MANAGING PROJECTS FOR MORE EFFICIENCY IN THE HEALTHCARE AND PAYMENT INDUSTRY: DETERMINATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGERS

by

Dale I. Troutman

_______________________

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

_______________________

Liberty University, School of Business

August 2019
Abstract

The drive to reduce healthcare costs while maintaining or improving patient care quality is being pushed on medical care providers and healthcare payment organizations. Many of these organizations do not currently have the necessary expertise or processes needed to successfully implement the required changes to reduce costs while maintaining quality. Project management is a function that can be used to deliver projects to reduce costs in these healthcare related organizations. Knowledge of the key characteristics and skills of successful project managers can be used by managers of project managers and human resources individuals that hire project managers in their selection process and can also help project management practitioners to understand areas of focus in their continuous development on factors that lead to successful projects. Project success is defined as not only meeting the triple constraint of time, cost, and scope but delivering quality results that result in client and stakeholder satisfaction and happiness. Key competencies of project managers include leadership, management, organization, soft skills, emotional intelligence, technical skills, and product skills that are defined during this study.

Key words: Project manager competencies, project success, project management skills, project management characteristics, healthcare project management
MANAGING PROJECTS FOR MORE EFFICIENCY IN THE HEALTHCARE AND PAYMENT INDUSTRY: DETERMINATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGERS

by

Dale I. Troutman

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University, School of Business

August 2019

Dr. Edward Moore – Dissertation Chair

Dr. David Duby – Dissertation Committee Member

Dr. Edward Moore – DBA Director

Dr. Dave Brat – Dean of Business School
Dedication

I dedicate this work to my wife, Aimee Troutman, my best friend, and a constant supporter and encourager. I thank you for your prayers and sacrifice of time and share the completion of this effort with you. I also dedicate completion of this work to my daughters, Kaitlin and Katherine Troutman who have been encouraging, while exhibiting their own strong work ethic to excel in their studies to gain knowledge and to expand their horizons for success. I look forward to seeing how the Lord will use all of us to carry out his work through our lives.
Acknowledgments

In addition to my immediate family and constant support of Aimee, Kaitlin, and Katherine, I want to thank other family and friends that provided prayer support and encouragement throughout this process. I am also thankful and want to remember and honor my mother, Merle Troutman, who provided encouragement through my early years and instilled in me the value of obtaining education and pursuing excellence. To my father, Vance Troutman, I am thankful for him instilling in me a strong work effort. To my in-laws, Norma and Matthew Dunn, I am thankful for the encouragement and prayer support and being like a second set of parents to me as I walked through this journey.

I also thank Dr. Gene Sullivan for his guidance and encouragement at the beginning of this pursuit and for setting the direction for the coursework and dissertation process and for Dr. Edward Moore for the ongoing guidance and support during this journey as my Dissertation Chair. I also acknowledge the sharing of knowledge and encouragement from my Cohort 3 colleagues that worked together as we supported each other throughout the coursework and a special thanks to Carol Davis for the many Wednesday night conversations of encouragement and perseverance and for lifting me up in prayer as we made the project management cognate journey together.
# Table of Contents

List of Figures .................................................................................................................. ix  

Section 1: Foundation of the Study.................................................................................... 1  
  Background of the Problem .............................................................................................. 1  
  Problem Statement .......................................................................................................... 3  
  Purpose Statement .......................................................................................................... 4  
  Nature of the Study ......................................................................................................... 5  
    Discussion of method........................................................................................................ 5  
    Discussion of design ....................................................................................................... 6  
    Summary of the nature of the study ............................................................................... 7  

Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 8  
  RQ1 ................................................................................................................................. 8  
  RQ2 ................................................................................................................................. 8  
  RQ3 ................................................................................................................................. 8  

Conceptual Framework .................................................................................................... 8  
  Leadership theories ....................................................................................................... 9  
  Management theories .................................................................................................... 10  
  Organizational theories ................................................................................................. 11  
  Project management theories ...................................................................................... 13  
  Discussion of relationships between concepts ............................................................. 14  
  Summary of the conceptual framework ........................................................................ 14  

Definition of Terms ......................................................................................................... 15  

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations ......................................................................... 15  
  Assumptions .................................................................................................................. 16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction of gaps</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications for Biblical integration</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to field of study</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the significance of the study</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare management challenges</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escalating healthcare costs.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted costs</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing payment methods</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundled payments</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value-based reimbursement</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of project management</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early management of projects</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern project management</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of theories</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership theory</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional and transformational leadership</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task and people-oriented leadership</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational leadership</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management theory</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fayol’s management theory.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of constraints.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational theory</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor’s classical organization theory</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency theory</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management theory</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triple constraint concept</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of project management</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management body of knowledge</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management process improvement tools and application</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management governance</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager competencies and project success</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager characteristics and skills</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project manager competency development framework</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project leadership skills</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management soft skills</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management technical skills</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project success criteria</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project success measures</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and perceptions</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of personal characteristics including soft skills and emotional intelligence</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding process</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of data analysis</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability and Validity</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of reliability and validity</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition and Summary</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of the Study</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Themes/Perceptions</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of the Findings</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 1 – Project manager responsibilities</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting triple constraints of time, cost, and scope</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing role of manager, leader, planner, and communicator</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing project governance role through managing risk and change</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to research question and literature</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution from research instruments</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of theme 1</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2 - Definition of project success</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving success by meeting triple constraint factors</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving success through stakeholder, client, and team satisfaction or happiness</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship to research question and literature</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contribution from research instruments ........................................... 85

Summary of theme 2 ........................................................................ 86

Theme 3 - Use of leadership characteristics for project success ................. 86

Leading by motivation and influence .............................................. 86

Leading by example, using servant leadership, and mentoring for success
.................................................................................................... 88

Relationship to research question and literature ................................ 88

Contribution from research instruments ........................................... 89

Summary of theme 3 ........................................................................ 89

Theme 4 - Use of management skills for project success ......................... 90

Using management styles .............................................................. 90

Using organization skills for effective project management ............... 91

Relationship to research question and literature .............................. 91

Contribution from research instruments ........................................... 92

Summary of theme 4 ........................................................................ 92

Theme 5 - Use of project management skills for project success .............. 92

Providing value through project management tools ............................ 93

Providing value through project management processes .................. 93

Relationship to research question and literature .............................. 93

Contribution from research instruments ........................................... 94

Summary of theme 5 ........................................................................ 94

Theme 6 - Use of personal characteristics for project success ............... 95

Utilizing communication skills ...................................................... 95
Exhibiting emotional intelligence ................................................................. 95
Displaying soft skills .................................................................................... 96
Exhibiting character ....................................................................................... 96
Displaying strong work ethic ....................................................................... 96
Displaying attitude for success .................................................................. 97
Building teamwork ....................................................................................... 97
Relationship to research question and literature ....................................... 98
Contribution from research instruments ..................................................... 99
Summary of theme 6 ..................................................................................... 99

Theme 7 - Use of technical skills and product knowledge for project success .. 100
Utilizing technical and data analysis skills .................................................. 100
Using product and industry knowledge ....................................................... 101
Relationship to research question and literature ....................................... 101
Contribution from research instruments ..................................................... 101
Summary of theme 7 .................................................................................... 102

Theme 8 - Education and training contributing to project success ............. 102
Relationship to research question and literature ....................................... 102
Contribution from research instruments ..................................................... 103
Summary of theme 8 .................................................................................... 103

Relationship of themes/patterns to research questions .............................. 103
Summary of the findings ............................................................................. 105

Applications to Professional Practice ......................................................... 108
Recommendations for Action ..................................................................... 109
Recommendations for Further Study ................................................................. 112
Reflections .............................................................................................................. 113
Summary and Study Conclusions ....................................................................... 116
References .............................................................................................................. 119
Appendix A: Interview Questions (Project Managers) ............................................. 133
Appendix B: Interview Questions (Leaders or hirers of Project Managers) ............ 136
Appendix C: Key Word Frequency Table ............................................................... 139
List of Figures

Figure 1. Interview content word picture. ........................................................................................................76
Section 1: Foundation of the Study

The foundation of this study was based on review of the characteristics and skills of successful project managers in healthcare payment related organizations. The foundation was built based on a review of the problem, purpose, and nature of the study. Research questions were discussed along with the conceptual framework of theories applicable to the role of project managers. A definition of terms, along with assumptions, limitations, and delimitations was noted. The writer included observations of the potential reduction of gaps within the theory or literature, implications for Biblical integration of the topic, and relationship to the field of project management. This section concluded with a review of the professional and academic literature for the related topic area.

Background of the Problem

The drive to reduce healthcare costs, while maintaining or improving patient care quality, is being pushed on medical care providers from many different directions. Moriates, Mourad, Novelero, and Wachter (2014) discussed that healthcare providers, including doctors and facilities, are under additional scrutiny to reduce costs of care, while at the same time providing care with higher quality. These writers noted that while many of these organizations are attempting to make changes, very few of them currently have the expertise or processes needed to successfully implement the required changes to reduce costs while maintaining quality. In addition, the industry has many organizations involved in carrying out the delivery and payment of services with complex changes that occur on a frequent basis. Moriates et al. (2014) also noted that the lack of focus in this area has resulted in as much as $750 billion spent on healthcare, each year in the United States that does not positively impact patient care. Hillary, Justin, Bharat, and Jitendra (2016) stated that the health care industry is failing to meet the
expectations of patients and systems of health care which has led to care that is not affordable for most U.S. citizens. Martin, Hartman, Benson, Catlin, and National Health Expenditure Accounts Team (2016) shared that health care expenditures in the U.S. have recently hit $3.0 trillion annually which is almost 18% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product. A plan to reduce these costs while providing quality care needs to be determined.

A review of the literature found that there is a need to improve the administration of the health care system and that project management and leadership do not receive the proper level of focus that can make a difference. Chiocchio, Rabbat, and Lebel (2015) shared that the average healthcare industry employee does not understand formal project management processes and their time is focused on patient care rather than implementing new payment or quality methodologies. Blaskovics (2016) discussed that project success is affected by the project manager’s leadership style, project knowledge, and use of project management tools. Although there is indication of gaps in project management leadership, there does not appear to be sufficient information on how costs of high quality health care can be reduced through proper project management with planning and coordination to implement changes in the industry such as Value Based Reimbursement (VBR) or other payment integrity services. Chang, Lorenzo, and Macario (2015) discussed that to make necessary changes to the health care system to care for those that need help, competition and cost need to be realigned for value to all patients.

The characteristics and skills of successful project managers were evaluated to determine which factors lead to successful projects. This information can be used by managers of project managers and human resources individuals that hire project managers in their selection process. This information can also help project management practitioners to understand areas of focus in their continuous development on factors that lead to successful projects. The efficiencies that
can be achieved through identification of how to determine the success factors of using project managers to carry out formal project methodologies in healthcare payment and related organizations will be reviewed. Developing a better understanding of which characteristics and skills of project managers contribute to successful projects will help leaders in the health care industry work toward improvements which can lead to needed cost reductions.

**Problem Statement**

The general problem addressed was that leaders and hirers of project managers in healthcare organizations did not have sufficient understanding of the characteristics and skills required of project managers to deliver successful projects. Successful projects are those that meet the expected project scope, budget, and time requirements. Sadeghi, Mousakhani, Yazdani, and Delavari (2013) discussed that choosing project managers with the appropriate competencies to lead projects influences the level of project success that can be expected. DuBois, Hanlon, Koch, Nyatuga, and Kerr (2015) discussed that understanding leadership qualities and styles that are appropriate for a project can lead to higher success rates. Understanding the characteristics of successful project managers and the skills that help them to meet objectives can help hiring managers and project owners to select appropriate individuals for their project teams to increase their potential for project success. Baum and Swig (2017) discussed that the success of projects in medical practices and hospitals requires creating appropriate budgets and timelines, along with understanding the purpose of the project as they work to manage schedule, cost, and overall project scope.

The specific problem addressed was that leaders of healthcare payment organizations and those practitioners that carry out projects do not have sufficient understanding of the collection of characteristics and skills required of project managers that will best allow them to deliver
successful projects. Chiocchio et al. (2015) noted that healthcare organizations need project management as an essential skillset and knowledge base, but will need to train or staff the project management roles with the appropriate characteristics and skills to aid in carrying out their work more effectively.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to determine and understand the characteristics and skills of project managers, in healthcare and related organizations that could affect their ability to deliver successful projects. Understanding the human side of management of projects to meet success criteria constraints (PMI, 2017), including cost, time, and scope, and providing insight to appropriate project management characteristics and skills will add value for hiring managers and project management practitioners. Hiring managers in healthcare payment and related organizations can use this information to evaluate project managers and project managers can use the acquired knowledge to further their personal development as they successfully carry out their role. Moriates et al. (2014) discussed that hospital and physician organizations in general do not have the knowledge or processes in place to handle projects to change reimbursement methods to increase value and will need assistance to be successful. Due to the apparent limited project management expertise in the healthcare payment environment and absence of appropriate literature of best practices, this study will add specific knowledge for managers by providing them with information on the characteristics and skills of projects managers as they deliver successful projects so that they can select project managers for effective project delivery.
Nature of the Study

The choice of a research method and design was determined based on the understanding of the problem that was addressed by the study. The research questions that were asked were used by the researcher to guide towards the appropriate method and design to choose. The researcher evaluated multiple methods and designs to determine the best research method which was to undertake the qualitative case study research.

Discussion of method. The qualitative method was chosen for this study. The ability to give participants of the study a voice in the outcome of the problem resolution was best suited for the qualitative method of study. Creswell (2014) discussed that qualitative analysis is used to explore and determine the meaning of a human problem in the eyes of participants of the study. Also, an analysis of the data obtained from the project managers and leaders that were studied may not have provided valid numerical data for quantitative analysis due to possible self-reporting bias by the project management participants. Creswell (2014) noted that with the quantitative method, theories are tested by comparing the relationships across variables. To answer the question of project managers’ detailed perceptions of personal attributes leading to successful projects, the quantitative method did not appear to have the appropriate fit with the problem since this would limit the numerical data that needed to be available in quantitative analysis (Creswell, 2014). While the quantitative method was evaluated, the descriptive design was the only possible quantitative method that appeared to meet some criteria, but a comparison across multiple research designs showed that a qualitative case study had the closest fit to evaluate the stated problem. According to Stake (2010), a qualitative study is personal by seeking the views of individuals and is experiential by understanding observations of individuals. Stake also noted that the results of this method are situational with descriptions made in context
and interpretive as the researcher works to understand the thoughts and comments of participants of the study.

The mixed methods design, which includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis, was also evaluated. Creswell (2014) discussed that the mixed method combines or pulls together components of qualitative and quantitative analysis to converge the available information. Creswell (2015) noted that there needs to be a clear integration between the qualitative and quantitative parts of the research for a mixed method study to be undertaken. With the goal of the study targeting understanding key characteristics and skills of project managers, the reduction of self-reporting bias and a goal to dig deep into the thoughts and perceptions of project managers and leaders again guided the researcher towards the qualitative method. This qualitative approach allowed for determination of the characteristics and skills that were used by project managers to deliver successful projects and this was triangulated by evaluating the feedback and responses gathered by direct interview of individuals and groups of project managers and their leaders.

**Discussion of design.** The case study design was chosen due to the need to obtain knowledge contextually and with in-depth development and analysis of project management methods. According to Creswell (2015), a single or multiple case study can be used to get individuals’ thoughts and perceptions on a specific issue. The case study content were developed using a series of interview questions that were compiled based on components of PMI’s Project Manager Competency Development Framework (Project Management Institute [PMI], 2017) along with other hiring and project leadership tools. Creswell (2014) discussed that once the questions that need to be asked are determined, the specific research approach can be confirmed.
Though a series of qualitative designs were evaluated during this review, the narrative design was ruled out since it relates to exploring the life experience of an individual rather than a need to evaluate specific characteristics and skills of the project managers and leaders to be studied. Phenomenology was not chosen since it is based on a phenomenon of a one-time experience and the described shift in payment methods in the healthcare payment industry and the need to understand project manager characteristics and skills is an ongoing process. Creswell (2014) discussed that phenomenology focuses on determining the experience for multiple individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon. Since project managers being evaluated would have different levels of experience, education, and training, this did not appear to be a good fit for the single phenomenon. Ethnography was not chosen since it describes a cultural impact and was noted by Creswell (2014) as occurring in a natural setting over an extended period which did not match the proposed study. Grounded theory was also evaluated. Creswell (2014) posited that use of grounded theory requires derivation of abstract theory from the perceptions and thoughts of participants. Because this design relates to developing new theory based on data in the field, it was not considered to be a good fit since the goal of this study was to determine existing characteristics and skills that led to successful project delivery.

**Summary of the nature of the study.** The case study design that was used allowed for development of knowledge from participants that could be leveraged to resolve the problem being studied. Individual or group interviews helped the researcher to understand the thoughts and feelings of project managers in the healthcare payment environment and can add clarity to the problem being evaluated. Pathak, Jena, and Kalra (2013) discussed that qualitative research is appropriate to understand the human side of a problem and how interactions across participants affect outcomes. To understand the human side of carrying out successful projects
using appropriate characteristics and skills by project managers, the case study was developed by holding interviews of project managers and leaders in the healthcare payment related organizations.

**Research Questions**

This study explored the overarching questions of:

**RQ1.** What are the characteristics of project managers who are successful in completing projects by meeting scope, budget, and time requirements in the healthcare industry?

**RQ2.** What are the skills exhibited by project managers who are successful in completing projects by meeting scope, budget, and time requirements in the healthcare industry?

**RQ3.** How do project managers and those that hire project managers define project success in the healthcare industry?

**Conceptual Framework**

This study involved consideration of project manager characteristics and skills that could be used to deliver successful projects. This information can then be used by leaders of healthcare organizations to better understand which characteristics and skills are required of project managers to deliver successful projects. Successful projects are primarily defined as those that meet the expected project scope, budget, and time requirement (Catanio, Armstrong, & Tucker, 2013). Leadership, management, and organizational theories that have an impact on the delivery of work through project management were evaluated to discover and understand key characteristics and skills of successful project managers. This information can be used by hiring managers to fill project manager positions and can be used by project managers to understand areas of personal development that will provide them more capability to deliver projects successfully.
Key leadership, management, and organizational theories affecting management of projects were discussed to determine possible themes that were determined.

**Leadership theories.** Project managers are responsible for leading their teams to success in carrying out the objectives outlined by key stakeholders; therefore, several key leadership theories will be discussed. Burns (1978) discussed his views on leadership and separated them into transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Bass (1985) added to the work by Burns and discussed that transactional leadership is more task oriented where the leader works to make the roles and assigned tasks clear to reports so that they can meet objectives. In transactional leadership, the leader uses an appeal to be doing a good job and doing the right things to help each other towards fulfilling each other’s needs. Being able to be adaptable to changing demands and needs is a part of this style. Van Wart (2013) discussed that transactional leadership theory includes discussion of providing team members what is needed to meet their job requirements. This includes providing the appropriate guidance, tools, training, and support necessary to meet stated objectives. Alternatively, Bass (1985) discussed transformational leadership as being at a higher level where leaders and followers work in concert to achieve higher motivation levels by mutual encouragement that leads to more motivated output. Bass also discussed the similarities between transactional and transformational leadership with leaders operating between the two categories based on the situation needed. Bass (1988) added to this discussion by describing transformational leader as inspirational, charismatic, and motivating. The transformational leader builds energy and enthusiasm within a team by appealing to emotions and gaining acceptance to move the team towards stated objectives.

Bass and Avolio (1992) categorized transformational leadership as including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
Individuals that are led with this style feel more encouraged and committed to meet and exceed objectives according to the authors. The support and interaction between the leader and the followers is key in building this trust and rapport necessary for ongoing growth. Leadership styles range from passive leadership, to transactional leadership, and then to transformational leadership. Depending on the management situation at hand, leaders move between the different styles to be most effective. Van Wert (2013) discussed that transformational leadership includes leading teams through change and project managers are responsible for leading temporary endeavors called projects to meet stated goals.

An additional theory to be explored for impact to project management is Situational Leadership which relates to the understanding of current circumstances and the need to modify management style to meet the current needs of the team members at each point in a project life cycle. Hersey and Blanchard (1979) developed the theory which includes a model for different leadership participation based on the work maturity of the individuals on the team. There is a level of balance between relationship and task orientation along a life-cycle that adjusts depending on the maturity of the team. To be most effective, project managers need to be able to choose the best options and methods based on the situation and project tasks at hand, to guide the project to an efficient outcome. Application of these leadership competencies in the role of project manager were evaluated to determine impact on project success.

