the Nigerian oil industry, because of the LC policy, was lower than the expected target. Adedeji et al. addressed this gap by

assessing the impact of LC policy in influencing local value creation with particular reference to indigenous oil firms' participation, backward linkages, and job creation.

DCs have a valid reason to apply and implement LC. Local governments by the LC policies assure more local employment, domestic market growth, enhanced local industrial bases, and the general economic development (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016). There are economic reasons and socio-political considerations to introduce LC policies, such as the need to create jobs and stimulate local industrial development (Ramdoo, 2016). It is estimated that more than 90% of resource-rich countries applied the LC policies, some with quantitative regulations, others with qualitative regulatory measures or incentives (Ramdoo, 2016). Among the measures employed to create LC, there are rules stipulating percentages for local procurement (Hansen et al., 2016). The United Nations Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that governments fix tariffs, taxes, and pricing to support small and medium-sized local companies and welfare (UNCTAD, 2016).

Other researchers argued that DCs' government implement LC policies to offer support or protection to domestic producers and workers and to extract greater benefits from inward FDI (Sauv, 2016). Also, other researchers supported the concept that quantitative requirements on LC introduce distortions in various sectors of the economy. Such measures generally have a negative impact on the productivity of organizations, affecting the profitability of foreign companies (Korinek & Ramdoo, 2017). Kolstad and Kinyondo (2017) advocated that LC requirements increase MNEs' costs, as local governments require multinational companies to use local inputs which are not

competitive, and which they would otherwise not have chosen. There is a risk that these forms of requirements may create a mechanism of distortion, providing additional means for exchanging favorable treatment for political support, and creating an additional arena for rent-seeking (Kolstad & Kinyondo, 2017).

Overview of Kazakhstan's LC and Local Regulations

Jensen and Tarr (2008) presented the LC provisions for multinational oil and gas companies, provisions that are highly contentious in the World Trade Organization (WTO) accession negotiations. Jensen and Tarr developed a 56 sector economic comparative static general equilibrium model of Kazakhstan, which they believed appropriate to evaluate the effect of Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO. Then Jensen and Tarr compared the data to the effect of the elimination of the LC requirements applicable to multinational oil and gas companies to the model and the foreign companies. In the oil and gas sectors, the result is the LC requirements and the value-added exemption for multinationals work in opposite directions regarding the incentive for multinationals to use Kazakh inputs (Jensen & Tarr, 2008). Ospanova (2010) provided a brief history of LC requirements in Kazakhstan in recent years and the legislative context in which the government rules. In particular, the LC provision stated there must be mandatory contract terms to include provisions on a fixed percentage of Kazakhstan personnel and allocations of Kazakhstan goods, works, and services. The government of Kazakhstan developed this legislative system to stimulate MNEs to search out domestic suppliers and contractors and invest in technology transfer. The set target for the level of product procurement from Kazakhstan suppliers is 50% by 2012, for

services up to 90% (Ospanova, 2010). To provide a better outlook of the Kazakh labor-law environment, Croucher (2015) described the weaknesses of the Kazakh system arguing the labor-law is embedded in a wider system of social relations where the impersonal rules in employment relations are evident. The social, political and legal pressures on Kazakh trade unions have increased since the country's independence, while the presence of powerful MNEs increased (Croucher, 2015).

A significant change in the existing LC requirements happened on November 2015 with the annexing of Kazakhstan in the WTO (Ministry for Investments and Development, 2015). The main requirements which came into force were (Ministry for Investments and Development, 2015): (a) the Kazakhstan producers of works and services must be granted a putative 20% bonus in the price of their bids during the tender procedure; (b) the term Kazakhstan producer of works and services means individual entrepreneurs and Kazakhstan legal entities, where at least 95% of all employees are citizens of Kazakhstan; (c) the minimum local content of works and services in the newly concluded contracts shall not be less than 85%; and (d) when engaging specialists within the framework of intra-corporate transfers, the number of Kazakhstan citizens shall be at least 90% of the total number of employees in each respective category, and workers 100% Kazakhstani. Besides, since January 2017, the ratio of expatriate personnel in management coming to Kazakhstan under an inter-corporate transfer arrangement should not exceed 50% of the number of local personnel engaged in the same categories (UNCTAD, 2017).

Azhgaliyeva and Kalyuzhnova (2016) described the minimum LC level for goods, works, services, and labor set as minimum requirements in the tenders. The winner signs a contract with agreed LC requirements in goods, works, services, labor, and expenditure on the training of the local workforce. Local companies have a 20% price advantage in tenders. This benefit can undermine the sustainability of MNEs forcing foreign companies to leave the country (Azhgaliyeva & Kalyuzhnova, 2016). LC requirements can stimulate local production and employment; however, excessive LC requirements may force foreign companies to leave the country, and thus reduce output and employment. This risk is sensible as Kazakhstan's economy has grown in unstable dynamics and oriented on the mining industry (Kurmanov, Beisengaliyev, Dogalov, Turekulova, & Kurmankulova, 2016). However, the number of local companies almost doubled from 2005 to 2014 (Kurmanov et al., 2016).

Vakulchuk (2016) described the effects and implications of the public administration reform introducing the LC requirements for foreign petroleum companies in Kazakhstan. Given the significance of the petroleum sector for Kazakhstan's economy, the local government invested in efficiency and communication since the year 2000, to provide the necessary conditions for more productive and efficient operations of foreign petroleum companies, with further positive effects on the economy (Vakulchuk, 2016). It is important for the local government to understand the macroeconomics of the region and the condition of the economic framework to implement the LC requirements efficiently. There are several studies describing the contradictory benefits of the LC policy and the doubtful positive influence on the local economy in Asia (Semykina,

2017). In summary, the preconditions for a successful LC policy implementation are (Semykina, 2017): having a large, stable and sizable market which has the potential for growth; encouraging transfers of knowledge and technology; and applying a low percentage of LC and phased in gradually to let the industrial system to adapt to the changes progressively.

Multicultural Management

Multicultural management is of utmost importance for the success of any project abroad and is essential when companies select the expatriates for the assignment abroad (Albrecht, Dilchert, Deller, & Paulus, 2014). Albrecht et al. (2014) examined the effect of expatriate openness in different cultures regarding achieving successful professional adjustment and level of job satisfaction. Albrecht et al. surmised that accepting an assignment abroad is partly dependent on an individual's personality and their perception that they will fit into another culture. Open people are more likely to seek an international assignment proactively, view different and challenging tasks as challenges as opposed to negative stressors or threats, and have higher life and job satisfaction (Albrecht et al., 2014). The importance of selecting the right expatriates is also related to the necessary on-the-job training. Lenartowicz, Johnson, and Konopaske (2014) examined the existing cross-cultural training methods available and the reasons why they are ineffective and developed a training framework and four alternative training approaches. The foundation of the framework was that knowledge is explicit or tacit, and cultural knowledge is mainly tacit. Lack of cultural knowledge results in costly resources in the form of poor

productivity levels, lack of relationships and collaborations, undesirable outcomes, and failed assignments (Lenartowicz et al., 2014).

Having the right training and confidence allows better job satisfaction, especially in a multicultural environment. Rozkwitalska and Basinska (2015) argued that the work context in MNEs, which influences job satisfaction of employees, differs from many other corporation's work context, mainly due to challenges posed by cultural and language diversity. Job satisfaction is an indicator that describes the degree to which employees' important needs and desired human values are fulfilled by their work. Rozkwitalska and Basinska suggested that cultural differences among individuals, groups or organizations cause problems, conflicts, risks, barriers in mutual contacts, and make human interactions troublesome decreasing the satisfaction level of the personnel.

Another critical aspect in developing countries is related to technology transfer and this practice is part of the local requirements that foreign companies have to adhere to (Nguyen & Aoyama, 2015). Nguyen and Aoyama (2015) argued that management commitment, quality practice, team-based work, and training could effectively minimize the impact of cultural differences on efficient technology transfer. Nguyen and Aoyama examined what components of management strategies could reduce the negative impact of cultural diversity on technology transfer. The management practices considered were management commitment, quality practice, team-based work, training, sharing, and understanding. Nguyen and Aoyama indicated that employees' understanding of quality, clear communication of goals and procedures, collaborative teamwork, frequent communication, training, and the provision of the appropriate resources were the factors

that helped to lessen the adverse impact on efficient technology transfer. Schoenung and Dikova (2016) investigated how differences among team members or personnel in an organization may positively affect productivity or be detrimental to the outcomes. Accordingly, the management has to acknowledge the diversity among team members, especially when it occurs in difficult environments such as DCs, as one of the major risks in a project. Competent and robust leadership can be a good solution to enhance the positive side of the differences in a team and create synergies (Mittal & Elias, 2016). As leadership is conceptualized differently by different cultures, it is important for an organization to choose a leader with the awareness of cultural difference to understand and manage diversity (Mittal & Elias, 2016). Several initiatives have failed when the organization did not pay enough attention to the management of different people and cultures (Huang, 2016). The integration of different professional and cultural factors is one of the most critical aspects of international projects. Some researchers defined multiculturalism as a project in the project, requiring affirmation of diversity and mutual respect before starting any exchange of ideas and information (Udangiu, 2016). A leader working in a multicultural environment should have the following three qualifications (Huang, 2016): (a) expertise, (b) empathy, and (c) cultural competence. Cultural competence allows a deep understanding and proper responsiveness to the combination of cross-cultural variables and the multiple interactions in the work environment (Maldonado & Huda, 2018). Scholars argued on a multidimensional model for developing cultural competence (Ljubica, Dulcic, & Aust, 2016): attitude awareness, knowledge and skills. Awareness concerns an ability to compare and contrast alternative

viewpoints accurately, knowledge provides the information to manage a change in multicultural settings, and skill delivers the ability to build on awareness and apply knowledge toward effective change in multicultural settings (Ljubica et al., 2016). Cultural competence enables managers and leaders to gain knowledge about cultures they work with and increase their range of adequate behaviors for efficient management style in multicultural environments (Ljubica et al., 2016)

Change Management

Managers strive for performance focus on the continuous improvement model to provide value to the business and stimulate change initiatives. The organizational changes are necessary to adapt or anticipate the changes in the business environment. According to Kuipers et al. (2014), there are two main factors that force managers to start a change management process: the context factor, which refers to the organization's external and internal environments; and the content factor, which refers to the organization's strategies, structures, and systems. There is a direct interaction between the organization and its environment, therefore between context factors and content factors. The result is that organizational change is forced by the environment in which the organization operates (Kuipers et al., 2014). Matos Marques Simoes and Esposito (2014) highlighted that in the modern business environment, organizational change impacts many units in an organization, therefore increasing the number of people involved. Thus, change management could lead to higher business complexity, and managers should have the right leverages to successfully manage organizational changes (Matos Marques Simoes &

Esposito, 2014). Matos Marques Simoes and Esposito recognized communication within the organization as a relevant success factor for the organizational change.

Communication is essential to build change readiness, to decrease the uncertainty, and to reduce individual resistance to change. Van der Voet (2014) argued that the factor, which ultimately contributes to the effective implementation of organizational change, is the support of employees. Van der Voet advocated that the key driver to achieve the support of the personnel within the organization is the leadership of the management. Therefore, managers and leaders use the combination of vision, communication, and motivation to lead the employees effectively to support organizational changes and reduce their resistance (van der Voet, 2014). Hornstein (2015) described resistance to change as inversely related to the awareness of the people in the organization. The more the personnel is aware of the objectives of the change, the more they are willing to cooperate (Hornstein, 2015). Especially in foreign environments, the management that succeeds in developing appropriate organizational culture is better structured in the creation values and attitudes that allow the organization to operate effectively (Eaton & Kilby, 2015).

