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Successful Strategies to Lead Change Initiatives

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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

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by

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MBA, Nova Southeastern University, 2006

BBA, University of Technology, Jamaica, 1996

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

As financial systems, global trade, and the regulatory environment integrate, business leaders are often ill equipped to develop and implement strategies to lead changes in organizations. Business leaders who lead change initiatives without proven sustainability strategies are highly susceptible to business closure. Grounded in Lewin's theory of change, the purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore successful strategies some business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years. The participants included 4 industry business leaders with a minimum of 5 years of successful change leadership experience. The data collection included semistructured face to face interviews, artifacts from websites, and company archival documents. Thematic analysis resulted in 4 primary themes: improving communication, providing coaching, enhancing employee engagement, and strengthening organizational culture. The implications for positive social change include the potential for increased employment rates within communities and investment opportunities in community projects. Business leaders who remain in business beyond 5 years could implement successful corporate social responsibility initiatives that may influence individual and community wellness, social engagement, and prosperity. Future business leaders may use the findings identified in this study to implement the strategies viewed successful in remain operable beyond 5 years.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my son, Jean Luc. I achieved academic success and so can you! To my sister Kaydian, I will always remember how you drove to Atlanta to prepare my meals so that I could focus on my assignments. Thank you for your support throughout this journey. This one is for us! I love you both, world without end.

I would like to make a special dedication to my mother. My mother loves all her children dearly and encourages us to become the best we can be. There is a unique sparkle and admiration in her eyes when her children achieve success in the various areas of our lives. She is our number one fan. I am proud to see that sparkle one more time.

Acknowledgments

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Carol-Anne Faint for her unfailing encouragement, “onward and upward”. You are a blessing and I am thankful for you. Thanks to my second reviewer, Dr. Deborah Nattress, who displayed exceptional commitment and provided thorough reviews within remarkable timelines. Thanks to Dr. Fred and the DBA Advocates for helping me to succeed. I want to acknowledge Dr. Gwendolyn C. Dooley for her precision and standard for quality. I also acknowledge the librarians whose work behind the scenes provides tremendous support to doctoral students. Importantly, I want to acknowledge and thank the participants of my study for their contributions and time.

Most of all, thanks to my Lord who kept me through it all.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

As business leaders respond to globalization, the successful implementation of change initiatives becomes a tool for sustainability. Organizational change is a precursor for survival, wealth creation, and growth (Oreg, Bartunek, Gayoung, & Boram, 2018). Leaders do not always know the change implementation process. Business ventures sometimes fail because business leaders lack the strategies to develop and manage change initiatives. The objective of the study was to explore the strategies that successful business leaders used to implement change initiatives and remain viable. This section includes the background of the problem, problem statement with the specific business problem, the purpose of exploring change initiatives used by business leaders, the research question, and the interview questions the participants addressed. This section also includes the significance of the study, highlights the contribution to business, presents the social impact of this qualitative study, and details a review of the professional and academic literature related to the research problem.

Background of the Study

As globalization advances, many organizations will undergo change. Leaders plan, implement, and lead change initiatives. In a changing business environment, organizational sustainability involves business leaders capable of pursuing and implementing change initiatives (Van der Voet, Kuipers, & Groeneveld, 2015). Organizational change is necessary for businesses to survive and prosper. Leaders who develop and manage change initiatives successfully help their organizations to thrive.

Despite the awareness of business leaders that change is necessary, change initiatives continue to fail. Some leaders lack the strategies to successfully implement change initiatives (Niess & Duhamel, 2018). Business environments constantly change, and managing change is a challenge for any business to adapt and survive (Van der Voet et.al., 2015). During a change process, employees require a clear vision, a change implementation plan, and commitment from the leaders of the organization (Fattore, Iacovone, & Steccolini, 2018). The findings from this research may assist business leaders with a deeper awareness of strategies that can be used to successfully implement change initiatives in their organizations.

Problem Statement

As financial systems, global trade, and the regulatory environment integrate, business leaders are often ill equipped to develop and implement strategies to lead changes in organizations (Al-Daaja, 2017). Approximately 80% of businesses fail annually due to the lack of sustainable change initiatives (Syahmi et al., 2019). The general business problem was that inefficient change management strategies can negatively impact business performance and reduce profitability. The specific business problem was that some business leaders lack the strategies needed to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business leaders used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years. The population for the study was four successful business leaders in Jamaica with over 5 years' industry leadership experience who successfully implemented organizational change initiatives. The implication for positive social change is the potential to provide existing business leaders with strategies to implement change initiatives that could improve business performance and sustainability that might lead to investment opportunities in local communities.

Nature of the Study

Researchers may use one of three primary methods to conduct research. The three main research methods are (a) quantitative, (b) qualitative, and (c) mixed methods (Crane, Henriques, & Husted, 2018). I used a qualitative multiple case study because the methodology was the most appropriate way to answer the research question. Researchers use the quantitative conceptualization of research measurement to test hypotheses, analyze relationships among variables, and to make predictions and generalizations (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2016). I did not examine relationships among variables and did not test hypotheses; therefore, a quantitative method was not suited for this study. A mixed methods researcher incorporates qualitative and quantitative approaches (Yin, 2018). A mixed methodology includes quantitative inquiry. As the study did not have variables to measure for comparisons or relationships, the mixed methods approach was not appropriate. A researcher uses a qualitative method with a focus on processes and meanings that are differently defined or not measured under controlled conditions (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2016). A qualitative research method is an appropriate approach when identifying and exploring the perspectives of participants in designing and implementing a process (Crane et al., 2018). Therefore, the qualitative method was my preferred method for conducting this study.

The four qualitative research designs I considered for my study were (a) case study, (b) narrative, (c) phenomenological, and (d) ethnographic. For my qualitative study, I used a multiple case study design. Narrative researchers consider the participants' stories to explain a phenomenon (Madden, Bailey, Alfes, & Fletcher, 2018). The specific business problem required an investigation within a specified time and space and did not include the early life experiences of the business leaders. As such, I did not select the narrative design. Phenomenological researchers are concerned with human experience; as such, the phenomenon is abstracted, reduced, and explained (Aagaard, 2017). Limiting my study to explore the meanings of the lived experiences of business leaders would not answer the research question, and therefore, I did not select the phenomenological design. A researcher would use an ethnographic design to focus on a pattern within a specific culture (Crane et al., 2018). I did not use ethnography because I did not seek to investigate culture on developing and managing change initiatives. Case study design was most appropriate for my study. Researchers use multiple case studies to explore separate occurrences of a phenomenon to obtain multiple perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). My research question probed *what* strategies the business leaders used. I used a qualitative multiple case study to enable me to explore and complete an in-depth analysis of the strategies that some business leaders used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years.

Central Research Question

The central research question for this study was:

What strategies do Jamaican business leaders use to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable?

Interview Questions

I asked the following open-ended questions through semistructured interviews with business executives to explore the strategies used to develop and manage successful change initiatives in business organizations to remain operable:

1. What are the strategies that you used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable?
2. What strategies did you use to ensure that the change initiative was successful after implementation to remain operable?
3. What strategies did you use to involve staff in the development and implementation of the change initiatives to remain operable?
4. What strategies did you use to communicate the developed change initiatives to mitigate resistance?
5. What were the strategies used to assess the effectiveness of the change initiatives during the change?
6. What strategies did you use to manage the barriers, if any, during the implementation of change initiatives to remain operable?
7. What additional strategies regarding the implementation of change initiatives would you like to share?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was the theory of change developed by Lewin (1951). As leaders of an organization implement strategies for the organization to thrive, employees and leaders should collaborate on strategies for success. Lewin (1945) espoused that modern society required a deeper understanding and a more efficient approach to addressing change dynamics. In 1951, Lewin introduced the three-step change theory. Lewin (1951) provided the change theory that comprised field theory, group dynamics, action research, and a three-step model of change. Leaders need to understand the change process so they can develop and manage change initiatives effectively throughout the implementation (Pollack & Pollack, 2015). Change occurs through a process of unfreeze, change, and refreeze (Lewin, 1951). The first stage is unfreezing of the present practices and norms; the second stage of change is moving, which is where the change actually occurs; and the third stage is freezing (more commonly referred to as refreezing), where the new norm is entrenched in the organization (Cummings, Bridgman, & Brown, 2016; Lewin, 1951; Rosenbaum, More, & Steane 2018).

Lewin's theory of change was applicable to my study because the framework was the basis for understanding how leaders modified policies, developed initiatives for implementation, and executed the change initiatives. Leaders of change management require a structured process and the steps that guide the implementation of planned change initiatives (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). I used Lewin's three-step theory of change to support my study because the framework guides leaders to prepare for change so that change initiatives can be successfully developed and implemented. Lewin's theory of change was also useful as a guide to interviewing the leaders to determine similarities with the model and for understanding the findings on change management initiatives used by the business leaders in this study.

Operational Definitions

I offer the following operational definitions to assist readers in comprehending the meaning of some specialized terms I used throughout the study.

Change management: Change management is where changes occur to create the ideal standard of an organization (Kumah, Ankomah, & Antwi, 2016).

Organizational change: Organizational change is the process by which the leaders of an organization transition the organization from one stage to another. The outcome of the change is desirable and lasting and can permanently impact how the organization performs (Espedal, 2016).

Resistance to change: Resistance to change is motivated by fear of the unknown and personal effort involving time and money; inertia and convenience are the risk factors in the process of change (Niculescu & Voicu, 2018).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions in research are ideas the researcher assumes to be true without any further investigation (Wilson, 2017). Assumptions of the study shape the research (Cypress, 2017). I identified two assumptions when conducting this research. The following assumptions were warranted: (a) I assumed that the study participants, who were successful business leaders with more than 5 years' industry leadership experience executing successful change initiatives, gave truthful and accurate answers to the interview questions; and (b) my interview questions captured the data needed to answer the research question.

Limitations

Limitations are aspects of the research that are out of the researchers' control but could affect the results and conclusions of the study (Bishwakarma, 2017). Therefore, a researcher must explain the plan or intention to address the limitations to mitigate any negative impact on the study (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017). The first limitation of my case study could have been access to business leaders and the ability to confirm interview dates and time. The second limitation could be the ability to generalize and transfer the findings to other organizations such as not-for-profit organizations. My sample size could have been a limitation in obtaining data saturation.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the boundaries set for a study (Nelms, 2015). The delimitations in a study are defined by the researcher. There are parameters in the scope of the study that are based on the researcher's specific choices (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The first delimitation of my study was my focus on business leaders and their strategies to develop and manage change initiatives successfully. A second delimitation was to collect data solely from business leaders who successfully developed and managed change initiatives. Marshall and Rossman (2016) recommended that the sample population should include a broad range of business leaders to avoid a narrow population for analysis. A third delimitation was my use of case study research to collect data from business leaders who met specific criteria in a chosen location. I selected Jamaica as the geographical location for the study. Yin (2018) explained that when a researcher limits the geographic location to one specific area, the researcher could limit the generalizability of the results to change management strategies used elsewhere.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was that business executives could identify successful change management strategies to boost operational success. Resistance to organizational changes could stem from fears from staff about adapting to and coping with new methods (Lumbers, 2018), and as such, the selection of a change theory was important. Therefore, knowledge of change management strategies should increase the propensity for organizations to remain in operation. The findings could stimulate business leaders, human resources managers, supervisors, and managers to reevaluate their organizations' change implementation strategies. Findings and recommendations from this study could assist business leaders with developing and adopting alternate methods for implementing change and thus boosting organizational performance and ultimately organizational success.

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings of this study could be of value to business practice because leaders could use the findings to understand change management implementation strategies, when to embrace change, when to engage employees, and how to develop change strategies to ensure the survival of their businesses. Teece (2018) advocated that the leaders of the organization should facilitate change. As my focus was on change management strategies, business leaders could be able to supplement or adapt their own change management strategies with findings from this study to boost change implementation success rates in their organizations. The findings from my study could contribute to business practice success for business leaders, enabling the leaders to develop and deploy strategies to implement change and remain operable.

Implications for Social Change

The results of the study contribute to positive social change because business leaders may become equipped with successful strategies to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. The local community may benefit when businesses remain operable. Businesses in a community are part of the providers of socioeconomic benefit, growth, and development (Karadag, 2015). When businesses remain operable, leaders may assist community members to have jobs and stable incomes, and the members are better able to provide for their families and support their communities.

Review of Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business leaders used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable. The target population for my study was at least three business leaders with a minimum of 5 years' industry leadership experience in successfully implemented change initiatives. In the literature review, I used Lewin's theory of change as the framework for analyzing the strategies affecting change management practices. Reviewing academic literature enhanced my understanding of how scholars and researchers examined the importance of organizational change, the role of leaders in employee engagement, and the causes of and strategies used to overcome resistance to change. The primary search keywords were change management, change initiatives, innovation, resistance to change, organizational development, and transformation.

I used online databases available through the Walden University Library including, but not limited to, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete/Premier, Emerald Management Journals, and Sage Journals. I also used Google Scholar and accessed government websites such as the Jamaica Information Service. I conducted a review of the literature on leadership and change management strategies for selected articles based on keywords and a combination of words that included leadership strategies, resistance to change, leadership behaviors, change management, and transformation. The articles relevant to the study were in the literature review. The study had 193 references, with 179 (95.47%) published within 5 years (2015 to 2019) of my expected year of CAO approval of my completed study, and 96% of the total references were peer-reviewed. In Table 1, I show a breakdown of the peer-reviewed versus non-peer-reviewed journals used in the review of academic literature, and in Table 2, I present the types of reference material and the year of publication.

Table 1

Sources in Review of Academic Literature

Sources	Total	Total more than 5 years of graduation	Percentage within 5 years
Peer-reviewed Journals	136	12	76.9%
Books	1	0	0.76%
Non peer-reviewed Journals	0	0	0%
Total	137	12	77.6%

Table 2

Summary of Reference Types and their Currency

	Older	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total	Percentage
Peer-reviewed Journals	9	42	34	59	42	2	188	97.41
Dissertations	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.52
Government publications	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.52
Textbooks	0	1	1	0	1	0	3	1.55
Total	9	43	36	60	43	2	193	100

Relevant Theory

Researchers use a conceptual framework to ground an investigation. Cooney, Pernick, Rice, and Monago (2016) and Woodside (2016) advised that change leaders should utilize a theoretical model for organizational change as the theoretical model can enhance the success of the intended change to meet the intended outcomes. Hughes

(2018) shared that the understandings and misunderstandings of management and organizational studies shape the practice of scholars and leaders. Lewin was the father of change management (Galli, 2018). I chose Lewin's theory of change to guide my investigation into what strategies business leaders used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable.

Lewin's theory of change. There are three major tenets of Lewin's change theory. The first stage, unfreeze, involves the preparation for the change (Lewin, 1951). The moving stage or change stage is the second stage and is the period when the actual change takes place (Lewin, 1951). The third stage, refreeze, means that the change was accepted and implemented (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). To allow for the successful implementation of a change, an organization must freeze the current functional or operational processes, implement the new change, and then normalize the new paradigm (Galli, 2018; Lewin 1951). During the unfreeze stage, people are motivated to embrace the change. During the move phase, the role of the leader is to promote reassurance about the benefits of the change (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). During the move phase, the transition begins in earnest and may last for some time.

Not all change theories have the same guiding principles in developing change initiatives. Lewin (1946) posited three elements as the key tenets of the change management theory, power, purpose, and relationship. Lewin (1946) offered that leaders should evaluate every strategy to determine if the implementation resulted in positive or negative outcomes. Therefore, leaders should establish measures for success between the effort and the achievement that helps to guide appropriate conclusions and establish positive work habits (Lewin, 1946). The conceptual lens guides leaders in transitioning theoretical concepts to practical tools in organizations.

Implementation of a change should be preceded by a roadmap to success and parameters to guide the pathway of the implementation. The tenets of Lewin's change theory presented over 70 years ago remain relevant to business leaders and organizational change (Burnes & Bargal, 2017). The parameters of Lewin's theory of change are interrelated and relevant to the entire change process and guide the development and management of change initiatives (Endrejat, Baumgarten, & Kauffeld, 2017). Lewin's theory of change established a classical and fundamental approach to change (Cummings et al., 2016; Galli, 2018). While critics asserted that Lewin oversimplified change implementation, nonetheless Lewin's theory of change remains formidable with seminal significance to change management (Cummings et al., 2016). Researchers continue to rely on Lewin's theory of change as the conceptual lens for research conducted in recent times and a roadmap to success in developing and managing change initiatives.