Management theories. In this study, scientific, classical, and later management theories were evaluated which lead to standard project management methodologies and processes. Henry Fayol is considered one of the important contributors to management theory. Fayol (1949) based management theory on the concept that businesses are systems where company goals can be met through effective use of resources including people, raw materials, money, or technological.
Fayol’s management concepts related to planning, controlling, monitoring, and executing, which relate to current project management methodologies. Kitana (2016) discussed Fayol’s 14 principles of management, which includes points relating to the task and role of project management including division of work, authority, discipline, unity of direction, order, and initiative. Kotter (2014) discussed that management is about effectively dealing with change in an organization by controlling activities and the functioning of systems. Kotter further noted key concepts of management that will be used as a lens to the function of project management including planning, organizing, staffing, budgeting, controlling, and problem solving. Kotter also posited that management skills of guiding and developing strategy can be achieved through communicating, empowering, and generating wins.

Goldratt (1988) discussed the Theory of Constraints. This concept pertains to the need to determine anything that can limit the performance of a system. Reducing any bottlenecks in a system that impact output need to be evaluated to remove those obstacles to make the system more efficient. This theory is highly relatable to project management and meeting schedule, cost, and scope requirements and to efficiently handle the critical chain or critical path items within a project. Review of literature pertaining to these concepts and strategies to meet project objectives by enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity allowed the researcher to determine their impact to project success in healthcare organizations.

Organizational theories. Fayol’s management theories are related to various forms of organizational theory. Abouzeedan and Hedner (2012) discussed that Scientific Management is viewed as a rational closed system approach. Rational systems are shown to be focused on specificity and attainment of goals, along with division of labor and formalization of required tasks that can lead to standardization of functions and efficiency. Taylor (1913) discussed
scientific management concepts which included work toward efficiencies, managing tasks, and standardization in organizations. Reducing inefficiencies and waste were also acknowledged in his work. These concepts relate to project management in the management of tasks and working toward the project objectives with goal of meeting stakeholder requirements with appropriate quality and attainment of desired scope. The work also includes basis of organizational behavior in using scientific management to increase productivity by removing barriers and providing appropriate rewards.

Fouad (2016) discussed that Classical organization theory evolved from scientific management theory and was centered on determining how to best perform tasks by matching to the best worker by task and then planning and controlling activities by monitoring and motivating team members. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) discussed Contingency Theory. This relates to the thought that organizations will need to adjust based on external environmental factors and even the structure of the organization. Depending on the degree of stability versus uncertainty, different operating structures may result in better opportunities for success. This situational management approach can relate to projects since the project environment and structure of the organization can influence how projects should be structured for success.

Systems Theory is another area of focus since it relates to organizations being composed of a group of related components and processes including the teams and goals of the organization (Boulding, 1956). Each of these parts works together to determine the output of the organization. Kitana (2016) discussed that management is viewed as a unified system with many different parts working together. From a project management perspective, this can relate to project dependencies and influences from external as well as internal sources that could cause risk to meeting project objectives. From a project standpoint, the external and internal
components that can affect the overall delivery of projects are important to understand. These factors that have been discussed will be shown to relate to current standards of project management practice and the role and competencies of the project manager who leads the effort to implement projects for organizations.

**Project management theories.** Along with the focus on organizational, management, and leadership theory, there is a focus on understanding the role of a project manager and the characteristics and skills needed to enhance project success. The concept of Triple Constraint or Iron Triangle has been a basis for determining key components of success as noted by Pollack, Helm, and Adler (2018) and is the lens through which success of projects will be evaluated. The triple constraint consists of the key project criteria of cost, time, and scope which is included in governing the success outcome of a project. The Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017) has expanded constraint criteria to include scope, costs, schedule, quality, resources, and risks, among other success criteria. Early discussion of these concepts as key to project success was noted by Gaddis (1959) that discussed working toward a goal of being on time, within budget, and conforming to performance expectations. This is modeled as a project triangle and infers that changes to any of the components can affect the other components. Though the triple constraint has been a common guide of success in the past, but the definition of scope needs to include meeting the needs of stakeholders and satisfying customers. Van Wyngaard, Pretorius, and Pretorius (2012) noted that inherent in achieving the components of the triangle is an overarching need for quality of the product or service required to meet objectives of project stakeholders. These writers discuss that the triple constraint requires that the three interdependent elements are required to be balanced to enhance project function and that along
with the three stated criteria, quality, customer satisfaction, performance, and control of risk are additional factors that relate to overall project success.

Cleland (1997) discussed Stakeholder Theory as an understanding of the objectives of the key stakeholders and understanding of requirements and the expectation of meeting specific goals during the temporary endeavor of a project. Stakeholders are those individuals or teams that are directly impacting by the delivery and outcome of a project. A key role of the project manager is in understanding stakeholder requirements and delivering on them throughout the life of a project.

**Discussion of relationships between concepts.** To gain a better understanding of the characteristics and skills of project managers that lead to successful projects, multiple theories were used to build a base of understanding. The concepts of project management in organizations can be built upon leadership theories, management theories, organizational theories, and finally project management theories. The impact of project manager competency including characteristics, skills, knowledge, training, and experience were evaluated against these project management theories to determine the effect on project success.

**Summary of the conceptual framework.** Knowledge of these business leadership and management concepts that were applicable to the role of project managers guided hiring managers and leaders of project managers in the healthcare payment industry to choose those individuals with a better chance of success delivering projects to reduce medical costs. In addition, project managers in this industry will be able to use this knowledge to focus their ongoing development in areas that will provide them opportunities for delivery of successful projects.
**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used in the fields of healthcare services, claims payment, and project management and are defined here for clarity for the reader.

*Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK):* Set of project management processes and standards coordinated by the Project Management Institute (Project Management Institute, 2017).

*Project Management Institute (PMI):* Leading not-for-profit association for the advancement of the project management profession. Goals of the organization include training project managers on standard methodologies by offering a certification program to allow individuals to achieve and maintain a high standard profession (Project Management Institute, 2017).

*Providers:* Collective term for individuals or organizations that deliver medical services which includes physicians, surgeons, hospitals, and other related entities involving in offering services to patients (Glossary, n.d.).

*Value Based Reimbursement (VBR):* Medical claim payment methodology that determines the financial payment of medical services based on the value of the service delivered rather than just on the number or extent of services provided to patients. The inherent goal in this methodology is to control costs while maintaining or improving the quality of medical care delivered (Hospital Value-Based Purchasing, n.d.).

**Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations**

To assist readers in understanding the study, assumptions were covered to include facts that were shared, but may not have been validated. Limitations were included to show potential
weaknesses of the study. Delimitations were included to provide information on the boundaries of the study and what was considered in scope for the study.

**Assumptions.** Current assumptions in this study included the following: The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, along with other stakeholders, continued to pursue changes to payment methodologies to use value-based reimbursement and other programs to add quality and efficiency in the healthcare delivery industry. In addition, healthcare providers and related organizations were willing to pursue education in project management processes and methodologies to improve their effectiveness and impact cost. Use of project management processes and tools aided in providing improvements in efficiency of delivery of healthcare services and allowed for reduction of cost. Managers and other leaders who lead or hire project managers need to understand the characteristics and skills of project managers that lead to successful projects.

**Limitations.** Known limitations of this study included the following: qualitative data gathered through use of this study were based on experience of individuals in the specific organizations or situations that were evaluated and may not have been specific reference to other related organizations. Additionally, the primary healthcare costs that were included in this research were those that could be impacted by health insurance and healthcare payment vendors. Examples of costs that were outside the scope of this review were those for new technology, malpractice insurance, and other ancillary costs.

**Delimitations.** Known delimitations of this study included the following: data gathered during the study were time bound by the time allowed for completion of each component of the dissertation process. In addition, due to the possible sensitive nature of healthcare data, personal healthcare data or personally identifiable patient data were not evaluated.
Significance of the Study

The increasing cost of healthcare has the attention of most U.S. citizens and has direct effects on politicians, employers, government healthcare agencies, insurance companies, medical providers, hospitals, and vendors in the healthcare payment industry. Government agencies including the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services are pushing new payment methodologies and other changes for cost reduction that require managing projects for change. Participants in this process and other healthcare payment and related organizations are working to reduce costs, but it appears that many do not have appropriate levels of formal project management expertise to develop a strategic plan. The goal of this study was to explore the characteristics and skills of project managers that contribute to successful projects to aid in the needed cost reductions in the healthcare industry.

Reduction of gaps. Gaps in knowledge in the healthcare delivery and payment industry related to the move to value-based reimbursement and other projects to improve efficiency were evaluated from the perspective of characteristics and skills of project managers that can lead to successful project delivery. For hiring managers, reducing this knowledge gap will allow them to select project managers with a higher probability of success and will allow project managers to understand areas of focus for personal development and continuing education and skill development that will give them the ability to improve on their success delivery of projects.

Implications for Biblical integration. The problem being addressed relates to the lack of knowledge of which skills and competencies of project managers that lead to successful projects which can be used while carrying out healthcare services to more efficiently control costs of individual citizens, companies, and government programs. Reducing costs of medical services will allow affected individuals to use their financial resources in other ways to better
their lives and their communities. God called on us to be good stewards of the resources that he has provided to us so we should work to add efficiency with known methods and tools. Luke 14:28 (NIV) includes discussion of using careful planning when a task is being completed so that appropriate resources are available. Van Duzer (2010) discussed that we are called to be good stewards to take care of God’s creation. We also are called to use our resources and individuals and as organizations efficiently. Luke 12:48 (NIV) notes that to those that are given much, much will be required. We should share the knowledge of project management and making strategic decisions with our team members as well as with our customers so that they can also be efficient. We are also called to use our gifts and talents to be creative in carrying out our responsibilities. God created us in His image, so we also can utilize creativity to better ourselves and those around us as we work towards carrying out God’s mission for us. By utilizing these Biblical views, we can add efficiency through successful project management to lower cost and enhance the potential for quality care which also betters our community one patient at a time.

Relationship to field of study. The field of study reviewed was Project Management. Project management, leadership, management, and organizational theories that were used as a basis for formal project management discussed in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMI, 2017) were utilized to determine the characteristics and skills that can be used in acquisition of project management talent and by project management practitioners to gain proper understanding to improve their delivery of successful projects. Evaluation of characteristics and skills of successful project managers including their project management knowledge to impact healthcare costs were evaluated. The ability to use this project management knowledge by leveraging appropriate characteristics and skills is core to the profession of Project Management.
Summary of the significance of the study. Hiring managers and human resources associates that are responsible for acquiring project management talent need to understand the characteristics and skills that allow a project manager to be successful. By evaluating the responses from these hiring managers, human resources associates, and project management practitioners, knowledge gained will add value in this area. Project managers themselves may be able to use the results of the study to further refine their personal development plans as they pursue additional project management skills and experience that can lead to successful delivery of projects.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This literature review was used to evaluate scholarly research and findings that related to the problems of rising healthcare costs in the United States, to the management and leadership theories that built the basis of current project management methodologies, and to understand which characteristics and skills project managers used to deliver successful projects and could be used to reduce the level of this cost problem in the healthcare industry. By discovering the appropriate characteristics and skills of successful project managers, the research included determination of whether there was knowledge gained that assisted practitioners within the healthcare payment industry to more effectively carry out their services. By evaluating the key factors that were in practice that resulted in successful completion of projects, determination of how leaders and hiring managers of project teams acquired strong leaders and built their project teams to increase their likelihood of success was studied. A review of the cost problem, other industry challenges, and proposed solutions, along with the related organization and management theories and project management concepts, and then how to deliver on solutions with effective
project management provided the background and themes that evaluated as the case study was carried out.

**Healthcare management challenges.**

*Escalating healthcare costs.* The cost of healthcare in the United States continues to rise and consumes a significant portion of the country’s gross domestic product. There are multiple factors which contribute to the rising costs as well as to the wasted tasks and inputs that use up funds that could be allocated for other purposes. Getting control of this situation is a key topic in political circles due to the significant impact on companies, individual citizens, and government agencies. Multiple authors covered the problem of high healthcare costs that continue to increase and use up a significant level of United States spending. Martin et al. (2016) discussed that healthcare spending reached nearly three trillion dollars in 2014 which continues to increase. These authors also discussed the different areas of spending that make up this total to include physicians, hospitals, other service vendors, technology, and administration. Chang et al. (2015) shared that there is a serious problem with the costs of healthcare and that healthcare providers and those implementing medical policy are under pressure to reduce costs while they provide better outcomes. These authors also noted that through accountable care is designed to provide health insurance coverage to many more people, costs to individual citizens and limitations on benefits may contribute to the ongoing problem.

Finding a way to control these ongoing healthcare costs can aid the U.S. in ongoing economic recovery efforts. Chang et al. (2015) discussed that the availability of quality health care and how it is provided are essential for the U.S. population. Warren (2011) shared insight from a physician who acknowledged that there is a balance between trying to reduce costs, while at the same time, maintaining or improving the overall quality of care delivered. By focusing too
much on cost, the care may be sacrificed. This author also discussed that an area of focus should be to reduce the amount of waste, by focusing on reducing those activities that do not provide adequate benefit. Rudmik, Wranik, and Rudisill-Michaelsen (2014) stated that with the continually increasing costs, government agencies must come up with ideas to handle the complex issue. These authors discussed that previously, medical providers were paid based on the number of services rendered which was seen to lead to more utilization of services. Teng and Longworth (2013) also discussed the rising costs and the need to work towards value by focusing personally on each patient and developing the appropriate individual plan. Chang et al. (2015) shared that competition has not resulted in costs being controlled like in other industries so changes need to happen to allow for healthcare value. These authors also stated that with the current trend, by 2023 that healthcare portion will reach almost 20% of the United States Gross Domestic Product (GCP). With the United States’ federal debt approaching 20 trillion dollars, efforts to decrease the costs of healthcare will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to affect this escalating problem. These authors discussed potential tools or strategies to improve quality and reduce errors and waste that would reduce costs.

Wasted costs. Moriates et al. (2014) discussed that approximately $750 billion is spent that does not improve care. Various participants in this delivery process included individuals, businesses, government, private insurers, and healthcare providers with each having a part in the current costs. These same authors noted that potential areas of focus in cost reduction would be provider cost, hospital cost, technology, and pharmaceuticals along with the overall behavior of patients in the system. To tackle these issues, provisions of the Affordable Care Act, which was enacted in 2010, were discussed to include various cost savings measures related to the delivery of healthcare services.
Changing payment methods. To bring the escalating costs under control, government agencies like the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, along with health insurance companies are engaging in new methods of payment. According to Delisle (2012), the high cost of healthcare and financial strain has caused a need for new ways to compensate doctors and other medical providers while providing quality care. In the past, the traditional fee for service types of payments have not resulted in cost and quality levels that are acceptable in the marketplace. Borden and Blustein (2012) shared the desire of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services continuing work to move to a value-based method for provider payment with a goal of achieving improvement in cost and care. Healthcare organizations are allocating resources to utilize the new methods in their business due to government mandates as well as for cost saving purposes.

Bundled payments. Another factor in the value-based plans is a concept of bundled payments discussed by Tsai, Joynt, Wild, Orav, and Jha (2015). With these methods, a hospital or other organization is paid a single payment which includes all care for doctors, facilities, and related care for the complete episode of care. By having a centralized responsibility for coordination, they posited that this will lead to higher quality and more efficient care. Cunningham (2014) also shared that bundled payment was a complementary strategy to aid in reducing overspending. Cunningham also stated that leaders from provider groups and executives in healthcare organizations need to take the lead in developing appropriate strategy to provide high value care while controlling cost. The change by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to focus on patient satisfaction, correct care, and ongoing necessary treatment for patients is defined as the quality that leads to high value care. In the United States, efforts are
under way by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to tackle this problem through a program of value-based reimbursement.

**Value-based reimbursement.** Government healthcare agencies, health insurers, and businesses continue to work to develop new approaches to reducing the outlay of healthcare funds. One of the approaches that has been introduced over the last five years is the concept of Value Based Reimbursement. Betancourt (2014) discussed that a transformation was coming to the United States. Developing structures to improve medical care, delivered while controlling costs, will lead to high value care. Betancourt also noted that proper approaches to meet the objectives of the new payment structures are in progress but there is still work to be done. The concept named Value Based Reimbursement, discussed in the literature, comes from this idea for improvement. Other writers including Hillary et al. (2016) shared that the trend is going towards moving as much reimbursement to the value-based concept over time as possible. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has a goal of shifting approximately seventy percent of payments towards the new value-based reimbursement methodologies by 2017 (Hospital Value-Based Purchasing, n.d.). Also, while these programs for value-based reimbursement have been developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, commercial insurers and employer’s private plans typically move in the same direction.

For these methods to work within the provider community, to allow for efficient cost reduction, Kennedy, Caselli, and Berry (2011) stated that a possible model to handle improvements includes good data sources, focus on training for service quality and values, as well as use of proper tools for control of processes, monitoring improvement. These authors also noted that since reimbursements will be affected, by the combination of quality of health and the service provided, these are areas that need to be focused on while attempting to impact cost.
Fleisher (2015) shared that value in healthcare could be impacted through project management to meet the triple aim of better care, lower costs, and improved population health. In the value model, providers are rewarded with higher reimbursement when they deliver better care with lower costs. Due to this it is important for providers and their staff to work collectively to improve in these areas. Moriates et al. (2014) discussed that providers typically lack appropriate management tools and knowledge to effectively deliver services in a way to add the most value. These authors shared a possible framework for developing a plan and creating systems to handle projects with a goal of improving the value of healthcare. Their focus was on identifying and reducing waste, but improvement in delivery of the high-value services is also an important factor. Hillary et al. (2016) noted that competition and accountability are other important factors in providing value. Hillary et al. also shared that changes to processes and tools need to be supported by appropriate technology platforms to improve outcomes and reduce cost. To evaluate how project management may be able to be used to aid in solving the cost issues in healthcare, the history of project management and current project management topics were discussed.

**History of project management.** A review of early project management that was formalized over time provided a base of knowledge of the use of projects to complete tasks. Historical references to collections of tasks being carried out to achieve a goal set the basis for project management. Project management became more prevalent after the middle 1900s and was discussed as a tool that can add to efficiency and success of organizational tasks.

**Early management of projects.** Managing tasks to meet a specific time-defined goal has been going on throughout history. Engwall (2012) referred to early endeavors in history that could be considered projects like the building of the Egyptian Pyramids and the Great Wall of
China. This author also discussed accounts of the management of military actions including creation and deliver of weapon systems and troops during and after World War II as being temporary project engagements. Management of the detailed tasks over periods of years in these examples would have needed to be handled task by task towards the goal of completion. In the mid-1900s the current formal concept of project management was further defined. Gaddis (1959) discussed a collection of management concepts including planning, controlling, and scheduling to meet objectives that have become known as project management.

Johnson, Creasy, and Fan (2015) noted that the discipline of project management has been in place since the early 1950s and that it has continued to gain attention as an important methodology and best practice. Garel (2013) discussed that project management become a more common management approach in the 1950s and 1960s and was developed using tools and methods from other areas of general management. Seymour and Hussein (2014) noted the basis of project management is based on management theories from the early 1900s from individuals like Henry Fayol. These authors noted that “Fayol’s five functions of management are: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling.” These functions match key concepts in PMI’s PMBOK. Seymour and Hussein (2014) further noted that current project management continues to put a lot of importance on utilizing Gantt charts to schedule and break down large projects into serviceable units that can be managed by the project manager.

**Modern project management.** In current times, project management has been separated as a function from general management. The profession of project management has become more formalized in the last 30 years. Garel (2013) posited that since the latter part of the 1980s, the trend towards project management becoming a key role in organizations has become more
mainstream. This is not just a trend, but this role has been acknowledged as a profession with guidelines and certification requirements more common.

Garel (2013) also noted that while project management may have been more prevalent in the areas of product development, construction, and the military previously, but has become more in vogue in service organizations and even organizations that engage in mass production. Seymour and Hussein (2014) shared that project management is about individuals working together toward a common goal with a defined plan. These authors also noted that process improvement in organizations has been guided by individuals who plan, execute, control, and monitor tasks to meet deliverables of key stakeholders. These management methods have become known as project management.

The Project Management Institute (PMI) was initiated in the United States in 1969. According to Garel (2013), the goal of PMI was to develop a common understanding of tools and techniques that could be used in the profession regardless of the type of organization that put it in place. Garel further noted that the organization produced a guide in 1987 to lead toward standardization of methodologies which was called the Product Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK). The Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017) noted that a project is a temporary endeavor towards a specific service or result which uses management knowledge, tools, and skills to meet project requirements. These methods relate to the profession of project management, which was noted in a study in materials developed by PMI (2017), as the third most valued management skill after leadership and negotiation skills, and business analysis. The continued usefulness of project management and its increased utilization was discussed by Cicmil and Hodgson (2006) due to the flexibility and versatility that can be achieved. By
organizing work, by breaking down into component tasks, the ability to plan, control, and monitor those tasks toward completion can be achieved.