Managers perform an organizational change to move the organization from a certain structure to another, depending upon the external or internal requirements. The change can generate opportunities and prevent exposure to external events, such as local regulations (Ceulemans, Lozano, & Alonso-Almeida, 2015). The implementation of organizational change is perceived to be difficult due to organizations' complexity and the different variables and contextual factors involved. Hornstein (2015) showed that

complex organizational change initiatives fail 67%–81% of the time. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt opportune strategies to make the organizational change as effective as possible. Scholars identified success factors to facilitate the organizational change (Verhulst & Lambrechts, 2015): (a) empowerment and the involvement of employees, (b) human commitment, (c) inductive learning, (d) the adaptation of the organizational culture, and (e) clear communication. Other researchers recognized the motivation of the team member as a pivotal strategy to perform a systemic change (Zeb, Saeed, Rehman, Ullah, & Rabi, 2015). Managers have to motivate through an effective leadership approach, recognizing the need for a change, providing a vision to understand it and guiding the organization into the change with the necessary commitment (Zeb et al., 2015). Rogleva, Temelkova, and Fustik (2015) argued that guiding an organizational change requires motivated employees, clearly defined tasks, and clear communication.

In particular, without a clear communication strategy, there is a higher risk to face resistance to organizational changes. Jones and van de Ven (2016) argued that resistance could reduce employees' commitment to the organization and managers, who unable to cope with change are also less committed to the organization. Altamony, Tarhini, Al-Salti, Gharaibeh, and Elyas (2016) advocated that in the process of implementation of the change phase, managers should consider the following factors: (a) leadership or team effectiveness factors, (b) end-user communication factor, (c) culture factor, (d) end-user training and involvement factors, and (e) the development factor. The three fundamental aspects of change management are the preparation to change by leadership, the implementation of organizational development, and result measurements (Altamony et

al., 2016). As possible threats, Dixon, Lee, and Ghaye (2016) identified that to transform mindsets and cultures could take a significant investment of time and effort; the other one, related to management, is that the pressure generated for the organizational change and time scarcity, provide a tendency to reject the change in difficult situations rather than embrace a new philosophy. Scholars reported that the failure to change and to respond to new opportunities or external events could eventually lead to economic losses (Lozano, Nummert, & Ceulemans, 2016). Therefore, it is important to consider the economic benefits as one of the main justifications for change in organizations.

Human Factor in Multicultural Projects

Lisak and Erez (2015) investigated the capacity of emergent leaders in multicultural teams regarding three global characteristics: cultural intelligence, global identity, and openness to cultural diversity. Lisak and Erez defined multicultural teams as teams consisting of individuals from different cultures, working together on activities that span national borders. Leaders should possess context-dependent characteristics that enable them to adapt to successfully, and operate in, the multicultural team context (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Conversely, team members search for a leader who demonstrates confidence in the complex global environment, capable of communicating with the entire team, and who helps to further the creation of shared understanding and trust among team members (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Darawong, Igel, and Badir (2016) assessed the impact of communication between expatriate and local managers on two types of conflict in subsidiaries of MNEs engaged in new product development (NPD). MNEs subsidiaries consist mostly of employees not only involved in different functions, but also from

different cultures. In particular, cross-cultural conflicts can arise in subsidiaries where a culturally diverse environment is predominant. Darawong et al. collected the data from 438 local NPD managers, analyzing three dimensions of communication: quality, bi-directionality, and formality. Darawong et al. found that the quality and bi-directionality of cross-cultural communication reduce relationship conflicts but increase task-related conflicts. Besides, a more formalized communication style increases both relationship conflict and task conflict (Darawong et al., 2016).

Ljubica et al. (2016) examined the link between individual culture and organization cultural competence leading to multicultural organization development (MOD). Ljubica et al. postulated that MOD is achieved through organizational adaptation to multicultural surroundings. The survey was carried out in Croatia, on a sample of 146 expatriates using the questionnaire method. The research results confirmed most of the hypotheses. The main contribution of Ljubica et al. is related to the link between individual competence and organizational competence, as developing cultural competence concept, organization and individual competencies were commonly observed separately.

Conversely, Lisak, Erez, Sui, and Lee (2016) examined the positive effect of leaders' global identity on multicultural team innovation. Following the decision-making processes perspective on team cultural diversity, Lisak et al. proposed that multicultural team leaders with high global identity foster team-shared innovation goals. Therefore, such leaders can motivate team members to adopt communication inclusion behavior, making sure that they all understand each other. Furthermore, Lisak et al. proposed that

the effect of fostering team shared innovation goals is stronger for teams with perceived high, rather than low, cultural diversity. Lisak et al. provided evidence on how multicultural team leaders with high global identity leverage on cultural diversity promote innovative goals, which further enhanced team communication inclusion.

Transition

Section 1 of this study included concepts and background related to the business problem and the subject of this research. A critical review of the literature included the extensive research and analysis of peer reviewed studies about the organizational learning theory and the environmental constraints in which MNEs work, which are the main subject of the study. In Section 2, there are details about the role of the researcher, the participants of this study and the recruitment criteria used. In the research process, there is a detailed explanation of the research methodology and the research design. This explanation includes the data collection instrument, data organization technique and analysis, the procedures for ensuring reliability and validity, and statements about adherence to ethical conduct. Section 3 includes a detailed discussion relating to the findings and social change implications. Section 3 includes an introduction, with the purpose statement and the research question, and the presentation of findings. Section 3 also entails the following subsections: (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

Section 2: The Project

In this section, I address the connection between the purpose statement and all of the components of the study, including my role as the researcher, the participants, and the research method and design. Further, this section includes details on the population and the sampling, the ethical approach to the research, and data collection, organization, and analysis techniques. Finally, I describe measures taken to ensure the necessary reliability and validity of the research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The target population consisted of five foreign company managers working in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan with successful experience in using strategies to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The implications for positive social change included the potential for increasing jobs for local people, leading to a decrease in the unemployment rate. Possible benefits for local people included access to better jobs in international companies and an increase in their standard of living.

Role of the Researcher

Despite the increasing utilization of technology, researchers continue to play essential roles in the studies they conduct. In case study research, a researcher must provide an accurate description of a specific phenomenon, select data collection and analysis methods, and adhere to ethics (Chong & Yeo, 2015). More generally, researchers

play a pivotal role in data collection, as they are in control of the entire research process; they need to gain access to a group of study participants, interact with them in a structured way, organize and perform the research process, collect data, and analyze the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My role as the primary and only researcher in the study was to collect data and analyze the information retrieved via semistructured interviews and content analysis. During the interview process, researchers facilitate the extraction of information, encouraging interviewees to talk about their lived experiences (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). In particular, in a semistructured interview setting, case study researchers should interact with participants, encouraging them to freely express their experiences (Morse, 2015b). I evaluated data from the semistructured interviews to have a deep understanding of the strategies that managers employed. My previous experiences in Kazakhstan working in an MNE in the oil and gas sector helped in facilitating the participants' expression of their experiences and views.

The data collected for this research reflected different perspectives and viewpoints to allow an understanding of strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. For this study, I followed the ethical guidelines defined in *The Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979), together with an interview protocol with predefined semistructured interview questions, to avoid incorrect assumptions concerning the research process. *The Belmont Report* includes a discussion of the difference between research and practice, promoting three fundamental ethical principles of ethical community-engaged research (Bromley, Mikesell, Jones, & Khodyakov, 2015;

Miracle, 2016). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016)

recommended the use of ethical guidelines for the protection of people who are subjects

of research. I adopted *The Belmont Report* guidelines throughout the study with integrity

and following proper documentation. The three basic ethical principles included in *The*

Belmont Report are respecting participants, generalizing beneficence, and negotiating

justice (Bromley et al., 2015; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016). A

way to provide respect to participants is to structure, issue, and follow an interview

protocol. Scholars argued that researchers can use interview protocols to increase

accuracy, improve the quality of data, ensure alignment with the research question, and

increase consistency in the data-gathering process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Castillo-

Montoya (2016) posited that researchers use interview protocols to provide consistency

in data collection, to facilitate the creation of a friendly environment, and to promote

mutual respect among participants. Researchers should design an interview protocol that

meets the following requirements (Castillo-Montoya, 2016): (a) ensures alignment

between the interview questions and the research questions, (b) promotes an inquiry-

based conversation, (c) reflects expert feedback, and (d) guides the interview process.

Participants in this study received the interview protocol before starting the interview

session, to set the rules for contacting, scheduling, and conducting interviews.

Chong and Yeo (2015) argued that one of the tasks of a researcher is to mitigate

the bias associated with data collection and analysis, avoiding viewing data from a

personal perspective. This process includes collecting data in a trustworthy manner,

contrasting and comparing evidence by reducing bias at a minimum throughout the

qualitative collection process, and analyzing and ethically interpreting the data (Levitt et al., 2017). To mitigate the bias associated with data collection and analysis, avoiding viewing data from a personal perspective, I designed and implemented tools for conducting the study. Through member checking, researchers ensure that interview data properly reflect participants' opinions (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Scholars designed member checking to enhance the credibility of data analysis and the involvement of interviewees (Varpio, Ajjawi, Monrouxe, O'Brien, & Rees, 2017). Atchan, Davis, and Foureur (2016) argued that confirmation and feedback from participants could improve the rigor and credibility of research. I used member checking to validate research findings via follow-up phone conversations with participants to ensure that I captured their responses accurately. I gave participants my interpretation of their responses to the interview questions and asked them to verify the accuracy of my interpretation.

I collected data objectively and ethically to mitigate bias. Researchers should make every effort to reduce or eliminate bias from their studies, excluding personal opinions and experiences to validate the analysis and conclusions (Birt et al., 2016). I adopted specific strategies to mitigate bias, such as using a structured interview protocol and reviewing and validating the transcripts involving participants. A researcher has the opportunity to mitigate bias by actively involving the participants in member checking and confirming results (Birt et al., 2016). Researchers use member checking to correct errors and to reduce the risk of misrepresentation and misinterpretation (Varpio et al., 2017). Through member checking, researchers ensure that interview data properly reflect

participants' opinions (Birt et al., 2016). I shared the results with the interviewees, including my interpretation of their responses to interview questions, and asked them to verify the accuracy of my interpretation.

Participants

This single case study research required the participation and interviews of five senior managers employed in a multinational organization working in Kazakhstan. The eligibility criteria for the selection of participants in this study specified that eligible individuals were expatriates with a managerial role in the selected organization who had implemented successful strategies for coping with LC requirements. Scholars find it appropriate to select participants with specific patterns, interactions, strategies, and experiences that are directly related to the topic under study because participants serve as representatives of a larger group (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Eligibility criteria are a foundational component of research and assist in defining the characteristics of a population under study (Kim et al., 2017). Researchers concur to select participants in the study that is more representative of the population with given characteristics (Kim et al., 2017). Essentially, I selected the population because of members' experience, roles in management, and influence on overall organizational performance, which aligned with the research question of this study. I selected expatriated managers working in Kazakhstan who had dealt with LC requirements and developed successful strategies to achieve profit for the business. I had access to the organization through my professional contacts, having worked for years in Kazakhstan in the specific business sector of interest. I also had contacts with the chamber of commerce in Kazakhstan, and I could

have arranged an in-person trip to the country for the case study. The preference for specific profiles was confirmed by requesting the validation of the eligibility characteristics in the informed consent letter.

Accessing participants for research purposes is often difficult if the research topic under investigation is sensitive (Dempsey, Dowling, Larkin, & Murphy, 2016). A critical success factor for accessing participants is represented by gatekeepers, individuals who can help or obstruct the research depending on how they evaluate the research (Høyland, Hollund, & Olsen, 2015). Obtaining the support of a person who has influence and power in the organization can add credibility and validity to research and facilitates the acceptance of participants (Dempsey et al., 2016). For this purpose, I contacted the chief executive officer (CEO) of the selected organization, who was one of my previous business contacts. I also included the CEO of the selected organization in the interviews so as to have access to the information of the company related to the case study and improve the reliability of data collection. Scholars have argued that interviews of CEOs guarantee unrestrained access to information and enhance the quality requirement in single case study research design and methodology (Gaya & Smith, 2016). The CEO guides and authorizes the firm's strategic decisions, including mergers, acquisitions, alliances, and the approach to local regulations, impacting the firm's financial performance and overall capital expenditures (Terjesen, Couto, & Francisco, 2016).