Successful change processes begin with a plan. Lewin's three-step model represents a framework for planned change (Rosenbaum et al., 2018). The change process begins with the perception that change is needed (Lewin, 1951). Change management is crucial to the success of an organization. Evolving environments and competitive market forces place new demands on employees and leaders (Ziemba & Oblak, 2015). Leaders of business institutions should be cognizant of why, how, and when to implement timely decisions to ensure that change is relevant, accepted, and viable (Cummings et al., 2016). Leaders should find innovative ways to lead change.

When leaders understand that the change is necessary, appropriate change initiatives can be developed and managed.

Lewin's theory of change provided the lens for this research. Hossan (2015) asserted that Lewin's theory was more appropriate for organizations that were based on a traditional top-down, command and control style of management, with segmented, small units and slow change timelines. Bakari, Hunjra, and Niazi (2017) explained that Lewin's classical three-step theory was a precursor for different models of change that evolved after Lewin's theory. Change models do not have to be complex (Lewin, 1951). Researchers need to ensure that there is goal congruence and alignment with the underlying theories and the framework for the study.

Lewin's theory could assist leaders with the steps to use to develop and manage change initiatives. Lewin (1947) described the phases through which change can occur. During the unfreezing stage, leaders establish a plan. Galli (2018) compared three major change theories and concluded that Lewin's theory of change included three primary assumptions for change to be successful. The first assumption is that the organization needs the change. In the first stage, leaders develop the change initiatives, communicate the plan, and begin training programs (Gali, 2018). In the second stage, Lewin (1947) reminded leaders that employees are central to the change. In the second phase, leaders engage employees, reinforce the change, and establish a new culture. In the third stage, Lewin (1947) explained that affected parties need to accept the transformation and incorporate the new processes into a new routine. In the final stage and on an ongoing basis, leaders remain motivators and reward employees for operating in the new status quo. Change is ongoing through all phases. I reviewed but never selected other change theories.

Alternative Theories

McKinsey 7S model. While the McKinsey 7S model is useful to assess organizational effectiveness, the model did not align with the research question to explore strategies business leaders use to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. One of the most common uses of the framework is to facilitate organizational change (Ravanfar, 2015). However, the model helped leaders to focus on the skills and staff portions of the model. Business leaders need to be astute in developing and managing strategies to implement change.

The most common uses of the framework included a guide to identify how each area of the organization might change in the future and to facilitate the merger of organizations (Ravanfar, 2015). Instead of supporting deep analysis and large shifts, the McKinsey 7S model was great for analyzing how coherent an organization is and guiding the leaders to know the parameters that required change (Mitchell & Fredendall, 2015). A major disadvantage of the McKinsey 7S model is the time consideration for leaders to incorporate all the levels (Galli, 2018). The model is complex and would be difficult to implement in a large organization. Another disadvantage is that instead of focusing the entire model on the *people side* of change, the model was primarily geared towards skills development. Leaders need to understand the full tenets of change and develop the skillset to adjust the parameters and tailor the implementation to the organizational needs.

Transformational leadership. I contemplated but did not select transformational leadership theory as the conceptual lens for this research. Transformational leadership theory was developed by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985). Burns introduced the transformational leadership framework. Bass and Avolio (1994) later extended the works of Burns to include the key concepts/propositions underlying the theory: (a) individualized consideration, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) inspirational motivation, and (d) idealized influence (Bărbînță, Dan, & Mureșan, 2017). The transformational leadership theory does not include parameters to guide business leaders to develop strategies to develop and manage change initiatives.

Transformational leaders use charisma and personal influence to lead change. Jiang, Zhao, and Ni (2017) asserted that the influence of transformational leadership on employee performance was an important branch of management research. A transformational leader is one who motivates followers to perform beyond expectations (Bărbînță et al., 2017; Bass, 1985). Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as the process in which leaders and followers are coordinated toward more elevated amounts of ethical quality and inspiration. Unlike traditional leadership theories, which principally concentrated on coherent procedures, transformational leaders accentuate feelings and inspirations (Zineldin, 2017). A leader’s influence on employees was not the purpose of this study.

While the charisma of the leader may be important in leading, the research question required fulsome strategies independent of the leaders’ personality. Transformational leaders provide a vision and build up a passionate association with their followers, expanding the awareness and confidence in higher objectives over their own advantages (Zineldin, 2017). Transformational leadership theory holds that leaders inspire followers to change their expectations, perceptions, and motivations to work towards common organizational goals (Zineldin, 2017). Further, there is a role for transformational leadership in promoting employees' feedback within the dynamics of leader-follower relationships (Bin et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2017). I did not select transformational theory because I intended to identify strategies that leaders used to implement change and not to focus on the leaders in their individual capacities or the leaders' personality attributes. I selected Lewin's change theory as the framework for this study.

General systems theory. Another conceptual theory considered but not used was the general systems theory (GST). Teece (2018) theorized that GST stemmed from the pre-Socratic philosophers, evolved throughout the ages through different philosophic entities, and eventually was formally structured in 1925. The core idea of GST is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts (von Bertalanffy, 1972). GST seeks to bolster a holistic approach to multidisciplinary congruence in organizations (von Bertalanffy, 1972). An organization is a complexity of various parts and each part or business unit is interlinked and coordinated for business sustainability (Teece, 2018). Kast and Rosenzweig (1972) expounded that GST is a proposal for the unification of science. There is interconnectivity among elements in organizations. The complexity might result in challenges in developing and managing change initiatives. GST is a change theory where leaders might view change initiatives as small parts within a greater system.

Developing and managing change initiatives requires unification in strategies used by leaders and employees. Joseph and Huber (2015) pointed out that a change in one part of a system affected all parts of a system. Teece (2018) offered that organizations were rewarded for deep specialization and managers were trained to practice specialization. However, GST is not easily understood and implemented by leaders. As such, GST was not the preferred conceptual framework to guide the research into strategies that business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. GST emphasized the interdependence among elements, integration of the elements, and the outcomes resulting from their interactions but not practical steps or guides on how to attain change (Teece, 2018). Another reason I did not select GST as the conceptual lens was that GST did not provide a guide to develop and manage change initiatives.

Survival and Change

Transformational efforts in organizations often fail. In fact, 60%-70% of organizational efforts reportedly fail (Thomas, George, & Rose, 2016). While the accuracy of the estimated percentage of failed change initiatives was debatable, the relevance to business survival in communities is not. Beer (2018) explained that when an Australian car manufacturer closed in 2017, redundancies within the industry were riveting. The loss of employment in the supply chain was profound, and the projected joblessness in some geographical regions caused a long-term catastrophe (Beer, 2018). Amarantou, Kazakopoulou, Chatzoudes, and Chatzoglou (2018) proffered that leaders should emphasize the interconnectivity between change initiatives and the survival of the business. The strategies leaders use to develop and manage change initiatives impact organizational success. Business survival and change are intertwined.

The first stage of Lewin's change theory included establishing the need for the change. Organizational survival is an urgent reason for leaders to develop and manage change initiatives. Leaders should examine and determine the criteria for success prior to the onset of change. Thomas et al. (2016) queried whether the value attained from the organizational change indicators was robust criteria to determine dissatisfaction with the established parameters. Rao (2015) pinpointed that leaders needed to demonstrate a new mindset, tool-set, and skill-set to effectively implement and lead organizational change. Additionally, the leaders and followers should align with the strategic goal and purpose to implement change (Moorman, Blakey, & Darnold, 2018). Both leaders and employees need to strategize to make change initiatives successful.

Leaders may have training in core functions but lack skills in developing and managing successful change initiatives. Some business practitioners did not have the skillsets to implement change successfully (Williamsson, Eriksson, & Dellve, 2016). According to Wilburn and Wilburn (2016), in the aftermath of the implementation of a strategy, business practitioners inquired what other strategies would prevent potential negative consequences. Williamsson et al., (2016) concluded in a qualitative research involving change in a Swedish hospital that one of the first steps in implementing change was a focus on the initial implementation phase that included an analysis of the needs in the organization. A corollary to Lewin (1951) was that leaders must establish the reason for the change. Survival in the global industrial scenes was paramount. Failed change initiatives may render the organization inoperable.

There are several fundamental and critical aspects of organizational change. Williamsson et al. (2016) explained that the creation of a sense of urgency, development of a shared vision, and communication of the vision helped to mobilize successful change initiatives. Wilburn and Wilburn (2016) advised that leaders may have difficulty in arguing that a person could not have known or at least considered more alternatives, particularly negative unintended consequences of change initiatives. An understanding of the antecedents of change leadership was relevant to business leaders as there were lessons to learn from this leadership approach (Boudrias, Phaneuf, Rousseau, & Brunelle, 2016). Lewin's theory of change incorporated the reason for the planned change and parameters to transition through the phases of change. When leaders were aware of the distinct phases of the change process, the development and management of the change initiatives became easier.

An organizational change has a diverse impact on people, systems, and the long-term success of the organization. The change must be needed (Lewin, 1951). Change involved strategic planning with specific goals, driven by communication with and the involvement of all employees (Oxenswardh & Fredriksson, 2016). Ali and Ivanov (2015) analyzed organizational development through the lens of (a) overall communication between cross-functional teams, (b) the improvement of business processes, (c) low employee morale, (d) change resistance among employees, and (e) lack of strategic direction. Lewin's theory of change blended the need for leaders to understand the need for the change, communicate the vision, and revisit existing structures to boost organizational survival.

Leaders involve different aspects of the organization when developing and managing the change initiatives to remain operable. Oxenswardh and Fredriksson (2016) declared that change initiatives involve one or more elements of the organizational system. Change involves a realignment of the whole system in an organization (Oxenswardh & Fredriksson, 2016). Afsar, Badir, Saeed, and Hafeez (2017) explained that organizational survival was not simply an endorsement of change or discouragement of transformation. Leaders should think of ways to engage all constructs of the organization to embrace change as a necessity for survival (Afsar et al., 2017). In the first stage of the change, leaders share survival anxiety with various levels within the organization (Lewin, 1951). Leaders of organizations who develop and manage change initiatives well thrive; those who do not, struggle to survive.

The survival of the organization is a recurrent theme in the globalized economy. The change affects all of the key components in an organization, strategy, work, people, formal and informal processes, and structures (Oxenswardh & Fredriksson, 2016). All employees at all the various levels must understand the state of affairs, the time span for completion of assigned projects, and the impact on the organization’s ability to survive (Ali & Ivanov, 2015). The freeze must occur to evaluate areas that require the change (Lewin, 1951). According to Andersson (2015), the topic of change has two ever-present corollaries, resistance and controversy. Leaders are responsible for risk mitigation of the implementation, including resistance to change.

Resistance to Change

Both employees and leaders might be apprehensive about change. Leaders must remain cognizant that resistance to change exist (Dwyer, 2019). The second phase of change included the risk of resistance (Lewin, 1951). Parsells (2017) found that while employees became frustrated during the change process, employees valued when leaders shared the big picture, the vision of the change, and the possible impact on their jobs. When people were not clear about their future and their livelihood, they might become confused and resist the change.

Response to change could be personal and emotional even in a work environment. Lewin (1951) established a corollary between lives in the organization with lives in other social settings. According to Lewin (1951), life was based on roles, positions, behaviors, authority, rules, social norms, and other definitive structures. Globalization was creating many unprecedented ways of how change impacted the organization through the vastly changing landscape of technology, demography, and social media (Syahmi et al., 2019). The mechanisms used to develop and manage change initiatives should include strategies to minimize resistance in the first place (Dwyer, 2019). Resistance to change could be counterproductive.

Leaders should exercise due care about employees in developing and managing change initiatives. Resistance to change was one of the main reasons for failed change initiatives (Amarantou et al., 2018). Employees must prepare for change (Lewin, 1951). The encouragement of creative thought from all levels of the organization cultivates a positive perception bias towards the change (Rubin & Abramson, 2018). Lack of preparation of the employees for the change may result in resistance to the change and ultimately failed change initiatives.

Leaders need to identify strategies to mitigate the risk of resistance to change. Leaders need to explore the circumstances that resulted in resistance to change. The seminal work conducted by Coch and French (1948) explored the reasons workers strongly resisted job changes and the mitigation strategies used. Leaders may successfully mitigate or eliminate resistance to change (Coch & French, 1948). Leaders must promote different activities to mobilize the team and foster the success of change initiatives (Galli, 2018; Hossan, 2015). Leaders may experience change resistance when developing and managing change initiatives. Staff is more likely to accept change initiatives when the staff understands the impact on their lives.

Leaders used various approaches to develop and manage change initiatives. Burnes (2015) explored the role of structure and culture in the process of organizational change and resistance. Kerber and Buono (2018) offered that there were three different approaches to organizational change (a) directed change, (b) planned change, and (c) a guided approach. When an organization projected low socio-technical predictability and low operational complexity, for example, the naming of a new department, the directed approach would be most effective (Burnes, 2015; Kerber & Buono, 2018). Resistance to change related to the individual or the structure (Burnes, 2015; Hossan, 2015). Planned change initiatives should be less disruptive. Leaders should explore what-if scenarios when implementing change initiatives to better understand the effect the change initiatives might have on culture and structure.

Obstacles existed in some organizations' structures that caused employees to resist planned change. Betancourt, Tan-McGrory, Kenst, Phan, and Lopez (2017) identified that leaders in health care services needed to improve quality and deliver higher value to clients. However, the barriers to remaining operable were the lack of buy-in from the leaders, organizational prioritization, energy, and execution strategies (Bentancourt et al., 2017). Leaders successfully addressed the barriers through organizational change management strategies (Betancourt et al., 2017). Some people actively resist change (Galli, 2018). Nevertheless, leaders are able to deflate resistance to the change by developing and managing successful change initiatives.

The second phase of Lewin's model sought to diffuse resistance to change. Lewin (1951) emphasized the importance of unfreezing as the stage to prepare employees for change initiatives. Sometimes, resistance to change emanated from ignoring employees' contribution to the change (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). Betty (2017) studied the experience of a technical college faculty and staff involved in an initiative to develop innovative models for providing equal opportunities to students with disabilities. The findings from the study were that leaders should recognize that humans required collaborative relationships, connection with the change, and a sense of control to be actively engaged in the change process (Betty, 2017). Sustainable change occurred when leaders align themselves as authors of change rather than targets of change.

The business executive must have strategies to successfully implement and sustain change. Managers were hard-pressed to implement smart strategies for continuous organizational improvement (Kirrane, Lennon, O'Connor, & Fu, 2017). However, employees’ shaped responses to change by both their personal psychological resources and their perceptions of the organizational environment (Kirrane et al., 2017). Akan, Er Ülker, and Ünsar (2016) explained that resistance to change was a significant factor with a direct effect on change efforts. When employees were well-informed about the organizational change process, and their opinions considered, employees adopted the change process.

The complexity of a change resulted in challenges in developing and managing change initiatives. Leaders needed to convey the reason for the change initiative in practical terms (Van der Voet et al., 2015) and relate the change to the business environment (Oxenswarddh & Fredriksson, 2016). Lewin (1951) projected that there were forces that either drove or restrained well informed, and that change occurred when the driving force exceeded the restraining force. In the second phase of the change, leaders continue to reinforce the need for the change.

Change is stressful for management and employees. Chinyerem et al. (2018) reported that the challenges to strategic change included (a) poor organizational management and culture, (b) increased technology installation, (c) organizational structure, (d) strong competition, and (e) employee issues. The employee issues related to the uncertainty of perceived erratic changes and the reaction resulted in resistance to change. When people are transitioning from the known - comfort zone- to the unknown, the uncertainty is difficult to handle (Chinyerem et al., 2018; Dhingra & Punia, 2016). Shimoni (2017) advised that traditionally, reaction to change may involve four distinct phases (a) initial denial, (b) resistance, (c) gradual exploration, and (d) eventual commitment. Leaders in organizations must drive change and seek to minimize resistance.

Some leaders have a traditional perspective that the individual's psychological disposition to change was the problem. The traditional remedy was to fix the individual (Shimoni, 2017). Dhingra and Punia (2016) explained that uncertainty about the change existed in employees at the macro and micro levels in the organization. Vos and Rupert (2018) postulated that research on employees' resistance to change focused primarily on the perspective of the agents of change or the employees involved in the change process and ignored the other stakeholders. In a sample of 117 agent-recipients' groupings, covering 110 different change projects in 90 organizations, Vos and Rupert (2018) found that agents perceived higher levels of resistance than the recipients of change. Recognition of resistance to change and strategies used by successful leaders could help other leaders to develop and manage change. Further, the initiatives could help leaders to recognize areas of the change that need remodeling.