**Overview of theories.** There are multiple theories that can be related to the profession and role of project management. These theories include the categories of Leadership Theory, Management Theory, Organizational Theory, and the Project Management Theory. Understanding these theories reinforces the knowledge that current project management methodologies use as a base. By establishing general leadership, management, and organizational theories and showing how these relate to the body of knowledge in project management, the skills and competencies needed to deliver success projects in the healthcare delivery and payment industry can be recommended.

**Leadership theory.** A project manager has the responsibility to lead the project team towards meeting the objectives identified by the project owner and key stakeholders. Muller, Geraldi, and Turner (2012) discussed their study where they were working to match the characteristics of projects and the factors that led to the success level of the related projects. Muller et al. found that the leadership ability of the project manager has an impact on the ability to meet project objectives. When the function of a project is related to strategic outcomes for an organization, the need for this leadership quality is evident. Muller et al. (2012) theorized that identification of appropriate leadership skills would assist organizational leaders to match up the appropriate personnel to projects based on the type and complexity of the projects. Tabassi et al. (2016) posited that increased productivity and effectiveness in delivery of projects can be achieved through attention to the leadership style of the project manager, including their intellectual and managerial competences, and how the project manager leads assigned projects. Tabassi et al. also noted that “dealing with rapid, complex, and often discontinuous change
requires effective leadership” (p. 342). Multiple leadership styles are discussed, which may influence the project manager in carrying out their responsibilities.

**Transactional and transformational leadership.** Transactional leaders work to achieve buy-in from their teams by focusing on meeting the needs of the individuals and teams. These leaders incite commitment of subordinates and peers through the feeling of participation and importance. Van Wart (2013) discussed that transactional leadership theory includes discussion of providing team members what is needed to meet their job requirements. This includes providing the appropriate guidance, tools, training, and support necessary to meet stated objectives. Alternatively, Bass (1985) discussed transformational leadership as being at a higher level where leaders and followers work in concert to achieve higher motivation levels by mutual encouragement that leads to more motivated output. Bass also discussed the similarities between transactional and transformational leadership with leaders operating between the two categories based on the situation needed. Bass (1988) added to this discussion by describing the transformational leader as inspirational, charismatic, and motivating. Transformational leaders create the impression of competence and inspire individuals and teams with excitement towards meeting a goal or objective. According to Gulluce, Kaygin, Kafadar, and Atay (2016), leaders that value the development of individuals on their teams and who challenge their team members intellectually while seeking to model shared leadership values are seen to be transformational leaders. Gulluce et al. noted studies that revealed multiple positive outcomes by leaders that fit this category. Clarke (2010) discussed previous transformational leadership theory and resulting increased ability to motivate and stronger working relationships between followers and leaders. By handling emotions well, leaders can respond to individual’s needs more effectively. Valuing team members and working to make changes to help others grow allows for an environment of
trust and collaboration where individuals take responsibility for helping their teams meet goals and objectives. Clarke noted that performance of the organization can be improved through this shared commitment or support and ongoing learning. Deichmann and Stam (2015) shared that this two-way relationship of value exchange that is a part of transformational leadership allows a bond of mutual commitment.

**Task and people-oriented leadership.** Task orientation includes the ability to set priorities and goals, plan and organize, and analyze and evaluate information. People orientation includes the ability to influence others toward a goal or objective. Engelbert and Wallgren (2016) discussed that leaders have an orientation towards one of the styles between task and people orientation and that these styles are thought to be influenced throughout early childhood and as a person develops through their performance as a manager and leader. These orientations relate to theory about the managerial grid that was developed by Blake and Mouton (1967), where they discussed that leadership style is based on focus on a concern for people being managed versus the concern for the tasks being completed or a combination of the two. Blake and Mouton posited that individuals that could balance a focus on both orientations appeared to have the strongest propensity for success. Gallo, Tausova, and Gonos (2016) shared that managers need to understand their leadership style and how they will use that to exert power and influence to lead their teams toward success. Gallo et al. noted that the managerial grid showed the relationship between power and authority as used by a manager or leader and how this related to concern for people or production. Garg and Jain (2013) discussed the leadership grid with dimensions of concern for people versus concern for production as the variations between relationship and task orientation respectively. Determining where leaders fall on the grid between categories represented by authoritarian, team leader, impoverished, or country club can
help a manager understand how to best use the style to influence task and people outcomes. Depending on the level of each of these criteria, a manager will either be more focused on tasks and performance or will be focused on team management where the goal is to influence individuals to meet team goals and objectives. The attitude or disposition of the individual or team and the associated leaders determines the orientation of the leader. Other authors offer an opposing view that leadership is best adjusted based on the situation of the organization and participants of the team.

*Situational leadership.* This view is that there are optimal ways to handle leadership based on the situation a team finds itself in. Hersey and Blanchard (1979) shared that the most appropriate way to manage is determined based on the factors of the environment that is being led along with power bases that are in play. Hersey, Blanchard, and Natemeyer (1979) discussed that the work maturity level of the team member will determine the most appropriate leadership style to be followed. These authors listed four styles of situational leadership by task behavior as telling, selling, participating, and delegating with these having increasing responsibility of the follower through the continuum. Telling refers to having to give detailed directions of all task components to the follower since they do not have the ability to complete the work without this structure. Selling includes more communication between the leader and follower since the follower is willing to take on more, but still needs direction. Participating includes a sharing of decision making between the leader and follower with continued involvement by the leader. Delegating includes the highest follower maturity in the task processes and allows the leader to have low involvement as the follower takes responsibility for actions. Geir and Lars (2015) discussed the different leadership levels in this theory to range from directing to delegating.
depending on current situation. The follower maturity along with the work situation involved leads people to behave in certain situations which affects the style to best follow.

**Management theory.**

_Fayol’s management theory._ Management theory includes early works by Fayol (1949) with contributions to classical management theory that included subject areas of planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. These concepts continue to be used in management today and have been acknowledged as key in the body of knowledge used by most certified project managers in the U.S. Parker and Ritson (2005) noted that some scholars note that Henry Fayol’s principles of management can guide all managers with varying circumstances even into the modern era of management. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015) discussed that Fayol’s policies have been widely accepted and that his 14 principals of management have developed into many of today’s management and administrative guidelines. Mintzberg (2009) shared that after all these years since Fayol discussed his core principles, managers are still focused on fulfilling the same roles. The included principal of divisions of work which assigns workers tasks based on their specialization lines up with assignment of specific tasks in the project work plan with responsibilities assigned to those with the appropriate skill sets.

Authority is another concept which relates to the project manager being given authority within the project by the project owner based on creation of a project charter. The concept of authority provides formal guidance for the subordinate or team member to follow the chain of command in carrying out the work of the organization. Another of Fayol’s concepts which was discussed by Uzuegbu and Nnadozie is the principle of order which is an organizational control system that gives every material or work task its correct position within the organization, along with assigning the correct tasks to appropriate individuals. This relates to the work breakdown
structure (WBS) and project schedule including appropriate tasks and assignments that is a standard part of project management methodology. The ability to use communication skills and build relationships with reports and co-workers was shown to be an aid in the management process. Parker (2016) noted that Fayol built components of planning and control in the systems of thought that he relayed. The writer shared that Fayol’s process included both the operational and financial aspects for the organization which relates well to both the task orientation in project management and the management of budget and cost factors that are included in any assigned project. This writer further noted that “corporate and business planning, budgeting, cost management, management control and responsibility accounting all owe elements of their designs and practices to Fayol’s foundational ideas” (p. 63). The use of standardized methodologies to organize the work of projects as temporary endeavors with a specific purpose is common in the profession of project management.

**Theory of constraints.** A core component in project management methodology is determining the critical path towards completing the tasks and goals of a project. Goldratt (1988) discussed a theory of constraints by posting that anything that limits the performance of a system is considered a bottleneck or constraint. To meet the shortest path to a goal, planning and control activities to overcome obstacles or inefficiencies should be determined. Johnson et al. (2015) posited that value can be added to the endeavors of project managers by proper planning and monitoring to deal with anticipated constraints and the use of buffers in a plan to deal with unanticipated obstacles allows for more effective project scheduling. The authors also noted that by using the method which is referred to as critical chain methodology, planning for project schedules can become more precise and lead to better projections to meet stakeholder requirements and add value for the organization. The need to reduce occurrence of obstacles or
bottlenecks can reduce the likelihood of project failure. By incorporating the theory of constraints and evaluating these obstacles or areas of limitations these authors discussed that improvement can be achieved. Parker, Verlinden, Nussey, Ford, and Pathak (2013) discussed that the understanding of project components and the related tasks will give project leaders and team members information to manage the risks of negative events by finding the weak links in the process. To minimize the constraints found in a project these, Parker et al. discussed using a five-step process to review processes, identify any constraints and how to best overcome them, and improve capacities where needed to make reduction of the constraint the overarching target for the team. Since resources are not unlimited, constraints occur in all projects, so project managers need to be aware of signs of uncertainty and complexity to address these challenges.

**Organizational theory.**

**Taylor’s classical organization theory.** Frederick Taylor’s development of scientific management theory in the early 1900s includes concepts that continue in project management methodology today. O’Daniel, Taylor, and Ennis (1912) discussed that Taylor’s concepts included planning and controlling tasks with a goal of finding the most efficient way to handle each required task in a work effort. The notion of matching each worker to necessary tasks in the organization to find the best fit and then to supervise these workers and create motivation by use of rewards and punishment continue in some respects in current organizational environments. Kitana (2016) added discussion of other concepts of Taylor to include development of the worker through scientific education which would help to develop them to meet the needs of the organization to gain efficiencies. The writer also discussed the concept of mutual relationship between the manager and the member of the labor force to be effective through cooperation. Working together could lead to higher productivity if the needs of both
parties were being met. This discussion relates to components of current project management including getting stakeholder and team member agreement through the project charter where responsibilities and requirements are identified.

**Contingency theory.** Since the early 1950s, contingency theory has affected work in organizations. Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) discussed contingency or uncertainty and the relation to finding a best fit for an organization based on the current environment, current technology, and favorability of the current situation being addressed. The concept developed was that there is not a unique best method for managing and organizing work (Hanisch & Wald, 2012). The unique combinations of experience and skills within a project team may lead the team to execute tasks in a specific manner to be most efficient. Kitana (2016) posited that there is an interdependence of multiple factors that are in play with decisions that are made by managers. This would apply to the management of projects as well. This author discussed that managers need to be aware of difference in situations that are encountered and determine the appropriate technique to use to achieve each issue or problem that arises to maximize the effectiveness of outcomes. Project managers consider the skills and experience of their resources that make up a project team and then determine the best approach to meet stakeholder objectives and requirements.

**Project management theory.**

**Triple constraint concept.** In addition to the management theories that were reviewed, the concept of the Triple Constraint or Iron Triangle focuses on the key components that are said to be core components of managing projects to control and monitor time, cost, and scope of the project. Gaddis (1959) discussed these concepts and they continue to be valid in the field in current times. This concept was also referred to as the iron triangle or three-legged stool in the
literature. Parker, Parsons, and Isharyanto (2015) discussed that a vital role for project leaders is to manage projects according to the triple constraint of scope, schedule, and cost. Managing the resources assigned to a project has an impact on each of these factors. Van Wyngaard, Pretorius, and Pretorius (2013) stated that without the triple constraints being managed as interrelated factors, project outcomes will not match their expected strategic objectives. Van Wyngaard et al. also noted that of these three factors, one must be of primary importance for a specific project with trade-offs occurring between the remaining two components. Van Wyngaard et al. in an earlier article stated that due to the competing priorities and conflicting demands, projects are constrained along this triangle of cost, time, and scope. Van Wyngaard and associates noted that for a project to be considered successful it would need to add strategic value and meet the defined targets of the triple constraint. Catanio et al. (2013) discussed that the success of a project can be managed by how well the project manager can meet the requirements of the triple constraint to manage time, cost, and overall project scope. Maddalena (2012) shared that key objectives for the project manager are to begin and end the project efficiently using the correct resources in the most economical manner. The author also guided the discussion of need to define roles, goals, and expectations to develop a framework for monitoring and controlling the required objectives of the project.

**Stakeholder engagement.** Researchers and those individuals performing management of projects have discussed the importance of project stakeholders. Cleland (1997) identified stakeholders as key drivers of project scope and outcomes in conjunction with the project management function. Johnson et al. (2015) discussed that stakeholders are individuals that are directly impacted by the outcome of projects. Stakeholders are noted as having a relationship with the organization, can influence the tasks and direction of organizational tasks, and can act to
impact project outcomes. Johnson et al. also noted that managing of stakeholders for a project is key for the project manager to understand requirements, goals, scope of the project deliverables, and communication needs. Johnson et al. also noted that engaging with the stakeholders, to clearly understand their objectives and tolerances, will lead to better understanding of the project and will allow the project manager to control the project to not veer off track or to end up with issues that are not resolved (Johnson et al., 2015). According to the Project Management Institute (2017), a key role of project management is to achieve or exceed the needs and requirements of stakeholders and to manage competing resources to success. Eskerod, Huemann, and Ringhofer (2015) shared that while company leaders are typically considered key stakeholders, the project manager should broaden the scope to include any internal or external participants that are impacted by the project or can have an influence on project outcomes. Eskerod et al. also noted that when there are conflicts or differences of understanding between stakeholders then trade-offs may need to take place to move the project forward. The project manager’s role includes mediating between these different factors to determine direction and focus. Managing the proper engagement of stakeholders and communicating effectively are necessary to maximize project success.

**Concepts of project management.**

**Project management body of knowledge.** The Project Management Body of Knowledge developed by the Project Management Institute includes processes and methodologies for structured coordination of projects. Based on guidelines of the Project Management Institute (2017), a project is a temporary process to meet a specific objective. Project management processes include tools and methods relating to initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, controlling, and closing. By following the included structure and methodologies, the desires of
project stakeholders can be understood and carried out effectively while controlling the cost, quality, schedule, and scope of the stated project. Project resources or team members that are available to the project to meet the skill requirements and an evaluation of project risks, along with a plan to mitigate those risks is also covered in the Project Management Body of Knowledge.

In addition to the discussion of project management, the Project Management Institute (2017) also discussed program management and portfolio management. Project management includes the work on distinct projects. Program management involves managing a group of related projects where there may be benefits of evaluating the objectives and tasks of the group of projects. These related projects are said to have a common outcome or capabilities to be delivered that are collective. Portfolio management involves potentially all the projects and programs in an organization that can be grouped to achieve strategic objectives. This can include prioritization between the various components in a way that maximizes the outcome across the portfolio.

These management concepts discussed in the Project Management Body of Knowledge relate to this study since there appears to be limited project management knowledge and strategic leadership knowledge in many healthcare organizations needed to handle the problem of high cost. By utilizing this project management structure that has been outlined, the expectation is that medical cost improvement and efficiency can be achieved by physician offices, hospitals, insurance companies, payment accuracy or other healthcare payment vendors, employers, government programs, and United States citizens in general. There is an assumption that improved project management skills and usage of standard project management methodologies will provide organizations with better structure and a strategic plan to meet the cost reduction
objectives. Goals were to evaluate the current level of training about the reimbursement changes, level of use of project management tools and management and front-line employee perception of the current processes and potential areas of improvement.

**Project management process improvement tools and application.** Review of the high costs of healthcare and the apparent limited expertise in proper management functions was discussed in the literature. Several authors discussed various management related competencies that appear to be in line with the stated goals for use of project management processes and tools that are a part of the Project Management Body of Knowledge. Sa Couto (2008) shared that delivery of healthcare services “would obviously fit in the project production category, because each patient’s case presents unique problems that require tailored solutions” (p. 49).

Schepman et al. (2018) discussed that there is a need for healthcare providers to collaborate in the primary care needs of healthcare due to rising costs and a population that is growing older. Schepman et al. also discussed how project management can be used to implement bundled payments to foster collaboration and innovation. Simon and Canacari (2012) also discussed using Lean principles and tools to reduce waste and cost to make processes more efficient. Following planning and monitoring processes, using project charters, and assigning appropriate responsibilities, based on knowledge of the scope of the project, were noted as key factors in successful implementation of healthcare projects. These processes and tools again are a good match with methodologies and inputs in the Project Management Body of Knowledge model.

With the delivery of healthcare including many defined processes, procedures, and workflow, the ability to define targets, measurements, timelines, and detailed plans could utilize project management tools to aid in their effectiveness. Maddalena (2012) discussed that
experienced leaders know the usefulness in applying project management protocols in developing business plans and operational processes. Healthcare executives can “increase the effectiveness of their organization’s strategic planning processes and improve accountability by incorporating project management principles” (Maddalena, 2012, p. 81). Maddalena also discussed several standard project management methodologies and outlined how these could aid in more efficient delivery of services. These include planning, communicating, implementing, and controlling. Developing a plan and timeline, to create a framework of accountability, and ensuring the proper team member fit would aid in developing a strategic project management plan that will add to efficiency in the healthcare industry (Maddalena, 2012). Chiocchio et al. (2015) noted that healthcare organizations need project management as an essential skillset and knowledge base but will need to be trained or will need to staff the roles to aid in carrying out their work more effectively. Mintzberg (2009) discussed that managers can become better managers by participating in training and development activities that help them to learn how to better handle their existing work functions. Experience at managing the day to day tasks along with development opportunities allow for improvement in capabilities.

Per the Project Management Institute (2013) publications, their body of knowledge that has been developed, lays out the steps for managing projects to include tasks and processes related to “initiating, planning, executing, monitoring and controlling, and closing” (p. 5). Within this framework, the following constraints are managed including “scope, quality, schedule, budget, resources, and risks” (p. 6). With the previous discussion of healthcare service delivery meeting requirements of a project, the previously noted authors appear to show a fit in applying this methodology.
**Project management governance.** Many organizations implement organizational strategy efforts through implementation of projects. Sanderson (2012) discussed that the very important role that today’s project deliverables influence the plan for overall effectiveness of an organization in carrying out their mission. Project governance activities under the leadership of a project manager add value to the organization’s efforts. Michiel (2014) discussed that the practice of project governance is controlled by the internal and external factors of the organization. Project governance includes a technical level of controlling and monitoring toward meeting the strategy of an organization or team. Project managers provide oversight along with the necessary operational functions to meet the deliverables set forth by stakeholders.

Projects typically are led by a project manager that works to understand stakeholder requirements and objectives for specific project tasks. They are then assigned employee and financial resources to carry out their plans. Ahola, Ruuska, Artto, and Kujala (2014) shared that organizations have multiple projects going on simultaneously and allocating resources and providing the appropriate priorities are a key role of project managers. Governance of projects allows for monitoring and protecting the structure and needs of the organization as projects are carried out (Ahola et al.). A key component in project governance approaches is clearly understanding user needs and setting clear objectives. Once these objectives are known, the project resources can be allocated in a way that works to achieve the expected outcomes. For adequate governance and transparency, project managers or other project leaders need to clearly document the objectives and the deliverables to ensure there is an appropriate match.

Ahola et al. (2014) also discussed that project governance is a primary tool for managing the risk of a project. All projects carry some level of risk due to internal as well as outside forces. A part of the standard governance plan for a project manager is the development of a risk
plan to evaluate, monitor, and mitigate any risks that could have impact on the ability to product necessary project deliverables within the proper time, scope, cost, and the necessary quality levels. Project managers are responsible for running their projects by controlling the work of their teams through documentation, communication, and oversight. Project managers should work with executives and functional leaders to understand the desires of the stakeholders. They then develop a project charter that outlines the objectives and will enable approval and sign-off by these stakeholders to provide appropriate resources and responsibility to carry out the needs of the project. Once the project is in process as a part of the governance process, the project manager works to provide control or oversight of the project activities to ensure they are aligning with corporate mission and strategy.

Project governance has a goal of ensuring project quality and adherence to stated project owner objectives. Hjelmbrekke, Lædre, and Lohne (2014) discussed that project governance can be achieved by monitoring and ensuring quality of the work the governance body fulfills in their role for the project sponsor or owner. Effective project governance requires good documentation and communication to ensure objectives are known and adhered to by the project team. The project manager is responsible for maintaining control of the deliverables to ensure communication and completion of the required tasks to meet project objectives that were outlined by the project owner.