It was also important to develop strategies for establishing a working relationship with participants. Trust and respect are essential to establish correct and durable working relationships with participants (Bromley et al., 2015). Another success factor in

establishing an effective working relationship between researcher and participants is to guarantee confidentiality and to inform participants that their involvement in the study is voluntary (Bengtsson, 2016). I provided all necessary information related to the research, including the purpose of the study; participants had this information before their involvement in the study. Thus, I developed trust and respect by involving the participants in member checking and confirming the results.

Research Method and Design

For a researcher, it is important to select the most appropriate research method and design to effectively achieve the objective of the study and answer the research question. From this perspective, rigorous scholarly research allows for a closer description of the phenomena under investigation (Cronin, 2014). Scholars can choose among three main research methods (Molina-Azorin et al., 2017): (a) qualitative, (b) quantitative, and (c) mixed methods. Whereas quantitative researchers require numerical methods to focus on precise measurements of numerical data and variables to validate or reject one or more hypotheses, qualitative researchers seek to describe life experiences to generate results (Gentles et al., 2015; Park & Park, 2016). The business problem in this study related to the strategies that some foreign company managers used to achieve profitable business performance satisfying local workforce policy requirements. In the following paragraph, I provide a defense for using qualitative single case study as the most appropriate research design to describe this business problem.

Research Method

The qualitative method was appropriate for this study because I described and analyzed a business case to provide an exhaustive understanding of the phenomena. Scholars use the qualitative method to describe a phenomenon, interpreting data and the personal experiences of participants (Ingham-Broomfield, 2015). Qualitative researchers explore complex issues, collecting participants' perspectives through interviews (Runfola et al., 2017). Robinson (2014) contended that interviewing is one of the most common processes of data collection in qualitative research. In this regard, the experience and background of the participants were important factors to enhance the quality and reliability of the information gathered. Scholars supported the initiative to interview top industry experts to mitigate bias in the research (Gaya & Smith, 2016).Scholars argued that by collecting answers to the research questions, it is possible to identify themes and restraining forces, as detailed, in-depth interviews are the most regular sources of data in qualitative case studies (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Other scholars posited that researchers use the qualitative method to gather the data needed to answer the central research question (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015). Therefore, the qualitative method was the most appropriate method to explore strategies used by foreign company executives to improve company performance while complying with LC regulations.

Quantitative researchers use close-ended questions and numerical data to accept or reject one or more hypotheses (Scuotto, Del Giudice, Bresciani, & Meissner, 2017). A quantitative method involves factors and variables with numerical values for ease of statistical computation (Reuter & Spielhofer, 2017). A quantitative method was not

appropriate because I did not use closed-ended questions or validate hypotheses. Further, I did not use any numerical variable or statistical computation in this study. When executing a quantitative research method, assessing and reporting validation is a critical requirement. Quantitative researchers often recommend a random sampling procedure and focus on sample size (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Robinson, 2014). Scholars in quantitative research focus on the development of correlations, which relate to causation, as a requirement (Qasem, 2015). To study the influence of sustainability practices on profitability, focusing on the petroleum industry as allowed in qualitative research, I gathered information from the selected participants without any requirement for causation. Likewise, a mixed-method approach was not appropriate because in my study I did not combine the qualitative and quantitative methods. Scholars use mixed methods to combine quantitative and qualitative methods within one study (Mclaughlin, Bush, & Zeeman, 2016). Further, mixed methods are not easy to perform, in that integrating different methodologies into one study requires a broader set of research skills (Molina-Azorin et al., 2017). Being a new researcher, I determined that mixed methods was not the preferred option.

Research Design

The case study design was suitable for this study because it allowed the data collection on successful strategies and in-depth analysis of the experience of selected individuals. Researchers in case studies can provide a better understanding of phenomena related to solid context-dependent knowledge (Katz, 2015a; Ridder, 2017). Cronin (2014) reported that performing a case study involves the following steps: (a) evaluating study

design, (b) accomplishing data collection, (c) executing data analysis, and (d) reviewing

data with comparative literature. Researchers use case study design to perform in-depth

investigation of real-life experiences (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015; Katz, 2015b). Ingham-

Broomfield (2015) argued that a case study design allows the analysis of complex issues

through the knowledge and experience of senior representatives in the field under study.

   There are other research designs that researchers typically use (Guetterman,

2015): (a) phenomenological, (b) ethnographic, and (c) narrative. Researchers using the

phenomenological research design describe the experiences of multiple individuals.

Phenomenological design is suitable for capturing participants' subjective lived

experiences of a phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Phenomenologists seek to

understand the meaning of those experiences (Cibangu & Hepworth, 2016). The

phenomenology design was not suitable for this study because it was not necessary to

describe the meaning of participants' lived experiences. Likewise, the ethnographic

design was not suitable because this research did not directly involve culture or people's

behaviors, but rather an exploration of strategies and description of business issues.

Scholars use ethnographic design to describe and interpret common patterns of groups'

cultures (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Ethnographic researchers perform observations of a group

within their environment over time (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015; Ingham-Broomfield,

2015). Narrative design was not suitable either, as this research did not explore

individuals' stories related to people's lives and individual experiences. Using a narrative

design, researchers identify and explore the life of one or more individuals' stories using

interviews and documents (Pearson et al., 2015). The narrative approach focuses on

stories of lived experiences of an individual (Compton-Lilly et al., 2015). Therefore, the narrative design did not align with this study's requirements. Finally, researchers using grounded theory research design seek to generate a theory to explain a phenomenon (Ward, Gott, & Hoare, 2015). The grounded theory design was not suitable for this study, as the purpose was not to develop a theory for explaining the successful strategies that managers use in developing countries to satisfy local workforce policy requirements. The primary objective of researchers using a grounded theory design is to develop a theory (Gentles et al., 2015; Ward et al., 2015). Based on the above justifications, the single-case study design was the preferred option.

The number of participants to involve depends on the point at which researchers achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Data saturation, or redundancy, occurs when no new themes emerge from the completion of additional interviews or cases (Boddy, 2016). Redundancy is the process of sequentially conducting interviews until all concepts are repeated multiple times without new concepts or themes emerging (Cleary et al., 2014). Focusing on a selected group of participants provides an advantage regarding interactions between participants that allow exchange, exploration and further elaboration of ideas that may not have occurred outside the group (Cleary et al., 2014). I selected a specific group of participants, who interacted and exchanged information, enriching the research data. As I reached the redundancy of information, I did not have the need to continue interviewing participants to achieve data saturation.

Population and Sampling

The target population was a foreign company whose managers work in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan and who have implemented successful strategies to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying the LC requirements. In qualitative research, one of the most critical challenges is to select a meaningful sample of participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I involved a purposeful sample of five participants, choosing senior managers who have direct experience with the research topic. The purposeful sampling is appropriate to qualitative studies as it allows the understanding of real-life experiences from selected sources, narrowing down the population into the representative sample (Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, & Hoagwood, 2015). A purposeful sampling technique can be used to identify and select specific participants for the data collection from managers who have direct experiences with the research topic (Duan et al., 2015; Kalla, 2016). Scholars argued that purpose sampling involves the identification and selection of participants who have specific knowledge and experience with a phenomenon of interest (Palinkas et al., 2015). Researchers use purpose sampling in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the best use of available resources, through the identification and selection of individuals that have significant experience with the phenomenon of interest (Etikan, 2016; Phoenix et al., 2018). Through purposeful sampling, I identified and selected the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources, identifying and selecting individuals that had a meaningful experience with LC requirements, and developed strategies to provide profitable business.

Scholars argued that in qualitative studies, in contrast with quantitative ones, researchers tend to use small samples, yet representative of the target population (Morse, 2015c). The concept behind this choice is that qualitative researchers need to get an exhaustive understanding of a phenomenon from a few personal perspectives. Reid and Mash (2014) advocated that performing individual interviews, a sample size between five and 15 interviewees is satisfactory to acquire sufficient information from direct experiences up to data saturation. Marshall and Rossman (2016) argued that researchers use small samples to achieve quality and flexibility during the study of a phenomenon. Researchers argued that case studies could rely on small samples as long as the researcher engages the participants for in-depth insights and collects different perspectives about each question (Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015). Protracted interaction with the interviewees helped in reaching data saturation. Fundamentally, researchers can reach data saturation in case studies building on the richness of data rather than the quantity of data generated (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Researchers can retrieve rich data having a small sample involving the participants for in-depth insights (Fugard & Potts, 2015). Morse (2015a) advocated that persistent engagement can lead to thick and rich data. Therefore, a small sample of five participants was appropriate to obtain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the participants about performing under LC constraints.

In this research, I explored the processes and professional experiences of five senior managers working in Kazakhstan to retrieve the strategies that performing foreign organizations develop in compliance to the LC in the country. The participants with a

meaningful experience in LC were appropriate to provide significant answers to the

research question and to represent the population. Scholars argued that the participants in

the study with the experience and knowledge in the study topic could provide relevant

information (Runfola et al., 2017). In qualitative research, the adequacy of the sample

size also depends on the quality of the data retrieved (Cleary et al., 2014). Further,

researchers argued that it is possible to reach data saturation even with a small but

adequate sample, interviewing experts in the field of interest (Gaya & Smith, 2016;

Morse, 2015a).

Researchers advocated that the use of interviews helps researchers to reach data

saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Likewise, other researchers confirmed that it is possible

to achieve data saturation when the interview responses become replicable (Elsawah,

Guillaume, Filatova, Rook, & Jakeman, 2015). The objective to reach data saturation is to

guarantee the necessary research consistency (Morse, 2015b). Therefore, I ensured data

saturation by interviewing senior managers, as the primary data collection methodology,

and performing interviews until no new information or no new themes emerged. After

that, follow-up interviews have been administered to reduce bias and to enhance the

accuracy of the discussions.

The main criterion for finding participants was their expertise and experience in

performing operations under LC regulations. The eligible participants have been

contacted via email asking their availability to participate in a 45-minute interview, either

by Skype or by conference calls. Scholars advocated that a relaxed interview

environment allows participants to be more comfortable in responding to questions and

be more participative (Scheibe, Reichelt, Bellmann, & Kirch, 2015). Dikko (2016) suggested setting an uninterrupted time that is adequate for completing the interview. For these reasons, I collected data by interviewing the participants in a comfortable and non-threatening environment to enhance communication with study participants. Through videoconference it was possible to use the usual work environment of participants to provide a comfortable environment. It is important to provide a setting that allows the most comfort to the participant, without too much background noise or distractions (Dikko, 2016). I made interview arrangements establishing rapport and enabling participants to be open and honest about their personal experiences minimizing interruptions.

Ethical Research

It is essential for researchers to adhere to ethical principles along with the duration of their study and to complete a review process to guarantee that the proposed research is ethical. Taylor and Thomas-Gregory (2015) advocated that researchers have to follow ethical procedures and protocols during data collection and analysis. On the same line, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016) pointed out that the use of ethical protocols for researchers could maximize the benefit and minimize the risk for the participants in the study. Petrova, Dewing, and Camilleri (2016) addressed ethical concerns in providing the truthful presentation of research results. To assure and protect the participants in this study, I followed the guidelines defined in *The Belmont Report* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). The primary purpose of *The Belmont Report* is to protect the rights of all the participants in the research (Miracle,

2016). I completed the National Institute of Health (NIH) web-training course about

protecting human research participants, obtaining the certificate number 1948038 (see

Appendix A). Moreover, I completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

(CITI) web-training course about ethical research, obtaining the certificate number

29257146 (see Appendix A). Finally, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) provided the

approval for this research. After receiving the approval from the IRB, I contacted the

selected participants of this study to start the interview process. Richardson, Kwan, Alter,

and McKendry (2015) supported the IRB's ethical guidelines, arguing that IRB's

guidelines provide trust to the research. Nakkash et al. (2017) advocated that the IRB

provides transparent communication strategies between researchers and participants,

reducing discrepancies and irregularities.