Resistance to change is an attitude, however normal, for the fear of the unknown. Anticipating and overcoming resistance to change were the main tasks of management at all hierarchical levels (Buseli, 2018). In the quantitative study by Vos and Rupert (2018) on the perceptions of agents and recipients of change, the leaders' knowledge of change strategies impacted the change initiatives. Resistance to change resulted in obstruction, ineffective use of organizational resources, and administrative failure (Jayatilleke, & Lai, 2018). Leaders should seek to understand the reasons employees displayed resistance to change. Leaders should address the resistance from employees for the success of the change initiatives.

Leaders may manage resistance in a myriad of ways. Gunnarsdóttir (2016) conducted a case study with participants who were managers in Norwegian child welfare services during a period of radical change. The findings were that managers handled challenges by conducting emotional work, emotional labor, and emotional balancing (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). In implementing changes to a computer-based system in an organization, Jayatilleke and Lai (2018) found that the consequences of unmanaged or improperly managed system requirement changes resulted in disastrous system development. The negative consequences were increased software costs, schedule overruns, unstable requirements, endless testing, project failure, and eventually loss of business (Buseli, 2018; Jayatilleke & Lai, 2018). In developing and managing successful change initiatives, leaders appealed to the emotional concerns from employees as a united response to the increased complexity of organizational expectations during the change processes.

Resistance to change is often associated with negativity. Change recipients are active participants in the change process (Oreg et al., 2018). Oreg (2017) demonstrated in three studies that employees who resisted change outperformed non-resistors on routine tasks. While change resistance may negatively impact aspects of organizational change, including performance on unstructured, dynamic, and nonroutine tasks, change resistance can boost performance on standard and predictable tasks (Oreg, 2017). While there were many potential causes of failed change, resistance to change was widely identified as a significant contributor to organizational failure (Amarantou et al., 2018). However, the negative perception could be a preconceived bias. Resistance to change was not always negative.

Resistance to change could originate from positive factors. Much of the literature relating to resistance focused on the negative context of change outcomes and change implementation (Georgalis, Samaratunge, Kimberley, & Lu, 2015). Leaders could use change resistance to evaluate change initiatives (Amarantou et al., 2018). Oreg et al. (2018) contextualized that a software development company adopted a new software development approach with reliance on user experiences rather than traditional documentation where the users offered no resistance but from the onset indicated acceptance of the change. However, the new software was not robust, and the change failed even though employees did not resist the change. Oreg et al. (2018) explained that resistance to change could lead to intricate, detailed, objective scrutiny of a planned change. As such, resistance to change was not always a negative phenomenon.

Leaders should engage change recipients who voiced concerns and objections to a change event. Leaders might gain valuable insight from change recipients when developing and managing change initiatives (Oreg et al., 2018). Dredge, Oates, Gregory, and King (2017) explored the strategies leaders used when staff voiced concerns about a change initiative that involved the transformation of historical practice to prescribe emergency subcutaneous medications for all patients admitted to a community palliative care service at Calvary Health Care Bethlehem, Australia. Dredge et al. (2017) found that even though staff challenged and queried the rationale for the change, the change was successfully implemented with continued collaboration with staff to ensure effectiveness. Ultimately, the implemented change resulted in enhanced service delivery and improved consumer satisfaction. Subsequent staff survey results revealed that the majority of staff members were satisfied with the change, and there was no negative impact on the quality of care patients received (Dredge et al., 2017). Lewin (1951) proffered that the second phase of the change process required change leaders to overcome resistance to change. When leaders considered the root cause of resistance from the staff, introduced the change slowly and methodically, the change initiatives were successfully planted into the organization.

Lewin's theory of change included parameters for participants who may resist change. Resistance to change may relate to (a) doubt in managerial capacity to implement change; (b) the skepticism that the timing and methods chosen were inappropriate; (c) previous bad decisions; (d) impatience with uncertainties; and (e) fear of job loss, power, and authority (Gunnarsdóttir, 2016). However, Buseli (2018) found that while each implementation must be valued on its own merit and on a case by case basis, how leaders communicated with and engaged employees impacted the change process. One of the factors which impacted the effective implementation of reform in teaching was resistance to change by veteran teachers (Synder, 2017). Tact and diplomacy characterized the way management approached change.

Not all change processes have a negative response from employees or leaders. While some may conclude that all participants resist change, Synder (2017) found some career teachers who did not resist change. There were several descriptors for the change response and Synder (2017) identified that positive focusers accepted change. Organizational structure was more team-based where individuals' behavior was a function of the group environment and seen and modified in terms of groups (Lewin, 1947). Some participants invested in reform efforts (Oreg et al., 2018) and actively desired the success of the organization. The culture of the organization directly impacted the change process. Some participants readily embraced change and perceived change as necessary for organizational survival.

Creating a Culture of Change

Organizational culture and cultural diversity may impact organizational change. Leaders must be mindful of the cultural dynamics of the existing organization and the new cultural paradigm that the change may introduce. Hofstede (1983) demonstrated that human relationships defined culture in the workplace. People complied with both organizational rules and cultural norms but truly gave priority to the latter (Hofstede, 1983). Axelrod and Axelrod (2017) attested that there was no *one size fits all* in organizational change. Culture related to other key constructs, particularly identity, institutions, and practices (Giorgi, Lockwood, & Glynn, 2015). An alignment of culture and change implementation boosted organizational success.

Leaders must believe in the success of change initiatives. Giorgi et al. (2015) explained that change initiatives should align with the culture of the organization. Lewin (1951) proffered that when the change entrenched new habits of the organization, the change was successful. Doll, Cornelison, Rath, and Syme (2017) advocated that deep culture change required two specific components (a) a shared understanding of the what, or content goals, and (b) the how, or process of change. Leaders incorporated the contextual strengths and challenges of the organization and the competencies and strengths of the entire team to develop successful change initiatives.

Change was successful when led by change leaders who believed that the status quo was transformable. The desire and capacity to learn and build a new culture when developing and managing organizational change were challenging (Daniels & Tenkasi, 2017). Dobrovič and Timková (2017) surveyed persons who took part in organizational change in the Slovak Republic and of the 87 respondents, 64% were employees and 22% were managers. Dobrovič and Timková (2017) found that the leaders of the change faced numerous obstacles including various failed strategies such as inadequate planning of changes, absence of training of employees, lack of time needed to adapt to implement the change, defending employees against change, an inappropriate culture of the company, or not implementing checks and verifications into the process of change. Lewin (1951) advocated that change initiative was successful when the new culture became the way of life in the organization. Setting the culture in an organizational change was an integral part of the change management process.

Leaders use the existing culture to create a new culture. Change participants embraced change when the new change initiative is the new cultural paradigm in the organization (Lewin, 1951). Doll et al. (2017) recognized that in some nursing homes, the efforts toward culture change and meaningful evaluation of the cultural change at the micro and macro levels were fraught with challenges. Daniels and Tenkasi (2017) explored multiple ways where leaders learned and utilized the knowledge of the existing culture within the organization to foster organizational change. The case study was conducted over a 2 year period via 3 identical surveys of employees at various levels of responsibility in a Fortune 500 ‘logistics’ company based in the United States Midwest region. The connection with the participant’s desire to learn about the new culture and environments was a positive step in establishing a new culture.

The culture of the organization is an important factor for leaders to consider when developing and managing change initiatives. Doll et al. (2017) expounded that the culture change strategies in nursing homes in the State of Kansas included an establishment of culture change goals, close monitoring, and mapping of culture change to the process to attain the goals. Ashta, Stokes, and Hughes (2018) posited that leaders required cross-cultural and change management strategies to develop and sustain collaboration among teams. Dana, Mukaj, and Vishkurti (2016) demonstrated that knowing the country’s culture is imperative in understanding how to implement organizational culture. A leader implementing change must create harmony between the new culture and the new strategic paradigm.

An understanding of the guiding principles and strategies to harmonize culture within an organization are useful to the change leader. Dana et al. (2016) found that to change the culture and promote sustainable cultural change, leaders retained the responsibility to align vision with action. Willis et al. (2016) found that leaders made incremental changes within a comprehensive change initiative strategy. Through incremental changes, leaders fostered distributed leadership, promoted staff engagement, created collaborative relationships, and continuously assessed and learned from change.

Lewin (1947) established that during the unfreeze stage leaders should reinforce the change. Ultimately, leaders bolstered a sustained cultural change and organizational success by incrementally aligning vision with readiness to engage.

During the change process, some employees struggle with the new change. Lewin (1947) advocated the new culture was established during the second phase of the change. Proponents of the cultural approach to change management offered that inappropriate cultures and structures were either obstacles or opportunities for successful change processes (Burnes, 2015; Shimoni, 2017). As such, Burnes (2015) and Shimoni (2017) advocated that leaders terminated or replaced employees who do not fit the desired cultures or structures. Leaders set the culture in organizations. Leaders may develop and manage change initiatives as group activities for norms and routines to accommodate new individual behavior.

The ethical principles of even one person can influence the relationships within the organization. To manage change initiatives in organizations to remain operable, leaders may opt to adjust individual behaviors of employees through individual performance reviews matched with organizational performance (Burnes, 2015; Shimoni, 2017). Derfler-Rozin, Baker, and Gino (2018) advised that even the hiring of new staff can impact the cultural fabric of the organization. Lewin (1947) established that refreezing occurs after the change implementation. Leaders should guard the culture of the organization, prevent discord, and establish the new ethos of the organization.

Leaders ensure that the cultural dynamics of the organization are considered in developing and managing change initiatives. Any employee who displayed unethical conduct can create a domino effect on how others perceived the organizational ethical values (Derfler-Roin et al., 2018). Feitosa, Grossman, and Salazar (2018) proffered that the demands of change management within organizations underscored the need for leaders to understand the processes and influences of cultural dynamics on team performance. Lewin (1947) established that refreezing is necessary to reinforce the new change and ensure individuals do not revert to the old paradigm. In establishing a culture, the guiding principles of Lewin's theory of change are useful to leaders to strategize and stimulate sustained cultural change.

Understanding change and improving the ability to lead change are important strategies that business leaders must practice. All the change elements of initiating change, engaging and communicating the change, and establishing the culture are responsibilities of the leaders (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Lewin (1951) advocated for employees' inclusion in the dialogue in solving a problem and emphasized that successful problem solving required active participation of change agents in understanding the problem, finding a solution, and implementing the solution. The organization becomes the object of change (Beslui, 2018). Leaders must become engrossed in the change management methodologies that boost successful implementation of change in various organizations.

As the global environment continues to transform, leaders develop and manage change initiatives to remain competitive and relevant. Lewin (1947) identified freezing as disrupting the norm. Leaders disrupt the norm to implement change initiatives. Fattore et al. (2018) reported that the results of a study of 680 public-sector consultants on the drivers of successful organizational change indicated that resource availability and a comprehensive approach to change appeared to play a less relevant role than vison, commitment, and an implementation plan from the change leaders. Leaders drive change initiatives and cause a change to occur (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Various research and studies outlined the reasons for failure and provided recommendations to boost capabilities of leaders to change the culture. Top management's commitment is central to change processes.

During change processes, many workers struggle to reconcile their personal and work responsibilities. Leaders are required to give due care to employees to appropriately remodel organizations and redefine workplace structures and cultures (Cech & O'Connor, 2017). Making mistakes can be horrific if the culture of the organization is to punish innovators (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). However, if something goes wrong with the planned strategy, the outcome could be detrimental for some persons. Price-Dowd (2017) advocated that nursing leaders needed to be honest with patients as the admission of wrong is an important culture to establish and build. Staff members and leaders sometimes challenge the status quo to assess whether there could be a better alternative.

Leaders may develop and manage various change initiatives to build a constructive framework for the new culture of the organization during the various stages of the organizational change process. The organizational culture, the individual's moral compass, and professionalism ultimately inspire the individual's performance (Price-Dowd, 2017). In the change process, theorists recognized that culture was a moderator for organizational change (Hussain, 2018). According to Niessen, Mäder, Stride, and Jimmieson (2017), leaders related positively to employees' affective states and well-being. Therefore, leaders are responsible to influence major changes in the attitudes of employees and build commitment towards the organization's mission, objectives, and strategies.

Leaders set the tone for culture in the organization while developing and managing change initiatives to remain operable. Fronzo (2018) reported that when the British Association of Urological Nurses (BAUN) wanted to impart a new culture during the change process, BAUN sought to inform the urological nurses about the approaches to change management. Hussain et al. (2018) advised that leaders modified strategies, processes, and structures during the change process to build a culture for the organization to remain sustainable. Lewin's (1947) change management model incorporated an analogy of how a block of ice must unfreeze, change, and refreeze to change shape. Similarly, leaders should develop and manage change initiatives that determine the existing conditions, engage in a process for the change, then refreeze the new cultural paradigm to remain operable.

Communicating Change

Communication is integral to the appropriate functioning of any change in an organization. When leaders communicate the benefits of the change initiatives, employees better understand the need to continue to support the change (Lewin, 1947). Royce (2018) advised that there are seven crucial steps to change, and communication is one of the vital parameters. When leaders communicated effectively about the change in business processes, morale was boosted; the resistance to change lowered as the strategic direction was clear (Ali & Ivanov, 2015). Clear and transparent communication of all change-related activities and their results are very crucial to successfully developing and managing change initiatives.

Leaders are aware that insufficient communication and inadequate stakeholder integration are among the most common flaws of unsuccessful change. Leaders should communicate and provide support for organizational change (Hussain et al., 2018). Where there was inefficient communication from the leaders, organizational communication suffered, prevented profitability, and stymied organizational change (Kwofie, Adinyira & Fugar, 2016). Leaders must be acutely involved in the development of effective communication with stakeholders during the change process (Fronzo, 2018). Adequate and timely release of information supported successful change initiatives, but leaders must establish trust; until trust is established, there could be challenges with organizational change.

Communication with internal stakeholders is part of the change initiatives process. Communication was a prominent strategy that leaders used for the successful implementation of change initiatives (Arnaout & Esposito, 2018). Communication from leaders was far-reaching, continuous, and relevant throughout the entire change process (Royce, 2018). Botez (2018) advised that communication resulted in a permanent exchange of messages. Leaders need to communicate with internal stakeholders about change initiatives. Communication is bidirectional, flowing down from the senior executive, and up from floor level employees.

Leaders are responsible for the messages communicated about the change initiatives that are developed and managed for the organization to remain operable. During the change process, communication should be about the change (Lewin, 1947). Communication, creating short and long-term goals, teamwork, and measuring success are required when developing and managing a change initiative (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). When leaders facilitate discussions while developing and managing change initiatives they provide opportunities to harmonize knowledge of the goals, new ways, and means of attaining those goals with employees (Botez, 2018). Leaders provided information about the change initiatives to allay fears of the unknown as well as gather valued inputs for the process (Botez, 2018). Communication about the change promotes success of the change initiatives.

Leaders must be actively involved in communicating the vision for the change. Teixeira, Gregory, and Austin (2017) advised that allowing change is not implementing change. Botez (2018) reminded that communication among team members was a high-level priority that allowed team members to exchange messages. The exchange of messages resulted in the achievement of agreements or disagreements, the expression of, or even enforcement of power, as well as negotiation and consensus (Botez, 2018). Communication helps to build consensus on change initiatives.

Culture and communication reinforce the change process. Teixeira et al. (2017) conducted an exploratory qualitative study to examine the responses of community pharmacists to the rapid changes in the pharmacy profession. The strategies pharmacists used to adapt, lead, and respond to emerging professional practices included communication (Teixeira et al., 2017). Leaders used a clear communication strategy in decision-making to improve the dissemination of information about the change process (Besuli, 2018). Leaders should avoid under-communicating the message and ensure the message was consistent to gain support from individuals at all levels of the company (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). According to Lewin's theory of change leaders should communicate the change initiatives and reinforce the objectives of the change process.

A clear communication strategy supports a better understanding of the efficacy of the overall organizational change success. Practitioners and scientists agreed that organizational change communication was the most effective approach to boost employees' adjustment to change (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018). Teixeira et. al. (2017) explained that prior to direct and consistent communication about the change, the pharmacists felt underprepared. Some pharmacists lacked the confidence to actually make a change in their practices. However, leaders build communication messages as preparation for people to accept change (Beslui, 2018). The reality is that effective communication is a continuous dynamic process that leaders use to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable.

The information communicated should be specific but adaptable to the environment, open and useful. Lewin (1947) recommended that change must be a group activity for the norms and routines to accommodate new individual behavior. Leaders are to communicate group activities. To overcome the insecurity of team members who resist, as well as the undecided, an intense leader used a multi-point communication to propagate the change in all directions throughout the organization, from top to bottom, from bottom to top, as well as horizontally and diagonally (Besuli, 2018). The role of the leader's communication is to reduce and eliminate fear of change among employees (Luo, Song, Gebert, Zhang, & Feng, 2016). Support from employees is necessary for the successful implementation of organizational change.