Proper oversight of the project by organizational leaders helps to ensure the mission and strategy are carried out in an effective manner by the project manager and team. Biesenthal and Wilden (2014) shared that use of projects in business has become a strategic effort rather than one that is just focusing on completing project tasks and finalizing a project checklist. Due to this increased strategic importance, project governance influences the overall functioning of the
organization. The ability to report on project roles and responsibilities and to enhance flexibility while remaining in the boundaries of control is a benefit of the project governance process.

**Project manager competencies and project success.**

**Project manager characteristics and skills.** Project managers are responsible for leading projects to meet stakeholder requirements to meet specific business objectives. Choosing a project leader with the appropriate characteristics and skillset is important for the success of the project. Medina and Francis (2015) discussed that they found differing opinions on which competencies were best suited for effective project managers. Some of the key characteristics of success that they identified were organizing and structuring the necessary work tasks, fostering collaboration, working well with people, communication and handling of project information, and having subject matter expertise or technical knowledge. This shows a combination of skills related to planning, organizing, controlling, communicating, leading, and understanding that can be further evaluated to further study key characteristics leading to success. The Project Management Institute (2017) described the PMI Talent Triangle related to project manager competencies to include technical project management, leadership, and strategic and business management. The technical component included knowledge, behaviors, and skills related to specific domains of the project along with any technical aspects of performing the project manager role. Leadership was noted as the skill and ability to guide, motivate, and direct a team to help an organization achieve its business goals. Strategic and business knowledge related to expertise and understanding in an organization or market that enhances performance to better deliver business outcomes. Maintaining a balance in each of these three areas contributes to a broad management ability to control the success of a project.
Project manager competency development framework. The Project Management Institute (2017) has developed a Project Manager Competency Development Framework to help guide project managers in their development to acquire the necessary competence and attributes that will aid them in their ongoing work in this role. By outlining a standard framework to evaluate the competencies of project managers, the Project Management Institute has a goal of helping organizations staff the function correctly and helps practitioners of project management to evaluate their skills. By evaluating gaps in expertise necessary to meet these standards, individuals can focus on education and experience that will help them to further advance their skills. This framework can be used to assess the primary dimensions of knowledge, performance, and personal competencies. The knowledge criteria relate to what the project manager understands about the tools and processes included in their assigned projects. The performance criteria relate to how well the project manager applies project management knowledge and processes to meet the objectives of the project. The personal criteria relate to the behaviors exhibited by the project manager in how they relate to team members and stakeholders, and what their attitudes and individual characteristics allow them to add to the project delivery process. These personal criteria are separated into categories for evaluation to include communicating, leading, managing, cognitive ability, effectiveness, and professionalism.

Organizations can use the Project Management Competency Development Framework to develop their own internal framework in their organization to include requisite technical and knowledge areas not covered under the standard framework. The Project Management Institute also has developed a corresponding certification program, along with an accredited examination process to allow practitioners to work towards obtaining the Project Management Professional (PMP) professional certification. Those individuals that are competent in the various knowledge
areas and use the tools and methodologies can increase their likelihood of success. Sadeghi et al. (2013) used criteria in the Project Manager Competency Development Framework and discussed a need to evaluate administrative, technical, and leadership skills to measure the ability to lead project teams to success.

**Project leadership skills.** The framework used by the Project Management Institute ties competencies to the 10 knowledge areas of the Project Management Body of Knowledge. These writers discussed that competency was defined as the knowledge, experience, and skills, along with personal characteristics that are useful in carrying out the role of leading projects and project teams. Using a leadership development questionnaire these authors also evaluated the competences of a group of project leaders. DuBois et al. (2015) discussed that understanding leadership qualities and styles that are appropriate for a project can lead to higher success rates. These writers noted that providing guidance and direction to a group and empowering them to achieve business results is the role of a leader and fits the role of a project manager closely. DuBois et al. also shared that since each project is a unique temporary endeavor, that having situational leadership skills allows project managers to deal with complexity and change and modify style to lead the project team based on the requirements that are placed on the team. Geoghegan and Dulewicz (2008) posited that leadership competencies were closely correlated with the success of projects that were undertaken.

Galvin, Gibbs, Sullivan, and Williams (2014) also discussed leadership styles of modern managers for evaluation of project management competences. Key attributes noted by these writers included technical background, maturity, executive relationships, and drive to complete tasks in a changing environment. Credibility, leadership, and ability to handle stress were additional strong attributes. Clarke (2010) stated that emotional intelligence impacts the project
manager’s ability to influence behavior through communication, teamwork, attentiveness, and managing conflict. Building on this area, the writers noted key competences including motivation, influence, and intuitiveness. Medina and Francis (2015) discussed additional criteria for successful project managers to include management of knowledge, good communication, team cooperation and collaboration, planning skills, and leadership. Parker and Ritson (2005) discussed the importance in personal relationships between the manager and other team members as being important for encouragement and understanding of communication. Harmony within a team can lead to better interactions and common focus on the goals of the project. Stevenson and Starkweather (2010) developed a Hiring Criteria Index to allow executives to prioritize their view of key attributes for hiring of project managers. Key competences were seen to be leadership, communication with key stakeholders and team members, verbal and written skills, and attitude and ability to handle change and ambiguity.

Project management soft skills. Other writers, including Creasy and Anantatmula (2013), shared that project outcomes can be affected by the level of a manager’s communication, innovativeness, ability to self-monitor, conflict management style, and ability to handle change. Ahsan, Ho, and Khan (2013) similarly posited that key areas of leadership skills and soft skills could be evaluated to determine a project manager’s potential for success when being hired for a position. Blaskovics (2016) shared that the relationship between a project manager’s personal characteristics and their attitude towards project management along with their leadership style were critical success factors and criteria that should be evaluated in selection and acquisition of leaders to fill this role. The writer discussed the expansion of success criteria from the classic project triangle of cost, time, and quality to the need to evaluate stakeholder satisfaction and the adherence to the strategic initiatives and plan of the organization. This conversation included
aspects of leadership that were key for project managers to include the ability to build teams, having optimism and motivational ability, and the ability to build relationships based on trust between individuals.

**Project management technical skills.** The ability to work within specific industries with a base ability to understand the technical details of a specific business or industry can allow a project manager to better navigate the complexities of project tasks and communicate more effectively with the team. Galvin et al. (2014) noted that to be effective the project manager needs to understand the technical aspects of their assigned projects with a confidence and competence for negotiations to be taken as credible.

**Project success criteria.** Understanding the characteristics of successful project managers and the competencies that help them to meet objectives can help hiring managers and project owners to select appropriate individuals for their project teams to increase their potential for project success. Sadeghi et al. (2013) discussed that choosing project managers with the appropriate competencies to lead projects influences the level of project success that can be expected. Sadeghi and associates worked to determine an appropriate competency model to evaluate those dimensions that lead to successful projects. The definition of project success was not consistent throughout the literature reviewed. It was generally shown as the ability to achieve the desired strategic changes for the product or service that is being delivered through a project. PMI (2017) defined success as achievement of project objectives which satisfies stakeholders. Wise (2017) discussed that success of projects includes understanding of whether the project was efficient and effective. Project efficiency was shown as adhering to the project plan and whether the cost, time, and scope requirements were met. Project effectiveness relates
to whether stakeholder requirements are met and if the perception of success and completion is seen within the stakeholder community.

**Project success measures.** Blaskovics (2016) shared project critical success factors that could be evaluated as appropriate for each project. These included clearly understanding the project’s strategic objective, understanding the required project scope, good communication among the project team and with stakeholders, project manager capabilities and leadership style, characteristics of the team members that impact the outcome, and ability to appropriately manage risk and change throughout the life of the project. Parker et al. (2013) also shared that to be considered successful an improved outcome meeting the stated objectives occurs by building capabilities for change for the product or service being delivered. These writers discussed that the project leader is managing change to move from one place to another on the development continuum. Geoghegan and Dulewicz (2008) discussed project success being more than meeting the triple constraint of time, cost, and scope but to include satisfaction of stakeholders, success of the product or service, and benefit to the organization. Bannerman (2008) discussed that success was based on the perceptions and desires of project owners and stakeholders. These writers discussed that determining critical success factors for each project are important the projects toward a successful outcome.

Mir and Pinnington (2014) discussed an alternate view questioning the value of project management due to the prevalence of failed projects. Some of their findings question the impact that the project manager has on the outcome of projects though they did find areas of positive relationship between the performance of the project manager and the success of the assigned projects. Mir and Pinnington added that organizations should develop a framework for project performance to work to obtain the correct skill sets and to determine key performance indicators
for project success. Working to understand the criteria that makes a difference will provide additional knowledge for leaders and managers that are using projects to achieve organizational strategy.

**Themes and perceptions.** According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), research should include analysis to find themes or patterns from the data that is collected during a study. By developing a deep understanding of the categories of information collected, details were coded to provide meaningful and useful information that emerged during the study. Coding the results into the most important events or outcomes will all themes or patterns to be better understood (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Creswell (2014) stated that data should be organized and then categorized so that themes begin to emerge. Additional themes or variations may have occurred during the study, but several areas that were identified during review of the literature and that emerged during the study were noted in the following material.

**Value of personal characteristics including soft skills and emotional intelligence.** Soft skills such as communication ability and style along with being sensitive to the needs of the team are noted as contributing to the success of project managers. Galvin et al. (2014) stated that having an awareness of the social and political needs of stakeholders and project team members allows for more positive interactions. Galvin et al. noted that the ability to handle and balance high stress levels for themselves and their teams will allow them to cope with situations that occur due to change and the amount of work that will be assigned to meet project objectives. The soft skill of emotional intelligence is specifically discussed as a contributor to success.

Emotional intelligence includes factors like being intuitive, having emotional resilience, and self-awareness. Galvin et al. (2014) discussed that the ability to communicate to team members and stakeholders and to influence and motivate these individuals allows managers to
overcome obstacles and deal with the feelings of their team. Clarke (2010) noted that emotional-centric skills and abilities have become more important in managing the collaborative environment needed in today’s project management. The ability to motivate and influence others while treating them with sensitivity, at times while dealing with conflict, are shared as key skills in dealing with teams and leading to positive outcomes. Providing empathy and emotional support to a team, rather than always just focusing on task orientation, allows a manager to handle the human side of management as they support their teams. According to Li, Gupta, Loon, and Casimir (2016), the support a leader provides has an impact on stress levels of a team and the level of satisfaction with their leaders. A manager that can control his or her own emotions and perceive the emotional cues from their teams can have an impact on work outcomes. Project managers leading matrixed teams can use this skill by understanding how the emotions impact the delivery of work and cohesiveness of the team as they motivate the team to perform in a positive manner. Li et al. (2016) also noted that leaders also can use emotional intelligence to maintain an awareness about negative emotions that could become an obstacle to the team and that empathy and understand can help to buffer negative situations.

Another emotional intelligence factor that has been discussed is self-awareness and ability to deal with adversity and change. Lloyd-Walker, French, and Crawford (2016) discussed that to remain effective, project managers understand the importance of dealing with difficult situations and being able to cope with adversity. Having significant level of self-efficacy and the ability to deal with uncertainty allows for managing and mitigating complex work situations. The ability to cope with changing objectives and challenging situations provides the project manager the ability to manage team members through changing times as requirements and deliverables are determined.
Value of technical skills. Intellectual and technical skills being utilized by project managers to lead to successful outcomes is also noted as a potential theme. Muller et al. (2012) discussed that as projects become more technical and complex, the intellectual and knowledge aspect of management is a key factor. Project managers monitor plans and actions and give direction to their teams in order to meet stakeholder objectives. Bredillet, Tywoniak, and Dwivedula (2014) asked the question of what factors make up a competent project manager. This included discussion that the successful project manager has the requisite skills to perform the role and can demonstrate and appropriate performance level. Knowledge of project management bodies of knowledge and mental tasks associated with the role along with ability to carry out the functions at necessary skill levels to lead multi-functional teams allows for positive performance. Loufrani-Fedida and Missonier (2015) discussed the needs for customer competencies, project management competencies, and technological competencies needed in balance to cover the varying needs within most projects. Technical knowledge allows a project manager to understand the detailed tasks being assigned to their teams and enables them to speak the language necessary to guide towards success.

Value of experiential learning. An additional potential theme based on review of the literature is that project management training and experiential learning may be factors that contribute to success in this role. Ramazani and Jergeas (2015) posited that with the increased role of project management within organizations the ability to obtain good project management talent and to educate managers and leaders to carry out project management will be important for organizations in a need to remain competitive. Continued skill development for project managers as they learn the aspects of the job and requirements within their organization can assist them in continual improvement and ability to meet strategic objectives of the organization.
as they work to meet stakeholder requirements. Project management related education and training should adapt to the situation and should provide appropriate resources for self-development along with organizational support (Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015). The opportunity to develop technical and interpersonal skills while gaining contextual knowledge within the organization are useful in the development of project manager competencies.

In addition to specific training, many project managers gain experience as they carry out the project management role. Savelsbergh, Havermans, and Storm (2016) discussed that much of the learning on the job in a project management role is critical in development due to complexity and specialized requirements of today’s projects. Knowledge is gaining by learning from peers and other team members as well as by working in repeated forms of projects to learn through the outcomes of previous projects. Handling problems that come up on a day to day basis within projects plays a part in this experiential learning process. Skills learned can include hard skills like project governance and tools along with soft skills of teamwork and interpersonal communication. Again, the ability to gain knowledge from actions can lead to a broadening of requisite skills and abilities.

**Management and leadership capabilities.** As noted throughout the review of literature, management and leadership skills are key competencies for a project manager to carry out a successful project. In addition to technical project management skills that have been discussed, PMI (2017) included leadership and strategic and business management in their PMI Talent Triangle as a part of the updated Project Manager Competency Development framework. The ability to lead project and functional teams where appropriate and to influence management and stakeholders as seen as critical to maximizing success within the role. Also, the ability to manage tasks, schedules, resources, and risks allows project managers to meet core requirements
within standard project management processes. The capability to guide project team members to understand stakeholder requirements and then to carry out the assigned tasks in times of change and complexity will provide an opportunity to deliver on time, within budget, and with appropriate scope.

**Project management capabilities.** It has also been shown through the research and review of multiple scholars that understanding of project management standards and guidelines can lead to consistency (Catania et al., 2013; Armstrong, 2015). The ability to use a common set of tools and processes provides for consistency that will allow for good documentation of requirements in order to deliver on the stakeholder’s needs (PMI PMCD, 2017). Use of consistent processes across teams allows for better ability to adapt as team members move from one project to the next. Formal training through the Project Management Institute (2017) or other affiliated organizations may be a way to develop an understanding of these common practices and processes for carrying out modern projects.

**Project success criteria.** It has also been shown through the research and review of multiple scholars that understanding of project management standards and guidelines can lead to consistency in delivering successful projects. Project success was generally defined as the ability to achieve the desired strategic changes for the product or service that is being delivered through a project during a project that is delivered within planned budget and schedule. PMI (2017) defined success as achievement of project objectives which satisfies stakeholders, which is project scope, and included appropriate adherence to the remaining two triple constraints of time and schedule. Blaskovics (2016) discussed success factors to include adhering to project objectives, defining scope, communicating with project stakeholders, and using appropriate
project manager capabilities and leadership styles to manage the project to successful completion.

**Summary of the literature review.** Escalating high healthcare costs are putting additional burden on the finances of United States government healthcare agencies, health insurance companies, health plans, employers, and individual citizens. All participants in this delivery system are looking for ways to reduce cost while maintaining high quality of medical care to add the highest value possible. With some perceived limitation on project management skills in these organizations, a process to discover the characteristics of successful project managers and the skillsets and methodologies they use will allow organizations to use formal project management, and the underlying management and leadership competencies that are included its development, to reduce healthcare costs while delivering high value. Gaining this knowledge and the appropriate factors for success of delivery of projects in organizations appears to be a worthwhile endeavor. By developing knowledge of success factors in the field of project management, hiring managers and human resource departments will be able to acquire and develop appropriate project management talent in order to assist in meeting strategic organizational goals. In addition, project management practitioners can use this information to determine the best approach to their own personal development as they work to meet organizational and stakeholder’s objectives while developing skills and abilities that will lead to project and personal success. The role of project manager in carrying out organizational strategy by efficient and effective management of projects has been discussed as pertinent to the complexity of project requirements. Through this study, the goal was to identify patterns and themes of project managers within the healthcare payment environments that can lead to increased success for organizations.
Transition and Summary of Section 1

Understanding the background of issues in healthcare payment organizations requiring improved management expertise to carry out cost reduction projects provides incentives to understand the field of project management and how it can be used effectively. By focusing on the background of challenges in the healthcare organizations along with project management history, the goal of this research was to understand theories of leadership, management, organizational behavior, and general project management that build a basis for characteristics and skills of project managers. The accompanying case study evaluated which specific characteristics and skills of project managers lead to delivery of successful projects.
Section 2: The Project

This section of the dissertation includes discussion of the components of the research project. The roles of the researcher and of the participants included in the study were determined based on the chosen research method and design. The population that was included in the case study interviews, along with the method for sampling, built a view for the delivery of the research project. The data collection process, which included information on the instruments used, provided a view of the data collection and data organization techniques that were engaged. The method for data analysis and the plan for how to maintain reliability and validity in the study presented a picture of soundness of the results that were collected.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to determine and understand the characteristics and skills of project managers, in healthcare payment and related organizations, that can affect their ability to deliver successful projects. Understanding the human side of management of projects to meet the triple constraint success criteria, including cost, time, and scope, and providing insight to appropriate project management characteristics and skills will add value for hiring managers and project management practitioners. Hiring managers in healthcare payment and related organizations can use this information to evaluate project managers and project managers can use the acquired knowledge to further their personal development as they successfully carry out their role. Moriates et al. (2014) discussed that hospital and physician organizations in general do not have the knowledge or processes in place to handle the emphasis on reimbursement based on value and will need assistance to be successful. Due to the apparent limited project management expertise in the healthcare payment environment and absence of appropriate literature of best practices, this study will add specific
knowledge for managers by providing them with information on the characteristics and skills of projects managers as they deliver successful projects so they can select project managers for effective project delivery.

**Role of the Researcher**

To begin the process of gathering actual case study experiential data, the researcher followed a defined process to gain approval to interview project managers and leaders or hirers of project managers from two to three organizations involved in the healthcare payment industry. A management representative from each organization was contacted with an emailed Organization Permission Request (Appendix A) to seek approval to interview employees. The researcher contacted each employee with an emailed Participant Permission Request (Appendix B) that described the study and invited them to participate in individual or group interviews to discuss their perspectives on the characteristics and skills that allowed them to be successful in meeting project objectives or managing or hiring successful project managers.

Once the appropriate participation forms were gathered and approval was received by the researcher, interviews were scheduled. The researcher led the interviews by sharing a defined listing of open-ended interview questions and took field notes to capture the views and perceptions of the interviewees. Additionally, with permission of the interviewee, the sessions were recorded and transcribed in order to capture the actual words of the participants that were used to capture the rich content and themes that emerged. Once the interviews were completed, the researcher organized and synthesized the qualitative data to develop themes that were used to provide a report on the outcome of the study. The collected data were transcribed and entered in the NVivo application by the researcher and the included analysis routines were performed to code the data for categorization and review.
The researcher in this study was a project management practitioner with over 20 years of project management experience, including over 15 years as a certified project management professional. With this experience and since the researcher has a working relationship with the selected organizations, special attention was focused on objective capture of interview data while minimizing the researcher’s own bias in this area. Creswell (2014) discussed that qualitative research is interpretive and where the researcher is affiliated with or has a relationship with participants, appropriate diligence should be taken to reduce bias and ensure the validity of the data.

According to Yin (2009), the interviewer in a case study needs to have several skills to get the most benefit from the interview. These included being able to ask good questions and understand the answers, being able to listen and capture the information shared, being flexible as information is gathered, understand the issues being addressed, and not allowing personal bias to influence the results. During the interviews conducted by the researcher, open ended questions were asked to gather information relating to the skills and characteristics of individual project managers that led to project success and were related to components of theories of management, leadership, organization, and project management in order to capture themes or descriptions that can be developed by compiling the data from participants (Creswell, 2013). In summary the researcher sought organizational approval to contact participants, contacted participants and sought their involvement in the study, captured interview responses, and then transcribed and coded the information in order to perform appropriate analysis of the emerging themes. While performing these tasks the researcher worked to treat participants ethically and the gathered information were protected.
Participants

This study of characteristics and skills of project managers was conducted in several locations of a healthcare payment organization with locations in the Southeast U.S. and in the Northeast U.S. Participants were engaged through use of a participation letter that described the intent and value of the study. To get an appropriate cross-section of responses, the study included participants from both Information Technology, Operational Support, and Project Management Office functions to provide a mix of project management practitioners, their managers, and hirers of project managers. Project managers and their leaders chose or those that hired project management talent that were solicited for this study had varying levels of project management experience, training, hiring, and years of service in this role which provided a better cross-section for more validity in the collection of project management insight related to meeting project success criteria.