Following the guidelines for ethical research, after obtaining consent from the

appropriate contact at the organization, it was possible to contact the selected

participants. To maximize efficiency and validity, it is important to ensure the availability

and willingness of the participants to join the interviews (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Participants that volunteer to join a research project may be highly motivated, providing

information-rich cases from which the researcher can learn about the phenomena under

study (Phoenix et al., 2018). Participants were invited to take part in interviews via skype

when not able to meet physically. The interview process followed the interview protocol

(see Appendix B) and included nine open-ended questions (see Appendix C), facilitating

explanations of experiences and opinions delivered in an articulate, expressive, and

reflective manner. In the consent form, there was a brief description of the purpose of the

study and the participation requirements. Scholars recommended the use of the informed

consent to ensure the ethical treatment of participants (Nakkash et al., 2017). Olsen,

Lehto, and Chan (2016) supported the concept that the informed consent is necessary to

ensure the basis of the fiduciary relationship between researcher and participant in the

study.

The informed consent form also included a paragraph related to the rights of

participants to withdraw from the research at any moment by notifying me via phone or

by email. Elo et al. (2014) posited the importance of giving the participants the complete

right to withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason. In case of withdrawal

of a participant, all the data provided by the participant in the study had to be destroyed.

Further, no incentive has been offered, monetary or not, to facilitate the availability for

the participation in this study. Researchers argued on the importance of voluntary

participation in the research without incentives and how this policy improves the

credibility of the findings (McLaughlin & Alfaro-Velcamp, 2015). In the informed

consent, it specified the voluntary nature of participating in this research. The participants

received the interview protocol and the informed consent form via email, with the

requirement to acknowledge the receipt. Marshall and Rossman (2016) strongly advised

that to ensure the ethical research process it is essential to secure the understanding and

acceptance of the informed consent. Nakkash et al. (2017) advocated that the informed

consent is necessary to protect the welfare of the participants and the interests of research

institutions.

Each participant received a notification about the measures envisaged to assure their data protection and confidentiality as they agreed to participate in this study. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions about their participation in the research. The informed consent included a brief description of the section of the scope and purpose of the study, a sample of the interview questions, and a statement of participants' right to withdraw from the study at any time. Accordingly, the participants' real names do not appear in this study, nor the company name. As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2016), it is necessary to use pseudonym coding or numerical differentiators to ensure data confidentiality. The protection of participant confidentiality is critical to ethical research, as researchers have to disclose substantial information about participants' lived experiences (Petrova et al., 2016). I ensured that the identities of the participants remained confidential. I cataloged the transcripts and documents from each interview, protecting the privacy of the interviewees and their organization, by labeling and progressively numbering each participant (i.e., M1, M2, etc.). Labeling enables researchers to reference a specific participant's interview providing additional security for participant information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The confidentiality was assured, as I was the only person with access to the participants' data.

I used the most suitable solution to store data and found effective protection measures to protect the confidentiality of the study participants. Scholars and managers have to take into serious consideration the data security and privacy protection for computing systems (Zhang et al., 2017). With the same concern, Dowsley, Michalas, Nagel, and Paladi (2017) dictated that cloud storage requires security solutions for data

security and to impact the clients' functionality as little as possible. Therefore, cloud computing was a suitable place to store the information retrieved, using a data encryption method to address the security concern. I saved all the study materials on my personal, password-protected computer and no one else could access it. Eventually, all these records will be destroyed, after 5 years, from the hard disk as well as from the cloud. The Walden IRB approval number for this research is 05-06-19-0479106.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher is the primary data collection instrument in a qualitative study, retrieving information and conducting semistructured interviews with the selected participants. Haupt and Pillay (2016) advocated that in qualitative studies the researcher is the one selecting the most suitable approach for the data collection process. Also, other scholars highlighted the capability of the researcher to strengthen the findings of qualitative studies through the researcher's interpersonal abilities with participants (Hazavehei, Karimi Moonaghi, Moeini, Moghimbeigi, & Emadzadeh, 2015).

For the data collection process, semistructured interviews were the preferred approach. I used semistructured interviews as one of the most important data collection tools, along with secondary data collection sources, company documentation, market report, and governmental data. Scholars use secondary data analysis to enhance the research through replication, re-analysis, and re-interpretation of existing data (Johnston, 2017). When using semistructured interviews, researchers use the conversation to drill the fullest responses from the interviewees using a prepared questionnaire based on identified themes (Gaya & Smith, 2016). Some researchers argued that semistructured

interviews, if conducted with regards to a specific objective and a stable phenomenon, can simplify the extraction of themes (Morse, 2015b). Paine (2015) supported the concept that semistructured interviews allow for a considerable variety of responses, helping to reduce the risk of bias related to the researcher's preconceptions. Finally, Aleandri and Russo (2015) described that semistructured interviews allow the researcher to guide the participants using a communicative verbal and nonverbal relationship, facilitating the data extraction.

I engaged five senior foreign managers of an MNE based in Kazakhstan using semistructured interviews, following an interview protocol (see Appendix B) with a set of interview questions (see Appendix C). The selected participants were contacted via email, after getting approval from the CEO of the organization. The interviewees agreed on the schedules of interviews after the interviewees' approval of the consent form, and interviews have been conducted using Skype video conferences. Participants either confirmed or rescheduled interview appointments based on their duties and other arrangements. A day before the scheduled interview, the selected participant ensured the time of the call.

To increase the reliability and validity of this research, I performed member checking processes. As per the interview protocol, after the interview, the participants checked my interpretation of their responses to assure data accuracy. Scholars supported the member checking process to enhance the accuracy and rigor of data collection (Birt et al., 2016; Taylor & Thomas-Gregory, 2015). Also, this validation practice improves the credibility and rigor of research (Chachula, Myrick, & Yonge, 2015). Each participant

received my interpretation of each participant's responses within a week from the interview for member checking, asking to send feedback within a week from receipt. Data filtering is essential to delete useless information and to realign to the research question (Petrova et al., 2016). Marshall and Rossman (2016) supported the use of member checking to strengthen the reliability of interpretations. After the completion of the data filtering, I used the software HyperRESEARCH™ to aid in analyzing the transcripts. Scholars use the features of HyperRESEARCH™ to highlight the themes and codes within a transcript (Lewis, 2015).

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques of the proposed study are mainly based on the results of the semistructured interviews with the participants and a company documentation review. Some researchers argued that in qualitative studies semistructured interviews are one of the most important data collection tools (Mcintosh & Morse, 2015). Mcintosh and Morse (2015) advocated that, in qualitative studies, one of the most used techniques is to collect data by conducting semistructured interviews, allowing the researcher to capture the point of view of participants effectively. In terms of advantages, Ward et al. (2015) posited that semistructured interviews could provide a suitable environment for the researcher to interact with participants, asking questions, capturing interviewees' rich understandings from their lived experiences, including over the phone interviews. Some researchers advised adopting semistructured interviews when the researcher understands the topic but is not able to predict all the possible answers (Mcintosh & Morse, 2015). Besides the advantages of performing semistructured

interviews, researchers may face challenges with this form of data collection. Researchers

may find difficulties scheduling the semistructured interviews (Rahman, 2015).

Participants may also feel inhibited when asked to respond to sensitive questions

(Mcintosh & Morse, 2015). Another disadvantage of semistructured interviews is such

interviews may offer little assurance that all relevant issues are covered and can represent

a problem for comparative data analysis (Young et al., 2018). Regarding the review of

company documentation, an advantage is that researchers may reduce their bias and

increase the validity of the study through replication, re-analysis, and re-interpretation of

existing data (Johnston, 2017). A potential disadvantage in using a company's

documentation is that the researcher did not participate in the data collection process and

does not know exactly how it was conducted (Johnston, 2017).

Ingham-Broomfield (2015) noted researchers can choose among a variety of

interviewing techniques, including (a) structured interviews, (b) semistructured

interviews, and (c) unstructured interviews. With structured interviews, researchers aim

to ask predefined questions with a limited possible answer (Alonso, Moscoso, & Salgado,

2017). Semistructured interviews involve in-depth conversations between the researcher

and interviewee strongly guided by the interviewee's perceptions, opinions, and

experiences, while allowing for varying numbers of questions to accommodate the

participant (Cridland, Jones, Caputi, & Magee, 2015). Unstructured interviews allow the

researcher to introduce a topic and let the participant develop ideas, with an informal and

conversational discussion, usually based on a broad, open-ended set of questions

(Sleijpen, Boeije, Kleber, & Mooren, 2016). The semistructured interview technique was

the preferred option because of my experience in the research topic and because of the predefined set of questions that allow more flexibility and interaction with the participants. The main steps related to performing the semistructured interviews are the following (Cridland et al., 2015): (a) preparing an interview guide, (b) identifying and selecting participants, (c) obtaining informed consent, (d) conducting effective interviews, (e) performing an accurate analysis and interpretation of data, and (f) involving participants in data analysis by providing feedback to participants. As the interview guide preparation is concerned, I developed an interview protocol as a guideline for the interviews (see Appendix B). The interview protocol is necessary to avoid personal biases and wrong assumptions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Researchers argued that the use of interview protocols could help accuracy, improve quality of the data, ensure alignment with the research question, and increase consistency in the data gathering process (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Birt et al. (2016) argued that researchers should record the interviews and involve the participants in the findings to improve accuracy. Member checking enables the validation of a study's patterns and findings with interviewees (Dai & Free, 2016; Morse, 2015a). I gave participants my interpretation of their responses to interview questions and asked participants to verify the accuracy of my interpretation of their answers. The video conferences were the selected instrument for interviews, as there were limited possibilities to reach the country in which the company is based. Using video conferences instead of traditional face-to-face interviews has advantages as well as disadvantages. One of the disadvantages of video conferences is that, compared with the traditional face-

to-face interviews, they do not facilitate building rapport with the interviewee, which is functional to the good performance of the interview (Elsawah et al., 2015). Another advantage of face-to-face interviews is that they can provide more consistency in data collection and data can be obtained more easily in face-to-face interviews (Gravlee, Maxwell, Jacobsohn, & Bernard, 2018). However, an advantage of video conferences is that the interviewee can choose the location they prefer to conduct the interview. Another advantage is flexibility of timing of the communication, and possibly the cost-effectiveness of the interview (Drabble, Trocki, Salcedo, Walker, & Korcha, 2016).

Researchers have the option to perform a pilot study. One of the main reasons a researcher is interested in performing a pilot study is to confirm the coverage and relevance of the content of the study (Findley, Jensen, Malesky, & Pepinsky, 2016). However, a pilot study is a time-consuming activity and not essential in cases using a range of qualitative data collection techniques, such as semistructured interviews (O'Cathain et al., 2015). I did not conduct a pilot study because it was a time-consuming activity and not essential when using semistructured interviews.

Data Organization Technique

I stored all handwritten notes, spreadsheets, and recorded interviews separately in labeled folders. Labeling enables the researcher to reference a specific participant's interview (Wolf, Williams, Austin, Dame, & Beskow, 2015). Researchers have to develop a reliable data storage strategy to ensure traceability, transparency, and reproducibility of the analysis to satisfy the need to collect, archive, and maintain data related to the study (Margarian, 2014). Shaw and Satalkar (2018) argued that it is

essential for a researcher to maintain the reliability and integrity of data collected. Bromley et al. (2015) emphasized that another critical aspect is to assure the privacy and confidentiality of information.