The leader's communication might increase employees' support for the change initiatives. During periods of uncertainty, due to organizational change, employees fear the possibility of a loss of positions or benefits and the unintended consequences of the change process (Luo et al., 2016). Consequently, employees resisted the change and were unwilling to help with the change process. Van den Heuvel, Freese, Schalk, and Van Assen (2017) demonstrated that communication about change initiatives helped to foster a positive attitude towards the change. Luo et al. (2016) suggested that the leader implementing change use hope orientation, subordinate orientation, and support orientation communication techniques. Communication is essential and plays a significant role in the successful implementation of change initiatives.

Leaders frame the messages to enhance meaning and provoke action from employees and managers to support the change initiatives for the organization to remain operable. Lewin (1947) invited leaders to encourage and inspire successful change initiatives through communication. Zhao, Seibert, Taylor, Lee, and Lam (2016) expounded that organizational leaders are required to communicate the importance of the change. Leaders should communicate the necessity for the change, the significance of the change, and what to expect after the change. Giambra et al. (2018) conducted a study where the themes that emerged indicated that staff believed participation was inclusive and involved both managers and peers. Leaders must be adept with strategies to communicate the change initiatives to all levels.

Leaders use communication as a strategy to encourage participation in change initiatives. Meaningful participation was predicated on preparation, engagement, accountability, and communication (Giambra et al., 2018). Osborne and Hammoud (2017) conducted a qualitative study in an organization in Jackson, Mississippi that explored the engagement strategies of four communication business leaders. The participants underscored that effective leaders must be transparent, communicate with all levels of employees, embrace the change, and provide feedback to all stakeholders (Osborne & Hammond, 2017). Leaders communicated the benefits of the change initiatives with the supporting evidence (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). Leaders ensure that the communication of the change initiatives is accurate. Lack of accuracy could result in a lack of meaningful participation.

During times of developing and managing change initiatives, leaders are responsible for guiding the messages. If staff or leaders displayed a lack of interest, accountability, skills, trust, and perception of value, then the communication of the change implementation may be shrouded (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). Giambra et al. (2018) recommended that leaders encourage meaningful participation from internal stakeholders including alternative ways to participate, advertise opportunities, and present better access to information. The participants in the study indicated that information disseminated directly to or from the leaders should explain the decisions to implement the change Giambra et al. (2018). Communication on the change initiatives should include information on decision-making and the benefit of the change to the organization.

Leaders communicate through various channels to inform about the change initiatives to remain operable. Leaders should provide updates, remind, and reinforce the need to develop and manage change initiatives (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). Leaders provide information to employees via indirect, face-to-face, and electronic methods (Giambra et al., 2018). The communication from the leaders is an ongoing activity during the three phases of the change process (Lewin, 1947). During each phase of change, communication is an important tool for leaders to use to remove or mitigate any obstacles.

Leaders communicate with employees on matters that may prevent change, including measures to mitigate employee resistance to change. When the leaders recognized resistance to change, the school leaders sought to implement damage control through constant communication to prevent the exacerbation of the resistance to change (Niculescu & Voicu, 2018). One of the roles of the leader during the change process was to communicate hope (Chadwick, 2015). The messages from the leader must be honest, unambiguous, and hopeful. With 245 randomly selected participants, Chadwick (2015) conducted a study of appeals of hope as part of an effort to take steps toward climate change prevention. The message components highlighted the importance of climate change, goal congruence, future expectations, feelings of hope, and persuasion (Chadwick, 2015). The communication of feelings of hope led to greater interest in climate protection (Chadwick, 2015). Lewin (1947) reported that leaders inspire change through communication. Communication from leaders can inspire a new way of thinking.

Building a bond between employees and leaders may have a positive impact on communicating change strategies. Osborne and Hammond (2017) found that leaders utilized communication strategies to build trust, demonstrate emotional intelligence, and represent the fortitude to cope with change. In 2017, Parsells concluded a single case study that concluded that communication between leaders and employees contributed to a successful change initiative to implement a budgeting software tool in an organization in the south-central region of the United States. Parsells (2017) concluded that employees were supportive of the change mainly because the communication was ongoing and inclusive from the design to experimentation, implementation, and evaluation stages of the software changes. Communication strategies stimulate emotional response to change initiatives.

Leaders can inspire emotional responses in communicating messages on change initiatives. Emotional appeals were useful in stimulating persuasive communication (Yu-Kang, Chun-Tuan, & Pei-Chi, 2017). Though frustrated at times, the employees appreciated and understood the strategic change and the big-picture perspective and not just how the change affected their jobs (Parsells, 2017). The definitive understanding and communication of roles and responsibilities were the key drivers of effective management and the key to achievement of goals and objectives (Sementelli, 2016). Leaders can rely on Lewin’s theory of change to build direct communication messages during the unfreezing, changing, and refreezing of change initiatives.

Some leaders incorporate hope about the change in the communication strategy. Niculescu and Voicu (2018) reported that during the implementation of the change management strategies, leaders offered support for the pupils and teachers. Participants in the change projects inspired messages of hope. Leaders may tailor messages differently for the local or global environment setting of the change initiatives. Yu-Kang et al. (2017) acknowledged that according to Chadwick (2015), hope and fear were presumed as alternates. However, fear appeals have an advantage when the change initiatives were global. Hope appeals were more effective when the issues were local (Yu-Kang et al., 2017). Leaders could inspire positive change by framing the communication of an issue as global or local. Communication influenced the way respondents' process fear-based or hope-based attachments. Leaders provide for an iterative development for the change initiatives through cultural change, communication, innovation, and employee engagement.

Trends in Change Management Strategies

Change management strategies support innovation. Innovation is a necessary function that organizational leaders should promote. The awareness of appropriate change management strategies fosters a smooth implementation of change initiatives. Gerbec (2018) conducted a case study that involved four leaders in one industrial organization in Europe, and one of the findings was that change management helped the leaders to identify and prioritize the areas of safety concerns. Another highlight from Grebec (2018) was that outdated strategies and insufficient implementation caused accidents or injuries. Two major benefits that impacted business decisions were that (a) change management strategies reduced business failure, and (b) change management strategies were useful to identify priority areas for modernization, restructuring, and the integration of new systems and technology.

The world of work is shifting from traditional career paths to relentless change, leaner structures, evolving roles, and a need to find meaning through work. A new skill-set is required to survive and thrive in the new economy. When organizational change is managed effectively, the likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes is increased. There are new approaches to change initiatives in various organizational settings. The attainment of the strategic goals was influenced by how the change initiatives were developed and managed (King, Hopkins, & Cornish, 2018). King et al. (2018) balanced previous research on change management in asserting that people should not be avoid or resist change because change is both inevitable and necessary. Importantly, when properly managed, change is innovative, creative, and oftentimes lead to improved outcomes.

Employee Engagement

Leaders have a responsibility to sustain engagement and profitability to remain operable. The leader utilizes change management strategies to make the change vision a reality. Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) argued that employees are the real impetus or catalysts who make organizations competitive and viable. Leaders ensure goal congruence and shared the vision in the implementation of change (Huang, Chou, & Chen, 2017). Leaders who seek to reinvent or restructure organizations require the support, engagement, and motivation of employees (Deschamps, Rinfret, Lagace, &

Prive, 2016). By examining employee engagement strategies, leaders could develop techniques to gain staff support.

A leader who is working towards successful organizational change engages employees in the process. Choi, Tran, and Park (2015) recognized that sometimes employees did not actively participate in the change. Leaders must determine the reasons for employees' lack of engagement in the workplace. Engaged workers contribute to the viability of organizations (Dickens, 2015). Hanaysha (2016) stated that engaged workers heightened productivity that not only increased profits and secured a firm’s competitive edge but also improved working conditions, wages, and salaries. When persons envision a benefit, persons rationalize the need for the change.

Leaders should engage employees before the change. Strong engagement with employees helps leaders to attain high goodwill levels before change initiatives are developed and managed. Opportunities for employees to collaborate on their work-product should not be a fortuitous exchange but planned active discourse about the change (Dickens, 2015). Appelbaum, Degbe, MacDonald, and Nguyen-quang (2015) highlighted that during a period of organizational change, the organization needs leaders to combine competence and skill at communicating and coaching to motivate, reward, and build good teams. Leaders must engage employees in change initiatives (Lewin, 1947). Employees should feel they are included in developing the change initiatives.

Change agents require social skills such as the art of persuasion, sensitivity, negotiating skills, and influence. In 2014, Heorhiadi, Conbere, and Hazelbaker amplified that business leaders needed to focus on establishing a humane workplace. Heorhiadi et al. (2014) presented that there was a need to appreciate how the mental capacities of employees were impacted by the way the leaders engaged the humanistic elements in the organization. Leaders constantly engage employees to fully explain the impact and implications of the change (Lewin, 1947). Too often, leaders focus on getting the job done but ignore the people who are getting the job done. Heorhiadi et al. (2014) highlighted that willful blindness is an escape route. Leaders should engage their team members and demonstrate heart (Heorhiadi et al., 2014). Leaders encourage the involvement and help direct decisions of employees while developing and managing change to remain operable (Duff, 2016). Leaders should persuade and influence employees in managing change initiatives.

When leaders appropriately engage employees especially during change, it appeared that organizational success increased. Strategies used to engage employees included an awareness of the soft and hard structures within the organization (Duff, 2016). Bourke and Roper (2017) pinpointed that engagement involved employees in a continuous review of the direction, structure, and capabilities of the organization to generate new and improved results. Technological advances and innovation are a survival mechanism for organizations (Brones, de Carvalho, & de Senzi Zancul, 2017). Staff engagement is a continuous process to build strategies for the change initiatives to remain sustainable and the organization remains operable.

Leaders in an organization require employee engagement skills not change control. Leaders must become more adept not just at strategizing for the hard management changes, such as structure, but also the soft management changes such as staff involvement (Bourke & Roper, 2017). Human resources and people's concerns must be addressed appropriately to achieve full employee engagement (Slack, Corrlett, & Morris, 2015). Leaders should seek to fully engage employees in the change initiative processes to foster job satisfaction, job commitment, and organizational success (Lee et al., 2018). For change initiatives to be successful leaders need to engage employees about the change.

Leaders are to engage virtual teams in developing and managing change initiatives to remain operable. Krumm, Kanthak, Hartmann, and Hertel (2016) advised that over the years, virtual teamwork developed to a highly prevalent aspect of the organizational competitive structure. Leaders and employees may need a deeper analysis of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) to entreat virtual teams to remain engaged. Leaders should recognize all employees as partners in the organization (Slack et al., 2015). Krumm et al. (2016) advised that leaders are required to boost the cohesiveness of the overall team, including virtual employees. During the phases of the change, leaders engage employees to remind and reinforce that the need for the change initiatives is for the organization to remain operable.

Disengaged employees can jeopardize the organization’s change efforts. Disengaged employees ooze a lethargic malaise that can compromise the culture, work ethic, change efforts, and camaraderie in the workplace. Allam (2017) advised that disengaged employees were more prone to flout the rules of the organization, less excited to learn, contributed to higher turnover rates and displayed no difficulty with sabotaging the change initiatives. Engaged employees remain committed to the organization in times of growth, as well as during downturns and challenging times (Lee, Daughtery, Eskierka, & Hamelin, 2018). Engaged employees fostered smoother change initiatives and positive organizational change behavior (Krumm et al., 2016). Leaders should develop a multiplicity of strategies to engage employees during the change process.

Leaders unlock the conundrum that shifts mindsets from the current state through to the unfreezing, change, and refreezing. Schaltegger and Burritt (2018) explained that motivation from leaders and managers lead their staff to achieve sustainable operations. Leaders who harnessed positive attributes from the team members delivered organizational change (Appelbaum et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2018). Commuzzi and Parhizkar (2017) recognized that the success of an organization was dependent on leaders' abilities to engage others in a structured manner to attain designed goals and objectives. Leaders should develop and manage initiatives that promote positive organizational behavior.

Leaders must possess the strategies to lead the internal team and stakeholders to a new and sustainable paradigm. Sementelli (2016) focused on institutional change and offered that all stakeholders within an organization were the key to success. Allam (2017) advised that leaders should revitalize the employee's positive work ethic and rebuild the employee's contribution to the workplace. Some leaders develop employee engagement programs such as reward programs, facilitate training, and communicate openly so that employees are more engaged in developing and managing change initiatives (Allam, 2017). Leaders should build change programs that include training needs, communication, and rewards. Engaged employees seek to contribute to organizational success.

Organizational leaders strive for success in the competitive market and manage change initiatives as part of that endeavor. Plaskoff (2017) maintained that gimmicks and fun activities are short-term; leaders should provide meaningful and tangible interaction with employees. Lewin (1947) implored that change is successful only when the change is sustainable. Plaskoff (2017) recommended six principles to assist with the orientation of employees' engagement experience. Plaskoff (2017) recommended that leaders incorporate the following principles in their engagement strategies: a) understand the employees as individuals and get to know their needs; (b) embrace new, expansive, and holistic thinking; (c) make the intangible tangible; (d) insist on participation of all members; (e) iterate and experiment; and (f) trust and appreciate the process. Leaders and employees must collaborate to develop and manage change initiatives.

Leaders should seek to lead through employee engagement and should identify the engaged team members who captured the insights of change. Craig (2016) concluded that when leaders involved employees the benefits included greater employee engagement, a shift in culture, and a greater pool of talent ready for future challenges and opportunities (Craig, 2016). Godkin (2015) proffered that employee engagement could drive organizational performance. Lambert, Bassell, and Friedman (2018) recommended that for employees to collaborate and become engaged, leaders must become agents of change. Leaders must be more creative, uphold ethical principles, and become more assertive as global thinkers capable of leading change in organizations.

Members of an organization constantly engage in gathering, interpreting, and disseminating information on a new set of events in the organization. Organizational members tend to engage in planned change initiatives because of the need to close gaps between the current state and the desired future state (Castillo, Ferandez, & Sallan, 2018). Employees' attitudes are critical parameters of the implementation of change while positive, negative, and ambivalent attitudes related to engagement notions on readiness and resistance to change (Castillo et al., 2018). Change disrupts the normal patterns of functioning in an organization and almost immediately triggers a process of sense-making in individuals (Park & Kim, 2015). Individuals begin to form change-related beliefs leading to attitudinal responses as soon as they become aware of potential changes in the organization (Park & Kim, 2015). Employees' attitudes have profound implications for the totality of organizational change. Research conducted by Park and Kim (2015) revealed that organizational members assigned positive or negative valence to change that were associated with negative or positive outcomes of the overall change. Leaders of an organization must engage the team members to boost change implementation success.

Employee change cynicism is an unintended consequence of organizational change. Leaders engage employees to build trust. Cynicism can undermine the effectiveness of change initiatives (Brown, Kulik, Cregan, & Metz, 2017). The leader must prevent or reduce cynicism among employees. Alatawi (2017) projected that in order to remain competitive, organizations must seek to contain expenses, maximize profits, expand productivity, and deliberately plan to retain workers. A leader seeks to boost organizational performance by fostering a positive influence on an employee's performance (Pongpearchan, 2016). Leaders engage employees to promote cohesiveness, commitment, motivation, and trust.

Leaders should utilize an active engagement strategy to shape all the functions in an organization. Leaders must engage employees to drive change organizational outcomes (Wen, Yang, Bu, Diers, & Wang, 2018). Choi, Kim, and Kang (2017) found that different styles of leaders contributed to different aspects of team effectiveness. Carasco-Saul, Kim, and Kim (2015) reported that to boost overall team effectiveness and organizational performance, leaders should involve greater collaboration among team members and pay keen attention to the fit between the leader's behavior and the characteristics of the teams' output. Caniëls, Semeijn, and Renders (2018) proffered that employees in the organization changed from time to time, but it behooves the organizational leaders to find innovative ways to optimize their employees' output and performance. Leaders recognize that the global demands on organizations place organizations at risk to remain operable. Change is inevitable. Lewin's theory of change stipulates three phases for leaders to use to successfully implement change initiatives. Leaders must develop and manage change initiatives for the organization to remain operable.