As a part of the requirement for Independent Review Board (IRB) approval for the study of human subjects, the selected organizations were provided a permission letter (see Appendix A) to give approval for the researcher to include their employees in the study. Each individual participant responded to invitations for the study by using direct email, and then completed a permission letter (see Appendix B) showing they understood the details of the study and what they were asked to participate in. Stake (2010) discussed the use of the IRB process, but noted that it is the researcher’s role to protect the privacy of human subjects. To meet the requirements of the IRB process at Liberty University, the participants were required to agree to their participation with the understanding that the process protected the privacy of their responses using appropriate data collection methods and masking organization and participant names and specific responses.
Research Method and Design

The qualitative method, case study design was chosen for this research. Using this method to give participants of the study a voice in the outcome of the problem resolution is better suited for the qualitative method of study. According to Chandler, Anstey, and Ross (2015), the ability to use the actual words of the participants to develop rich content adds to the value of the study. Data were gathered to support the chosen design of case study to allow project managers and their leaders, or those that hire project managers, from a representative organization with multiple locations to provide insight on which characteristics and skills provide ability to deliver successful projects.

Discussion of method. Using the qualitative method in this research allowed experiential data to be gathered with rich content provided by the participants. Creswell (2014) discussed that qualitative analysis is used to explore and determine the meaning of a human problem in the eyes of participants of the study. Participants were asked open-ended questions to gather personal-based information from their project management experience and to shape the content in a flexible manner. Yin (1999) discussed that in health services research, the ability to be flexible and retain the possibility of discovery using the case study method can lead to more realistic results. The analysis of the data obtained from the project managers and leaders, in conversation around open-ended interview questions, supported the goal of determining known success factors. For this study, the researcher delved into thoughts of the participants that led to rich data content for evaluation. Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) discussed that obtaining detailed descriptions was important so that the reader could be informed as they decide on the transferability of the information. According to Stake (2010), a qualitative study is personal in nature by seeking the views of individuals and is experiential by understanding
observations of individuals. Stake also noted that the results of this method are situational with descriptions made in context and interpretive as the researcher works to understand the thoughts and comments of participants of the study.

The goal of this research was to gain understanding of key characteristics and skills of project managers, from the perspective of project managers and leaders, which could provide insight into enhancing the success of organizational projects. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gather participant perceptions and responses gathered by direct interview of individuals and groups of project managers and their leaders. Houghton et al. (2013) discussed that rigor in obtaining information from participants allows for credibility in the themes that emerge in the research.

**Discussion of design.** The case study design was chosen due to the need to obtain knowledge contextually and with in-depth development and analysis of project management related skills and characteristics. According to Yin (2009), a case study can be used to get individuals’ thoughts and perceptions on a specific issue. By gathering data from project managers and their leaders through individual or group interviews, insight into professional perspectives and empirical results could be analyzed to determine themes that allowed for better understanding of the research problem.

The case study design that was used allowed for development of knowledge from participants that could be leveraged to resolve the problem being studied. Bickman and Rog (2009) discussed that a case study with some differences between participants, including location, can be stronger than all participants having similar demographics and will broaden the coverage for a topic. In addition, by interviewing participants across multiple locations, the results may have a more extensive applicability to other organizations in the healthcare payment
environment. Houghton et al. (2013), noted from a healthcare related study that completeness of data gathered from multiple perspectives provides a more thorough understanding. Yin (2009) shared that by performing studies at multiple sites, the possibility of direct replication of the process will provide more benefits in the analysis that can be performed. Individual or group interviews helped the researcher to understand the thoughts and feelings of project managers in the healthcare payment environment and added clarity to the problem being evaluated. Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, and LaRossa (2015) discussed that data richness and quality are achieved when the saturation point is reached. Gathering information from participants until additional content was repetitive or was as expected allowed the researcher to gauge when data collection was complete.

Population and Sampling

The population that was used pulled from project managers, managers of project manager, or hirers of project managers in order to solicit multiple perceptions related to project management competencies. From this population, an appropriate sample was determined that allowed for saturation of collected data to ensure that the results of the study were meaningful.

Discussion of population. Data regarding characteristics and skills of project managers that lead to successful projects were found by interviewing practitioners of the project management function along with their hiring managers. For this single case study, participants from two to three locations within a representative organization were interviewed. The population was chosen from individuals within the two to three locations that currently worked as project managers during 50% or more of their work hours, managers that had project managers reporting to them, and human resources practitioners responsible for hiring project managers. Yin (2009) discussed that by evaluating multiple locations or settings the additional
experiential work will reduce concerns of uniqueness and will have more power than a single homogenous site. A cross-section of project managers with different levels of experience and training in the field, along with managers or hirers of those project managers, was included in the study to determine if there was differentiation related to the experience level in the role or the perspective of the different participant groups.

Discussion of sample. Creswell (2013) noted that choosing the appropriate sample is necessary to have appropriate opportunity to find themes and assertions toward understanding the research problem. A minimum of 20 participants made up from a minimum of 10 participants from two or more different locations or functions was included in the study. Roland (2016) stated that with a relatively similar population, samples of 12 may be reaching saturation. Roland also noted that ideally, two or more sites are preferable than one to reach saturation where results can be generalizable with a depth of understanding. Once this minimum was met, participants were added until the researcher determined a saturation point where there was a sufficient level of information and that additional interviews would not likely add material new themes or detailed data. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016) proposed that this saturation point ties to when the information is powerful based on how much information the sample holds.

Gathering of information needed to continue until the quality of the captured details were enough to provide meaningful insight and they were no longer expanding. Based on the interpretation of this gathered information, a qualitative researcher will continue to make decisions to adjust to enhance the study. Malterud et al. (2016) also noted that if the data that are gathered are dense and providing rich content, then a smaller sample may provide the necessary content.
Creswell (2014) stated that the goal is to purposefully select sites and participants that will add maximum value to gain understanding of the problem being studied. Guetterman (2015) noted that this type of sampling is iterative in nature and that the research questions being asked are limited to study of a phenomenon in a specific context. This author shared that the goal is to be able to explain the opinions of the participants to add to the rich content needed to answer the research question. Roy et al. (2015) discussed that purposeful sampling was sometimes interchanged with selective or theoretical sampling. For this study, the selective portion was based on the preliminary sample being determined based on knowledge of a cross-section of project managers with different experience levels and training. Creswell (2014) stated that purposely choosing participants and sites will allow the researcher to understand the varying perceptions and answer the related questions. Once the planned interviews were underway, the purposeful review for richness of the collected data and themes were evaluated by the researcher to determine when the saturation point was met. Roy et al. (2015) discussed that this type of sampling was appropriate due to the researcher selecting initial population based on a need for variation in demographics within the group. The researcher then continues to enhance the population for additional variation and content as theoretical themes emerge. This target of richness and quality of data leads to saturation and credibility of the process.

**Data Collection**

Data were collected by the researcher through individual and group interviews across multiple sites and functional areas within the participant organization. The responses of participants interviewed were captured by the researcher in a secure manner that protected respondent’s information in a confidential manner. Aluwihare-Samanayake (2012) noted the importance of the researcher having a shared consciousness with the participant and putting the
participants’ needs ahead of the research needs. The researcher organized the data in a way that perceptions could be synthesized and coded to develop the themes that were included in the research report.

**Instruments.** In qualitative research, the researcher is an instrument that is used to collect data from research subjects to provide insight towards solving the stated business problem. Yin (2009) noted that the researcher as the instrument needs to be flexible and adaptable during the data gathering involved in the case study. During the interviews, the interviewer captured data and listened for themes, including characteristics of leadership and management style, along with education, soft skills, and skills related to project and general management. Additional themes may have been developed depending on the responses from the interviewees and as the interviewer adapted follow-up questions to the responses of the individuals and groups that were included in the study. Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012) shared that the researcher is responsible for actively listening to the participants and using reflexive questioning to guide the collection of data and protection of desires of the interviewee. Yin (2009) noted that the researcher as the instrument is actively participating based on being knowledgeable in the topic of study and is gaining insight by understanding the theories related to the study area. The literature review completed by the researcher in the areas of leadership, management, organizational, and project management related theories served as a base of understanding for potential themes.

**Data collection techniques.** The planned interviews were semi-structured by having a list of open-ended and follow-up questions that allowed the researcher to collect data related to the study research questions. Interviews were in person at the two planned sites of the participant organization when possible. Data were collected by taking field notes, along with
audio recording the responses using a digital recorder, so that the responses could be transcribed by the interviewer at the completion of the interviews. Chandler et al. (2015) discussed that the ability to record the actual words of participants adds integrity to the data since it can be listened to repeatedly to capture accurate details of the participant’s thoughts and perceptions. If any participants that typically work remotely were not able to meet in person, video conferencing was utilized with recording of the video used for transcription purposes. The field notes, audio recordings, video recordings, and transcribed interviews were maintained on the researcher’s personal laptop. Once transcribed, the content was stored in an electronic database for coding and analysis.

A set of primary questions were developed that allowed the researcher to ask consistent questions of each participant according to their role and is included in an interview guide (see Appendix A for Project Managers and Appendix B for leaders or hirers of project management staff). In addition to the primary question, the interview guide included follow-up questions to assist the researcher in guiding conversation to capture responses with depth of content. The process included the interviewer guiding the interviewees to answer appropriate questions to gather the necessary data. The researcher, in the role of interviewer, had the flexibility to use the follow-up questions to facilitate additional communication necessary to gather the necessary level of information. Creswell (2014) discussed that the researcher has flexibility to delve into appropriate areas by asking open ended questions which result in the participant telling their story. A semi-structured interview approach allowed for consistency in initial questions and also allowed the researcher to shift the line of questioning based on the participant responses. By collecting multiple levels of information, Creswell (2014) noted that the data can be compiled and synthesized to arrive at themes or assertions that will add value to the case study report. The
researcher also needed to be adaptable to listen and interpret the information collected to probe further in specific areas where the responses were not complete.

**Data organization techniques.** Data were captured during interviews by creating handwritten field notes or electronic field notes captured by the researcher in Microsoft Word. If participants agreed to the recording of the interviews, a digital audio recorder was used to capture in person sessions and a recording of video sessions were captured directly onto the researcher’s personal laptop using the Skype video conferencing application. Recordings were then transcribed by the researcher in order to capture all content in as much detail as possible. Chandler et al. (2015) posited that honoring the actual words of the interviewees provides knowledge and meaning. In addition to the information captured directly from field notes, the researcher debriefed personal observations and perceptions of the interview into an electronic reflective journal. The captured data were then entered into the N-Vivo software application stored on the researcher’s laptop to facilitate the categorization and coding process.

**Summary of data collection.** The researcher functions as the instrument in the interview process by reflexively listening to the participants and capturing their thoughts and perceptions. By using interview questions that were open-ended, the researcher captured a depth of information based on what was important to each participant. This interview data were compiled in field notes, audio recordings, and video recordings and then transcribed for entry into an electronic database for categorization and assignment of tags by theme.

**Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis and synthesis allowed the researcher to organize and prepare the data for writing up the findings that were presented. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) discussed that analysis referred to splitting data out into understandable parts and categories. Synthesis is the
process of pulling the data back together to add understanding of how the interview results were supported by the data and how the findings related to the potential themes identified during the literature review.

**Coding process.** According to Creswell (2014), the content of data collected can be reduced by summarizing and categorizing, which is also known as coding. This process allows for simplification of the meanings of the collection of data. Coding is a way to classify responses with tags or labels that will provide additional context and meaning. Ponelis (2015) shared that the goal of analysis is comparison and pattern matching, which allow the researcher to find trends emerging through their findings. Data were categorized and managed using the NVivo tool to maintain and tag the data based on thematic codes developed by the researcher. Rossman and Rallis (2012) discussed that computer programs can be used to capture and analyze data by separating into categories, developing codes to tag the data, and then further refining to find six to eight emergent themes that can be used to answer research questions. Rubin and Rubin (2012) shared that captured data should be reduced to 20 or fewer categories, coded by theme, and then codes should be condensed to the point that five to seven rich themes emerge. As data were collected, the researcher coded initially based on the anticipated themes related to leadership, management, organizational, and project management theories and evaluated if other themes or trends emerged. Ponelis (2015) noted that data must be stored early in a structured format with tools for proper analysis and management. The themes that were identified by linking to the collected data were reviewed to determine whether the themes provided answers to the research questions related to finding key characteristics and skills that lead to successful completion of projects.
Summary of data analysis. According to Creswell (2014), case study is a methodology that includes detailed description of a setting and the included participants. With this context related to the setting, data are analyzed to determine themes, patterns, and issues and are categorized using the coding process. Analysis of themes is used to add rich description to aid in understanding. The goal of case study is to be able to transfer the knowledge that was gained through the perceptions of participants.

Reliability and Validity

To aid in the credibility and applicability of reported information from the research study, the qualitative researcher sought to ensure that the methods and actions taken were reliable and valid. The researcher sought a level of confirmation that provided a believability to the resulting themes that came from the analysis of the collected data so these could be utilized to add value to project managers and their managers.

Reliability. To provide for reliable information being obtained during the interview process, the researcher prepared an interview guide that included primary questions that were asked of all participants so there was a common starting point. The interview guide also included follow-up questions that corresponded to the primary questions to allow the interviewer to solicit more detail from the participant to stimulate additional conversation and capture of deeper content. Creswell (2014) noted that reliability relates to consistent processes being followed by the researcher. This consistent line of questioning along with follow-ups to ensure discussion around potential themes adds to the reliability of the data that are gathered. Houghton et al. (2013) shared that reliability in a qualitative study is like a measure of dependability and that the resulting data will be stable. By using the standard set of questions that relate back to the original research questions, the results were exhibited as having a higher degree of reliability.
Validity. The researcher determined a minimum sample size of 12 participants from a primary location or function and then at least eight participants from a second location or functional area for a total of at least 20 participants. In addition to the minimum, additional participants were interviewed until a saturation point was achieved where additional content gathered did not include additional themes or perceptions that had not already been determined from the existing sample. By reaching the saturation point there was a depth of information based on the perceptions of the participants. In addition, by including interviewees from locations in two different states and across multiple functional areas, data were triangulated to aid in the validity of the results. Stake (2010) discussed that evaluating multiple points of view in a topic area leads to triangulation and confirmation. Creswell (2014) added that triangulation can be achieved by converging several different perspectives from participants to build evidence for the accuracy of emerging themes. This author also noted that validity can be achieved by employing member checking which refers to sharing the emerging themes with interviewees to confirm that the researcher perspective is supporting by their perceptions. Houghton et al. (2013) noted that gathering multiple different perspectives provided a more complete picture and that following member checking by allowing participants to review the transcription of their interview added to the validity of the captured data.

Summary of reliability and validity. For the results of this research to be usable, the researcher needed to follow organized processes to ensure consistency and accuracy of the data that were collected. This process allowed the results to be reliable and valid through communication of the rigor involved in the research process. This provided a credibility that gave confidence to readers of the research to determine how they could generalize the results for application in any similar situations.
Transition and Summary

Qualitative research includes review of spoken words and is used to determine understanding as it relies on evaluation and interpretation to determine meaning. During qualitative interviews, open format questions will be used and allow the researcher to evaluate to gather rich content from the participants. The open format also includes freedom of expression to ask follow-up questions and allows the researcher to qualify the discussion to add additional meaning. By documenting and following a defined process across participants in multiple locations, multiple functional areas, and with varying levels of education and experience, the goal of obtaining reliable and valid results is obtainable. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and dissertation committee within the School of Business Administration, the researcher will commence contact with participant organizations and participants in order to begin the planned interviews and data collection.
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Project management is a function that is carried out in many different industries and organizations including healthcare payment organizations. Successful project management can aid in carrying out projects that lead to efficiency and cost reductions in this business segment. In this study, the researcher reviewed the characteristics and skills that were utilized by project managers in the study organization to successfully complete assigned projects. The identification of key characteristics and skills were reviewed to determine which of these reviewed attributes added value to project management practitioners and those that hirer or managed project management talent. Project managers can use this information to find areas of development and focus that will give them tools to lead successful projects. Managers and hirers of project management staff can use the information to find and develop talent with an improved potential to succeed in the role. In addition, the role of a project manager and the definition of what a successful project includes were reviewed with discussion of how these concepts related to the themes and perceptions of the participants. The review focused on the skills and characteristics that were a part of the participants’ project management tool kit.

The results of the study were shared through an overview of the study and presentation of the findings. Analysis of the data collected and how they related to the anticipated themes and patterns that emerged during the case study interview process were shared. Discussion of the application of the study results to professional practice and recommendations for action were presented. The section ends with recommendations for further study and reflections by the researcher leading to the final summary and conclusions of the study.
Overview of the Study

Based on review of the literature and personal experience of the researcher, there is a need for improved understanding of which specific characteristics and skills, collectively, are used by project managers who carry out the work of their projects successfully. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to determine and understand characteristics and skills of project managers that affect their ability to deliver successful projects. The researcher completed a qualitative case study with a goal of answering three key research questions by gathering rich content based on the experience and perceptions of project management practitioners and those that manage or hire individuals in this role. Creswell (2014) noted that qualitative analysis can be used to gather definition and meaning of a problem through the eyes of the individuals being studied.

To determine the themes and patterns that would emerge from the study, the primary research questions were developed to gather information guided by the conceptual framework based on theories and concepts of leadership, management, organizational behavior, and project management. The primary questions included:

1. What are the characteristics of project managers who are successful in completing projects by meeting scope, budget, and time requirements in the healthcare industry?
2. What are the skills exhibited by project managers who are successful in completing projects by meeting scope, budget, and time requirements in the healthcare?
3. How do project managers and those that hire project managers define project success in the healthcare industry?

Individual semi-structured interviews were performed by phone or in person by the researcher to gather the views and experiences of the participants that volunteered for the study.
Stake (2010) discussed that qualitative research allows the researcher to seek the personal views from individuals that have experience with the area of focus for the study. The included participants were either project managers or those that manage or hire project management talent. Demographics relating to the number of years an individual had performed the project management related role, their function, location, and whether they had obtained a project management certification were captured to aid in the depth of the captured results.

The participants are currently working for a healthcare payment and technology organization with project managers reporting that they perform project management functions an average of 77% of their work time. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the project managers have obtained their Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and have worked in the role an average of 16 years. Managers or hirers of project managers report they work with project managers an average of 61% of their work time. Managers or hirers of project managers have worked with this function an average of 17 years. Previous roles of all participants were largely a mix of healthcare information technology (IT) and healthcare operations or consulting. In addition to the mix of experience and the inclusion of both project managers and those that hire or manage project managers, the participants were separated into two groups. One was largely homogenous of local employees in a specific project management function within the corporate office of the organization. The second group was collected from various functional departments and/or different company locations or those that worked remotely outside of the corporate office. Content results were compared across the two different groups to triangulate the data to add to the validity of the results.

Questions raised by the researcher during the interviews included having the participant define the role of the project manager and to define what is included in a successful project.
Once these questions were completed, a series of questions were asked to gather information from the participant on which characteristics and skills they, or colleagues that were seen as most successful, used to be successful in completing projects. In addition, other questions delved into what types of education and training were utilized to achieve these characteristics and skills needed to carry out the project management role and attain their current level of success in completing projects. In addition to evaluating each participant’s own attributes, questions were asked related to the interviewees’ perception of characteristics and skills possessed by other successful project managers that might allow value to be added to their own development.

The details of the interviews were captured by creation of field notes of the researcher along with audio recordings of the conversation with the study participants. The recordings were then transcribed for evaluation of the content, perceptions, and themes that would emerge. The transcribed results were then broken apart and coded to capture patterns and themes from the words and thoughts of the participants. Finally, the details were synthesized to pull together the emerging themes for presentation of the findings. The actual themes that were determined were compared to the anticipated themes and perceptions that the researcher had defined based on the associated literature review to triangulate the results from different sources to display the reliability of the data.

**Anticipated Themes/Perceptions**

Based on review of the literature during this study, the expected themes that should have emerged included use of personal characteristics including emotional intelligence levels and understanding to lead to delivering successful projects, and the value of using soft skills when dealing with team members and project stakeholders. In addition, due to the typical matrixed management of project team members, use of skills and characteristics including the
management and leadership styles of individuals were discussed as a contributor to the ability to lead successful projects. From a skills perspective, the value of both knowledge of a company’s products and associated technical skills was noted as being a potential contributor to delivery of successful projects.