Each step of the interviews helped in identifying themes, patterns, and trends. I also noted the participants' analyses, alternate viewpoints, and criticisms. To avoid data loss or corruption of information, the data and the recorded interviews have been secured in a hard drive with a backup in the Cloud, using 64-bit password encryption. McGonagle, Brown, and Schoeni (2015) argued that securing data provides the researcher the opportunity for further exploration or analysis of the information. Neal, Neal, VanDyke, and Kornbluh (2015) advocated that audio-recorded interviews help the researcher to extract themes from an interview, preserving verbal and non-verbal information. The process of data protection forces the researcher to follow rigorous steps to keep a proper data security procedure during the lifespan of the research and beyond (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Petrova et al., 2016). Other scholars argued that research data and interview transcripts should remain stored and secured using reliable technology (W. Liu, Hu, & Wei, 2015). As per Walden's IRB policies and procedures, all the data related to the research will be securely stored for 5 years. After this period, the hard copies and all digital files will be destroyed.

Data Analysis

Selecting the appropriate data analysis process enabled the extrapolation of the deep meaning of data retrieved and the recognition of patterns or themes. Researchers performing qualitative research can easily accumulate a significant amount of data and it

is essential to select the proper tool to analyze the information gathered (Atchan et al., 2016). Academics usually approach qualitative data analysis in four phases (Yazan, 2015): (a) preparing and collecting the data, (b) developing themes and codes, (c) categorizing and indexing data, and (d) representing and discussing the data. Yazan (2015) argued that the process of collecting and analyzing data is recursive and dynamic. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the research linking the research question logically to the research conclusions, through the practices of data collection and data analysis, ensuring a reliable collection of relevant data (Hurst et al., 2015). In particular, researchers use the data analysis process to extrapolate the deep meaning of data that participants have about a business problem by patterns identification (Lewis, 2015).

The use of methodological triangulation supports the identification of patterns and themes, prevent bias, and increase reliability and validity from the use of multiple data sources. According to Tuncel and Bahtiyar (2015), researchers perform triangulation to maintain and enhance reliability and validity. Oesterreich and Teuteberg (2016) argued that data triangulation allows the researchers to analyze the research topic from a different perspective. Other researchers supported the methodological triangulation to ensure the credibility of the research, analyzing the concurrence of primary and secondary data from data collection (Ingham-Broomfield, 2015; Ruiz-López et al., 2015). Conducting methodological triangulation, researchers can enhance credibility and reliability, determining if the different types of data reveal similar results (M. D. Moon, 2019). I performed the methodological triangulation of multiple data sources by comparing the qualitative data from the review of organizational documentation with the

interview data, focusing on the main themes correlating the themes with the available literature and the developed conceptual framework. Scholars use this approach to maximize validity and trustworthiness, and to avoid bias within the analysis process (Bird et al., 2014; Raber et al., 2016).

The sequential process of data analysis entailed transcribing the participants' answers to open-ended questions, organizing the data, and analyzing the information that eventually merged into codes, themes, and categories. Scholars suggested the transcription of qualitative interviews data to facilitate the data analysis (Neal et al., 2015). Other researchers argued that analyzing the participants' data may support the researcher in developing themes (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Further, coding of the audio file and related transcript allows preserving verbal and nonverbal information (Neal et al., 2015).

There is a wide range of available tools to assist with qualitative data analysis, but it is essential to make the right choice of software for qualitative data analysis (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Le, 2014). Margarian (2014) supported the use of qualitative data software for developing codes. I used the software HyperRESEARCH™ to assist in identifying themes. Scholars argued on the advantages and disadvantages of computer software programs, including HyperRESEARCH™ (Lewis, 2015). However, researchers take advantage in utilizing computer software in the process of data reduction through the recognition of patterns and themes, which are part of an inductive analysis (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). This process consists of identifying codes, which can then be merged into

categories where similar issues are grouped, generally involves mining and reducing the data (Cornelissen, 2017).

Reliability and Validity

Researchers recognize the importance of the issue of validity and reliability while developing a case study (Runfola et al., 2017). Establishing quality is a primary requirement to guarantee that the analysis of research is grounded and, consequently, that the results can be integrated into the existing body of knowledge. To achieve this objective, researchers have to develop a study with quality characteristics, providing reliability and validity checks for their research, ensuring a consistent and accurate collection of data (Morse, 2015c). Scholars have to assure validity and reliability throughout the entire study, providing rigorous and trustworthy results (Bengtsson, 2016). Morse (2015a) argued that qualitative researchers have to strive to develop quality research by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Researchers refer to reliability as the processes to ensure data are consistent (Noble & Smith, 2015). Scholars argued that some of the most common processes that can ensure reliability are member checking, bracketing, and methodological triangulation (Morse, 2015a). Scholars define validity as the degree of integrity of the methods applied and the trustworthiness in reflecting the data (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2018). An example of the validation of data collected can occur through member checking and bracketing (Noble & Smith, 2015; Patton, Hong, Patel, & Kral, 2017). Methodological triangulation is also useful for ensuring validity (Tuncel & Bahtiyar, 2015). I ensured reliability and

validity by guaranteeing a rigorous process of data collection and analysis, interview protocols, validation techniques, and transferability.

Reliability

Scholars usually refer to reliability as the opportunity to find the same results after repeating the measurement of a similar phenomenon (Noble & Smith, 2015). One of the most critical aspects of a qualitative research process is the trustworthiness and integrity of the data (Selelo, Madigele, Ntaka, & Moetedi, 2017). Researchers can improve credibility and reliability through a methodological triangulation, verifying if the different types of data bring similar results (Cronin, 2014). Triangulation is essential to establish quality in qualitative research and to guide data collection and analysis (Yazan, 2015). Researchers use triangulation to mitigate the weaknesses of any single method (Molina-Azorin et al., 2017). Amankwaa (2016) added that academics use credibility, transferability, and dependability to enhance the reliability of qualitative research. In particular, dependability refers to the integrity of qualitative studies and aligns with the concept of reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Further, Elo et al. (2014) defined dependability as the constancy of data over time.

To achieve dependability and trustworthiness in the study, I documented the process of data collection, explaining the selection of participants, member checking, and following an interview protocol. Selelo et al. (2017) advocated the use of an interview guide to reduce the misunderstandings by participants and bias. Further, it is important to avoid conflicts of interest and affiliation, which is essential to set neutrality, a fundamental principle used in qualitative interviews to help mitigate the interviewer bias

(Devotta et al., 2016). Stewart, Gapp, and Harwood (2017) argued that dependability could be achieved by building a chain of evidence with constant comparison of documents, member checking, prolonged engagement, and persistent observations. Amankwaa (2016) advocated that researchers can assure dependability by the continuous checking of documents produced and corrected throughout the research phase.

Validity

Amankwaa (2016) encouraged the use of credibility, transferability, and dependability to evaluate the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. From the same viewpoint, Elo et al. (2014) argued that researchers often represented the validity of qualitative research by terms such as credibility, confirmability, and transferability. Further, Fusch and Ness (2015) stressed the importance of data saturation to achieve validity.

I enhanced the credibility of the results through member checking. Amankwaa (2016) argued that member checking is a suitable method to ensure credibility. Also, member checking requires sharing the interpretations of the interviews with the participants, asking for feedback on the accuracy of the findings (Birt et al., 2016). Using this method, researchers increase the credibility of the findings because participants can testify that the information they wanted to provide is correct (Birt et al., 2016). From the perspective of establishing credibility, researchers start building up credibility during the initial phase of the study, as they need to identify and describe external and internal resources (Bengtsson, 2016). Further, researchers should assure that the participants in

the study have the opportunity to review and agree on the interpretations from the survey
(Elo et al., 2014).

Transferability occurs when findings can be applied to other settings or groups
(Bengtsson, 2016; Elo et al., 2014). To allow other researchers to repeat the same
research process undertaken during this study and achieve similar findings, I followed an
interview protocol (see Appendix B). Scholars defined transferability as the ability to
describe a phenomenon or present findings in the research that can also be applied to
other contexts, settings, and future research (K. Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley,
Adams, & Blackman, 2016). Cornelissen (2017) advocated that researchers could
reinforce the transferability of research by providing descriptive details of the study.
Other researchers argued that to improve transferability is necessary to give a background
of data to create a context of the study and a detailed description of the phenomenon
(Amankwaa, 2016). Noble and Smith (2015) argued that to enhance transferability it is
crucial to systematically and consistently document the research, providing research
protocols as necessary.

Researchers establish confirmability of findings when the data accurately reflect
the information the participants provided and the interviewer provided evidence of the
alignment of interpretations of those data (Elo et al., 2014). To increase confirmability, I
documented this research through comprehensive notes and organized data, reviewing
each step of the research process as necessary to provide clarity and objective data and
minimizing any potential bias that could have resulted from missing documentation.
Bengtsson (2016) referred to confirmability by the terms of objectivity and neutrality of

the data. Further, to increase confirmability, researchers use the findings of the research

with the documented data to minimize the research bias (Hazavehei et al., 2015;

Mclaughlin et al., 2016).

Another important aspect that can enhance validity is data saturation. Data

saturation can maximize the components that Aldiabat (2018) described as credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To reach data saturation, I performed

methodological triangulation by reviewing organizational documentation and conducting

semistructured interviews with participants. If I had not reached data saturation, I would

have continued interviewing participants until no new themes emerged. Robinson (2014)

advocated that when participants provide the same information using the same interview

protocol in the research, researchers reach reliability and saturation. Researchers reach

data saturation when no new themes appear from the information gathered (Boddy, 2016;

Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The factors that can maximize the data saturation

are (Aldiabat, 2018): (a) focusing on the nature of research question, (b) using the

researcher's experience in qualitative research, (c) conducting methodological

triangulation, (d) understanding the philosophical background of the research method, (e)

using a guiding theoretical framework, and (f) using sensitizing concepts.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included a link between the purpose statement of my research study to

all components of the study, addressing the role of the researcher requirements,

discussing the selected participants, and detailing the research methodology and design

adopted. Further, Section 2 included the comprehensive description of the population and

sampling subject of this study; the ethical research; and the data collection instruments, analysis, and organization. Finally, I described how to ensure the necessary reliability and validity of the research.

Section 3 includes an introduction, with the purpose statement and the research question. The presentation of findings follows. Additionally, Section 3 includes the following subsections: (a) application to professional practice, (b) implications for social change, (c) recommendations for action, (d) recommendations for further research, (e) reflections, and (f) a conclusion.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore strategies that foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The targeted population consisted of senior managers working in one company in Kazakhstan who successfully implemented strategies to achieve profitable business performance and had strong experience in fulfilling LC policy requirements. Data were collected by conducting semistructured interviews with the managers of a foreign company and reviewing relevant company documents. Furthermore, I used member checking and methodological triangulation to reinforce the validity and reliability of the study. I explored the strategies used by the managers through the lens of the organizational learning theory that Argyris and Schön (1978) developed. I sought to identify words, actions, ideas, and strategies that were consistently found when conducting semistructured interviews and reviewing organizational records to identify patterns and themes. Afterward, I compared and contrasted the themes against the concepts found in the conceptual framework and in current literature to answer the main research question. The findings were consistent with organizational learning theory.

Three prominent themes emerged from data analyses: training of local personnel, cultural and communication competence, and personnel retention. The findings gathered during the interviews provided detailed information about the strategies that foreign managers used in achieving good business performance in developing countries while

satisfying local policy requirements. In this study, I illustrated the importance of communication for maximizing organizational performance and found that communication and cultural barriers between local employees and the company's expatriate managers could be one of the main reasons behind the company's low level of performance in DCs.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question of this research study was the following: What strategies do foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements? I used semistructured interviews and member checking to answer the research question and to understand the strategies that foreign managers use to cope with LC regulations. I used company documents with semistructured interviews to conduct methodological triangulation. I maintained the confidentiality of the participants by labeling and progressively numbering each participant (i.e., M1, M2, etc.). The principal themes resulting from the five managers' responses were (a) training of local personnel, (b) cultural and communication competence, and (c) personnel retention. The first main theme had two subthemes, while the other two main themes had one subtheme. In Table 2, I reported the rate and frequency of the themes and subthemes, while in Table 3, I rated the most significant participant thematic quotes.