Transition

The goal of this study was to explore strategies that successful business leaders used to develop and manage change to remain operable beyond 5 years. In Section One, I outlined the framework for the strategies involved in implementing change and the role of the leaders during the change process. Lewin's (1946) model for change provided the lens for the conceptual framework for the study. I used Lewin's model to explore the process that organizations may use to develop and implement successful change initiatives. In Section 1, I identified the change management theories that leaders could use to explore developing and managing change initiatives to remain operable, the resistance associated with change, trends in change management strategies, change management leadership skills, and communication of the strategies to implement change. In the review of the literature, I attempted to set the foundation for the study and elaborated on how the content of the previous research aligned with my study. I provided the parameters and environmental factors that business leaders strategized for when developing and managing change initiatives. In Section 2, I addressed the research process, including the role of the researcher. I discussed the characterization of the participants and methods used to collect the data. I presented the ethical considerations for the research. In Section 3, I presented the findings and analysis of the data gathered, provided implications for social change, recommended strategies to successfully lead and implement change initiatives, provided areas for additional future research, and concluded the study.

Section 2: The Project

The target group for this multiple case study was at least three business leaders from at least three organizations in Jamaica. Four business leaders from four different organizations who successfully implemented change participated in semistructured, face-to-face interviews. I organized this section into subsections to include a presentation of the purpose of the research. A discussion of the research methods and designs show the rationale for inclusion. I discussed the sampling techniques and the population descriptions for the study and included the ethical principles that guided the research and discuss the principles of reliability and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years. The population for the study consisted of four businesses that operate in Jamaica and whose leaders successfully implemented organizational change initiatives. The implication for positive social change was the potential to provide existing business leaders with strategies to implement change to bolster performance and business survival which foster job creation, job growth, and job retention. Employed persons are better able to provide for their families and support their communities.

Role of the Researcher

One of the key research instruments in a qualitative study is the researcher. The researcher is responsible for data collection and is the data collection instrument (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2018). The role of a researcher is to understand the data collection process, get intricately involved in the data collection procedures, and become integrally involved in collecting the data in the qualitative research (Yin, 2018). Qualitative researchers locate and interview participants, collate and analyze the data, and manage the interview process (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). The role of a researcher is to ensure that participants understand the questions and are informed of their participation. In a qualitative case study, a researcher collects data from multiple resources such as (a) interviews, (b) records, and (c) documents (Yin, 2018). The researcher’s interpretive role is essential in the process (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). I was the primary data collection instrument for this study; I collected and interpreted data from the semistructured interviews and conducted a review of public records and archival documents. I used semistructured interviews to acquire data on strategies successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives.

I have leadership experience in business, in both private and public organizations. I also managed and participated in several change initiatives. I did not include any participants in this study with whom I have a prior working or platonic relationship. I did not interact with or establish relationships with the business leaders before selecting participants. During my research, I remained neutral and did not allow my personal bias to interfere with this study. I was open and honest with the participants of my study about my experience with the topic and research.

Ethical protection for all participants is essential. Another role of the researcher is to be ethical in interacting with participants. Before conducting the study, I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research training and obtained certification (Certification Number: 31997294). The NIH training contained information on the *Belmont Report*, which included guidelines for ethically selecting and protecting human subjects in research (U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). In addition to completing the NIH certification to ensure ethical limitations, I adhered to the *Belmont Report's* Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research protocol. I used the *Belmont Report* on participant decisions to decide what and how to share information from the initial interview through member checking to protect participants' verbal and written responses and identity. I explained the process to the participants, monitored the process, and extracted data from the interviews to provide valid and useful information for future researchers and business leaders.

Another role of the researcher is to mitigate bias. Researchers' bias may impact how information is solicited, recorded, or interpreted (Wadams & Park, 2018). Researchers should take additional measures to understand and mitigate personal biases. Marshall and Rossman (2016) explained that researchers must indicate any prior observations or associations that may influence the research and any prior connections that may create a harmful bias. Researchers eliminate bias and ensure validity by cross-referencing multiple data sources (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). I mitigated bias through professional discretion, the use of interview protocol, member checking, triangulation of the data and ensuring data saturation.

Researchers seek to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of the research by using member checking. Member checking is a process to share interpretations or summaries of data and credibility of research findings (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; David, Hitchcock, Ragan, Brooks, & Starkey, 2016). To mitigate bias, I used reflective journaling as a resource to ensure I did not inject my specific feelings during the interviews. To mitigate my personal biases, I posed the same open-ended questions to each participant and recorded the experiences exactly as described by the participants. I established and maintained neutrality during all phases of the research study and during the interview process with the participants. Mitigating bias requires identification of bias and then engagement in activities or practices to remove those elements.

Another role of the researcher is to establish and use an interview protocol to collect data to enhance reliability. A researcher follows an interview protocol to establish a reliable method of data collection that is objective and trustworthy and results in increased data quality (Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Kallio et al., 2016). I used an interview protocol (see Appendix A) to ensure that I asked participants the same questions in a systematic format to enhance data quality. I treated each participant in the same manner, asked the interview questions in the same order, recorded the responses, and conducted member checking to ensure an accurate description of each participant's experience.

In the pursuit of this doctoral study, I upheld the policies and procedures for ethical research of Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I did not make any prior contact with or attempt to select participants until approval from IRB. After receiving IRB approval (My Walden University IRB approval number is 08-19-19-0746091), I recruited participants for the study. I conducted semistructured interviews with business leaders who implemented change successfully. My role in the qualitative case study was to conduct interviews, ask applicable questions, listen actively, ask probing questions, and take notes. The interview protocol was the foundation for the qualitative interviews. I used the interview protocol to interview business leaders and ensured the accuracy of interview interpretations.

Participants

I used purposeful and snowball sampling to gain access to four business leaders in Jamaica. When researchers select participants with the most knowledge to provide accurate information based on experience, the purposeful sampling technique is used (Palinkas et al., 2015). When researchers obtain participants based on the recommendation of other participants, the method is snowball sampling (Mortara & Sinisi, 2019). The selection criteria for participants in the study were business leaders with over 5 years' industry experience in leading organizations and who developed and implemented successful change initiatives in their organizations. Researchers select participants for the study based on the respondent's involvement in the case and the ability to answer the central research question (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016; Yin, 2017). I excluded participants with no involvement in the implementation of organizational change. Only participants with prior change management decision-making abilities and practical experience participated in the study.

To gain access, I sought participants by contacting various business industry associations for names of business leaders who successfully led and implemented change initiatives within the last 5 years. Researchers gain access to participants through affiliations and may need to interact with gatekeepers (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). I obtained contact information for the participants by searching the Internet for company website contact information and from the industry associations. I made direct contact with business leaders and introduced myself and the purpose of my study, and then I sent the business leaders a letter of invitation to formally invite them to participate in the study. Once potential participants indicated an interest in participating in the research, I provided each with the informed consent form. The informed consent form outlined the purpose of the research, the participant's responsibility, the right to answer some, all, or none of the questions without consequence, and my responsibility to keep all information and identifying characteristics confidential throughout the research process. I plan to dispose of all collected data and personal identifiers by fire after 5 years following the research.

I developed a rapport with the participants by explaining the objectives of the research. Researchers build rapport with participants by being transparent about their study background and purpose (Park & Lunt, 2015). The invitation to participate included the statement that any information shared during the interview would be recorded and would remain confidential and then destroyed as indicated above. By indicating "I consent" on the informed consent form the participant agreed to the requirements of the research process.

Research Method and Design

The focus of this qualitative multiple case study was the successful strategies leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. This section includes a discussion of the qualitative method and the reason I selected this method for the study. I also justify why I selected a multiple case study and why the selected research design was the best choice for my research study.

Research Method

I selected a qualitative research method for this research study. I explored strategies business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable beyond 5 years. The three primary research methods are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Turner, Kane, & Jackson, 2015). Yin (2018) proffered that qualitative researchers are involved in the exploration of how persons attach various meanings of a problem in real-world settings. Qualitative research is most appropriate to explore participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The qualitative researcher uses open-ended questions to explore new ideas and understand the attitudes and experiences of participants (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). I selected the qualitative method as the most appropriate method for this research because I attempted to answer the *what*, *how*, and *why* questions of the phenomena. Using the qualitative method, I interacted with business leaders to probe the successful strategies used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable and brought an understanding to the how and why of the selected strategies.

The quantitative researcher tests a hypothesis and relies on instrumental measurements to analyze numerical data. Quantitative researchers answer the *how many or how much* questions by analyzing numerical data and the use of a statistical procedure to analyze the data (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Quantitative researchers focus on measurement, test hypotheses, analyze relationships among variables, and make predictions and generalizations (Makrakis & Kostoulas-Makrakis, 2016). Since I was not testing a hypothesis nor analyzing statistical data, the quantitative method was not relevant to my study.

The quantitative and mixed methods did not apply to my research because I was not testing a hypothesis, or a theory and I did collect numeric data for statistical hypotheses testing. The quantitative method uses quantifiable variables in investigating and explaining an issue or phenomenon. Researchers use the quantitative method to test hypotheses, ascertain correlation, apply measures to variables, and to answer questions such as how much and how often (Yin, 2018). The mixed-method includes both quantitative and qualitative analyses (Alavi & Habek, 2016). The advantages of using the mixed method include an in-depth analysis of the interviews, surveys, and observations while the quantitative data undergoes statistical analysis to provide detailed assessment of responses (Alavi & Habek, 2016; McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Mixed methods was not appropriate for my research as I only explored the strategies used by business leaders involved in the successful implementation of change initiatives in organizations. I did not analyze numeric data nor tested hypotheses. I identified the strategies business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives in their organizations.

Research Design

I considered four qualitative designs to address the business problem in this study. The four possible qualitative designs included narrative, phenomenological, ethnography, and case study (Aagaard, 2017; Yin, 2018). Narrative researchers consider the participants' stories and life experiences (Madden et al., 2018). Since I did not explore the stories of the life experiences of my participants, the narrative design was not appropriate for my study. Phenomenological researchers explore the lived experiences of the participants and are concerned with human experience; as such the phenomenon is abstracted, reduced, and explained (Wilson, 2015). As I explored the strategies business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable, the phenomenological approach was not appropriate for this study.

I did not intend to explore the culture of my participants; therefore, the ethnography design was not appropriate for my research. My research focused on learning what successful strategies business leaders used when implementing change initiatives. Yin (2018) described the case study as an exploration in an issue bound in time, place, and context to generate insights from interviews conducted in real-life settings. The case study design was appropriate for this study as it supported the objectives of the study. Researchers who used the case study design explored the real-world situations of an event or series of events, or specific activity, or problem by using a single case or multiple cases (Aagaard, 2017). According to Yin (2018), the researcher using a case study design investigates the phenomenon within a real-world context. I conducted a multiple case study design to allow stakeholders to gain information on strategies used by leaders in real-world situations to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable.

Data saturation is an essential element when the researcher uses a case study design. Researchers use data saturation to guide when interviewing is complete, and the data becomes robust and fulsome. Data saturation takes place when no additional ideas, themes, or categories emerged from the last participant interviewed (Morse, 2015). To ensure data saturation, I continued to conduct interviews of research participants until no new ideas or themes emerge. I interviewed four participants to obtain data saturation. During the interviews, I requested all the participants to provide answers to questions until they had nothing more to add. After reviewing the data and as a function of member checking, I asked the participants to read the information to verify if the information shared was correct, complete, and if anything was absent. I analyzed data from all interviews, company documents, and publicly available literature. Additionally, precise coding of the data took place to reveal whether there were significant themes as recommended by Yin (2018). The use of the multiple case study design applied consistently with the purpose and research questions used in the study allowed for saturation and triangulation of data.

Population and Sampling

There are three main types of sampling methods used in qualitative research namely purposive, quota, and snowball. I used purposeful and snowball sampling to obtain participants for my qualitative case study. Purposeful sampling is useful for researchers to understand the views of participants and their perspectives (Benoot, Hannes, & Bilsen, 2016). Snowball sampling is a method of recruiting participants recommended by other participants (Mortara & Sinisi, 2019). The participants were business leaders who were instrumental in developing and managing successful change initiatives in their respective organizations.

In this study, I recruited and gathered data from 4 business leaders who successfully developed and managed change initiatives for their organizations to remain operable. According to Yin (2018) and supported by Birt et al. (2016), a study was valid based on the depth of information provided by the participants. The appropriate sample size is an important part of a qualitative research design (Rosenthal, 2016). Palinkas et al. (2015) explained that qualitative researchers used purposive strategy with the assumption that the participants had valuable experience and significant perspectives on the phenomenon studied and were qualified for the process. Mortara and Sinisi (2019) explained that snowball sampling helped researchers to gather enough data to analyze and draw conclusive results that help to make informed decisions. A smaller sample size allows the researcher using the case study design to obtain rich descriptions of the phenomenon (Yin, 2018). Boddy (2016) offered that for interview-based cases a sample size as small as one may be adequate to address the research question. The minimum number of participants recommended for data saturation in a case study design is three (Yin, 2018). The plan for the study was to interview at least three business leaders. I interviewed and collected data from four business leaders who were successful in developing and managing change initiatives to remain operable.

There is no one-size-fits-all method to reach data saturation. Data saturation occurs when there is no new information garnered via data collection or analysis (Fusch & Ness, 2015). I obtained data saturation from my interviews and data collection from the four business leaders. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), the researcher aims for evidence of data saturation to gather data that is rich and thick rather than focus on the number of participants. I conducted face-to-face interviews with four participants. The face-to-face interviews were at locations agreed upon by the participants. The participants in the study signed a consent form to participate in the interviews. I stored the recordings, electronic notes, names of participants, and identification of the partnering organizations electronically in a password protected folder in a password protected computer. All physical documents are stored in a lockbox. No one else has access to the lockbox. At the end of 5 years, I will delete the electronic data and destroy the hard copy documents by physical means.

Ethical Research

Ethical practices and processes are protection mechanisms for study participants. Walden University's informed consent form is one of the mechanisms used to protect the study participants. The 1979 Belmont Report provided guidelines for the ethical treatment of the human subject in research and protect participants in this research. The process entailed full disclosure of the research to the participants. I obtained signatures on the Informed Consent Form from participants prior to participation in the study. Providing participants with full disclosure is vital to the research process (Yin, 2018). As such, I provided study participants with full disclosure on the purpose and scope of the study, informant privacy and confidentiality, and data protection. Potential participants received an email invitation to participate. The letter of invitation provided details about the study. I informed the participants that I was a doctoral student conducting research as part of my graduation requirement.

An explanation of the purpose of the study and the potential benefits of participating assisted participants to decide whether to participate. I stated that participation was voluntary and that participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants' withdrawal can cause a disruption in the process of generating knowledge for the study (Harriss, MacSween, & Atkinson, 2017). Participants who desired to withdraw from the study were able to do so by formal notification via email advising that they no longer wished to participate. None of the participants withdrew from the study.

There are instances when some researchers use monetary incentives to encourage participation in studies. Some researchers offer participants the knowledge that their participation serves to further research in a particular area of study (Bager, 2015; Harriss et al., 2017). Participants in my study did not receive monetary compensation. I assured participants that the information they provided in the study was recorded in posterity and that their individual participation could result in furthering knowledge about the development and management of successful change initiatives that business leaders used to remain operable.

Researchers and participants set parameters for participating in research. An important consideration for conducting interviews for a qualitative study is the confidentiality of participants' information (Morse & Coulehan, 2015). The location for interviews must be convenient and inviting for the participants (Peter & Halcomb (2015). I selected convenient private locations conducive to discussions for my interviews with participants. I ensured that the rooms available were empty and comfortable for conducting interviews. As the researcher, I did not disclose the identities of the other participants. On approval of the study, I will provide a copy of the study to the participants via pdf format. Researchers code the names of participants and organizations to remove personal and company identifiers for confidentiality purposes (Elger, Handtke, & Wangmo, 2015. I coded the participants as P1, P2, P3, and P4.

Other important ethical considerations in protecting the confidentiality of study participants are the proper storage and eventual disposal of study data. I used a variety of data collection methods and data storage options in this study. The Walden program requires 5-year retention of research related data and material. Therefore, I will maintain for 5 years, all the written documents, audio recordings, and data collected electronically or otherwise during the study. I continue to store the electronic data in a password protected folder in a password protected computer accessible only by me for five years. I securely locked away paper data and documents in a secure location, accessible only by me. At the end of 5 years, I will delete the electronic data and physically destroy and shred all research-related material including the identification schema.