Other expected themes included the definition of project success and the anticipated value of experiential learning from both formal education and ongoing training, as well as through on the job training within an organization. Though not called out in the anticipated themes earlier in the study, a theme emerged based on the initial interview questions regarding the understanding of the definition of the role of a project manager. There were a variety of responses in this area that will be discussed in the findings which should broaden the understanding of context for the study participants.

**Presentation of the Findings**

The analysis of the verbal content from the transcribed interviews provided a broad range of perspectives from the sample size of 24 participants. Interviews were held by holding semi-structured interviews with a list of defined questions for project managers (Appendix A) and those that manage or hire project managers (Appendix B). Data were captured until a point where the planned minimum sample size of 24 participants was met. It was found that the additional participants beyond the twentieth participant did not provide new emerging themes so that the point of data saturation was considered to have been reached. The themes to be discussed that developed during the study include the review of perceptions of:

- Project manager responsibilities
- Definition of project success
- Use of leadership characteristics for project success
• Use of management skills for project success
• Use of project management skills for project success
• Use of personal characteristics for project success
• Use of technical skills and product knowledge for project success
• Education and training contributing to project success

The frequency of words captured during the study interviews are displayed in Appendix 3 to provide rich content of actual words of the participants to encapsulate the results of the study. The following figure (Figure 1) represents a visual representation of the frequency of rich content from the participants’ words that are included in the results of the study to reflect content included in the themes that emerged.

![Figure 1](image)

*Figure 1. Interview content word picture.*

**Theme 1 – Project manager responsibilities.** There were a variety of responses when the participants were asked to define the responsibilities of a project manager that is successful in
this role. Some participants discussed factors that they are measured to determine successful projects by meeting certain responsibilities and success criteria as they carry out their project management roles. A large majority of the participants responded with some form of the triple constraint success criteria of meeting time, cost, and scope expectations of a project as a part of their defined role. There was also discussion of performing the role of manager, leader, planner, and communicator that emerged as important responsibilities from those that were interviewed. The noted responsibilities also included performing project governance through managing change and risk during the project.

Meeting triple constraints of time, cost, and scope. A key role for project managers that was seen by participants and their peers and managers was creating a schedule, based on time constraints created by the project owners, to meet the defined tasks. Parker et al. (2015) shared about the importance of the triple constraint factors, along with managing project resources, and the application of the concept to successfully completing delivery of projects by the project manager. Most participants in the study included the triple constraint factors when discussing their responsibilities as project managers and they expectations that had been set on them to determine their ongoing success in the role. Participant A3 (personal communication, October 24, 2019) discussed that the role included, “resource allocations, planning, scheduling, engaging the client and implementing the project.” Participant A9 (personal communication, November 2, 2019) noted being responsible to, “stay on the right path to manage, monitor, and adjust to achieve goals.” Along with the creation of schedule, there is a focus on tracking, monitoring, and adjusting to keep the project moving according to the defined plan. Participant A1 (personal communication, October 24, 2019) shared, “our main goal is to deliver the scope of the project,
within the time allotted…making sure that we deliver what we say we're going to deliver and within the planned time.”

Most project managers that participated included conversation about developing a timeline for project completion and working to keep a project on schedule. This was discussed as one of the first items that stakeholders want to be updated on. Since projects are delivered as temporary endeavors to meet specific goals and objectives that are requested by the project owners or client, the next factor is when the results can be delivered so that value is added. Participant A15 (personal communication, November 9, 2019) shared, “The role includes touching and shaping the project from the start.” Participants noted that planning, monitoring, and controlling the tasks of a project based on a schedule allowed the proper path to be followed.

Though budget or cost was not discussed as frequently by this group of participants who largely work with defined project teams without cost tracking, financial resources are not unlimited. Handling projects within a defined budget or cost level can determine level of satisfaction from a client or stakeholder so from a business standpoint delivering a project without excessive or unplanned costs is considered a part of the role of the project manager in practice.

Defining the project scope or requirements as defined by the project owner, client, or other key stakeholders and then carrying out a plan to complete those requirements close to the defined time period was a common theme that appeared. Participant A5 (personal communication, October 25, 2019) shared, “we've accomplished what was given out to us.” Participant A9 shared, “responsibility for achieving a predefined outcome by folding all of those pieces together and understanding how each contribute the end state.” Project managers need the ability to pull together all the resources and tasks within a plan so that stated objectives can be
Participant A9 described the role as being the glue that holds the project together. Other participants shared how they must be involved with task level work on the project, but their key role is driving the process by working through others. Participant A10 (personal communication, November 1, 2019) shared, “We are hands on but a lot of it is working with other people to get things done.” Participant B4 (personal communication, November 9, 2019) shared, “Project management is a vehicle to move things forward.”

**Performing role of manager, leader, planner, and communicator.** Several participants related project management to the role of a conductor in an orchestra or quarterback of the team. By helping each individual team member to be successful with their part or task, the whole team and project has a better opportunity for success. Participant A6 (personal communication, November 1, 2019) shared,

when a project manager is sort of a facilitator in an orchestrator, I think you end up being successful. You have a role of the quarterback of the team, putting it in football terminology. You give clear direction as to what needs to occur. Coach up and build up team members as needed, follow up, organize, just facilitating every aspect of the project team to make sure we are all moving in the direction to complete the objective.

According to several participants, much more can be completed by a team than by any one individual. Participant A7 (personal communication, October 31, 2019) shared, “making sure that everyone on the project knows what they need to do, when they need to do it, how they’re going to do it, and what we get is a well conducted project delivery.”

The participant project practitioners saw themselves as leaders, managers, planners, and overall communicators to keep the project on track. Participant A12 (personal communication, November 7, 2019) shared, “Project management is the shepherding of, the herding of those
activities, in appropriate sequence, to ensure that everything is done. In this role, I should be more of the tour guide on their journey.” Participant A17 (personal communication, November 15, 2019) shared, “Planning and communication are the two parts I consider a critical role.” The participants collectively viewed a key role of the project manager as owning the process by planning, facilitating, managing, and leading in this profession. Participant A11 (personal communication, November 5, 2019) shared, “making sure that the work gets done and bringing in the right stakeholders to ensure that that work progressive according to the end goal.” The analogy used by several participants, to being like a conductor of an orchestra, where individuals with great talent each use their skill or talent to contribute to the success of the whole, showed the potential of a successful project manager. The comments on mentoring, building up, and fostering success that were apparent in the words spoken during the interviews displayed the need for teamwork across the project participants for maximum success to be achieved. The additional analogy heard of the leader being a quarterback added to this context; even if the quarterback is a superstar, without the rest of the team it would be impossible to come out on the winning side. The participants of this study see the role of project manager as being a strategic position that can steer the project down the right path to success when it is led and functions as intended.

**Performing project governance role through managing risk and change.** Project governance was another pattern that emerged during the discussion. Individual governance by project managers includes monitoring project risks and need for change that could impact the schedule, cost, or scope that is required by stakeholders. Samset and Volden (2016) discussed that project governance is a key part of the project manager role and includes relating to processes and making decisions on project actions to lead to successful projects that add value by
achieving stated goals. Participant A1 shared the responsibility, “to manage that whole process, to manage the disruption and the noise that comes in, making sure that we're staying on focus and on track and not being sidetracked by anything that's not important.” Compared to other areas of focus, fewer interview participants pointed this out as a part of their role though several participants discussed that they determine risks, challenges, and potential obstacles and work to manage towards better outcomes.

According to participants, projects rarely go exactly to plan. One of the roles discussed by several individuals was how to deal with changes to projects whether that is a change in scope and requirements, or the need to change the schedule due to unforeseen changes or risks that could occur during a project. By monitoring the plan, schedule, and tasks being completed the project manager can work to anticipate changes or issues that may come up during a project and then when they occur a part of the role is to mitigate the issue and minimize the impact to the schedule, scope, and cost.

**Relationship to research question and literature.** This theme included aspects of all three primary research questions since the role of project manager was defined to include characteristics including leadership and management qualities, to include skills related to project management and the triple constraint, and to include factors of defining successful projects by exhibiting the responsibilities of a project manager. The participants in the study that were either project managers or those that manage or hire project managers believe they are responsible for taking ownership of the delivery of the project in a role like a conductor of an orchestra, a quarterback of a football team, and as a facilitator and shepherd of the project tasks. The ability to use these key characteristics allows the project manager to be the glue that holds the project together and it is driven towards success. Previous review of literature showed examples where
the adherence to the triple constraint of meeting time, cost, and scope factors led to project success. Catanio et al. (2013) shared results of their study showing that meeting project objectives in these three areas was an indication of delivery of successful projects. The Project Management Institute (PMI, 2017) advocates for these three constraints being just a subset of the criteria being a key component of successful project delivery that should be evaluated for success in delivering projects. Project governance was another pattern that was found in the review of literature. Parker et al. (2013) discussed that managing negative events, like risks or unplanned changes, in projects can be facilitated by understanding of project management processes.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From demographic question 1 (noted in Appendix A [project managers] and B [managers or hirers of project managers]), the requirements of the role of project manager, and the criteria that they are measured on by their managers and organizations, were defined by each interviewee as they answered the question of what the role means to them and how they have been successful over a period of years. Demographic questions 2 and 4 (noted in Appendix A and B) related to the years of experience and project management certification level that had influenced participants’ views of the role of project manager. The average length of time that individuals had been in the role was about 16 years, so these participants had developed their success criteria through delivering many projects to meet the needs of their organizations. The attention given to this theme by participants, as they described how they and their peers had achieved success by meeting defined project constraints and meeting the needs of customers and other stakeholders, helps to answer the research questions related to which characteristics and skills are utilized to contribute to project success.
Summary of theme 1. The project managers interviewed, collectively took responsibility to deliver the objectives defined to meet their organizations’ success criteria with a “the buck stops here” perspective. The importance of completing the scope of the project was described in multiple ways including accomplishing what was given, achieving a predetermined outcome, and meeting the business objective. Taking ownership was seen to lead to success based on the views of the participants. Meeting the scope of a project is ultimately the goal of what the project manager is working to deliver for the project owner, client, and stakeholders. The triple constraint concept though, defines that scope is important though it must be balanced with the time to deliver, the cost to deliver, and the quality of the deliverables that lead to stakeholder satisfaction.

Theme 2 - Definition of project success. Study participants were asked to provide their view the definition of successful projects. Definitions were discussed along with comments about the criteria that they had utilized for projects which had been seen as successful within their organizations and by project stakeholders. Most of those interviewed discussed how they had achieved success by ongoing adherence to the triple constraints of time, cost, and scope in the project manager role, along with having quality outcomes. In addition, participants discussed being seen as meeting success criteria by achieving satisfaction or happiness of clients, project stakeholders, and the internal team.

Achieving success by meeting triple constraint factors. Meeting the triple constraint criteria was noted as both part of the role and a key determinant of success in a project by most of the participants. A common definition of success in the area or project management is to deliver the defined scope of the project on time, on budget, and with acceptable quality. The study participants typically communicated a similar definition of project success that included
meeting the triple constraint criteria as a base for success. Participant A9 shared, “A successful project is where you achieve defined objectives” and participant A13 (personal communication, November 8, 2019) shared, “then are you on time, on budget, and on task with acceptable quality.”

In addition to the triple constraint, several participants included that a successful project results from team members growing in their abilities and a trust level being built with the client or stakeholders. Participant A10 shared, “The key thing is to build a relationship, build that trust, for the team to sharpen skills, and learn how to do things better” and participant A14 (personal communication, November 9, 2019) shared, “I think gaining trust and buy in from those stakeholders is key to ensuring that you have success.”

**Achieving success through stakeholder, client, and team satisfaction or happiness.**

Several of the study participants discussed stakeholder or client satisfaction as being a gauge of success which matched up with studies included in the literature review. Participant A12 shared, “I think success is the client is pleased with what we've delivered. We build rapport and trust and they will then follow and seek our direction on adding additional business.” Participant A16 (personal communication, November 13, 2019) shared, “the stakeholders including the client and project owners from the company need to be satisfied that their requirements have been met. The client needs to be satisfied that what they wanted was delivered.” Participants discussed project success as meeting the objectives of the project or delivering the expected scope while achieving client satisfaction and happiness.

This different spin of the client and internal team being “happy” was shared by almost half of the participants. Participant A3 shared, “client is happy and from a team perspective we learned something new and we're able to take the lessons learned and actually grow and be able
to implement another project of similar type faster or more effectively.” Clients or project stakeholders were described as happy when the planned deliverables were met. There was extension to internal team members and project participants also being happy or satisfied with the results and the effort that was put in to achieving the goals of the project. Participant A1 shared, “the team itself feels that it was successful and that they've gotten something out of it and are happy with what they did.” The happiness was also discussed as coming from a team working together and that there was something learned or developed, even from a team or personal skills level, as the project was carried out. Participant B1 (personal communication, October 25, 2019) shared, “Customer success for a project, means getting to the same goal, having mutual agreement with the customer, their experience was happy and was it in a reasonable timeframe.”

**Relationship to research question and literature.** The participants used the triple constraint of meeting time, cost, and scope of the project with acceptable quality as the core definition of project success but then added value by supplementing this industry definition. Parker et al. (2015) reiterated the value of each of the triple constraint factors in completing successful projects. A successful project was also defined as a project that leads to client or stakeholder satisfaction and happiness with the project outcomes that are delivered. Also, a successful project was discussed as a project where the team engaged in learning new skills and building for future capability. Successful projects were also discussed to be those where the project manager coached up, built up, and supported creation of team unity that aided in delivering project objectives and a propensity for future success.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From demographic question 5 (noted in Appendix A and B), the definition of project success was asked of the participants to determine
their view of the criteria that is required for a project to be successful. Study questions 1 through 6 (noted in Appendix A and B) provided input on characteristics and skills utilized by successful project managers provided insight into the steps that were considered to need to be taken to achieve successful outcomes. The ability to utilize project management skills and processes to meet the triple constraint criteria of meeting time, cost, and scope requirements was discussed in part or total by all participants in the study.

**Summary of theme 2.** The project managers participating in the study defined success in most cases according to the concept of triple constraint and meeting time, cost, and scope. This was expected since most of the participants have engaged in formal project management training and achieved the PMP certification through PMI. With the triple constraints of time, cost, and scope including quality being objectives that can be measured, the concept of client or team happiness is more subjective but could potentially be valuable to measure during post-project lessons learned or debrief meetings coordinated by the project manager.

**Theme 3 - Use of leadership characteristics for project success.** Participants had varying views of leadership styles and factors that were encompassed within the leadership topic. Leading by example and mentoring was another area of focus. The remaining views of participants on leadership are included in the discussion.

**Leading by motivation and influence.** Several participants discussed the team building perspective of leadership and working to motivate members to complete project tasks effectively. Participant A1, A2 (personal communication, October 30, 2019), and A13 discussed that leadership was about motivating and inspiring others success. The difference between transformational and transactional leadership, and difference between people and task orientation, was prevalent during the review of literature on leadership styles. Several
participants discussed transformational leadership or using motivation and encouragement to influence team members to meet their objectives on a project. Participant A10 shared, “I'm encouraging and influencing others towards certain goals or objectives.” Since most of the participants had long tenures as project managers and were certified in the profession, the planning, scheduling, and task execution part of their role appears to have been more of a given in the role rather than a leadership style that they practice or aspire to.

Based on conversations, newer project managers focus more on the scheduling and task execution portions of a project in order to “check the box” on completion of tasks. Also, even more experienced project managers may see that they focus on task assignment and execution more with newer teams where a confidence level has not been achieved on capabilities of the team. As the experience level of the project manager or time the teams worked together increased, the focus shifted to how to maximize the effectiveness of the individuals and team through encouragement, motivation, and personal influence which would equate from shifts from transactional to transformational and shifts from task to people orientation. This observation also equates well to the discussion on situational leadership in the review of literature.

Depending on the situation or circumstances where a project manager and team find themselves during a project, the leadership of the team can shift from telling individuals what to do, to selling them on the tasks they are responsible for and to carry them out. As the maturity of the team or project progresses, team members can become more a part of ideas and decision-making as they participate in the management and direction of the project. Ultimately, for well-functioning teams, where the confidence level in the team’s abilities and self-motivation are evident, the project manager may move to more of a delegating style to allow team members to meet objectives of the project with minimal direction.
Leading by example, using servant leadership, and mentoring for success. When asked interview questions related to leadership styles, other participants shared their view of being successful by leading by example, exhibiting servant leadership, and mentoring team members and colleagues for individual growth and organizational success. Participant A8 (personal communication, November 2, 2019) shared,

I lead by doing; to me actions speak a lot louder than words. I believe in the basketball style of team that we all have a role; we all have a place on the court. It's not a golf team where we're trying to compete against each other.

Participants B3 (personal communication, November 8, 2019) and A11 noted that leading as a project manager includes mentoring team members and influencing them toward completing project goals. The concept of a situational leadership style was also discussed by several participants and participant B5 (personal communication, November 30, 2019) shared, “you manage different people, different groups, differently depending upon what they need and how much they need.”

Relationship to research question and literature. As was expected based on the review of literature, the applicability of leadership characteristics to delivering successful projects emerged as a theme. A combination of leadership styles emerged as the most prevalent based on the views of the participants. Transformational leadership that includes motivation of the project team members through encouragement and involvement was discussed as a key driver of project success. Bass and Avolio (1992) discussed that transformational leadership included idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Most participants discussed one or more of these factors where successful leaders were seen to provide encouragement while building trust and loyalty within a team. While there were several
different styles of leadership reviewed from the applicable studies in the literature review, the
interview participants focused on a few key areas including the importance of motivation. There
was minimal reference to transactional leadership and task orientation though many of the
project managers discussed monitoring and controlling completion of tasks, and equipping teams
with appropriate tools and guidance, in other parts of the project management role discussion.
These factors could relate to transactional leadership which may appear to be an assumed style
during certain parts of a project that include assignment and tracking of tasks. In addition,
servant leadership that is carried out to support the team as the project manager leads by example
was discussed by several interviewees.

*Contribution from research instruments.* From study question 1 (noted in Appendix A
and B), the characteristics that had been exhibited by participants that contributed to project
success were discussed. Study questions 2 and 3 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the
participants to broaden their views to characteristics they had seen other project managers exhibit
and those characteristics that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Leadership
style was defined most often as a characteristic that when used effectively allowed for building
up and influencing teams to meet the needs of clients and stakeholders.

*Summary of theme 3.* The project managers and their managers or hirers appeared to
give more credence to working with people, encouraging, and motivating compared to focus on
task orientation and productivity. The role of a project manager and ability to deliver successful
projects is affected by both spectrums of this discussion. Project managers need to be able to
understand the makeup of their teams and employ the appropriate leadership style to move their
teams and projects toward success. Participants that discussed a belief that leading by example
and mentoring their teams allowed them to build rapport and support to meet project objectives.
Project managers that work to lead by example may be viewed as more of a part of the team,
directing the team while also being willing to understand and even execute tasks in the plan. The
knowledge factor of having product or industry knowledge, along with technical skills that were
discussed within another theme, allowed the project manager to build trusting relationships and
work as a team to deliver the scope of the project. The influencing, motivating, and building
others up for their individual needs was part of the participants’ view which relates to the
transformational leadership style that has been discussed.

Theme 4 - Use of management skills for project success. Participants had varying
views of management styles and factors that were encompassed within the management topic.
Several participants discussed that relationships and accountability need to be built in order to
reduce the need for micromanaging the project team. Participants B1 and B2, shared the need
for strategic management and decision-making skills being key factors for project managers to
carry out their role. Several participants also noted that managing by setting clear expectations
without micromanaging was their desired style.

Using management styles. The participants shared multiple views on how they approach
management of their project teams and these included discussion of advocating for team
members and building an understanding of the team’s goals and how they best perform assigned
tasks. Participant A3 shared, “I'm there as one of their advocates and I will do whatever I can to
make sure that they're successful.” Participant B4 shared, “always important is framing your
approach through the eyes of the person you're speaking with, so you're looking at their
perspective and making sure you're working to an end that they see as valuable as you do.”
Understanding organization and project strategy was noted to provide managers with increased
opportunity for project success. Participant A15 shared,
building rapport with people outside of the team has been useful in being able to meet project demands. Getting involved in the work of the project and getting dirty in the project details, along with directing the team, allows for better teamwork and achievements.

**Using organization skills for effective project management.** The value of being organized and following a structured plan was evident in most participant responses. The ability to plan out the tasks that will be executed over a time period and then to monitor and control those tasks to completion takes attention to detail and continual follow-through so that tasks do not get behind to the point of not being recoverable. As mentioned previously, this ability was taken for granted in some cases since it is just seen as a part of the role that must be carried out.

