

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY TRAINING

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DIVERSITY TRAINING IN THE WORKPLACE

by

Vilmarie Lopez

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University, School of Business

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Abstract

Organizations worldwide have gone global and with that, the workforce demographics have shifted to a more diverse population. Scholars project that within 30 years there will not be a “majority” group in the workplace and these demographic dissimilarities will result in withdrawal behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and employee turnover because employees will not feel identify with any group (David et al., 2015). Therefore, organizations are focusing their efforts on designing strategies and implementing training initiatives in order to train the workforce, not just on diversity awareness, but on how to cope with diversity in the workplace and reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. However, there are unanswered questions: Are these initiatives effective? If not, why do they fail? This study explored the reasons diversity training fails to increase awareness and reduce discrimination in the workplace, therefore, resulting in negative organizational outcomes. This study explored the how and why the failure of diversity training is linked to employees engaging in withdrawal behaviors. This study explored how leadership involvement and support of diversity management initiatives impact employees’ behaviors and attitudes. The problem addressed was the potential failure of diversity training in the educational services industry in Central Texas to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on the employees.

Keywords: Diverse workforce, diversity training, employees’ behaviors, leadership

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Approvals

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Dedication

I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me (*King James Version*, 2016, Phillipians 4:13).

First of all, this dissertation is dedicated to God, who gave me the strength, persistence, and knowledge through my everyday life.

To my children Paloma, Robert A., and Mia, who inspired me each and every day to be a better mother. Thank you for your love and support.

To my husband Robert, thank you for your love and understanding through this journey. It was not easy, but we did it!

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Approvals	iii
Dedication	iv
List of Tables	x
List of Figures	xi
Section 1: Foundation of the Study	1
Background of the Problem	3
Problem Statement	4
Purpose Statement	5
Research Questions	6
Research Question 1	7
Research Question 2	8
Research Question 3	9
Nature of the Study	10
Discussion of Research Paradigm	10
Discussion of Design	13
Discussion of Methodology	15
Discussion of Triangulation	19
Summary of the Nature of the Study	20
Conceptual Framework	21
Concepts	22
Formal Theories	24

Actors	26
Constructs	27
Relationship between the Concepts, Theories, Actors and Constructs.....	28
Summary of the Research Framework.....	29
Definition of Terms.....	30
Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations.....	31
Assumptions.....	32
Limitations	34
Delimitations.....	35
Significance of the Study	36
Reduction of Gaps in the Literature.....	36
Summary of the Significance of the Study	40
Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	41
Business Practices Implemented by Organization in Diversity Training	42
The Problem.....	49
Concepts.....	52
Formal Theories	57
Actors	61
Constructs	64
Related Studies.....	66
Anticipated and Discovered Themes	72
Summary of the Literature Review	73
Summary of Section 1 and Transition	74

Section 2: The Project.....	77
Purpose Statement.....	77
Role of the Researcher	78
Research Methodology	79
Discussion of Flexible Design	79
Discussion of Case Study.....	80
Discussion of Methods for Triangulation	82
Summary of Research Methodology	83
Participants.....	83
Population and Sampling	84
Discussion of Population	85
Discussion of Sampling	86
Summary of Population and Sampling	88
Data Collection and Organization.....	88
Data Collection Plan	89
Instruments.....	91
Data Organization Plan	94
Summary of Data Collection and Organization.....	95
Data Analysis	95
Emergent Ideas.....	96
Coding Themes	97
Interpretations	98
Data Representation	99

Analysis for Triangulation	99
Summary of Data Analysis	100
Reliability and Validity.....	101
Reliability.....	101
Validity	103
Bracketing	104
Summary of Reliability and Validity	106
Summary of Section 2 and Transition	106
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice.....	110
Overview of the Study	110
Presentation of the Findings.....	114
The Problem.....	118
Anticipated Themes	120
Employees' Behaviors and Attitudes.....	120
Leadership Support	121
Leadership Diversity Intelligence (DQ).....	122
Workplace Withdrawal	123
Attitudinal Learning.....	124
Discovered Themes.....	125
Employees' Attitudes and How They Perceived the Training Influence Training Outcomes	125
Leadership Involvement is Essential for a Successful Implementation of Diversity Management Initiatives.....	130