Ethical boundaries must be upheld throughout the research process. The Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) must grant approval for the study to begin. The IRB governs the oversight of ethical research. Walden University's IRB process is a mechanism that regulates the ethical conduct and practices of researchers. The IRB approval process seeks to ensure that all researchers adhere to the highest level of ethical conduct and practice only ethically sound practices. Doctoral students obtain IRB approval as a demonstration of commitment to comply with all the established processes and adherence to the highest ethical standards throughout the study. Researchers must obtain IRB approval before engaging in selecting the research site, research participants, or collecting data. Prior to commencing my research, I obtained permission from Walden IRB.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this qualitative study. According to Yin (2018), there are six methods of collecting data for case studies: (a) interviews, (b) archival records, (c) direct observations, (d) documents, (e) participant observations, and (f) physical artifacts. Yin (2018) stated that not all sources are required in any one study but recommended that researchers incorporated at least two. Researchers using case study design often use semistructured interviews as a data collection instrument (Elger et al., 2015; Yin, 2018). The use of semistructured interviews with open-ended questions was the primary means of obtaining data during one-on-one interviews with business leaders. Additionally, with permission, I collected documents from the organizations to assess the strategies the business leaders used to successfully develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable.

As the main data collection technique that I used in this study was face-to-face interviewing, the use of an interview protocol was vital to strengthen the data collection process and the quality of the data collected from interviews. I developed an interview protocol (see Appendix A) that provided structure and a detailed systematic guide for the conduct of effective interviews. Marshall and Rossman (2016) emphasized that qualitative researchers do not usually use interview questions created by other researchers. Therefore, I created my own interview questions for this study. Each interview included the seven open-ended interview questions (see Appendix A) on strategies used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable.

At the beginning of the interview process, I shared the nature and purpose of the study with the participants; I gave assurances to the business leaders that the information they shared with me would remain confidential; reminded them that they were free to terminate the interview at any time as stipulated in the Form of Consent. Researchers audio record interviews and notified the participants before the recorder was turned on. The main purpose of an audio-recorded interview is to transcribe the participants' responses more accurately after the interview (Crozier & Cassell, 2016). Investigators enhance the accuracy of the transcription with audio recordings (Elger et al., 2015). I audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews verbatim to create an interpreted summary for member checking. The interview questions were open-ended, and I asked follow-up questions in the event any participant had difficulty in answering the questions in a comprehensive and detailed manner. Both the interview protocol and interview questions obtained IRB approval before the interviews took place. I double-checked the data collection instruments for the appropriate number of questions and clarity of language. I confirmed that there was sufficient time to conduct the interviews without inconveniencing the business leaders. Importantly, during the interviews, I created a comfortable atmosphere, so the participants were at ease in sharing their experiences.

To ensure validity and reliability, I created a detailed audit trail, which is a systematically maintained collection of material involved in a given study. I interpreted and analyzed the participant's statements, and then shared my interpretation of the responses with the participant to guarantee validity. According to Yin (2018), validity occurs through member checking and as such, researchers should verify the accuracy of their interpretation of the responses provided by participants. Member checking is the process of engaging the participants in fulsome conversation during and following the interviews and by reviewing the information the participants shared (Yin, 2018). The member checking process provided an opportunity to review, interpret the interview responses, and summarize replies to the interview questions.

Data Collection Technique

For this qualitative multiple case study, I collected data using face-to-face semistructured interviews containing seven questions, company archival documentation, and website content. I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB before commencing data collection. The data collection process is a systematic method of collection of information about a research question. Researchers conducting a case study should collect data from multiple sources Yin, 2018). The main data collection technique used in this study was interviews.

The data collection techniques regarding the semistructured interviews began followed an interview protocol (see Appendix A). Researchers using face-to-face interviews see, hear, and feel the participants' experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The interview protocol contained the set of interview questions and step-by-step guidance leading the interviewer through the interview process (Chen & Mykletun, 2015). The following are the data collection steps; I:

1. obtained site approval from the business leaders via letter or email.
2. used a list from the industry associations to identify the participants considered for the study.
3. recruited participants via email using a participant letter. One participant informed a colleague of the study and I obtained the participation.
4. obtained the informed consent from participants who wished to participate in the study.
5. scheduled interviews via telephone calls and messaging service.
6. met the business leaders, explained the purpose of the study, and obtained permission to collect data from the company.

I sent the participants e-mails with an invitation-to-participate using an e-mail script and attached a copy of the informed consent form. I used an interview protocol to guide the interviews (see Appendix A). The interview protocol contained a set of interview questions and step-by-step guidance directing the interviewer through the interview process (Chen & Mykletun, 2015). Since the purpose of this study was to identify and explore what strategies business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives, the semistructured interview was appropriate for the study. I selected face-to-face interviews as my main data collection technique in this study. Interviewing participants in an iterative style aligned with the flexibility needed to achieve the appropriate depth of information gathering.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each data collection method. Face-to-face interviews are the most common method of interviewing in qualitative research

(Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The main advantage of a face-to-face interview is that live interaction builds an environment that allows participants to express their humanity. Using open-ended questions helped participants to express sentiments, feelings, and understanding of participants' experiences with humanity. McIntosh and Morse (2015) noted that the advantages of face-to-face semistructured interviews included enhanced verbal and nonverbal communication. Other methods of data collection may not have had the same effect as human interaction may be more remote. Another major advantage of the face-to-face interview process is the entailed structured, flexible, and adaptable process (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Atherton et al. (2018) concluded that researchers use face-to-face iterations and interactions for high-quality qualitative data mining. Therefore, the face-to-face interview process enabled me to collect the high quality, deep, and insightful data needed to address the research question.

The disadvantages of face-to-face interviews may include obtaining the appropriate time for the interview and value of the participants' time. A potential problem for researchers is gaining access to the desired participants and the willingness to take the time to participate in the interview (Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016). McIntosh and Morse (2015) added that the researcher's time and money could also be disadvantages to the interview process. To address these potential disadvantages, I structured the interviews for the minimal amount of time needed to gather the information needed from the four participants and restricted the distance I commuted to conduct the interviews.

The researcher's lack of experience may become a potential disadvantage in data collection. The disadvantage with face-to-face interviews is that a novice researcher may not have the dexterity to identify when to prompt a question or probe response to gather more relevant data for the study (Atherton et al, 2018). I followed the interview protocol and asked the participants to explain further if the answers were not specific. I also took notes during the interviews. The notes entailed documenting keywords, making drawings, and illustrations during the interviews. I actively listened, paid close attention, and remained perceptive and attuned to the environment to mitigate the risks of not knowing when to prompt for more detailed responses.

The other source of data used in the study was document collected from the organization and publicly available data. According to Yin (2018), using more than one collection technique helps investigators validate their findings through triangulation. The advantage of document collection is the broad coverage of the study topic through a collection of hard data about the topic and repeated reviews of documentary evidence (McGrath, Palmgren, & Liljedahl, 2019). Another advantage of reviewing company records is to obtain veracity of the information. Document analysis was less personal than the interviewing process but allowed for extensive data comparison (primarily acquired from the interviews). Document analysis may increase the credibility of data interpretation, according to (McGrath et al., 2019). Qualitative researchers may obtain valuable historical insights, identify trends, and gain an understanding of a phenomenon from archival documents.

The disadvantage of archival document review is the potential voluminous nature of the information. Yin (2018) identified disadvantages with using archival documents including (a) researcher's lack of input and control in the data collection, (b) difficulty validating the reliability of archival data, and (c) incomplete or inaccurate data. Yin (2018) offered the use of data from multiple sources as a way to offset these limitations. Therefore, I used face-to-face interviews and documentary processes to enable the collection of the fulsome and high-quality data needed to address the research question.

Validity and reliability in qualitative studies include a discussion on dependability, credibility, and transferability of data, instruments, and processes. To demonstrate the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments used, researchers incorporate a robust data collection protocol to guide the process and enhance trustworthiness. To ensure the validity of the data, I respected the perspectives, beliefs, and experience each of the business leaders shared in the study in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting their responses. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A). A pilot study or field test may be beneficial to the researcher. A researcher can use a pilot study to assess the information and design of the future definitive trial (Bell, Whitehead, & Julious, 2018). A student researcher benefits from mentor feedback on the appropriateness and suitability of interview questions and research approaches. I gained feedback from my committee chair, committee member, and university reviewer to assess the suitability of my interview questions and processes.

Member checking is an important strategy that researchers use to demonstrate rigor in the data collection instruments and processes. The trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research (Birt et al., 2016). I used several procedures to maximize objectivity and reduce researcher bias, including member checking and a detailed audit trail. Yin (2018) advised that researchers use member checking to obtain comments or correction from participants on (a) researcher's interpretations, (b) emerging findings, and (c) the research report. I conducted member checking following the initial interviews, by contacting each participant to review their responses to questions, checking the accuracy of my interpretation, and making corrections to my misinterpretations. Member checking strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collection instruments and processes used in this study.

Data Organization Techniques

Data organization in qualitative research refers to the systematic process of ordering, categorizing, and arranging the information gathered. A methodical process that organizes information helps researchers with the analysis and meaningful extrapolation of data (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). I recorded the interviews with an audio recorder to keep track of the data for validity, for interpreting the interview, as well as a reference tool for participants. Each of my study participants received a distinct code and labeling for differentiation, and a log of the research progress documented. Researchers use Excel spreadsheets, journals, notes, and transcripts in order to keep track of information gathering (Chowdhury, 2015). Each business leader's identity remains confidential and I labeled all documents as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), and Participant 3 (P3), and so on, for ethical consideration and the right to privacy. Ensuring the confidentiality of all information is critical to data analysis. Chowdhury (2015) noted that researchers used cataloging, labeling, coding, and sorting to increase the efficiency in organizing data. I maintain an electronic filing system for all information from the audio recording and supporting documents.

I separated all research data and labeled documents and files with unique identifiers. Chowdhury (2015) noted the importance of maintaining locked and secured storage of all research files and documents. I stored all electronic data including consent forms, the invitation to participate, emails, and notes on a password-protected computer. All research data such as recorded interviews and electronic notes are in a password protected folder in a password protected computer for five years after approval of the study as stipulated by Walden University. No one has access to the folder or computer.

I locked away the hard copy documents obtained from participants and they are in a secure case located in my home office for 5 years to assure confidentiality. Researchers maintain a log to indicate the date and specifically the dates and time when the research occurred (Chowbury, 2015). I have a research log of the time of day when I collected the data. Reflective journals provide a way for the researcher to describe the recorded data as well as any ideas or important aspects drawn from the questioning (Chowbury, 2015). I kept a reflective journal to help to document and organize my thoughts and facilitate the collaborative inquiry process of qualitative research. I included my reflective journal as a primary source of data for this study and I used this reflectivity system of journaling to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research data. I will keep raw data for 5 years according to Walden University’s policy on the retention of research data. After 5 years, from completion of the study I will destroy the raw data from the study by shredding paper copies of research files.

Data Analysis

Researchers must apply logical techniques to describe and illustrate, condense and recap, and evaluate data. The analysis of data enables the researcher to discover meaningful patterns and themes. The data analysis process begins when the researcher works through the data to determine meaningful themes, patterns, and descriptions that answers the central research question (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Triangulation is a data analysis technique that allows researchers to corroborate evidence from different types of data and sources. The data sources for this study include the semistructured interviews, recordings, transcribed notes, a reflective journal, notes, and document review.

Researchers must analyze and interpret the data collected to draw meaning and identify emerging findings to answer the central research question I used NVivo to prepare and code the data to enable for interpretation. Vaughn and Turner (2016) proffered that when researchers organized collected data, researchers were better able to analyze and identify important themes and determine how best to use the data collected. I conducted a thematic analysis of the data collected. As the researcher, I (a) gathered the data (b) grouped the data (c) generated themes from the findings (d) accessed the data, and (e) used a thematic approach to find the strategies that business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives successfully. To prepare the data for analysis, I uploaded the audio files and documents into NVivo to transcribe the audio files and electronic notes word-for-word into Microsoft Word documents. To protect identification, I coded all references to participants (P1, P2, P3, or P4) in the transcribed files.

A systematic data analysis process enables researchers to extract meaningful and objective information from qualitative data. Yin (2018) stated that the selected data analysis technique should support the research question and the conceptual framework. The appropriate data analysis process for this study was thematic analysis. I collected data from multiple sources and used thematic analysis to identify information relevant to the research question. I searched and read all relative data and looked for comparisons. Koopman (2015) indicated that researchers examine codes and themes through the process of thematic analysis. I used Yin's thematic analysis process to analyze the data. Yin (2017) stated that thematic analysis was appropriate for (a) interpreting data, (b) deductive and inductive methods, (c) analyzing two different processes, and (d) coding and pattern recognition. I applied Yin's five steps to the data analysis. The first step was compiling data. I compiled data using methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation entailed drawing information from interviews, a review of documentation, and physical artifacts. The second step was disassembling the data. I disassembled the data using NVivo software. The NVivo program identified repeated words used throughout the data and provided codes to represent keywords. The third step was reassembling the data. I placed coded and related words into clusters to seek patterns of information. The fourth step of data analysis is interpreting the data (Yin, 2018). This step required careful and thoughtful efforts to reduce any personal bias that may alter the data analysis process. By maintaining a professional approach to interpretation, research is less likely to infuse personal bias and opinion into the interpretation of data (Yin, 2018). The fifth and final step was drawing meaningful conclusions from the data. Yin (2018) indicated that by using coding, clustering, and non-biased interpretation, research should draw meaningful conclusions reflecting strategies to answer the central research question. I ensured that I drew meaningful conclusions by identifying key themes from the findings to draw conclusions that may answer the central research question. Using thematic analysis, I focused on the themes and compared those ideas to the literature and the conceptual framework for this study.

Reliability and Validity

Questions still abound even now in the 21st century about the persistent concern with achieving rigor in qualitative research (Cypress, 2017). Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) indicated that the credibility of research findings was viewed through the lens of two particular parameters on research design, that is, reliability and validity. The sources of data of quality issues are (a) participant's error, (b) participant's bias, (c) researcher's error, and (d) researcher's bias (Saunders et al., 2015). The strategies that I employed to demonstrate research rigor, trustworthiness in this study are detailed below.

Reliability

The researcher can enhance the trustworthiness of the study by asking the right questions during the interviews as well as properly documenting the processes and rationale for any decisions made during the research process (Krosnick, 2018). Also, the use of an interview protocol helps ensure that the researcher stays focused and unbiased during the interview sessions. Therefore, I used the interview protocol to guide me to ask questions that were relevant to answering the central research question and ensure that there was consistency in the structure of the interview process. Using an interview protocol guided me through each interview and provided a systematic and repeatable approach to ensure each interview was conducted the same way, thus enhancing the authenticity of the interview process and interview data. To complete the interview process, interviewers continue to interview participants until the addition of data adds no new information and at that point, the interview process reaches saturation and the interviews stop (Yin, 2018). I continued to interview participants until I reached saturation and at that point, I stopped the interview process.

Dependability. To establish dependability, I used methodological triangulation, drawing on multiple sources, to capture a breadth of data on the topic. Sources of data triangulation include interview data, review of available organizational documents, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2018). I used member checking to confirm the data collected was accurate. A technique to ensure rigor in qualitative research is member checking (Smith & McGannon, 2018). According to Smith and McGannon (2018), member checking involves the participants of a project confirming or disconfirming the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative data. Ghaedi Heidari, Maghsoudi, Bahrami, and Kheirabadi (2019) explained that in member checking, initial interview data are shared with the participants for feedback I used member checking to assure the study's dependability.

Transferability. A researcher enhances the transferability of their research by applying two techniques; the first is an audit trail, to capture every step of the research process (Yin, 2018). Keeping an audit trail guides future researchers in strengthening the repeatability of data collection processes and aiding the trustworthiness of findings. The interview protocol further enhanced transferability by providing a step by step approach to the interview process. Using the interview protocol ensured that I asked each interviewee the same questions in the same order, to generate information in a non-biased and consistent manner. I used an audit trail to document all steps taken in research, and an interview protocol used to ensure consistency in the interview process, to enhance the transferability of my research.

Validity

Cypress (2017) referred to validity as the trustworthiness of the research. However, Watson (2018) explained that validity related to an estimate of how accurately the instrument measures the variable being studied. Cypress (2017) recommended that qualitative researchers consider the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of the data. The researcher must use the appropriate methodology for data collection and data analysis to obtain creditable results in the research and demonstrate the validity of data collected (Leung, 2015; Smith & McGannon, 2018). Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that a researcher could enhance the validity of the study through the triangulation of data from multiple sources, member checking, and peer debriefing. I used triangulation and member checking to address the dependability, validity, and credibility of the research.

Triangulation occurs when the researcher uses more than one data source to assure the credibility of data. Triangulation decreases biases, increases validity, and strengthens the research (Cypress, 2017). With data triangulation, the researcher’s different methods and perspectives maximize rigor and robustness of the study. With data triangulation, the researcher's different methods and perspectives produce more comprehensive findings (Smith & McGannon, 2018). The strategy in qualitative research is to use more than one data collection procedure from the same design (Krosnick, 2018).