The organizational learning theory that Argyris and Schön (1978) developed was used as the foundational theory of this research. I explored the strategies that foreign managers use in DCs to make the company profitable while following LC regulations,

through the lens of organizational learning theory. Training of local personnel,

knowledge transfer, competency, and absorptive capacity are four concepts of

organizational learning theory that foreign managers could use to increase the

profitability of the organization concerning LC requirements. All five participants

acknowledged during their interviews that training, knowledge transfer, and competency

of expatriates were essential to retain skilled local personnel. Maintenance and retention

of key employees are prerequisites for the successful appropriation of competences and

organizational prosperity (Ahammad, Tarba, Liu, & Glaister, 2016). M2 indicated the

need for local employees to be motivated, to be coached, and to have defined career

goals, in that the performance of the company depends upon having a motivated

workforce. Organizational learning theory is consistent with other findings in this study.

Several researchers have argued that effective communication, personnel

development, cultural competence, and rewards and recognition programs are essential

for proper coaching and the retention of employees (Eaton & Kilby, 2015; Hanaysha,

2016; Kontoghiorghes, 2016; Ljubica et al., 2016; Matos Marques Simoes & Esposito,

2014). Additionally, managers have given evidence that creating a motivating workplace

can stimulate employees toward enhancing their performance (Reizer, Brender-Ilan, &

Sheaffer, 2019). Foreign managers may use the results of this study to elaborate and

implement strategies to develop and retain competent local people in their organization.

Leaders in MNE organizations may also gain a better understanding of the importance of

having expatriates with specific skills in the effective management and development of

local personnel. Ultimately, the three main themes of this study have a connection to the study's conceptual framework.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes, Rate and Frequency by Participants

Themes and subthemes	Rate	Frequency
Training of local personnel	22%	35
Knowledge transfer	10%	16
Assessment of capabilities	12%	19
Cultural and communication competence	21%	34
Integration	15%	23
Personnel retention	10%	16
Motivation	10%	16

Note. Percentages rounded to whole numbers.

Table 3

Most Significant Participant Thematic Quotes

Themes and subthemes	Rate by participant				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5
Training of local personnel	2	4	3	2	1
Knowledge transfer	1	2	1	2	3
Assessment of capabilities	2	2	1	2	1
Cultural and communication competence	2	2	4	2	5
Integration	2	2	3	1	2
Personnel retention	2	2	1	2	2
Motivation	3	2	1	2	1

Emergent Theme 1: Training of Local Personnel

Employees' training is a theme that all five foreign managers confirmed as important. The employees' training theme emerged from Questions 2, 3, 6, and 8. Related

subthemes that emerged from the interviews were knowledge transfer and assessing capabilities. All five foreign managers concurred that training of employees would increase the capability of the personnel and improve their career development. Altamony et al. (2016) argued that local workers could reach the level of any expatriate if they would perform appropriate training and had the opportunity to gain experience. M1 stated, "companies should provide training and on the job training and keep them also for future projects." M1 also reiterated that providing training allows the organization to be profitable.

Harhara, Singh, and Hussain (2015) reported that training in organizations is positively related to organizational commitment and retention. M2 reported that training local employees is important for the sustainability of the company; that training activities improve the performance of staff; and that the performance of the company, especially in DCs, depends on the quality of the workforce. M3 and M5 stated that for the company, investing in training is of utmost importance to help overcome the main challenge in Kazakhstan: finding an educated workforce. M4 reiterated that local personnel are not fully aligned with job requirements and that it is necessary to provide relevant training to perform in the business. M5 confirmed that the local workforce does not always have suitable capabilities for the projects and, therefore, it is necessary to provide training. Edgar et al. (2016) argued that employees need learning, training, and coaching to know and better understand the company's business processes. Additionally, fulfilling the LC training allows a smooth nationalization of the positions of supervisors and managers, as it is possible to have skilled local personnel to replace expatriates. M4 and M5 shared that

it is important to provide on-the-job training to local employees, as in most of the projects this activity is requested by the client for direct personnel, to ensure an adequate level of competence. Amendolagine et al. (2017) investigated the advantage of technology spillovers from foreign enterprises, which allows their local suppliers to ensure that their requirements are met. MNEs can also contribute by providing training for the local labor force, as required by LC policy (Amendolagine et al., 2017).

The importance of selecting the right expatriates relates to the necessary on-the-job training. Lenartowicz et al. (2014) examined the existing cross-cultural training methods available and the reasons that training methods are ineffective and developed a training framework and four alternative training approaches. The foundation of the framework was that knowledge is explicit or tacit, and cultural knowledge is mainly tacit (Lenartowicz et al., 2014). Lack of cultural knowledge results in costly resources in the form of poor productivity levels, lack of relationships and collaborations, undesirable outcomes, and failed assignments (Lenartowicz et al., 2014).

Another aspect of training as a whole relates to the transfer of technology and expertise from MNEs to a local firm in DCs. Amendolagine et al. (2017) investigated the advantage of technology spillovers from MNEs to the local DCs' firms. The spillover effect is the result of the intentional transfer of knowledge and technological and managerial capabilities by multinationals, which assist their local suppliers in ensuring that their requirements are met. MNEs can also contribute by providing training for the local labor force, as required by LC policy (Amendolagine et al., 2017). M1, M2, and M3 identified the JV with a local company as a strategy to successfully perform in DCs and

fulfill the LC. M1 explained that establishing local partnerships can attract local financing from banks. M1 reiterated that international companies struggle to integrate their operations into the local market, and they need to find proper subcontractors and partners to attract a professional workforce. M2 stated that it is important to identify potential partners to open different business opportunities. For instance, M2 explained, "if you are a maintenance company and you find a partner working in powerplants or other related activities, you can create a partnership to attach a specific business." M3 declared that one strategy is to join local contractors to create JVs and grow the local companies, transferring expertise to local subcontractors. Conversely, M3 stated that the process of technology spillover from MNEs to local contractors presents additional constraints and issues for the execution of projects in DCs.

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning theory of Argyris and Schön (1978). The importance of training of local personnel relates to the need to overcome the discrepancy between expectation and actual results concerning performance. Organizations should promote learning between the expatriate members and the transition team of local personnel (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Managers need to increase knowledge in the organization and create organizational developments to facilitate a sustainable setting and improvement. Training is one of the organizational business processes that promote the increase of knowledge among employees. Onağ, Tepeci, and Başalp (2014) argued that managers should organize a systemic training process to enhance organizational learning capability. Other researchers (Oelze et al., 2016) argued that organizational learning and the subsequent capability of individuals'

development is a direct result of training. Managers should invest time to ensure that

learning and knowledge management are permanently assigned as a daily organizational

activity at all organizational levels (Saadat & Saadat, 2016).

       Knowledge transfer. M1 argued that management has the responsibility to issue

procedures to retrieve and manage the information that is mandatory by law. By LC

requirements, the local governments mainly imply the substantial utilization of local

resources and workforce (Dosumu et al., 2017). However, the local workforce and local

contractors are not skilled enough to comply with the requirements of their work

assignment (Edgar et al., 2016). M2 declared that if in some projects the organization can

improve the knowledge of some people, it is possible to improve relationships, and

eventually to improve economic results. AlHussaini and Karkoulian (2015) found that

one important barrier to knowledge transfer is lack of communication between

employees. Khan et al. (2015) noted that providing an effective system to transfer the

organizational and personal knowledge of local workforce requirements might positively

affect the business performance of employees, workgroups, and companies. M3 stated

that it is possible for an excellent head of department to know the work very well yet not

be able to transfer this knowledge to local people. Because knowledge management and

transfer are important for the success of the company, the organization might identify a

less skilled head of department who is able to transfer knowledge and work with local

people. Academics have indicated that knowledge transfer and employee retention have

positive influences on company performance (Ahammad et al., 2016). M4 argued that it

is also important to manage knowledge internally when related to the latest requirements

of the LC. The same concept applies to most potential local partners. Scholars and managers consider the aging of the skilled workforce one of the major challenges for organizations; therefore, the transfer of knowledge has become a critical success factor (Burmeister & Deller, 2016). One effective way to improve the organization's knowledge is to provide necessary on-the-job training (Ranucci & Souder, 2015). Oelze et al. (2016) argued that organizational learning and the subsequent capability of individuals' development is a direct result of direct training.

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning theory of Argyris and Schön (1978). Fernández-Mesa and Alegre (2015) stressed the importance of knowledge transfer and defined organizational learning as a framework that organizations use to improve performance through the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Brix (2017) focused on the role of organizational learning and analyzed the processes and outcomes of knowledge creation, retention, and transfer. Scholars and managers consider learning organizations as systems that allow expansion of knowledge capacity among their employees (Forés & Camisón, 2016). In such organizations, people have the opportunity to develop new ideas and give the desired results, as learning enables the development of new ideas, innovation, and new thought patterns (Fernández-Mesa & Alegre, 2015).

Assessing capabilities. M1 argued that it is important for the organization to recognize the effort that people make. M1 explained that company leaders periodically assess the capabilities and needs of employees to tailor specific training sessions. M1 reiterated that this process responds to requirements to define what the company wants

from employees and what employees can do for the company. Miller and Cockrell (2015) explored the relationship between the effectiveness of the appraisal process and employee performance, indicating that workplace culture mediates the relationship between the effectiveness of the appraisal process and job satisfaction, employee retention, and performance. M2 stated that organizational leaders promote motivational practices, such as training, career goals, and performance appraisals, to improve the performance of staff. Miller and Cockrell debated the notion that organizations that assess the performance of their employees succeed in motivating their staff to achieve organizational objectives. M3 argued that some local people lack motivation, and it is necessary to assess them periodically, motivating people by promoting those deserving a promotion. M4 argued that the first step in hiring a local person is to set a training program; before that, it is important to assess the person's performance. M5 explained that the nationalization process has two main positive impacts on the organization, which are reducing cost and improving the capability to manage the local people. M5 declared that to support the nationalization process, the organization needs to periodically assess the capabilities of local people through testing, training, assessing, retraining, and supervising. The assessment process is one of the pillars of human resource management, and management can use the assessment of personnel in the development and growth of the company's various businesses (Al Shobaki & Naser, 2016).

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning theory of Argyris and Schön (1978). The importance of assessing capabilities of local personnel relates to the need to understand cultural differences and knowledge needs. Organizational learning

refers to the way in which organizations create, maintain, and improve knowledge (Argyris & Schön, 1978). Management practice, including training and assessments, can effectively minimize the impact of cultural differences and facilitate efficient technology transfer (Nguyen & Aoyama, 2015). Kadiresan et al. (2015) argued that training and development deal with increasing and updating the skills, knowledge, competencies, and experiences of an employee through a series of training and development programs. With this perspective, the process of assessing the capabilities of local personnel enables management to plan and perform the most suitable training. Organizations that engage in assessment and use the results to make changes to improve the effectiveness of knowledge transfer are demonstrating the application of organizational learning principles (Young, 2018).

Emergent Theme 2: Cultural and Communication Competence

All five managers mentioned that cultural and communication competence is essential to be able to work in DCs. The cultural and communication competence theme emerged from questions two, three, six, seven, and eight. The related subtheme that emerged from the interviews was integration. By integration, the five managers meant the integration of the MNE's organization into the local market. M1 stated that organizations always need to find a way to communicate effectively from the top management to the local workforce, pursuing an effective integration among the personnel. M1 explained that expatriates in a supervisory position have to speak English and the local language, accept the local culture, and respect local habits and traditions.