Employee-Engagement in the Planning and Decision-Making Help Improve	
Employee's Interpersonal Skills and Job Motivation	134
Multi-Cultural Awareness and Education are Key in the Educational Services	
Industry	138
Application to Professional Practice	143
Improving General Business Practice	144
Potential Application Strategies.....	145
Recommendations for Further Study	149
Reflections	151
Personal and Professional Growth.....	151
Biblical Perspective	153
Summary of Section 3.....	155
Summary and Study Conclusions	160
Appendices.....	178
Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide	179

List of Tables

Table 1. Gender and Role in the Organization	116
Table 2. Based on Demographics	116
Table 3. Focus Group Demographics	117

List of Figures

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Diagram	22
Figure 2. Independent School District's Demographics	120

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In recent decades, organizations had become widely diverse mainly due to globalized markets and shifting demographics which bring people into the workforce from different backgrounds. Scholars had shown a great interest in this topic and many studies had been conducted to explore and understand how to manage diversity in the workplace to achieve competitive advantage in a very competitive global market. According to Maturo et al. (2019), “diversity and inclusion have become an important part of business strategic plan as a response to recent shifts on the workforce demographics where knowledge and innovation play an important role in today’s environment” (p. 358). Therefore, this study focused on diversity management initiatives such as training the workforce on diversity and inclusion, regardless of position in the organization, in order to increase awareness, reduce discrimination, and create a more inclusive working environment.

Section 1 of this study focused on the problem to be studied. This study thoroughly discussed the background of the problem, the problem statement, and the purpose statement, which helped the researcher explore the reasons diversity training can potentially fail to achieve the end goals which could further result in negative organizational outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). The researcher also identified the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and potential risks moving forward. This section also addressed the significance of this study in business practice and the relationship to the cognate Human Resources Management (HRM) as a business field of study as well as understanding the application of biblical concepts on this study.

In Section 2, the researcher discussed the project in detail. This section discussed the researcher’s role throughout the study and the research methodology to be used to further explore

and understand the problem. This section played an intricate role in the development of the research project and further execution of the field study. This qualitative research study was conducted using flexible design, which as defined by Creswell and Poth (2018), explored a social or human problem where the researcher observes participants, analyzes words, and conducts a study in a natural setting. Therefore, based on the nature of the problem being studied as defined in Section 1, flexible design seemed the most appropriate methodology to conduct this study. Furthermore, in this section the researcher chosen methodology was multiple case study in order to explore the problem from different perspectives in a real-life setting using multiple sources of information to gather data such as one-on-one interviews, archival data, and focus groups. Lastly, in Section 2, the researcher discussed who the population would be and how it would be divided to better explore and understand the problem. The sample to conduct the study was taken from the industry and consisted of employees in different roles as well as diverse backgrounds. In this section, the researcher also discussed the size of the population to be studied prior to conducting the study and discussed the actual number of participants in the study and how they were recruited in Section 3.

The last section of this study was the presentation of findings. In Section 3, the researcher discussed in detail how the study was conducted. The researcher conducted the research study in an independent school district in Central Texas area which serves a large population of students and employed a faculty/staff who are described as a mobile population. Most of the habitants in the community where the study took place are military families who relocated from other states or overseas locations for a period averaging 3 years. In Section 2, the researcher discussed the intended size of the population; however, a total of 33 men and women participated in this study. The researcher described how the population was divided and how the data were collected and

analyzed. Three themes were discovered as the result of the coding and transcribing of the data. The themes discovered discussed in this section are listed below and relate to each of the research questions. The researcher further discussed how these themes related to each area of the research proposal and how each theme answered the research questions and helped the researcher understand and explored the problem being studied.