Credibility. Liao and Hitchcock (2018) reported that there are two design techniques to achieve credibility; (a) primary techniques which include design, sample, and data collection and (b) additional credibility techniques which include triangulation, audit trail, member checking, and persistent observation. To ensure credibility, I used data triangulation of research results with archival data. I interviewed business leaders located in Jamaica with over 5 years of industry experience who developed and managed the successful implementation of change initiatives. Qualitative researchers boost credibility of research when the participants of a study reviewed the information (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I invited participants to review the transcript, and I established and used interview protocol. I enhanced credibility by conducting member checking of the data interpretation.

Transferability. Researchers must ensure methodological rigor in studies so that relevance to other situations could be considered applicable. Transferability means enabling others to form conclusions if findings from a particular research apply in a different field or location (Liao & Hitchcock, 2018). There are several techniques to enhance transferability. Ghaedi Heidari et al. (2019) recommended that to achieve transferability of the data, researchers share a summary of the interviews with comparable participants who were not enrolled in the study. Transferability was confirmed if the interviews represented similar experiences and strategies to successfully develop and manage successful change initiatives. Liao and Hitchcock (2018) explained that to empower others to determine transferability of a study, researchers provide rich descriptions of the context of the research and rich descriptions of the participants' accounts to enhance transferability. I ensured that I provided rich descriptions of the context of the research as well as rich descriptions of the information gathered from participants.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the level to which the findings of a study may be corroborated by other persons (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, I documented the measures for checking and rechecking the data to ensure confirmability. Researchers establish confirmability when they document the procedures for checking the data throughout the study and present the diversity in the way that the data is understandable to others (Bearss et al., 2016). During this research, I continued to request participants' responses until no new information emerged to satisfy the requirements for confirmability. If the participant confirms the accuracy of the data or the results, the findings are deemed credible and the research is valid (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

I ensured the continuation of recruitment until data saturation was attained. I ensured the rigor of the qualitative process. I ensure that the reliability and validity process was maintained to enhance the confirmability, trustworthiness, and transferability of findings to similar populations.

Transition and Summary

In Section 2, I reintroduced the purpose of the study and described my role as the researcher. The *why, what*, and *how* of each decision, supported by scholarly peer-reviewed or seminal sources provided an in-depth view of the process for this study. The sub-topics included research method and design, population sampling, ethical research, and data collection. Section 2, provided a map of the procedures that guided the completion of the study. Section 3 begins with an introduction of the purpose of the study, and I presented the results of the data collection, that is, interviews, notes, and hard copy material, as well as the analysis process. I provided a description of the application of the results and implications of social change in professional practice. Recommendations made to business leaders include successful strategies to implement change, and I provided an explanation of how the information may relate to other industries. Change management is a rich, sensitive, and ever-changing topic. Section 3 includes my recommendations for further studies and further research. I concluded the study with some closing thoughts, including my views on the implementation of change initiatives.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that some business leaders used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable. To collect data, I conducted face-to-face, semistructured interviews with four business leaders from different organizations located in Jamaica. The main themes that emerged were (a) improving communication, (b) providing coaching, (c) enhancing employee engagement, and (d) strengthening organizational culture.

The four business leaders interviewed used a combination of innovative and time-tested strategies to develop, manage, and lead successful change initiatives in their organizations. Considering more effective management of change initiatives, business leaders using the conclusions of this study might contribute to positive social change by aligning the goal of the change with the mission of the organization. Additionally, improving communication and employee engagement might generate beneficial outcomes for the business that could lead to the longevity of the business, improved growth, and sustainable communities through increased local employment. Semistructured interviews, review of websites, and document review triangulated and confirmed data for this study.

Presentation of Findings

This section details information pertaining to the emerging themes from the interviews, participant identification codes, and interview protocol. In this study, I conducted face-to-face semistructured interviews with four business leaders in Jamaica to answer the overarching research question: What strategies do Jamaican business leaders use to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable?. The interviews gave the participants an opportunity to share detailed information about the strategies used to manage change so that organizations remained viable.

I also reviewed company documents, including coaching and training plans, training manuals, process flows, user guides, notes from meetings, posters, e-mails, and jingles used to convey the change. I used an interview protocol, and I asked each participant the same set of questions in the same order, and after taking as much or little time as they wanted, each participant responded. Prior to the interviews, I advised participants of their right to answer the questions or to refuse to answer questions. I reminded participants of my obligation to secure the information received as confidential; this included interview recordings, my notes, and company documents. I also informed the participants of my note-taking process, which involved both written and voice-recorded notes.

After I collected the data, I transcribed and interpreted the audio recordings. I uploaded the transcribed interviews in NVivo. To verify my interpretation of the information from participants, I conducted member checking. Based on the research question, and after compiling and analyzing the interview responses, I identified patterns. I used the patterns to cluster themes and to eliminate irrelevant data collected from interviews and company documents. The four themes that emerged from the data analysis were (a) improving communication, (b) providing coaching, (c) enhancing employee engagement, and (d) strengthening organizational culture. The findings from this study aligned with the conceptual framework of Lewin’s (1947) change management model and were supported by some of the peer-reviewed studies from the literature review section.

Table 3

General and Demographic Information on the Business Leaders

	Participant			
Parameters	#1	#2	#3	#4
Code	P1	P2	P3	P4
Nationality	Jamaican	Jamaican	Jamaican	Jamaican
Highest level education	Masters	Masters	Masters	Bachelors
Years in current company	4 years	2 years	10 years	10 years
Total industry leadership	18 years	38 years	30 years	12 years

Theme 1: Improving Communication

The first central theme that emerged was communication. All the business leaders in my study indicated a strong reliance on communication as a strategy used to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable. The theme communication emanated from participants’ responses to Interview Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and was the most frequent strategy identified throughout the data.

The business leaders began the change initiatives by communicating the purpose of the change. P1 provided an example of the message communicated to staff.

> We explained to the staff what the change was going to do for the organization and what the change meant to each member of staff. The message also explained the reason for the change. The leader needs to make sure that in communicating

> the change, the change was not about the leader or created a situation of them versus us. Buy-in starts with communicating the need for the change, the possible impact, and by talking about how the change may be a solution to a challenge. Explain what we are going to get from this change and why it is the best fit for the company.

Similarly, P2 reflected on a particular change initiative experience and explained that the change must be linked to the mission of the organization. According to P2,

> We placed the change on a pedestal. Every employee must know about the change. Every employee must understand the change initiative in their own language meaning, the gardener, the factory worker, the manager, and executives must have the shared perspective that the change will make things better. That level of commitment to the change process only happens with effective communication.

At all times, the communication of the change and the actual change initiative were tightly coupled. Face-to-face conversations helped the business leaders to share information with employees in a direct manner. According to the business leaders in the study, they embedded communication messages in all the strategies. P3 pinpointed that "without communication, the change was more likely to fail." P4 shared that using various forms of communication allows employees to maintain clarity on the purpose of the change, a milestone achieved, and general progress reports on the change. All the business leaders integrated resources such as the use of cross-functional committees, one-on-one cell phone conversations, conference calls, and mobile telephone applications such as text messages to communicate internally about the change initiatives. P4 offered an example of using communication as a strategy in a change initiative.

> At first, we explained everything to all staff in a manner for every staff member to understand. And, we gave them all an overview of the change needed. We requested feedback and then provided an in-depth understanding of what we were trying to achieve. We also explained their role in trying to succeed in the change and how the change would and should not affect their jobs. Communication was integral to the success of the whole change or solution. So, at all times, everybody understood what was going on.

The participants provided company documents such as notes from general staff meetings and divisional meetings, plus emails, newsletters, and memos sent to employees on a continuous basis throughout the change process. I reviewed communication plans from two participants that included the use of other creative means of communication such as developing a theme song, jingles, and poems to explain the change initiative.

Theme 2: Providing Coaching

The second emergent theme was coaching. Training and mentorship were sub-themes the participants identified as important strategies to develop and manage a successful change initiative. All the participants emphasized the importance of coaching employees whose jobs or duties must change due to the initiative. However, the participants disclosed that the positive effect of training and mentorship enhanced coaching when implementing a change initiative. P1 explained that “training required maintenance for the new way of doing things to stick. I find that by coaching and mentoring employees on the organization imperatives, the new training information was enforced." P2 related an experience where a new information technology system was deployed and coaching employees boosted success of the change initiative.

> An experienced employee in the organization provided one-on-one support and advice throughout the hands-on training program. So the job expectations and benefits of the new system were repeatedly explained by a peer, employees expressed that they felt a greater sense of understanding of what is required of them in their jobs and then better supported the implantation of the new information technology system.

P1 advised that "another strategy is the sharing of knowledge through training." Further, all change initiatives involved a "new learning and new approach" to conducting a task or process and "required active coaching and training". P1 explained that

> all my successful change initiatives included a training plan and a coaching plan which detailed how, frequency, and methods to transfer knowledge and sustain the change. Training and coaching is a holistic set of tools to support all levels of employees through a change and to maintain the change.

P1 explained that sometimes external experts were involved in the coaching process but employees could assist with coaching other employees. According to P1, "sometimes a batch of employees received the initial training and then an iterative process allowed the first set of trained employees to become ambassadors for the planned change". P2 emphasized that "for a successful change initiative, leaders must include coaching and mentoring so that trained employees perform differently."

The business leaders encouraged training on every change initiative so that all employees can have structured guidance and information. One business leader showed a user guide on a customer information system that was implemented and the training register of the staff members who participated in the training sessions. Another business leader provided a graphical step-by-step instruction of the process flow that changed in a manufacturing plant. P2 asserted that “we facilitated hands-on training so that all employees became familiar with the change prior to full implementation”. P4 explained that the employees were “assured that no suggestion was insignificant.” P2 explained that “the employees knew that they could make mistakes, the coaching and mentoring from leaders and from select employees encouraged the transformation.”

The study participants emphasized that coaching supported by training and mentoring conducted prior to, during, and after the implementation helped with building a smooth transition. P2 explained that “training does not work when employees are not sufficiently aware of the change initiative.” However, P3 indicated that leaders must do a constant evaluation of the implementations and recognize when there was a need for additional training.” P3 explained that feedback from employees was a useful indicator of the level of preparation and acceptance of the new processes. According to P3,

> Leaders of the change must continue to gauge the implementation process and determine whether the management and employees require additional training and coaching from the change leaders. The fact is, in executing change, there are critical change elements that must integrate into daily organizational practices.

P3 recommended that a committee of persons could provide the coaching and mentoring of staff. The committee could comprise employees and persons external to the organization. P3 further explained that employees who were new converts and accepted the change could be used as ambassadors of the change. Selected employees and external persons can provide coaching and mentorship; not just the leaders of the organization.

Interestingly, P2 offered that the business leaders also benefitted from training and mentoring on how to implement change. P2 referenced several philosophies on change management, (such as Lewin's theory of change and Prosci Levers of Change) and books on leadership (such as Jim Collins' Good to Great) that helped to guide practical experience in implementing change. Leaders needed coaching, training, and mentoring. P4 advised that when "leaders were trained to execute change, the leaders were better able to provide the guidance, motivation, and expression of belonging" the employees needed.

The face-to-face semistructured interviews and documents received from the business leaders contained coaching plans, training plans, training material, user guides containing graphical step-by-step instructions, and e-mails provided the data for methodical triangulation. P4 provided a training manual that had significant changes suggested by employees. The edits included a revised process flow that eliminated some duplicated steps in an approval process. The leaders explained that the strategy to provide continuous coaching, and when supplemented with training and mentoring on the change, boosted the success of the change initiative. My study participants converged on the need for coaching. While the business leaders used coaching as a strategy to implement change initiatives, the business leaders recommended training and mentorship for leaders who were implementing and developing change. All participants reflected that continuous training was the best option to introduce, teach, and reaffirm the change for all employees, leaders should receive coaching and mentorship to build capacities to lead change to remain operable beyond 5 years.

Theme 3: Enhancing Employee Engagement

The business leaders in my study indicated that engaging and receiving feedback from all employees affected by the change was significant when developing and managing a change initiative. Two of the business leaders in the study cautioned that while employee engagement was an essential tactic, the leader must decide when to roll out the change. P2 used an analogy to explain engagement throughout the change process, "the bus must leave the station at some point. It is good to have as many people on the bus as possible before the journey begins but recognize that not all will join at the same time."

All participants agreed that the change initiatives had a better chance of success when the leaders identified, involved, and engaged the users of the change process or system. P1 explained that

> if the staff is not engaged then they may presume that the change was thrown at them. Business leaders need to remember that employees are humans and humans need to feel and know there is belonging, safety, and appreciation. Employees need to feel belongingness to the organization; employees need to feel safe; employees need to know that they matter to the organization. Therefore, include

> employees in the change initiatives and give due consideration to employees' input. This does not mean every suggestion is accepted. However, every suggestion was considered.

P1 explained that a specific strategy was to include executive management, mid-level management, including direct supervisors, and line staff on the implementation committee. According to P1, the direct involvement of the cross-functional and multi-level team was successful as the "management and staff were immersed in making the change possible. The close interaction improved trust, improved communication, and created a no-cost method to relationship building". P2 explained that "as a leader, my job was to persuade employees to accept the change. But how can they accept without trust? So, I always get the staff involved."

The business leaders confirmed that involving employees in decision making about the change initiatives and promoted awareness and acceptance of the change initiative. P3 explained that

> we got people involved in a lot of things going on, we shared the project plan, the benefits to the company, the benefits to the customers, and the projected financial impact of the change. We gave people opportunities to provide feedback as we dedicated an email address to the change initiative and we had specific staff meetings to deal with optics and concerns about the change.

P4 shared that

> we tried to get involvement from the employees, not just the leaders. We invited the employees to the discussion because we wanted to hear the criticism,

> concerns, and solutions, form the employees. We knew that employees would congregate and talk by themselves but we believed that if we nurtured the conversations, management, employees, and customers could benefit. Ultimately, we engaged and engaged continuously and the result was that the change initiative was successful.

Additionally, P3 stated that “when employees are a part of the process, part of the decision to make the change, part of the planning to implement, part of the execution, part of the strategy, then persons inadvertently became owners of the change as they are more engaged.”

P4 explained that after formally introducing the change initiative in a staff meeting, one strategy was to create a poster to encourage employees with a desire to participate and help with the change to volunteer their expertise by attending a brainstorming meeting the following week. P3 advised that subsequently, “we created other posters created and placed at strategic locations in the organization, such as in the lunchroom, to provide updated information of the change.”

P2 and P4 advised that leaders must strategize for disengaged employees. P2 referred to philosophy from the book “Good to Great” and explained that “a great vision without great people was irrelevant. According to P2 and P4, “employees who consistently opposed the change after a consistent series of training and engagement were separated from the organization”. P2 cautioned that “leaders must not violate labor laws but employees who decided not to be a part of the change were separated from the organization.” P2, P3, and P4 explained that they used employee exit strategies such as redeployment to other organizations within the group of companies or terminated the employees who were not in sync with the change. Leaders must be aware of and exercise the options available to ensure the right persons remained with the organization. The participants agreed that being a part of the decision-making process caused more employees to become more engaged.

The methodical triangulation included company documentation, including pictures, of employee engagement activities conducted during the change process. A review of the study participants' website indicated statements such as "we value our employees." One website had an employee value proposition, "we value our employees and build our brand on the relationships with our employees." One study participant showed pictures of line staff working together to make posters to promote the change initiative. One study participant provided samples of staff meeting agendas, text messages, and emails sent to employees to introduce and sustain the change. The business leaders coalesced on the strategy and advised that when the employees understood the change, the process to manage the change initiative became easier.

Theme 4: Strengthening Organizational Culture

The participants pinpointed that the culture of the organization impacted the change initiatives. An outline of the vision of the organization interlinked with the mission, values, and objectives of the planned change helps employees understand the needs and purpose of the change. P1 explained that "the link between the change and the strategic direction of the organization was an effective strategy used to help employees interpret change in an accurate context." P2 explained that "when employees shared a clear understanding of the mission and values, the strategy provided clarity on how the organization would change.” P3 explained that during the change initiative,

> an understanding of the mission and values of the organization was crucial to being supportive of organizational change. Explanations of the change in the context of the overall mission of the organization were useful in helping the employees to interpret change and process the dynamics of the new culture. It is important for employees to understand.

P4 advised that

> business leaders implementing change must recognize that a clear outline of the organizational mission and values can have positive effects on promoting organizational change. However, business leaders must exercise caution because the failure to align organizational policies and operations with the stated mission and values can engender change resistance.