Expatriates often feel that communication with locals is distorted due to differences in language; conversely, local managers find expatriates lack sufficient local knowledge of the host country culture and cannot communicate with them (Darawong et al., 2016). Taking a socioeconomic viewpoint, cultural diversity plays an integral role in the development of individuals (Kim, 2015). Lack of cultural knowledge results in loss of resources in the form of poor productivity levels, lack of relationships and collaborations, undesirable outcomes, and failed assignments (Lenartowicz et al., 2014). M1 reiterated that the local culture might affect the organization. Edgar et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of the effect of local culture on any company's resource management process. Managers can use practices, such as training, communication, and empowerment to improve the company's performance; however, there is no clear best practice that management can use to resolve a cross-cultural conflict situation that might occur in the team (Ahammad et al., 2016). M1 stated, "you need to accept the local culture, respecting the habits and the traditions that there are in place where you work." When expatriates learn the local cultural protocols, foreigners and locals can relate to each other and live in harmony, supporting an effective multicultural team environment and boosting workers' responsiveness to the organization that leads to increased productivity (Abugre, 2018).

M2 stated, "one of the main constraints to comply with the local requirements is related to the communication barrier; therefore, expatriates struggle to integrate with the local employees." M3 added that the organization needs to have people with proper oral and written communication skills to communicate with locals effectively on-site. In the project, the supervisors must speak the local language and to understand them. M3 also

reiterated that promoting cultural exchange between expatriates and locals may help to effectively implement strategies satisfying the local workforce requirements. MNEs have to employ and develop high professionals with an understanding of cultural diversity through the application of both cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity, effectively responding to global business requirements (Abugre, 2018).

Multicultural team members search for a leader capable of communicating with the entire team and helping to further the creation of shared understanding and trust among team members (Lisak & Erez, 2015). Cross-cultural communication skills are necessary to provide significant cultural knowledge that improves expatriates' communication and work outcomes in the subsidiaries (Abugre, 2018). M4 concurred that language and cultural barriers can prevent the organization from being successful. M5 declared that breaking the cultural barriers is necessary for the organization, as management has the responsibility to try to understand local personnel and prepare them to perform. Lack of cross-cultural communication enables a degraded emotional environment that involves a considerable amount of uncertainty and a potential for misunderstanding among multicultural team members (Abugre & Debrah, 2019).

In the framework of the organizational learning theory of Argyris and Schön (1978), the importance of communication and cultural competence relates to the necessary leadership skills that a supervisor or a manager should possess. The appropriate type of culture for performing organizations is the one that assists the organization to be effective within the environment where it operates (Kontoghiorghes, 2016). Leaders are the enablers of individuals' ability to learn and can promote or inhibit organizational

norms and culture that are conducive to organizational learning; therefore, cultural and communicational competencies are necessary skills for leaders to perform this task in a multinational context (Wu, 2016). Cultural competence enables managers and leaders to gain knowledge about cultures they work with and increase their range of adequate behaviors for efficient management style in multicultural environments (Ljubica et al., 2016). Organizations that promote knowledge sharing within employees through effective communication and proper cultural interaction establish the appropriate environment for the collective effort of organizational learning (Onağ, Tepeci, & Başalp, 2014).

Integration. M2 stated, "international companies struggle to integrate to the local market; find proper subcontractors; and attract local professional workforce, which is very scarce." To realize the full exploitation of local knowledge, MNEs have to employ both knowledge transfer and knowledge integration approaches (Li et al., 2016). Integration is essential when the main key performance relates to coordination and there is a defined sequential or reciprocal interdependence in activities (Franz, Leicht, Molenaar, & Messner, 2017). Using the integration process, it is possible for the organization to establish the necessary level of responsibility and communication for all team members and their activities, improving the project performance (Franz et al., 2017).

M1 stated, "if the organization is capable of making the employees feel part of the company, there will be a good result in performance." M1 also declared that the integration of expatriates into the local community is essential to improve the relationship

with the local community. Che Ibrahim, Costello, and Wilkinson (2018) highlighted the

increasing research interest in understanding the concept, features, and elements of team

integration practices in construction projects as a way to embrace collaborative

environments. The integration of different professional and cultural factors into the

organization is one of the most critical aspects of international projects. Some individuals

define multiculturalism as a project in the project, requiring affirmation of diversity and

mutual respect before starting any exchange of ideas and information (Udangiu, 2016).

M2 posited that one of the constraints to complying with the LC is the trust barriers

between locals and expatriates. Integration not only enables team members to solve

problems jointly, but also allows them to build on each other's ideas, skills, trust and

expertise, as well as gain new learning (Mehta & Mehta, 2018).

M3 stated, "when you are breaking these barriers in between and everybody feels

to be at the same level and similar, after that point does not really matter if you work with

a local workforce or expatriates on that position." M4 reiterated that expatriates have to

show respect, as many expatriates treat locals as if locals were under them. An integrated

team can cooperate effectively in a difficult environment to deliver the milestones of a

project efficiently (Chang, Jiang, Klein, & Wang, 2019). M5 declared that MNEs have to

work and integrate with local people to succeed in DCs. Organizational learning is a

dynamic process of creation, acquisition, and integration of knowledge into business

operations to develop the resources and capabilities, enabling the organization to achieve

better performance (Oelze et al., 2016; Zerden, Lombardi, & Richman, 2019).

Multicultural teams enable organizations to operate across geographically dispersed

zones and employ talented professionals from around the globe; the integration of such culturally diverse cognitive resources of knowledge, ideas, experiences, and perspectives enables team members to gain new insights and create innovative solutions (Lisak et al., 2016).

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning theory of Argyris and Schön (1978). Knowledge transfer and integration of different professional and cultural factors consist of two closely linked processes: internal transfer and integration of knowledge (Onağ et al., 2014). The efficacy of the organization to perform these two processes relies on the lack of internal barriers that inhibit the transfer of knowledge within the company (Onağ et al., 2014). Integration is one of the most important processes that can minimize internal barriers within local employees and between locals and expatriates. The integration of departments (i.e., human resources, procurement, sales, operations, etc.) is important to enhance the organizational learning as each department differs from the others in a number of important aspects, including the educational profiles, training of employees, and the non-codifiable knowledge that is crucial for success (Ranucci & Souder, 2015).

Emergent Theme 3: Personnel Retention

The personnel retention theme emerged from questions two, three, seven, eight and nine. The related subtheme that emerged from the interviews was the motivation of employees. All participants mentioned that the organization has to develop and apply practical strategies to retain employees of diverse backgrounds in order to succeed in achieving profitable business performance. M1 stated that the organization applies

strategies to retain personnel by giving incentives, offering opportunities, and providing training. M1 also declared that an upward career path, through promotions from foreman to supervisory positions or job offers on other projects, is also a strategy that the managers use. M1 argued that it is important to promote people to build a feeling of belonging within the organization. MNEs considered employee retention as one of their major challenges, especially in DCs (Sarmad, Ajmal, Shamim, Saleh, & Malik, 2016). Researchers (Coetzee & Stoltz, 2015) provided evidence that retention factors contribute to reduced voluntary turnover, lower intentions to leave, enhanced productivity, and more committed and satisfied employees. Harhara et al. (2015) stated that the high cost of employee turnover influences the organization because of decreased productivity, low employee morale, and stagnated growth profitability. M2 disclosed that it is essential that the company retains key personnel and improve the capabilities of your local workforce, noting it is possible to better the performance of the projects and to increase the profitability. M2 stated "this [employee retention] gives you the success of the company."

Managers implementing effective employee retention strategies may lead the organization to stability, growth, and profit (Cloutier, Felusiak, Hill, & Pemberton-Jones, 2015). Employee retention has a negative effect on an organization because the organization suffers an economic loss when some of the personnel leave the company once employees are fully trained (Sarmad et al., 2016). Coetzee and Stoltz (2015) identified some main retention factors, which are (a) compensation , (b) job variety and autonomy, (c) training and development opportunities, (d) recognition by and feedback from supervisors, (e) career opportunities, (f) work and life balance to meet both work

and family commitments, and (g) organizational commitment and involvement in the organization.

M3 stated that if the company is able to create a system where expatriate presence is optional and the organization continues to retain good local people, the project is usually successful. Nationalization represents a fundamental shift in the way the private sector will operate and its associated resource-based operations and infrastructure (Edgar et al., 2016). M3 reiterated, "good communication skills are necessary for expatriates to deal with local people, and managers should promote cultural exchange to avoid turnover." Cloutier et al. (2015) identified several strategies to improve the retention of employees, including delivering effective communication, hiring skilled people, and offering development and training programs among the most successful. Ineffective communication within an organization may lead to a poor work culture, which in turn increases the employees' turnover (Cloutier et al., 2015). Harhara et al. (2015) argued that managers implementing effective retention strategies might reduce employee turnover by improving employee work experiences through communication and adequate feedback.

M4 stated that one way to assess the effectiveness of the company's strategy to improve the performance of the project and satisfy the local workforce requirements is to monitor the turnover of people. Companies with high employee turnover may be negatively impacted by disrupted operations as well as unpredictable team dynamics and performance, translating into further financial costs for organizations (Harhara et al., 2015). M4 reiterated that it is important for the company to work to retain local people

with a nationalization plan. M4 stated that it is essential to "motivate people, promoting who deserves to be promoted and not promoting who does not perform." M5 also supported the strategy to substitute expatriates with capable local individuals, which may increase the profitability of the company because of reduced costs and improved capabilities of local people to manage local employees.

M5 stated that one of the strategies to increase performance is to attract, select, and retain the key local persons, such as supervisors, operators, and direct and indirect personnel, through providing on the job training and knowledge transfer. M5 informed that key local employees are important for the company, as key employees will "be retained and moved from project to project." Peter-Cookey and Janyam (2017) conducted a study debating the local workers' productivity and the correlation with the processes of knowledge transfer. Morris et al. (2016) found a correlation between the development of human capital and competitive advantage. Management practices, such as management commitment, quality practice, team-based work, training, and frequent interaction, can effectively minimize the impact of cultural differences on efficient technology transfer (Nguyen & Aoyama, 2015).

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning model of Argyris and Shoen (1978). Wang et al. (2017) theorized the importance of organizational learning on knowledge transfer and personnel retention. Organizational change can be fatal to the organization if organizational learning and knowledge transfer are not taken into account by management (Wang et al., 2017). Having both explicit and tacit knowledge of the organization and work processes, employees have a framework to achieve shared goals

(Ranucci & Souder, 2015). Maintaining and retaining key employees is a prerequisite for the successful appropriation and safeguard of competences and organizational sustainability (Ahammad et al., 2016). Managers promoting a structured approach to employees' retention not only increase the opportunities for organizational learning and development, but also rise employee motivation that is favorable to the sustainability of the organization (Islam & Tariq, 2018).

   Motivation of employees. M1 stated that a nationalization plan is necessary for the local operations, and relocating people in place of expatriates motivates the employees. M1 also stated that employee motivation is a significant factor that correlates to job satisfaction and willingness to use knowledge and personal capabilities for the benefit of the organization. Researchers provided evidence that employees' level of motivation positively affects the retention of employees. M2 disclosed, "management uses motivational practices such as career goals, performance appraisals, and training." Sarmad et al. (2016) found motivational factors are actions that lead an employee toward achievements, recognitions, growth, and status. Other researchers (Aleksić-Glišović, Jerotijević, & Jerotijević, 2019; Boichuk, Bommaraju, Ahearne, Kraus, & Steenburgh, 2019) promoted the perception of an effective procedural justice in evaluating the performance of employees as having positive effects on employees' motivation and, ultimately, on their performance. M3 stated, "if people feel part of and behave as part of the team, the organization will achieve the best production of the work, and everything will be under control." The creation of a good work environment and team building are success factors for motivating employees (Hitka, Rózsa, Potkány, & Ližbetinová, 2019).