1. Employees' attitudes and how they perceived the training influence training outcomes.
2. Leadership involvement is essential for a successful implementation of diversity management initiatives.
3. Employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making help improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation.
4. Multi-cultural awareness and education are key in the educational services industry.

Lastly, in Section 3, the researched concluded the presentation of findings with an overview of the study and reflected on her journey throughout this process and how it helps her grow as a Christian, individual, and profession in the human resources field of study. She also discussed the application to professional practice, recommended strategies to the organization, which can be used to leverage on the findings, and recommendation for further study.

Background of the Problem

Many organizations had gone global and operating in global markets which means a workforce consisting of people from different ethnic groups, gender preferences, religions, and ages. David et al. (2015) projected that within 30 years there will not be a "majority" group in the workplace and these demographic dissimilarities will result in withdrawal behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and employee turnover because employees will not be able to identify

with any group. Therefore, training the workforce not just on diversity awareness but on how to manage diversity in the workplace and most importantly, how to train employees and executives in a widely diverse environment, challenge many organizations these days as they face a workforce engaging on behaviors therefore resulting in negative organizational outcomes. Furthermore, there is a misconception when it comes to awareness training in the workplace which causes training to potentially fail and achieve its end state creating more challenges for the leadership at all levels. Being aware of biases and discrimination against protected groups are not enough to reduce discrimination in the workplace, increase awareness or change employees and managers' behaviors towards training and the organization itself. On the contrary, organizations put leaders and executives through online testing which proved the existence of unconscious biases which could negatively affect social interactions in the workplace as well as the effectiveness of diversity training (Noon, 2018). So, understanding the role of leadership, their values and potential biases were pivotal to this study in order to understand why diversity management initiatives could fail to achieve the objectives. Lastly, this research was built upon various research studies in Human Resources Development (HRD) as organizations and their leadership tried to understand why diversity training could fail and finding the gap of developing an efficient human resources development strategy that leads the organizations to a more inclusive working environment.

Problem Statement

The general problem addressed in this study was the potential failure of diversity training to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance. David et al. (2015) presented evidence showing that diversity training fails to meet its goals to increase awareness

and reduce discrimination when the workplace is unsupportive of diversity, therefore, causing employee withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. Rawski and Conroy (2020) supported these views and presented evidence showing that diversity training fails and lead to negative organizational outcomes when nationality diversity is low and training is imposed failing to increase awareness, reduce prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Guillaume et al. (2017) noted that diversity training engenders organizational performance, team creativity and team members' interaction when diversity-oriented training is not aligned with HR diversity-oriented strategies and nationality diversity is low. Peretz et al. (2015) suggested that for diversity training programs not to fail, they must be congruent with the national cultural practices, otherwise, employee's commitment to the organization will be lower and they will start engaging in withdrawal behaviors such as higher turnover and absenteeism. Israel et al. (2017) studied this topic even further and suggested that the overall impact of diversity training or response to training is linked to workplace diversity resistance (e.g., open prejudice, refusal to engage on training, and verbal or nonverbal hostility in the workplace). The specific problem addressed in this study was the potential failure of diversity training in the educational services industry in Central Texas to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on the employees. This study further explored the reasons diversity training could potentially fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). Additionally, this qualitative study

explored the how and why the failure of diversity training was linked to employees engaging in the withdrawal behaviors. Lastly, this study also explored how leadership involvement and support of diversity and inclusion initiatives could impact employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance. In this study, the potential failure of diversity management and training initiatives on employees was defined as the negative outcomes (e.g., poor performance, withdrawal behaviors, etc.) of these initiatives on the organization and its employees.

Research Questions

Many studies had been conducted to determine why diversity training failed its intended goals and objectives. The research questions listed below guided this study in order to explain why these programs could fail at times and how organizations could do better in order to achieve the intended goals. Therefore, this research study sought to answer the research questions below in order to evaluate the impact of diversity training programs in the educational services industry in Central Texas. Furthermore, this research study sought to achieve its general objective to determine why diversity management initiatives such as diversity training could fail to achieve the stated goals resulting in negative organizational outcomes. The research questions focused on achieving the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the reasons why diversity training initiatives failed to achieve stated goals and what employee behaviors influence the outcomes of the programs.
2. To understand the difference between diversity awareness and diversity training in order to determine how diversity training can help the organizations attain the stated goals.
3. To assess the impact of leadership values to the successful implementation of diversity management initiatives.