Change is not an immediate outcome. There is value in the conclusions of this study for business leaders to use these strategies to develop and manage successful change initiatives. The four emergent themes from the body of data related to improving communication, providing coaching, enhancing employee engagement, and strengthening the organizational culture. Lewin’s theory of change could assist leaders with the steps to use to develop and manage change initiatives.

Findings Related to Conceptual Framework

Employees are concerned about change initiatives in organizations. The strategies that the business leaders used were in alignment with the conceptual framework and supported by the literature review that to mitigate the risk of resistance leaders should value employees, share the big picture, align the vision of the organization with the change, and explain the impact that the change could have on jobs (Lewin 1947; Parsells, 2017). Communication as a critical strategy aligns with Lewin's theory of change. Lewin (1947) and confirmed by Obakpolo (2015) expressed that leaders must maintain clarity on the goals, objectives, and progress of the implementation of the change initiatives. The leaders demonstrated that they shared the goals with employees via various mediums such as emails, newsletters, posters, telephone calls, and face-to-face meetings. The theme of effective communication was consistent with the findings of Obakpolo (2015) that internal communication was a strategy to build and nurture employee relations and develop trust between the employees and the management. However, leaders must provide timely and reliable information to contribute to employee motivation and employee involvement, especially during the process of implementing change initiatives.

All participants indicated that coaching employees about the new status quo provided opportunities for employees to accept the change. The ease of adapting to change resulted in the higher success of the change initiative. Coaching leaders is a strategy that aligned with the conceptual framework. Kewin (1947) advocated that change occurred through a process. Kumah et al. (2016) explained that change occurred to create the ideal standard of an organization. Additionally, training and mentoring provided structured information to employees and the training manuals were used to support transfer of knowledge. User manuals and process flow charts detailed information on the new way of doing business but also afforded an opportunity for constructive feedback. Lewin's three-step model of change stipulated that change occurred through the processes of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Lewin, 1951). Not only employees resisted change; some leaders may resist change (Dwyer, 2019). Lawrence, Ruppel, and Tworoger (2014) found leaders needed additional training and support to execute change initiatives. Lawrence et al. (2014) conducted a qualitative longitudinal study that included an assessment of questionnaire responses from high-level leaders in a hospital. The findings from Lawrence et al. (2014) indicated that leaders who received training were motivated and committed to the change. The business leaders indicated that coaching was crucial for all levels of employees to understand the change and for change to embed in the organization.

Employee involvement was an active engagement strategy. The strategies used by the study participants aligned with studies from Kaliannan and Adjovu (2015) and Dickens (2015) that employees' engagement and willingness to support change improved when there was a high level of employee involvement in decisions. The encouragement of creative thought from all levels of the organization cultivates a positive perception bias towards the change (Rubin & Abramson, 2018). The business leaders explained that they did not only rely on those persons at the top of the organization but engaged all employees and provided opportunities for employees to contribute.

All my study participants explained that engaged employees were more excited about the change. Engaged employees remain committed to the organization in times of growth, as well as during downturns and challenging times (Lee, Daughtery, Eskierka, & Hamelin, 2018). The relationship between emotions and the transition can improve leadership during times of transition and can provide opportunities for less resistance, quicker engagement, and higher commitment (Lawrence et. al. 2014). Allam (2017) found that disengaged employees were likely to contravene the rules of the organization, unexcited about the change, less excited to learn, contributed to higher turnover rates, and displayed no difficulty with sabotaging the change initiatives. The strategy to enhance employee engagement confirmed Burnes (2015) and Shimoni (2017) that leaders must ultimately terminate employees who are not in sync with the new paradigm.

Methodical triangulation of the findings from the interviews, company records on change initiatives, and reviews of company websites aligned with the planned change, the vision, and mission of the organization and confirmed the explanation of some of the complexities and nuances of the change initiative. This confirmed that an alignment of the change initiative with the vision, mission, and strategic direction of the organization was a successful strategy in developing and managing change initiatives. The business leaders indicated that when employees can align or perceive the change in relation to the mission and values of the organization, the change process was smoother.

All the participants reported that an understanding of the mission and values of the organization was crucial to being supportive of organizational change. The literature review provided that organizational change often brings uncertainty. The business leaders' strategies aligned with research from Parsells (2017) that when leaders provided clarity of direction and explained the purpose of the change initiative, resistance was minimized. The alignment of the planned change initiative with the mission of the organization calibrates with research from Williamsson et al. (2016) that leaders and employees must work together to embed the new culture of the organization.

The business leaders explained that they ensured support from management and employees through active communication. These steps were synonymous with the first stage in Lewin's model, freezing. During the second stage, change, the business leaders implemented the change, communicated often with employees, listened to employees, empowered the leadership team and the employees through training, and actively engaged employees about the change initiatives. The second stage is the introduction of the new change initiative (Lewin, 1947). In the third phase, refreezing occurs after the change implementation and the change becomes part of the organization's culture. Refreezing is necessary to reinforce and maintain the new change and ensure that individuals did not revert to the old process (Lewin, 1947). The alignment of the planned change initiative with the mission of the organization calibrates with the research from Lewin (1947) and Williamsson et al. (2016) that leaders should embed the change initiative in the culture of the organization.

Application to Professional Practice

I presented the findings from this study as effective strategies that successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives. This study may be beneficial to other business leaders who seek to successfully implement a change initiative within their organization. Boudrias et al. (2016) stated that when leaders identified what makes some leaders' strategies successful, the lessons learned could assist other business leaders to create their own strategies. The conceptual framework and the literature review in this study link the findings from this study on the strategies that successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives. Business leaders and other professionals can use the findings from the study to promote business continuity by developing and managing successful strategies in change initiatives.

The study participants strongly recommended that leaders strive to improve communication about the change initiative. The communication should begin with the reason to implement the change and should align with the mission and vision of the organization. Staff meetings, divisional meetings, one-on-one discussions were some of the face-to-face tactics that the study participants used. Other forms of communication that the study participants used were emails, text messages, notices, and posters to deliver the information to employees to allay fears and obtain buy-in for the change initiatives. Business leaders could use the findings from this study to design a communication plan when developing and managing change initiatives.

Coaching leaders is important in managing the challenges of change brought about by globalization. The participants ensured that leaders received coaching and all employees participated in training programs on the new initiative. Training continued throughout the change process and continued after the change implementation to conduct the ongoing assessment for sustainability. Training equips both leaders and employees with the skills, knowledge, abilities, and understanding required to function effectively and for the organization to operate efficiently. From the findings of the study, coaching supplemented with training and mentorship played a vital role in organizational success. From the participants' account, coaching blended with training and mentoring employees were strategies used to boost performance and ultimately placed the organization in a position to remain competitive and achieve sustainability. The participants encouraged coaching, training, and mentorship for the leaders and employees.

The final study results were that the business leaders accredited their success in developing and managing change initiatives to enhancing employee engagement and relationship building. The study participants reported that when leaders engaged employees, the employees were less agitated to resist the change. The leaders formed committees that included executive management, mid-level management, direct supervisors, and line staff working on the implementation. Both staff and management worked together to create the communication messages to staff; one leader reported that a team of employees and management created a company jingle on the change. The study participants were willing to train, coach, and mentor staff. However, the study participants separated employees from the organization if after repeated attempts of engagement, the staff member was not the right fit for the organization after the change.

The study participants pinpointed strengthening the organizational culture as a powerful strategy to achieve success when developing and managing change initiatives. The study participants reiterated the mission and vision of the organization in discussions, training, and engagement sessions with the employees. The success of the new change initiative hinged on the new culture embedded in the organization. The leaders ensured that the policies and procedures of the organization aligned with the culture of the organization. Other business leaders could implement these strategies to bolster the success of change initiatives to remain operable.

Implications for Social Change

Understanding the strategies that successful business leaders used to sustain business continuity is important. Preserving businesses could help individuals, communities, and countries to improve national growth, boost prosperity, improve the standard of living, increase employment, and better living conditions for members of the community. On an individual basis, business leaders engage in change to meet global demands could create more career development and career paths for employees.

When change is successful, businesses remain operable, and the business leaders enhance job security, maintain, or increase profitability. Business leaders who successfully implement change initiatives can reduce costs and become more competitive in the marketplace (Van den Heuvel et al., 2016). Businesses that remain operable could also improve the level of employment within a community. As such, the business could contribute more to communities and become more involved in the community. A business that remains operable pays taxes and maintains the ability to embrace corporate social responsibilities.

Recommendations for Action

Current and future business leaders may consider recommendations based on this research to assist with developing and managing the implementation of change initiatives. My recommendations are for the government sector, the private sector, employees, and community members. My specific recommendations for current and future business leaders are (a) improve communication, (b) provide coaching, (c) enhance employee engagement, and (d) strengthen organizational culture to develop and manage successful change initiatives. Business leaders need to assess the global environment and determine the type of change needed.

The first recommendation is that business leaders communicate the intent and value of the change initiative effectively. Communication needs to trickle down and flow up. When the communication goes downward, the leaders must be clear in communicating the value of the change and upward flow to allow employees to actively participate in the change. Participants believed that successful change initiatives had effective communication about change initiatives.

The second recommendation from this research is for leaders to access coaching from leaders who were successful in developing and managing change initiatives. Leaders who are ill-equipped with successful strategies should obtain coaching combined with training and mentoring to build the success of change initiatives. Business leaders must develop and facilitate proper training about the change initiative, coach, and mentor employees before, during, and after the change to ensure sustainability. Employees should be in training programs prior to implementation to ensure that employees know and understand expectations. Training conducted during the implementation stage conveys and builds the knowledge, skills, and techniques needed for the change. Training programs conducted after implementation reinforce, maintain, and promote evaluation of the change to ensure sustainability of change. Business leaders in this study recommended that leaders receive training about change management, coaching, and mentoring. Participants in this study separated persons from the organizations who were not the right fit for the success of the change initiative.

The third recommendation from this research is for business leaders to actively involve and engage employees in the change initiative. Business leaders need to provide opportunities for employees to provide feedback in developing and implementing a change initiative. Business leaders need to continuously engage employees and provide updates on the change initiative plan. Business leaders should seek employee involvement to determine whether a change should occur and then enable employees to assist the implementation of the change occurs.

Fourth, business leaders need to strengthen the organizational culture to ensure the change initiative is successful. Change initiatives impact organizational culture. Leaders should ensure that the change is sustainable. Therefore, leaders must embed the change in culture. The business leaders in this study demonstrated that a new paradigm of communicating, training, mentoring, coaching, and employee engagement set the tone for a new culture in the organization.

By applying these recommended strategies, more business leaders may use successful strategies and effective practices to implement change initiatives. Leaders can expand their knowledge and improve their ability to implement change by attending training on implementing change. Business leaders can use the findings from this study to help reduce the failure rate of change initiatives. I will disseminate the findings of this study to business leaders, researchers, other professionals, and organizations through (a) academic research journals, (b) business journals, and (c) through professional conferences, written materials, and training sessions.

Recommendations for Further Research

I used a qualitative multiple case study to explore the strategies that successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. The location for this study was Jamaica. Future researchers can explore a larger population in other countries to explore whether other jurisdictions have the same change strategies to improve the sustainability of businesses. I propose four recommendations for future research.

My first recommendation is that future researchers cover a more expansive geographical location. Marshall and Rossman (2016) urged researchers to include a wide range of participants to avoid narrow population analysis. Researchers could conduct a similar study in another geographical area to explore if the findings from this current study can be generalized to other geographical areas. Business leaders in other geographical areas could use these strategies to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. Second, researchers interested in advancing this study could consider including other industry leaders to explore the communication, training, coaching, mentoring, and employee engagement strategies that led to successful change initiatives.

Third, future researchers could accommodate views from a broader spectrum of participants including employees, to explore the strategies that make change initiatives successful.

Fourth, future researchers could explore strategies successful business leaders use when the workforce is predominantly millennials or include multigenerational employees. Exploring information from interviewing actual generational cohorts might uncover new strategies that business leaders can use to become more successful when developing and managing new change initiatives.

Reflection

My journal towards a terminal degree was rewarding and fulfilling. My role in this qualitative single case study was to gather data without bias. I began the study with earnest anticipation that well-rounded responses from accomplished business leaders would emerge. I am confident that the goal was achieved. I benefitted from the guidance of my research committee at Walden University who worked tirelessly to ensure that the study was about an actual business problem, the research question was targeted, and the design of the study had enough depth to ascertain meaningful findings. While the reviews were lengthy, the academic rigor remains valuable. During the data collection phase, I met participants with diverse experiences who were willing to share so that other business leaders could benefit. This study captures data from four astute business professionals who together have more than 50 years’ experience and countless success with change initiatives. While the business leaders were from different industries they selflessly contributed to a common goal, business viability. I am privileged to have walked this journey.

As a professional, I am proud of my academic achievement and the opportunity to extend the body of knowledge on successful change management strategies. My doctoral study emanated from a personal need to inspire and lead successful change initiatives. I remain committed to intertwining change and success. In a personal way, I believe that the strength of a leader is the ability to set the foundation for others to grow. I am proud to be able to begin a journey that can help others to grow, emulate, or build on.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies successful business leaders used to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable. Lewin's theory of change was the conceptual framework I used in the study. I used the research method and design to establish the research scope and linked the data collection and analysis activities. I interviewed four business leaders from four different organizations with offices in Jamaica. In addition to interviews, I collected data from archival documents and internet websites and triangulated the data to corroborate the evidence obtained from the different sources. The data analysis revealed four themes (a) improving communication, (b) providing coaching, (c) enhancing engagement, and (d) strengthening building organizational culture.

The findings were that the business leaders used a multiplicity of innovative and time-tested strategies to develop and manage successful change initiatives. Business leaders should integrate various strategies to successfully develop, implement, and manage change initiatives. Some change initiatives are successful. The findings from this study may provide leaders with strategies to develop and implement change successfully to remain operable beyond 5 years.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol	
What will you do	**What will you say - Script**
• Introduce the interview and set the stage	My name is Lorice Edwards Brown. I appreciate you taking time out of your schedule to participate in this research project. I am studying strategies business leaders use to develop and manage change initiatives. My central research question that will drive this study is: What strategies do Jamaican business leaders use to develop and manage successful change initiatives to remain operable?
• Give the participant an opportunity to introduce themselves	**Demographic Questions:** • What is your age group? • Where were you born? • What is your highest level of education? • How long in the current organization? • How many years of experience as a business leader? There are 7 questions that I will ask you. Just to reiterate, you have consented to be a part of this research project by signing the informed consent form I sent you previously and agreeing to be interviewed. Please remember that your participation in this project is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Do you have any questions about the informed consent form that I previously sent to you or the informed consent process?

• Listen for nonverbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth responses	I will ask you 7 questions and will audio record this interview as well as take notes. Your participation along with this interview is a private matter, and I will keep these proceedings confidential. Do you have any questions or concerns about the confidentiality of your participation? Do you have any questions or concerns about anything that I have discussed with you thus far? 1. What are the strategies that you use to develop and manage change initiatives to remain operable? 2. What strategies did you use to ensure that the change initiative was successful after implementation to remain operable? 3. What strategies did you use to involve staff in the development and implementation of the change initiatives to remain operable? 4. What strategies did you use to communicate the developed change initiatives to mitigate resistance? 5. What were the strategies used to assess the effectiveness of the change initiatives during the change? 6. What strategies did you use to manage the barriers, if any, during the implementation of change initiatives to remain operable? 7. What additional strategies regarding the implementation of change initiatives would you like to share?
Wrap up interview thanking participant.	This concludes our interview. Thank you

	for participating in my research study. I appreciate the time you have taken to help me complete my research towards achieving a Doctor of Business Administration degree.
Arrange follow-up member checking process using either phone or email.	I will transcribe this interview and provide a summary my interpretation of the most prominent concepts from your interview to you via email within three business days from today. Please review the information to ensure that I have captured the essence of your responses. I will contact you either through a follow-up telephone call or email for a follow up interview to obtain your feedback to ensure that you agree with my interpretations or provide clarification.
• Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage • Share a copy of the interpretation for the three prominent concepts from the interview by email. Follow up conversation using phone or email format. Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found— note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval. Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, is there anything that you would like to add?	Today, I will share a succinct synthesis of your response to each question. Please provide feedback regarding the accuracy of the synthesis. 1. Concept 1: Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation - perhaps one paragraph or as needed 2. Concept 2: Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation - perhaps one paragraph or as needed 3. Concept 3: Question and succinct synthesis of the interpretation - perhaps one paragraph or as needed