A motivating workplace is a performance enhancer for employees (Reizer et al., 2019).

M4 stated that one of the barriers to implementing strategies to satisfy LC is that local

people lack motivation. Consequently, it is important to motivate employees through

promotions (Sarmad et al., 2016).

M5 supported that nationalization is one of the strategies to motivate personnel.

M5 stated the organization usually starts a project using expatriates, but when a local

person is ready to replace the expatriate, the manager nationalizes the position and

promotes the local employee. M5 also reiterated that, as a common practice, management

places a skilled local as an assistant to the expatriate. The mentorship period might range

from some months to years of on the job training, depending on the responsibilities. The

goal is to make it possible to nationalize the position. Researchers found a correlation

between job insecurity and lack of motivation in employees, whereas promotion is more

beneficial for employees to maintain work motivation (Tu, Long, Wang, & Jiang, 2019).

Lin, Chen, Ashford, Lee, and Qian (2018) argued that job insecurity has negative effects

on employees' performance and affective commitment to the organization. People's

perceptions and feelings of career success and satisfaction influences motivation (Coetzee

& Stoltz, 2015).

This finding was consistent with the organizational learning theory of Argyris and

Schön (1978). The motivation of employees is strictly related to the performance of the

organization. Various variables and different circumstances influence organizational

learning within organizations, and efficiency in organizations is essential to achieve

performance (Golmoradi & Ardabili, 2016). Managers and leaders use the combination

of vision, communication, and motivation to lead the employees effectively to support

organizational changes and reduce their resistance (van der Voet, 2014). Islam and Tariq

(2018) posited that the employees' perceptions of a learning environment can increase

their engagement in the workplace and their intrinsic motivation. Hanaysha (2016)

argued that the work environment has a significant positive impact on organizational

commitment and the effects of employee engagement and organizational learning.

Recursively, the increased motivation and engagement of employees can result in various

extra-role behaviors such as innovation, proactivity, and knowledge sharing (Islam &

Tariq, 2018).

Applications to Professional Practice

By analyzing the results of this study, it is possible to explore strategies foreign

company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local

workforce policy requirements. I used the organizational learning theory that Argyris and

Schön (1978) developed to guide the direction of the research. The specific business

problem was that some foreign company managers lack strategies to achieve profitable

business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements.

Managers can use the findings and conclusions from this study to plan effective

strategies to fulfill the local workforce policy requirements. These strategies may prove

valuable in retaining employees in organizations and lead to improving the productivity

of the company. Maintaining or enlarging a market position fulfilling the local workforce

policy requirements may lead to an increase in competitive advantage and the attraction

of competent local resources. Entrepreneurs and managers willing to enter into

developing countries' markets, or already operating in these markets, may benefit from

understanding the strategies that some foreign company managers use to achieve

profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements.

Lastly, the local economy may benefit from having both international and skilled local

companies in the market, capable of providing an indirect improvement of ancillary

service companies throughout the business pipeline.

Implications for Social Change

The implications for positive social change include foreign company managers

working in developing countries and using successful strategies to increase employment

opportunities for local people. Companies working in DCs may provide better services to

support their customers by the selection, employment, training, and retention of skilled

local people. Harhara et al. (2015) argued that the turnover of employees could

negatively affect the organization because it can increase indirect costs, decrease

productivity, and reduce the employees' morale, leading to low profitability of the

company.

Managers could stimulate positive social changes through organizational activities

(Stephan et al., 2016). Organizations that want to maintain or improve their market

positions have to develop the capabilities of local resources, despite the regional context

(Neffke et al., 2018). Therefore, foreign company managers could use the findings from

this study to provide, either directly or indirectly, positive support to the local

communities, including stimuli for the development of competent local entrepreneurial

skills and job creation. The outcomes of this study may enhance social change by

increasing job opportunities and creating organizational and economic growth through the development of local labors. Related to social welfare, researchers reported improved local economies (i.e., employment opportunities, increase in salaries, and competence among people) may lead to decreased criminality rates (Lange & Kinyondo, 2016).

Recommendations for Action

Managers and business leaders working in DCs need to understand whether the results of this research study could augment their existing strategies to increase the profitability of the company while satisfying the LC requirements. Based on the findings of this study, I am able to provide three recommendations that foreign company managers could adopt in DCs to enhance their profitability and follow the local workforce requirements. It is apparent that this study's participants perceived employee development, training, and retention as important contributors to business success in DCs while fulfilling the LC requirements. Team development could contribute to both business sustainability and profitability. Providing training to local employees and considering them an integral part of the organization may motivate the personnel and positively contribute to the profitability of the company.

The first recommendation is to provide training for local employees. This action will support the development of local personnel, improvement of their capabilities and skills, and implementation of a smooth nationalization plan. Foreign supervisors and managers should be participative and aligned with the strategy of the company. The second recommendation is to select and hire foreign managers, supervisors, and team leaders with the necessary cultural and communication skills. It is important that foreign

representatives understand the local culture, respect it, and effectively communicate with local employees. Effective management and leadership allow the creation of a productive environment and, eventually, commitment throughout the organization. The third recommendation is to create strategies to select and retain key local personnel, improve retention to avoid loss of resources, and employ local employees in future projects in place of expatriates.

Managers of MNEs in any business field desiring to improve their business profitability and sustainability in DCs should consider the findings of this research study. Organizations considering new approaches in fulfilling the local workforce requirements in DCs should include the strategies described in this research study. Managers can access this study through the ProQuest/UMI dissertation database, as Walden University will disseminate the findings of this doctoral research study. Furthermore, I will disseminate the findings through participation in oil and gas seminars, presentations in international conferences related to LC, and business journal publications.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to explore strategies foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. Foreign companies, as job creators and significant contributors to the welfare of DCs, have difficulties in sustaining their business in countries with strict LC requirements. The sample size of this single case study limited the research to one foreign company and restricted the transferability of the findings. Future research should include more participants to obtain broader results. A limitation of this study is also the

geographic area because the study is limited to Kazakhstan. Another limitation is the industrial sector, which is limited to the oil and gas business. Other foreign companies working in different DCs or other business fields may have different approaches. My research focused on an MNE based in Kazakhstan. There are opportunities to study other MNEs working in the ex-Soviet Union's countries, which are similar to Kazakhstan in enforcing the LC requirements. The results of future studies may provide further effective strategies from what the five participants in this research successfully implemented. The results of further research studies may allow foreign organizations to perfect and adopt effective strategies for their organizations to improve profitability and fulfill the LC requirements. As organizations working in DCs are necessarily becoming multicultural, integrating several different values and beliefs, a future area of study might include a new concept of the organization, with more effective leadership styles that can facilitate the integration and management of multicultural teams.

Reflections

The decision to research strategies to perform under strict local workforce requirements emerged from my professional experiences working in the oil and gas industries in emerging countries for the past 20 years. The successes and the failures I experienced inspired me to conduct this research study to learn the most effective strategies to implement the LC requirements while making my company profitable. Although I have extensive experience in managing the LC requirements in DCs, my role as a researcher required me to mitigate the bias associated with the data collection and data analysis, avoiding viewing data from a personal perspective. This requirement was

necessary to increase the reliability of the research and ethical standards of my findings. The doctoral journey was a strict process of collecting and reviewing the existing literature, designing and following an interview protocol with selected participants, gathering, analyzing, and summarizing information. This journey helped me expand my knowledge on the complexity of LC and the impact of the related requirements for MNEs working in DCs. Reading the findings of this research study, managers and business leaders may have the opportunity to discover the necessary information, along with examples of successful strategies, to increase the profitability in DCs while respecting the local workforce requirements.

Conclusion

Leaders of MNEs need to develop effective strategies to fulfill LC requirements and sustain their businesses. Providing a better understanding of the strategies that successful foreign managers use to meet the local workforce policy requirements in DCs could help other managers to sustain their business and increase their profitability. Leaders should create job opportunities for local people, enhancing their knowledge and skill and retaining them for future projects. This action allows organizations in DCs to remain sustainable, generate profits, sustain the local economic environment, and provide career opportunities for experienced employees. Nguyen and Aoyama (2015) discussed that knowledge transfer is a particularly significant factor in the expansion of manufacturing activities and local sustainability in developing countries. Argyris and Schön's (1978) organizational learning theory was my conceptual framework, which provided the basis and guidelines to understand the way expatriates can effectively

transfer their knowledge to the local employees. The target population for this research comprised five foreign managers working for an MNE in Kazakhstan.

I conducted semistructured interviews following an interview protocol, transcribed interviews, and used methodological triangulation to compare the information gathered with data from organizational documents to improve the validity and reliability of my findings. I used member checking to validate the participants' responses, expanding on their answers by asking the interviewees to clarify meaning on their answers, which helped in reaching data saturation. Though a deductive analytical approach, three primary themes emerged from data analysis: (a) training of local personnel, (b) cultural and communication competence, and (c) personnel retention.

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Appendix A: NIH Certificate and CITI Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Ext
certifies that **GianAndrea Manzoni** successfully co
Web-based training course "Protecting Human Res

Date of completion: 01/15/2016

This is to certify that:

GianAndrea Manzoni

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Student Researchers (Curriculum Group)
Student Researchers (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

An Interview Protocol informs participants of the steps of events within the interview session of a study. The purpose of this study is to explore strategies foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements. The following constitutes the Interview Protocol for this study.

Before the interview, the researcher will:

- Provide potential participants with an invitation by mail to participate in the study.

- Provide the following, upon indication of interest in participating: a copy of the interview protocol, a consent form, and the list of interview questions.

- Confirm receipt and understanding of the provided documents.

- Schedule the time and place for the interview.

- Answer to concerns and questions.

During the interview, the researcher will:

- Obtain the signed consent form, if not already received from the participant.

- Confirm participant's agreement for the interview to be recorded.

- Confirm participant's understanding of the right to withdraw voluntarily from the interview and study at any time, for any reason.

- Remind the participant that identifiable interview responses and participant identity are kept strictly confidential. Aggregated responses and selected quotes from the interviews will be within the concluding research report.

• Address any questions or concerns.

After the interview, the researcher will:

• Thank the participant for their contribution to the study.

• Transcribe the interview responses (Document verbatim the conversation in written form)

• Conduct members checking

• After the analysis is completed, will call the participants to discuss the analysis summary back to each participant interviewed and each participant to make sure the data was captured accurately.

• Receive confirmation of accuracy of meaning interpretation from all participants.

• Convert all received paper documents to digital format and destroy paper documents.

• Save all files to hard drive and maintain in the cloud for 5 years, then destroyed.

After publication, the researcher will:

• Send the summary of findings and electronic copy of the completed study, if requested, to participants.

• Advise the participant of publication if the participant did not request a copy.

• Send the summary of findings and an electronic copy of the completed study to the operation manager in the Company's headquarters

Appendix C: Interview Questions

The overarching research question for this study was the following: What strategies do foreign company managers use to achieve profitable business performance while satisfying local workforce policy requirements?

Interview Questions

1. How do you identify and evaluate a potentially profitable business in developing countries?

2. What administrative and operational constraints have you faced in order to comply with local requirements?

3. What strategies do you use to better the performance of projects and satisfy local workforce requirements?

4. What is the process of retrieving information related to local workforce requirements and regulations in terms of the utilization of local resources?

5. What are the metrics that the local government uses to address and measure local workforce requirements?

6. How do you assess local workforce capability and availability?

7. What are the key types of barriers you have faced in implementing your strategies for satisfying local workforce requirements?

8. How did you address the key barriers to implementing your successful strategies for satisfying local workforce requirements?

9. How do you assess the effectiveness of your strategies to better the performance of projects and satisfy the local workforce requirements?