RQ1. How do diversity training programs fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?

RQ1a. What employee behaviors contribute to the failure of diversity training programs?

RQ1b. What employee behaviors contribute to the effectiveness of diversity training programs?

RQ2. What makes awareness training initiatives in the organization different than diversity training?

RQ2a. How the understanding of those differences helps organizations attain the end goals to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?

RQ3. What are the most critical leadership qualities for an organization to successfully implement diversity training programs in the educational services industry?

Research Question 1

These questions sought to explain why diversity training could fail to achieve the desired goals and to understand what employee behaviors could potentially affect the implementation of diversity training programs. Studies had been conducted to explore the ‘why’ diversity management initiatives such as diversity training in the workplace fail its stated end goals to increase awareness and reduce discrimination in the workplace. According to Dobbin and Kalev (2016), one of the reasons those objectives would not be met is because the leadership uses negative messages or threats in their training (e.g., discriminate and the company will pay the price). Another reason why diversity training potentially fails would be because organizations make training mandatory and threaten employees to attend, otherwise, there would be consequences. These employees’ behaviors or negative reactions could result in the failure of such initiatives as employees could rebel against imposed training and start engaging in withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover.

On the other hand, diversity programs could be more effective if employees do not feel that they ‘have to’ attend annual training in order to comply with state or federal regulations. When employees do not feel that the training is imposed or mandated from the top leadership, their behaviors and attitudes towards training, and more important, towards their jobs, could greatly contribute to the success of the programs. Moreover, employees engage a more positive attitude because they feel like they belong to the organization and value, therefore, reciprocating the organization with positive behavior, high productivity, and performance. Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) referred to these positive attitudes and behaviors as affective commitment or that special bond of the employee with the organization and they feel more willing to work towards achieving organizational goals. Indeed, affective commitment could be seen as a positive outcome of a successful diversity training program helping reduce employee’s withdrawal behaviors.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 sought to understand the differences between awareness training and diversity training, and how understanding these differences would benefit the organization meet their training objectives. “It is estimated that 67% of U.S. organizations and 74% of Fortune 500 companies invest in diversity-training programs” (Alhejji et al., 2016, p. 98). Indeed, many organizations could be reluctant to invest in such initiatives because the lack of awareness and lack of understanding of the benefits those initiatives could bring like market impact on the business and the organizational impact (e.g., employee commitment to the organization). The latter is critical for the organization to understand as it could lead to employee withdrawal behaviors, poor employee performance and poor team performance (Alhejji et al., 2016). In fact, diversity training should address not just the ‘how to’ (training) but align it with the ‘why’

(awareness) in order for diversity initiatives implementation to be effective. Alhejji et al. also discussed that diversity training, not just awareness training, helps to align the knowledge and skills of employees on diversity with their business strategy which will further enhance the employee's commitment to the organization, improve team performance, and gain competitive advantage.

Research Question 3

Lastly, research question number three sought to explain the leadership qualities and values needed to successfully implement diversity management initiatives. Diversity management initiatives such as diversity training in the workplace are crucial for an organization to comply and meet their diversity efforts of increasing awareness and reducing discrimination in the workplace. However, in order to succeed and meet the end goals when implementing organizational diversity initiatives, two steps proved to be crucial: leadership engagement in pro-diversity behavior and higher perceived commitment by the HR manager (Ng & Sears, 2020). Furthermore, Ng and Sears hypothesized this relationship between the CEOs' moral values and how mid-level managers perceived their commitment will positively influence the implementation of diversity initiatives such as training. They concluded that the CEO's commitment and moral values towards diversity are imperative to successfully implement diversity programs initiatives. When upper management showed fewer positive views on diversity, they would not buy-in to implementing these initiatives unless they have the moral obligation to do it. On the other hand, when the organization itself lacked the motives to support these initiatives (e.g., economic), upper management's moral values and social responsibility demonstrated to be pivotal for the successful implementation of diversity initiatives.