**Relationship to research question and literature.** As was expected based on the review of literature, the applicability of management skills to delivering successful projects emerged as a theme. Kitana (2016) discussed management principles that are evident in project management including division of work, order, initiative, and unity of direction that relate to management skills discussed by project managers. General management and project management skills were a good match to assist in understanding areas of focus in this specific organization and industry that could have applicability across many organizational types. The ability to plan and organize a project team and the tasks necessary to meet stakeholder objectives was noted as a key skill. The review of literature had a broader management perspective included, but the participants did not place as much focus on general management since skills were discussed as a part of the project management specific role. Concepts including planning, controlling, and removing obstacles were discussed in the review of the literature (Kotter, 2014), but again participants
appeared to relate those topics to standard project management processes rather than to
management in general.

Contribution from research instruments. From study question 4 (noted in Appendix A
and B), the management skills that had been exhibited by participants that contributed to project
success were discussed. Question 5 and 6 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the participants
to broaden their views to skills they had seen other project managers exhibit as they managed
teams and projects that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Demographic
question 3 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed participants to discuss their educational
background and training that had been undertaken to develop their general management skills
that had contributed to their success in delivering projects.

Summary of theme 4. Giving team members enough information and guidance to be
successful without having to watch all the details of their work was noted as both efficient and
rewarding for all involved. Being able to make decisions for the project team members and tasks
in a way that leads the team in a collaborative style, builds rapport, and earns trust was shared as
a contributor to project success. Use of organizational behavior concepts was expected to be a
theme though did not emerge from the study as a separate pattern from an organizational culture
perspective, though was mentioned as a part of the discussion of management skills and
leadership characteristics. Organization skills were noted as a part of general management and
project management standard functions.

Theme 5 - Use of project management skills for project success. Participants had
varying views of what makes up project management functions and applicable skills. A large
majority of the participants had received formal project management training and were certified
Project Management Professionals (PMP). The training on process and structure that is included
in formal project management training was inherent in several interview responses based on the high percentage of participants that had completed training in this area.

**Providing value through project management tools.** Microsoft Project, Visio, and other Office tools were discussed as useful to build plans, then monitor and deliver results. Reporting and data querying tools were also discussed as adding value to the strategic management of projects. The participants discussed the use of tools aiding in organizing and communicating project details and progress toward the stated objectives. Additional tools related to methodologies like Lean and Agile were noted as useful depending on availability of these within the organization.

**Providing value through project management processes.** Almost all the participants discussed the advantage of using software tools and project management processes either during the discussion of the project manager role, project success, or training and skills areas of questioning. Whether the tool is a spreadsheet or a project management scheduling tool, the participants shared the need to capture and communicate a defined and structured plan. Participant A2 (personal communication, October 24, 2019) shared, “Having understanding of scheduling, dependencies, and risks.” The project managers wove the thought of taking ownership and guiding their teams throughout the interviews. Participant B2 shared, “it’s not only about the deal being delivered on time and under budget. It's the ushering of the project, the delivery.”

**Relationship to research question and literature.** As was expected based on the review of literature, including material by PMI (2017), the applicability of project management skills to delivering successful projects emerged as a theme. The function of project management to achieve objectives set out by stakeholders, as the project team worked collectively to meet stated
goals was discussed by Seymour and Hussein (2014). Understanding project management or other software tools was discussed in the review of literature to be a differentiator that allows a project manager to use information and structure their work effectively.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From study question 4 (noted in Appendix A and B), the skills that had been exhibited by participants that contributed to project success was discussed. Question 5 and 6 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the participants to broaden their views to skills they had seen other project managers exhibit and those skills that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Demographic question 3 allowed participants to discuss their educational background and training that had been undertaken to develop their project management skills that had contributed to their success in delivering projects. Demographic questions 2 and 4 (noted in Appendix A and B) related to the years of experience as a project manager and whether the individual participant had undertaken formal project management training and certification that had helped them develop project management skills leading to successful project outcomes.

**Summary of theme 5.** The structure that is defined by PMI or other project management organizations allows project managers to function by planning, executing, monitoring, and controlling the appropriate tasks that are required to deliver project scope and objectives. The participants discussed their organization skills and the tools and processes that they use to deliver their project objectives successfully. The use of tools to review data allowed the project managers interviewed to be more strategic in meeting the financial needs of the project. The project managers that were interviewed discussed the value of formal project management training that allowed them to carry out the profession in a consistent manner and was a contributor to successful projects.
**Theme 6 - Use of personal characteristics for project success.** Participants shared their mix of characteristics and in some cases how those applied to their success. Categories of characteristics included in the discussion are communication, emotional intelligence, and other soft skills.

**Utilizing communication skills.** Almost all the participants in the study mentioned communication skills as being key in managing projects and project teams. Several participants stated that communication is the most important skill for project managers to be successful. In many cases, the project manager is managing team members in a matrixed fashion from across multiple functional areas. Not having a direct reporting relationship with the team member requires effective communication to help them understand their role and to also stress the importance of completing their assigned tasks. Participant A8 shared, “I put my listening ears on. I really am listening to what the client is saying or to what others were saying.” The participants discussed that while managing projects they must develop project requirements, plans, presentations, and schedules that all require extensive use of communication skills.

**Exhibiting emotional intelligence.** As was expected based on the review of literature, the discussion of emotional intelligence and its effect on the participants’ work emerged as a theme. Participants shared their thoughts related to emotional intelligence. Participant A2 shared, “Emotional intelligence is important since there are other spectrums of understanding. I want to be concerned for other’s feelings and want to earn their respect so that I can be a more effective manager.” Many of the participants had been through a company provided training session on this topic and could see the value of understanding others and working with them more effectively based on their personal style and personality type. Participant A6 shared, “the interpersonal skills required to be successful in project management where we have to interact
with a ton of different personalities in a ton of different levels of the organization.” Study participants discussed that a key soft skill that contributed to their success was emotional intelligence and individual characteristics that this can include. Participant B5 shared, “Professionalism, emotional maturity, and confidence and the ability to hear and handle criticism.” Again, as in most areas of management, the ability to understand personalities and work styles for those that one works with can allow for better working relationships. Participant A13 noted, “Understanding that different personalities interpret things differently or need information in different ways, it affects the ability to communicate effectively.”

**Displaying soft skills.** The primary areas discussed were communication skills and emotional intelligence. Participants shared their understanding of these skills and in some cases how those applied to their success. These additional soft skills have been categorized into character, work ethic, attitude, and teamwork for discussion.

**Exhibiting character.** As project managers where most are certified as Project Management Professionals (PMP), most participants ascribed to character as being paramount as they deal with stakeholders, clients, and team members. PMP candidates take an oath as part of certification to maintain integrity as they carry out their role. Participant A3 and B1 discussed that following solid ethics and being credibility is important but maintaining integrity is key. Other participants noted the need for honesty and openness with clients and stakeholders with participant A8 noting, “I believe in being transparent so that things don’t need to be hidden. I believe in integrity a hundred percent; people can trust you.”

**Displaying strong work ethic.** A strong work ethic was discussed as a characteristic that allowed participant project managers to be successful over a long period of time. Most of those interviewed added comments about work ethic though these came in many different forms
including several participants who noted dependability and accountability as important characteristics. Participant A6 stated that this is achieved through having “a natural desire to take ownership.” In addition to these previous areas of work ethic, other participants shared that perseverance and persistence were needed to work through any obstacles and continue guiding the team throughout the scheduled project. This personal leadership includes what others shared as tenacity and drive when participant A10 shared, “you have to have tenacity and you don't give up. Keep driving ahead to try to solve whatever is right ahead, look outside the box, try to figure out a solution.” Participant A17 shared, “just the drive to succeed and to not fail. I tend to take it personally if a project is going to be successful.” Participant B3 shared, “It's takes some tenacity to find the right resources and make sure that people are delivering on their timelines.”

**Displaying attitude for success.** This positive attitude of leadership and effective management was discussed by participants as including confidence and assertiveness. Flexibility and willingness to think outside the box was noted by other participants. Participant B4 shared the need for “receptivity to feedback and taking the time to understand the lessons learned.” In a similar direction, Participant A16 shared, “I think I possess curiosity and want to learn as much as I can on a project and am more client focused and outgoing.” Throughout several of the theme areas there was the thread of ongoing learning, working to make things better, and helping the team to grow. This tied in well with the desire that most participants had to continue learning and developing their skills as they enhance their characteristics and skills for ongoing success for themselves and their teams.

**Building teamwork.** The final soft skill area was related to the continued thread of working as a team. Many projects require multiple skill sets and functional areas to be involved in delivering the requirements of the project stakeholders. Multiple participants discussed
displaying camaraderie and working to build up their teams and colleagues. Collaboration and the ability to develop working relationships was stated by most of those that were interviewed. This relates back to earlier discussion about the conductor working to help each individual exhibit their skills and talents as they all work toward the common goal of creating a successful outcome as the project is delivered successfully.

**Relationship to research question and literature.** As was expected based on the review of literature, the discussion of personal characteristics that each participant felt was related to their ability to deliver successful projects emerged as a theme. These could be lumped together as soft skills since they are not easily measured like hard skills that could potentially be tested or exhibited. Blaskovics (2016) discussed critical success factors for matching individuals to the project management role as including individual attitudes and personal characteristics. For personal characteristics of successful project managers, several factors were seen to aid in the effectiveness in carrying out projects. These included cognitive abilities of thinking and understanding within the product and technical capabilities of the organization. Galvin et al. (2014) shared that successful project managers had and understanding of technical aspects of their organization and used appropriate communication to influence teams for success. In addition, a persistence and tenacity to drive towards project success was discussed as a key differentiator in being able to move a project towards a successful outcome. In addition, the value of soft skills including communication skills and emotional intelligence were discussed by many of the participants as leading to successful project outcomes. Medina and Francis (2015) had similar results that showed a combination of many different attributes including personal characteristics of good communication, teamwork, and collaboration can lead to success. As was expected based on the review of literature, the discussion of soft skills that participants felt were
related to their ability to deliver successful projects emerged as a theme. Galvin et al. (2014) noted that using soft skills including handling change and dealing with stress contributed to the project manager’s abilities to handle project teams. Verbal and written communication along with the ability to create presentations to deliver status and outcomes were noted as pertinent skills that should be in every project manager’s toolkit.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From study question 1 (noted in Appendix A and B), the characteristics that had been exhibited by participants that contributed to project success was discussed. Question 2 and 3 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the participants to broaden their views to characteristics they had seen other project managers exhibit and those characteristics that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Capturing the rich content discussed by the participants provided insight to a collection of skills that could be used in the participant organization to lead to future success.

**Summary of theme 6.** Communication abilities are a key characteristic for all management positions, but they are possibly even more important for project managers. Managing both internal and client stakeholders was noted to require both verbal and written communication skills and in addition, the ability to create presentations that are understandable and communicate effectively. The project managers and their managers or hirers discussed emotional intelligence as a key success factor for them as they carried out the project work within their organization. Most participants had been a part of formalized internal training on the emotional intelligence topic and noted that this training provided them insight into how to better understand team members and how they go about doing their work. The understanding of similarities and differences in style and methods can allow team members and those that are managed to move forward through all the tasks of a project. Emotional intelligence can also
relate to earlier discussions on leadership and management skills and styles since everyone has a
different set of characteristics and skills that they utilize in their daily work. Leading projects
requires integrity to allow project managers to maintain trust and loyalty towards the efforts
within their teams and this was a basic requirement for ongoing success. As a leader of the
project, the project manager is looked to for being dependable to deliver required objectives and
to be accountable for the results of the team that lead to project success. These key
characteristics of soft skills and strong work ethic help to define the professional role of project
manager as it should be carried out from a leadership perspective and overall attitude that is
exhibited.

**Theme 7 - Use of technical skills and product knowledge for project success.**
Participants shared their mix of technical related skills and in some cases how those applied to
their success. At a much lower rate, a few participants mentioned product or industry knowledge
along with technical skills.

*Utilizing technical and data analysis skills.* The use of various software tools and data
analytics skills was discussed by over half of the participants as being skills they currently have
used to contribute to successful project outcomes of where they have seen others utilize the skill.
Participant A2 shared, “I think there are data analytic tools that add value and I think excel skills
are definitely very helpful too.” Participant A5 shared, “I would say analytics skills. Being able
to access databases, being able to run queries, and run reports is helpful.” Data analytics and
reporting tools were stated to be one of the primary technical knowledge areas where individuals
would like to become more proficient. Participant A8 shared, “To me data is information that's
totally empowering, and you can't ever argue with data.” In addition to technical and data
analytics skills, product knowledge was discussed as adding value to carrying out the work of a project team.

**Using product and industry knowledge.** Study participants were asked interview questions about characteristics and skills. Knowledge about the organization’s products and knowledge of the healthcare payment and data analytics industry were included in some participant’s responses. Participant A2 shared, “It is helpful to have the expertise and technical skills to be able to lead a project…to be more successful as a project manager.” Knowledge of an organization’s technical capabilities and product knowledge were discussed as valuable skills to acquire and maintain in order to maximize a project manager’s capabilities.

**Relationship to research question and literature.** As was expected based on the review of literature, the discussion of technical skills that each participant felt was related to their ability to deliver successful projects emerged as a theme. Galvin et al. (2014) shared that understanding of technical aspects of an organization and product knowledge can contribute to the project manager’s ability to lead teams to successfully completing project tasks. Technical and product knowledge provided a platform for investigation of specific skills including data analytics, project tools and processes, and software applications that provide efficiency in delivering the components of a project and communicating tasks and deliverables to the project stakeholders that allows for success in project work.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From study question 4 (noted in Appendix A and B) the skills that had been exhibited by participants that contributed to project success was discussed. Study questions 5 and 6 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the participants to broaden their views to skills they had seen other project managers exhibit and those skills that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Demographic question 3 (noted in
Appendix A and B) allowed the participant to discuss their educational background and ongoing training that they had been involved in to help them develop technical and product knowledge skills that influenced their successful project delivery.

**Summary of theme 7.** Most participants interviewed either noted that data analytics and reporting tools provided them insight that allowed them to be more effective in their projects or stated they believe other project managers use them to deliver successful projects. Technical and product knowledge helped project managers to understand the tasks and deliverables of a project and for those that assisted with task completion and mentoring team members, the knowledge was seen to provide credibility and subject matter expertise that contributed to communication with stakeholders and the project team.

**Theme 8 - Education and training contributing to project success.** The participant interviews included questions relating to education and training background that prepared individuals for the role of project manager. Most participants credited their university education, project management specific training, and industry and organization training as assisting them in developing the requisite skills and competencies to be successful in their role.

From a training needs perspective, there was a similar pattern of desire for additional training on emotional intelligence and communication/presentation skills. Many in the group desire additional training on SQL query and data analytics tools to help them in their role. The remaining topics that received interest were for leadership development and strategic management skills.

**Relationship to research question and literature.** A review of literature showed many authors that noted the importance of continual learning and development for project managers due to the varying nature of projects. Ramazani and Jergens (2015) shared that ongoing
education and continued skill development can provide skills that all project managers to meet objectives. These authors note that development and training should be adapted to the specific situation and project structure within an organization to provide the most value. PMI (2017) encourages ongoing professional development for project managers that have been certified as Project Management Professionals.

**Contribution from research instruments.** From study question 4 (noted in Appendix A and B), the skills that had been exhibited by participant that contributed to project success was discussed. Question 5 and 6 (noted in Appendix A and B) allowed the participant to broaden their views to skills they had seen other project managers exhibit and those skills that they would like to acquire if they had the opportunity. Demographic question 3 (noted in Appendix A and B) on education and training background, along with study question 7 (noted in Appendix A and B) that included discussion of the participants’ training needs provided insight that can be useful for both project management practitioners and their managers or hirers to equip and acquire project teams for success.

**Summary of theme 8.** Training topics that developed as a pattern from the participants included PMI’s PMP process training, information technology technical training, training on communication and presentation skills, and then emotional intelligence training as the most useful. Managers of project managers can utilize this information on training background and needs to refine development plans as they offer training opportunities for their team. Project management practitioners can use this same information to further their personal development and focus as they pursue applicable training experiences.

**Relationship of themes/patterns to research questions.** Research question one was used to evaluate the characteristics of project managers that lead to project success. The themes
of project manager responsibilities of using leadership characteristics and communication abilities were noted as key indicators of success. Leadership included conversations of motivating and influencing teams to achieve project objectives. Project managers as servant leaders, who lead by example and mentor their teams, was evident as a goal for the participants. Other key personal characteristics that emerged in the theme were exhibiting emotional intelligence and using soft skills to engage teams. Maintaining strong character and work ethic with an attitude for success allows the project manager to influence teamwork and collaboration.

Research question 2 was used to evaluate the acquired skills of project managers that lead to project success. Project manager responsibilities noted as important were use of project management skills and various management and organizational skills while carrying out the function of a project manager. Use of standard project management tools and processes was discussed as a mechanism for project consistency and successful outcomes. Expanding these skills by use of technical and data analysis skills, along with product and industry knowledge, balanced out the skillset of a successful project manager.

Research question 3 was used to allow the participants to define project success since delivering successful projects is the primary function of their role. Again, the discussion of the role of a project manager centered on those things that helped with successful outcomes including the triple constraint criteria of time, cost, and scope. Adherence to quality outcomes and meeting stakeholder objectives that lead to satisfaction were seen as success criteria. The definition of project success matched the content of this theme and project managers believed that educational background and ongoing training for continued development of their skills and characteristics would give them the best chance for success in the world of project management.
Summary of the findings. Through review of the literature during the study, as well as results of a case study in a healthcare payment organization, themes related to leadership, management, and project management contributed to the characteristics and skills that are possessed by project managers who are delivering successful projects. The concepts reviewed in the literature were evaluated against research questions that were determined during the study. The research questions being addressed delve into answering the question of what characteristics and skills of project managers allow them to successfully complete projects against the criteria of scope, budget, and time. The additional research question is how do project managers and managers or hirers of the role define project success. This allowed for an expansion of the success criteria, and discussion of characteristics and skills, beyond just the concept of the triple constraint.

The themes that emerged provided discussion and insight into the following:

- Project manager responsibilities
- Definition of project success
- Use of leadership characteristics for project success
- Use of management skills for project success
- Use of project management skills for project success
- Use of personal characteristics for project success
- Use of technical skills and product knowledge for project success
- Education and training contributing to project success

This insight provided into the characteristics and skills needed by project managers to effectively carry out their responsibilities can provide project managers, their managers, and hirers with content to determine ongoing development needs, to staff their teams appropriately,
and to acquire and maintain strong project teams. The key areas of developing leadership and management capabilities, along with understanding project management processes and methods was noted as valuable to consistently carry out the role of project manager. Personal characteristics like emotional intelligence and soft skills, and technical and product knowledge displayed a pattern of those attributes that successful project management practitioners should possess. The collective thoughts of the participants on their view of the role of a project manager, the definition of success as they were measured for success in their roles, provided insight to answer the research questions of the study.

The pattern exhibited showed a propensity for focus on communication and people/relationship skills to build teamwork and ability to create satisfied stakeholders and customers. The resulting data from two different sub-groups within the sample did not show any significant difference in the teams thus further validating the patterns that evolved. Participants in the study discussed the importance of ongoing education and development of the skills and competencies that are contributors to project success.

Gaps in knowledge in the healthcare delivery and payment industry related to cost-cutting measures, including the move to value-based reimbursement and other projects to improve efficiency, were evaluated from the perspective of characteristics and skills of project managers that can lead to successful project delivery. During review of the literature on project management, there appeared to be limited expertise in the healthcare payment and related environments, relative to software development and general project management, and absence of appropriate literature of best practices in the healthcare niche. Participants in this process and other healthcare payment and related organizations are working to reduce costs but it appears that many do not have appropriate levels of formal project management expertise to develop a
strategic plan. For hiring managers, reducing this knowledge gap will allow them to select project managers with a higher probability of success and will allow project managers to understand areas of focus for personal development and continuing education and skill development that will give them the ability to improve on their success delivery of projects. While there were multiple themes discussed that were like the general project management literature, there emerged a narrower description across the participants from the healthcare payment industry.