Nature of the Study

Discussion of Research Paradigm

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), paradigms or interpretative frameworks are “worldviews” or beliefs the researcher bring into the process which will guide the study (p. 18). Because we all see things differently and have views and interpretations of the world, there are several paradigms that structure or guide the research. The primary research paradigms discussed in this research study were post-positivism, constructivism, transformative frameworks or participatory action frameworks and pragmatism. Kaushik and Walsh (2019) discussed that they share these common elements but a different perspective on research: axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, and rhetoric.

Post-Positivism. This framework emerged from the positivism paradigm because post-positivists believe that there is something else out there that is worth inquiring about. Kankam (2019) discussed post-positivism as a framework that goes beyond scientific methods and explained that this method is more subjective and “mentally constructed by individuals” (p. 87). Therefore, this approach could be seen more on research supported by quantitative research, or a combination of both, quantitative and qualitative methods. This framework is also supported by reasoning because the researcher inquired about the logical steps rather than the cause and effect. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), post-positivism focuses more on the probability that something may or may not occur rather than the cause and effect. Postpositivist researchers do not validate data on personal experiences and beliefs but are more analytical and will use other tools (e.g., computer programs) to help analyze the collected data.

Constructivism. This paradigm is associated more with qualitative research. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live

in and work” and these individuals are more subjective at viewing things and understanding their meanings (p. 24). A social constructivism has a more subjective view of reality and their knowledge and understanding of things is not based on scientific facts but rather on knowledge and experience they gain. Furthermore, researchers consider all the available facts and look at the big picture, then “construct” his own understanding and view of things by asking the right questions. It is not that researchers are born this way, but rather developed. King (2018) explained that “the notion that knowledge is not something that people possess” but it occurs through social interaction.

Transformative Framework. This framework is best suited for qualitative research. As described by Creswell and Poth (2018), the basic tenet of this framework is that “knowledge is not neutral” and its purpose is to improve society. Therefore, some researchers do not identify with either of the previously discussed frameworks or paradigms and use the transformative framework as an alternative method to advocate for inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., LGBT groups) into the society. This framework brings together other research paradigms not discussed here such as critical theory and feminist theories. According to Mertens (2017), the strength resides on those marginalized groups, and they need to be included since they all have been discriminated against and oppressed because of the cultural values and life experiences which have led to social transformations. The end state of these researchers is to increase social justice and decrease social disparities.

Pragmatism. As defined by Creswell and Poth (2018), pragmatism focuses on the outcomes of the research, the “what” and the “how” of the situation rather than the conditions that preceded or the logical steps a postpositivist inquire about. This framework is not based on theories or methodologies but studying the problem in real-world situations. Pragmatism is

suited for both qualitative and quantitative studies as the pragmatic researcher will use different data collection methods to answer the research questions such as interviews. A pragmatic researcher believes that not two people can experience the same, therefore, there can be multiple realities that are open to empirical inquiry (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Furthermore, Kaushik and Walsh suggested that a pragmatic researcher not only brings in human experiences but scientific domains in order to understand the problem.

Research Study Paradigm: Pragmatism. This research study used pragmatism as its paradigm which closely aligned with my perspective on how I see the world and how I handle problems. When looking at problems, I remain objective and look at the “what” and the “how” of research using multiple methods to collect data in order to answer the research questions. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), this paradigm focuses on the problem being studied which is the most important aspect of the research, what works, and solutions to the problem itself rather than the methods. Therefore, a pragmatic approach fitted me as a person and my perception of the world. Furthermore, it was best suited for this research on the potential failure of diversity training in the workplace. The intent of this research was not to solve a problem but as explained by Kaushik and Walsh (2019), the use of pragmatism required detection of a social problem and actions to take to address the problem. As a pragmatic researcher, my perspective of the world led me to answer the research questions, avoid biases, and better understand what was working or not, best practices, and further recommendations. As a pragmatic researcher, I was able to understand how leadership values and engagement in pro-diversity behaviors can influence employees’ participation in training and learning of diversity versus leading them to engage in withdrawal behaviors such as higher turnover and absenteeism. Lastly, a pragmatic approach incorporated exploring and understanding of the training methods and curriculum used

to conduct training, and how training would benefit both the organization's competitive advantage and employee's job motivation and performance.

Discussion of Design

Types of Research Designs. "Research design is a blueprint to guide the research process by laying out how a study will move from the research purpose/questions to the outcomes" (Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018, p. 238). Indeed, the research design guided the process and was critical for the researcher as she needed to determine how the data were collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported. It was imperative for the researchers to understand each one of the approaches in order to select the most appropriate design for the study in order to determine the what data needed to be collected, the how that data were analyzed and the why of the data resulted from the research in order to further answer the research questions. There are three types of research designs: quantitative (fixed), qualitative (flexible) and mixed methods as discussed below, yet the one selected for this research study was flexible design. In this section, I further explained the appropriateness to the problem being studied.

Quantitative (Fixed) Method. According to Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), the researcher uses fixed methods like close-ended questions (predetermined) or numeric data to collect data then use computer/statistical programs to analyze and interpret the results. This type of design is more formal as it uses numerical data to study and understand the problem. By using quantitative method, the researcher can determine the relationships between the dependent and independent variables, and the cause and effect between the variables. This type of design is more appropriate and frequently used in science, psychology, economic, sociology, and political science type studies as it generates numerical data and researchers are trying to test and validate

the hypothesis using statistical analysis. Lastly, there are four categories of quantitative (fixed) design: experimental, quasi-experimental, descriptive, and correlational.

Qualitative (Flexible) Method. On the other hand, qualitative methods use data to study the problem. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined this method as an inquiry process that explores a social or human problem where the researcher observes participants, analyzes words, and conducts study in a natural setting. Moreover, in qualitative research the researcher is trying to explore or understand a problem not to validate a hypothesis allowing more ‘flexibility’ with data collection such as open-ended questions, interviews, observations, and case studies. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), this exploration or understanding is needed in order to study a group and variables which are not quantifiable or easily measured. Throughout this research field study, the researcher used this method using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, focus groups and publicly available data to further understand the problem being studied. Creswell and Poth further discussed five approaches to qualitative research which the researcher discussed below in further details and explained the appropriateness to this study.

Mixed. Mixed research design will then use both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. According to Shorten and Smith (2017), mixed methods research purposely requires quantitative and qualitative methods to collect, analyze and interpret the evidence. The decision to use mixed methods will depend on the type of research. Deciding on using mixed methods will depend on the research study, what the problem is and the research questions. Additionally, the researcher will opt for mixed methods when the study is complex and the researcher would like to view the problem and collect data from different points of views and diverse sources. However, mixed methods can pose some challenges for the novice researcher conducting a complex study due to the amount of data to be reconciled, analyzed, and interpreted

(McKenna et al., 2021). Last, mixed methods could be ‘fixed’ or ‘emergent.’ The difference between the two is that the fixed mixed methods and procedures are predetermined in the beginning of the study and implemented as planned while emergent mixed methods occur when the researcher finds a component being inadequate and a second approach gets added after the study has already started.

Research Study Design: Flexible. This study used a flexible design qualitative method, specifically, a multiple case study research method. Flexible research design was appropriate for this study because the problem being studied was not a theory driven study, but ‘flexible’ research to explore and try understanding the problem and answer the research questions. Additionally, flexible research design was appropriate for this type of qualitative research since this study took place in multiple locations using documented case studies and research as well as personal interviews and focus groups, which therefore dictated the course of this research.