The participants all had experience in the healthcare payment industry, they came from backgrounds in health insurance, government medical programs, healthcare vendors, and actual medical fields (including hospital and doctor based organizations). The collection of characteristics and skills noted by this group focused on the narrower set including exhibiting leadership (over just task management alone) to coach, mentor, build up, and create team unity. There was more focus on data analysis skills, along with healthcare and product knowledge, due to the prevalence of using healthcare claim data to facilitate the goal of using project management to reduce healthcare costs and deliver on the complexities in this environment. The focus also included having a strong client focus and working towards the happiness and satisfaction of clients and project stakeholders by delivering to build trust and contribute to the success of client goals and needs. Finally, the focus on the strategic focus of project objectives contributing to client and organizational mission in the professional role of project manager can contribute to this “collection” of criteria. Hiring managers of project managers and project management practitioners can build these criteria into their hiring and development frameworks to better align for success in this healthcare payment industry based on the collective views of these study participants.
The results that were presented here narrowed down the focus to specific areas that appeared to be prevalent in the study population and provided insight that answered the research questions for project managers and those that managed or hired for the role. The conclusion was that the knowledge and guidance obtained from these study results can be used by project management practitioners as they pursue development and training needs to continue their propensity for success in the healthcare payment and data analytics industry. This knowledge and guidance can also be used as a resource for hirers or managers of the project management role to further their investment in talent in the project management profession.

Applications to Professional Practice

The problem that was addressed was that project managers, their managers, and those that hire for the role did not appear to have a sufficient understanding of the collection of required characteristics and skills necessary to continually deliver successful projects in the healthcare payment industry. The purpose of the study and the findings provided insight into the characteristics and skills that project management practitioners in a healthcare payment organization have used to deliver successful projects. In this market, working with healthcare insurance plans and government healthcare programs, there is an ongoing need to reduce medical costs. The ability to manage projects to completion in a most efficient manner to meet stated success criteria will allow project managers to assist in the delivery of cost reductions. The profession of project management is gaining in importance and becoming more prevalent in many organizations (Baum & Swig, 2017), in addition to healthcare, so the findings can also be utilized by project management practitioners in general, and those that manage or hire for this role.
By using these results to understand the factors that were determined by deep discussion with the participants, the information can help project managers determine areas of focus for their efforts in continuing education and personal development. The discussion of the actual characteristics and skills that have allowed the participant project managers to deliver successful projects can be used to assist other project managers in their opportunity to build for success. This development can be a combination of training classes, webinars, or even personal exposure, on the job training, and mentoring to work towards developing any characteristics or skills that they feel they are missing or that need development. Managers of project managers or those that hire for the position can use the findings to determine characteristics and skills to use in their evaluation of new talent and for ongoing development of existing teams.

**Recommendations for Action**

Project management continues to be a growing profession and is seen as one of the most needed types of management with strategic importance in the healthcare industry (Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015). The results presented expand the scope of some of the generalizations that have been made on the role of a project manager and the definition of project success. Some see the role of a project manager as just someone who plans out a project schedule and then manages the task completion process in order to “check the box” on project completion. Based on the information received during this study, professional project managers that deliver successful projects do much more than just plan out projects and meet the triple constraint of being on time, on budget, and within the defined scope. The project managers in this study who averaged over 16 years of experience in the role and where the majority were certified as Project Management Professionals (PMP), displayed a set of characteristics and skills that collectively have contributed to successful project outcomes. These included technical skills and knowledge in the
specific market segment where they operate, and the possessed leadership skills to guide, direct, motivate, and to mentor individuals of their project teams. In addition, the project managers understood the strategic objectives of their organization related to project delivery and worked with stakeholders in the organization to enhance the delivery of strategic outcomes in their projects. Project success had a broader definition than the triple constraint with quality and was shown to include client or stakeholder satisfaction and happiness, and a team that learned new skills and processes and learned from the project to facilitate future success within the organization. A broader view of project manager competencies shared by participants included the ability to enhance the team by empowering, delegating, encouraging, team building, understanding, and influencing strategic outcomes. Project managers were noted as the glue that holds the project together.

Recommendations for action include the following within healthcare payment and related organizations, but also have applicability, more generally, to project management across other types of organizations:

1. Managers and hirers of project managers should evaluate their hiring criteria to include the collection of characteristics, skills, and experience that have been shown through these participants to lead to successful projects.

2. Organizations that use project managers to lead projects should provide opportunities for continued education and development to assist project managers in enhancing their current characteristics and skills to balance their toolkit for success.

3. Organizations that use projects to complete work should utilize a tool like PMI’s Project Management Competency Development Framework (PMI, 2017) to build their own internal framework for project manager characteristics and skills. Hirers or managers of
project managers can use the personalized framework to identify criteria to look for in the acquisition of talent. For project managers, this information can be used along with the criteria identified during this study, to enhance their personal development and learning plan to allow them a higher propensity for delivering successful project outcomes.

4. Organizations should create an inventory survey for project managers to determine a list of characteristics or skills that they need to develop. General training recommendations, based on the results of this study, are to train on any competency gaps within their staff to include communication skills (verbal and written), emotional intelligence, leadership styles and methods, technical skills including necessary tools and data analytics capabilities, and deficiencies that exist in product or industry knowledge.

5. Project managers or those that aspire to the role should use the criteria in these results to develop an inventory of areas of strength and weakness and then create their own personal development plan as they seek out opportunities to learn or acquire these characteristics and skills.

6. Organizations and project managers should partner to determine how to build a coaching and mentoring process into their current project work and development plans. Learning from other practitioners as well as engaging in opportunities to learn on the job can be useful in developing necessary competencies.

The results of the study and recommendations for action will initially be shared with the case study organization due to participants’ interest and request from the organizational sponsor. These results and the action plan will be compiled in a PowerPoint presentation format and shared by the researcher. Further distribution of the material will be planned through presentation at local chapter meetings of the Project Management Institute.
**Recommendations for Further Study**

The study of characteristics and skills of project managers in the healthcare payment related field added value for this case to identify perceptions of this group of participants from the healthcare payment industry. The ability to build more effective delivery of projects and to have a higher propensity for success can help to overcome the rising costs of healthcare.

Recommendations for future study of desired project management competencies and success factors could be evaluated in the following additional sectors to also contribute to overall healthcare cost reduction:

1. Healthcare delivery including physician practices and facilities like hospitals.
2. Government healthcare agencies like Medicare and Medicaid.
3. Other industries and functions that interact or serve as vendors that are a part of the overall cost of healthcare.

An additional area of potential future study would be a quantitative evaluation to determine the correlation between years of experience as a project manager, whether a project manager had obtained their PMP certification, and how this relates to the success of projects.

Groupings of characteristics and skills such as leadership, management, and organizational skills, along with specific project management expertise, could be evaluated against project success levels. In addition, personal competencies including the ability to communicate, emotional intelligence, other soft skills, and technical or product knowledge that are possessed by project managers could be evaluated from this quantitative approach to gain insight on priorities for further development.
Reflections

Working through the coursework of the DBA program was challenging to undertake at the same time I was performing a very demanding full-time program management position but has been rewarding and fulfilling. I am thankful for the opportunity to learn alongside my DBA cohort and to build my knowledge and skills in the strategic work of leading projects in a business organization. The research process for the dissertation preparation was much more extensive and time consuming than I originally expected, but the ability to dig into the leadership theories, management theories, and organizational theories, and to deepen my knowledge in the area of project management has broadened the perspective of the work that I execute on a daily basis. As a longtime leader, manager, and program/project manager, I did not anticipate gaining a lot of new knowledge in the field of project management based on my previous formalized training in project management and certification as a Project Management Professional (PMP). During the many hours of case study interviews that I led, it was fulfilling to see the role of project manager and what it entails from the eyes of many other professionals and colleagues. I found that there is not a “one size fits all” method for being a successful project manager, but I did find trends and ideas that can be of value to those that are interested in enhancing their project management abilities or for those considering the profession.

For the participants in the study, I believe there was a positive effect and broadening of their perception of competencies that most achieved as they were given the opportunity to delve into the factors that they felt influenced their success. For many, it appeared that as we talked, they continued to dig deeper and understand the broadness and impact of their role on their project teams and within their organizations. Almost all the participants shared that they would be interested in the cumulative results and were interested in learning if there were development
areas that they could pursue. Most of the participants also were able to share characteristics and 
skills that they saw in their colleagues that if given the opportunity they would be interested in 
pursuing.

With the population of the study averaged over sixteen years of experience in a project 
management role, and with a large majority having achieved their PMP designation, there could 
be a thought that they would feel they were seasoned in the role and would know all the factors 
needed to achieve success, but every one of the participants found areas where they could 
 improve. Each project manager or leader of project managers shared a different view of how 
projects are delivered successfully, but there definitely were similar threads that developed 
during the study. These factors can be shared with colleagues and project management 
practitioners to allow them to have more knowledge of a development plan that will allow them 
to continue and even enhance their success.

My view of the Biblical principles that relate to this area of study would start with the 
acknowledgement that even though God is control of all things, He gives us the opportunity to be 
stewards to use the talents and skills that we have been given. These can be used to contribute to 
the building up of our communities, our co-workers, our friends, our family, and even ourselves. 
It is noted in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, “Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and 
stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be 
found trustworthy” (NASB). As project managers, we should use continuous integrity to build 
trust and exhibit servant leadership but also shepherd the project team towards success. In a 
passage from the New Testament it is noted, “shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising 
oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid 
gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to
be examples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3, NASB). Project management functions best when the project manager builds trust and comradery so that the team engages for a wholistic success rather than just for what is in it for them personally. Project managers should set the example and then guide their teams toward success.

This opportunity to be the best that we can be in carrying out God’s will and plan for our lives, through our vocations, can be evidenced in the role of project management where we develop ourselves so that we can serve others through our project leadership. It is noted in the book of Mark, “but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43-45, NASB). Building a plan based on the objectives shared by the project stakeholders and then guiding team members to maximize their potential and work as a team can lead to the best opportunities for individual and organizational success. “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” (Colossians 3:23-24, NASB).

By serving stakeholders, clients, and the team throughout the work of the project, the satisfaction or happiness that was discussed as a project success factor by participants, can be achieved.

The planning and scheduling role of the project manager that participants discussed, as being the base of the role as they worked to achieve the known constraints for success in the project management is evidenced in the Bible to be effective in any undertaking that one engages in. Meeting the plans and goals of a project can relate to both achieving the required scope and schedule of the project. “Commit your works to the Lord and your plans will be established” (Proverbs 16:3, NASB). In Proverbs 21:5 it is noted, “The plans of the diligent lead surely to
advantage, but everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty” (NASB). Understanding the cost factors of the project could be related to a passage from Luke that discusses planning and budgeting when it is stated, “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?” (Luke 14:28). The success factor of effective verbal communication skills contributing to success is also evidenced in the Scriptures where it is shared, “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person” (Colossians 4:5-6). This passage relates to controlling your words and encouraging others towards success. The importance of written communication and documentation of plans and results can be reflected by the following verse,

Then the Lord answered me and said, record the vision and inscribe it on tablets that the one who reads it may run. For the vision is yet for the appointed time; it hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. (Habakkuk 2:2-3, NASB)

Project management provides the opportunity for leadership, management, and organizational competencies to be exhibited through project management to maximize success opportunities for project teams and their organizations.

**Summary and Study Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to determine and understand the characteristics and skills of project managers that can affect their ability to deliver successful projects. Based on review of the literature, there was a perceived gap in project management knowledge and understanding of the collection of competencies that lead to success in the healthcare payment and related fields. This study provided an opportunity to gather this information to aid project managers and
those that hire and lead project managers in their work with the strategic nature of this profession and the ongoing goal to reduce healthcare costs. The actual results of the interviews with project management practitioners validated this gap, within the participant organization, by understanding the collection of characteristics and skills that could lead to higher levels of project success. In addition, the knowledge to be gained can help existing project management practitioners to develop characteristics and skills as a part of their personal development to provide them a higher propensity for success in the role.

To gain the rich content of personal perceptions of project managers and managers or hirers of the role, a case study was undertaken within an organization in the healthcare payment market niche. With a need to reduce overall cost of healthcare expenditures in the U.S., the ability to deliver successful project outcomes in this space can provide an opportunity for ongoing efficiencies and cost savings. The first two research questions raised were what are the characteristics of project managers who are successful in meeting objectives in the healthcare industry, what are the skills exhibited by project managers who are successful in meeting objectives in the healthcare industry. To tie these characteristics and skills to project success, the final question was how do project managers and those that hire project managers define project success in the healthcare industry.

A qualitative case study was undertaken to determine individual perceptions and thoughts from the sample of project managers or those that manage or hire individuals in a project management role. A total of 24 participants were interviewed with a mix of half of the participants from each of two different demographics to provide some variety or non-homogeneity to better triangulate the results. The participants were all asked a series of questions in a semi-structured interview format. The questions included discussion of the role,
training, and experience of the participant and then included an inventory of the characteristics and skills that had allowed project managers to be successful in delivering projects. The participants were also asked to define project success during the discussion to tie all the factors together.

Project success was defined as not only meeting the triple constraint of time, cost, and scope but delivering quality results that result in client and stakeholder satisfaction and happiness. In addition, project success was described as finishing a project where the project team experienced development, learned strategic lessons and knowledge, and where the team and organization was positioned for future success in delivering project work. Key characteristics of project managers included organization and ability to plan and execute but with a transformational, motivating, and encouraging style. Servant leadership and collaboration within teams, to build trust and accountability for delivering project tasks and objectives, was also seen as attributing to success. Soft skills focusing on verbal and written communication, along with emotional intelligence to understand individuals and teams and to persist when evaluating risks and overcoming obstacles, were noted as factors that contribute to project success. Finally, the added skill of having technical knowledge including project management and data analytics tools, along with industry or product knowledge was seen to round out the competencies that would allow the project manager to maximize success. In the strategic organizational role of project manager, project management professionals as the “conductor” or “quarterback” of their project teams should evaluate their characteristics and skills against study results and/or specific industry standards to further their development and propensity for success delivering project objectives and satisfaction for clients and stakeholders.
References


Creasy, T., & Anantatmula, V. S. (2013). From every direction - How personality traits and dimensions of project managers can conceptually affect project success. *Project Management Journal, 44*(6), 36-51. doi:10.1002/pmj.21372


doi:10.1002/pmj.20084


doi:10.4236/jssm.2016.93033


Medina, A., & Francis, A. J. (2015). What are the characteristics that software development project team members associate with a good project manager? *Project Management Journal, 46*(5), 81-93. doi:10.1002/pmj.21530


doi:10.19030/ijmis.v18i4.8820


doi:10.1016/j.ijproman.2009.11.008


Appendix A: Interview Questions (Project Managers)

Demographic Questions (primary question and possible follow-up questions to facilitate discussion):

1. What is your role related to Project Management?
   a. Do you spend 50% or more of your time in this role?

2. How many years have you been performing this role?
   a. What role were you in prior to taking on the PM role?
   b. Why did you decide to become a project manager?

3. Discuss what education or training that you have completed related to this role?
   a. Internal company training?
   b. Industry related courses through PMI or affiliates?
   c. University or College coursework included?

4. Are you certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) by the Project Management Professional (PMI)? If not, do you have any other professional certifications related to Project Management?
   a. If so, when did you receive your certification?

5. What is your definition of project success?
   a. If triple constraint of cost, time, and scope are not discussed, dig a bit deeper to see which of the three the participant’s organization focuses on.
   b. How does your organization define project success if different?
Study Questions:

1. What are the characteristics that you have that have helped you to complete projects successfully by being on-time, on-budget, and within the defined scope? How do these characteristics contribute to you being successful as a project manager?
   a. If not discussed, ask about characteristics related to management and/or leadership.

2. What are the characteristics that you have seen other project managers possess that has allowed them to complete projects successfully? Why do these characteristics contribute to the success of other project managers?
   a. If not discussed, ask about characteristics related to management and/or leadership.

3. What are other characteristics that you would like to possess to allow you to better complete projects successfully? How do you think these characteristics will help you to be successful in delivery of projects?
   a. If you had the opportunity, how would you develop these characteristics?

4. What are the skills that you have that have helped you to complete projects successfully by being on-time, on-budget, and within the defined scope? How do these skills contribute to you being successful as a project manager?
   a. If not discussed, ask about organization or industry technical skills.
   b. If not discussed, ask if there are any soft skills that have contributed to success.
   c. If not discussed, ask about project management skills (tools, techniques, and methods)
5. What are the skills that you have seen other project managers possess that has allowed them to complete projects successfully? Why do these skills contribute to the success of other project managers?
   a. If not discussed, ask about organization or industry technical skills.
   b. If not discussed, ask if there are any soft skills that have contributed to success.
   c. If not discussed, ask about project management skills (tools, techniques, and methods)

6. What are other skills that you would like to possess to allow you to better complete projects successfully? How do you think these skills will help you to be successful in delivery of projects?
   a. If you had the opportunity, how would you develop these skills?

7. What training methods or classes have you completed that have allowed you to complete projects successfully?
Appendix B: Interview Questions (Leaders or hirers of Project Managers)

Demographic Questions (primary question and possible follow-up questions to facilitate discussion):

1. What is your role related to Project Management?
   a. Managers of project managers – how many project managers do you manage?
   b. Hirers of project managers – how many project manager positions have you helped to fill?
   c. Do the project managers perform their role 50% or more of their work hours?

2. How many years have you been performing this role?
   a. Prior to this position, describe any interactions you had with project managers?

3. Discuss what education or training you look for when hiring project managers?
   a. Internal company training?
   b. Industry related courses through PMI or affiliates?
   c. University or College coursework included?

4. What is your stance on project managers and formal Project Management certification?
   a. How is your organization’s stance on certification different than your stance?

5. When setting requirements or goals for project managers being hired or managed what is your definition of project success?
   a. If triple constraint of cost, time, and scope are not discussed, dig a bit deeper to see which of the three the participant’s organization focuses on.
   b. How does your organization define project success if different?
Study Questions:

1. What are the characteristics that you believe help project managers to complete projects successfully by being on-time, on-budget, and within the defined scope? How do these characteristics contribute to the success of project managers?
   a. If not discussed, ask about characteristics related to management and/or leadership.

2. What are the characteristics that you have seen other types of managers possess that has allowed them to complete projects successfully? How would these characteristics contribute to the success of project managers?
   a. If not discussed, ask about characteristics related to management and/or leadership.

3. What are other characteristics that you would like project managers or new hire candidates to have to allow them to better complete projects successfully? How do you think these characteristics will help project managers be successful in delivery of projects?
   a. How does your organization help project managers develop these characteristics?

4. What are the skills that you encourage project managers to have to complete projects successfully by being on-time, on-budget, and within the defined scope?
   a. If not discussed, ask about organization or industry technical skills.
   b. If not discussed, ask if there are any soft skills that have contributed to success.
   c. If not discussed, ask about project management skills (tools, techniques, and methods)
5. How do you guide project managers to obtain the appropriate skills and characteristics to lead to success?
   a. If not discussed, ask about organization or industry technical skills.
   b. If not discussed, ask if there are any soft skills that have contributed to success.
   c. If not discussed, ask about project management skills (tools, techniques, and methods)

6. What training methods or classes are available in your organization that have allowed project managers to complete projects successfully?
   a. What other training or classes would you like to see your project managers undertake?
## Appendix C: Key Word Frequency Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Word</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of words</th>
<th>Similar Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>project</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>4.52%</td>
<td>project, projected, projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managers</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.59%</td>
<td>manage, management, manager, managers, managing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
<td>think, thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
<td>skill, skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>communicate, communicating, communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1.37%</td>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>client</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>client, clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successful</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>success, successful, successfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.31%</td>
<td>work, worked, working, works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>team</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>team, teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>help</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>help, helped, helpful, helping, helps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>make, makes, making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>know, knowing, knows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.90%</td>
<td>understand, understanding, understands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goal</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>goal, goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>time, times, timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organized</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0.72%</td>
<td>organization, organize, organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delivering</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
<td>deliver, delivered, delivering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learned</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.62%</td>
<td>learn, learned, learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ability</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
<td>meet, meeting, meetings, meets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>build</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>build, building, builds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plan</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
<td>plan, planned, planning, plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>emotional, emotionally, emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leadership</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>person, personal, personalities, personality, personally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tools</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.47%</td>
<td>tool, tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>budget</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>budget, budgeting, budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>process, processed, processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tasks</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.41%</td>
<td>task, tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>business</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>change, changed, changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>execute</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>execute, executed, executing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focus</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>focus, focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intelligence</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>intelligence, intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schedule</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>schedule, schedules, scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>technical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>data</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dependencies</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>depend/s, dependability, dependencies, depending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effective</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>effective, effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ensure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>ensure, ensuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>objective</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>objective, objectives, objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tracking</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>track, tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>customer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>happy</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stakeholders</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>stakeholder, stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>style</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>together</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.28%</td>
<td>together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>