Discussion of Methodology

Types of Methodologies. Once the researcher identified the research design that best suited for this research study, the researcher decided on the methodology approach. Choosing the right methodology played an intricate part of the research design as researcher made important decisions such as how to collect data and how to analyze the data which therefore guided the study and answered the research questions. In this section, the researcher discussed the different approaches to qualitative research study using flexible design.

Narrative. A narrative design is a type of qualitative research where the researcher is telling a story of an individual in detail. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), narrative research is used to collect detailed stories from individuals and their experiences in specific locations and using different strategies to gather the data, such as interviews and observations.

This qualitative research method is useful when the researchers want to tell a story about someone's life experiences and what those experiences meant to that individual's life. Carless and Douglas (2017) discussed that narrative research helps researchers "learn how individuals negotiate their identity, morality, and behavior within their particular life context" (p. 307).

There are different types of narrative approaches to a researcher can take. Some of the most used ones discussed by Creswell and Poth (2018) are biographical study which is a study of someone's life; autoethnography is telling our own story or autobiography; and, an oral history is a compilation of personal events, causes and effects from an individual(s) or organization.

Researchers might encounter issues or challenges when using a narrative design and they must do mainly with the gathering of individuals' life experiences and events/situations: the subject of the study willingness to release information and protecting the privacy of the individual(s). Not everyone feels comfortable telling their own stories and talking about events or situations in their lives, for instance if the researcher is conducting a study with soldiers and what they lived during war might not want to tell the story because of their post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD); however, they might be able to talk through images. Moreover, the researcher should not be too invasive into the subjects' personal lives if that is not the focus of the study. Flynn (2019) discussed this as a challenge when using narrative research with intellectual disabilities and the way to address this challenge is building communication and rapport with the individual, choosing a familiar location for the interview, and having a familiar and support face present during the interview(s).

Phenomenology. A phenomenology study focuses on what a group of individuals have experienced which could lack objectivity as it is more the participants' perception of their own experiences with the phenomenon. Phenomenology study is recommended when the researchers

are trying to understand the common experiences of a group within a particular phenomenon. Researchers might face some challenges when using a phenomenological approach as it can be too structured for some researchers. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained some of the challenges faced by researchers: bracketing personal experiences (did it really happen?) and how the researcher personal experiences can be introduced to the research, and how interpretive phenomenology fits within the study. The amount of data collected from interviews, observations and documents can be too personal and skewed the data, resulting in the research being more subjective. Therefore, the interpretation of the data can be difficult as the researcher will always have a particular interest drawing him into investigating the phenomenon. However, researchers need to remain unbiased and avoid reaching to conclusions based on their own personal experiences but the experiences of the participants.

Ethnography. This approach focuses on a culture-sharing group in order to describe and interpret the patterns of behaviors, values, beliefs, and language (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Using this approach allows the researchers to immerse themselves with the participants in order to understand the social and cultural aspects of the group. Creswell and Poth suggested that ethnography research is best suited when there is a need to understand how the group works and to explore the cultural phenomena. There are also many challenges associated with the use of this approach. Ethnographic research is also time consuming. Another challenge researchers face when using this approach, is the amount of data to be analyzed because this approach produces a high volume of unstructured data from fieldwork, diaries, interview transcripts and memos (Jones & Smith, 2017).

Case Study. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case study research must be view as a methodology where the researcher explores real-life cases or situations and gathers detailed

data through different sources of information such as observations, interviews, and reports. Case studies are used to research or investigate an individual, a group, or an event in real-life or setting. Creswell and Poth pointed out common characteristics among case studies: identify the case to be analyzed that can be described by different parameters; present an in-depth understanding of the case to be studied; use multiple sources of information to conduct the analysis; always conclude studies with the researcher's findings and conclusions or assertions after exploring and analyzing all sources of qualitative data. The use of case studies is best suited when the researchers want to explore real-world cases bounded by parameters such as time and place. Like the previously discussed approaches, researchers may face some challenges when using case study as the qualitative research approach. Some of the challenges, as described by Creswell and Poth, are the scope of the case selected, deciding how many cases to study, single or multiple studies, and the amount of data collected which might lack relevancy with the study. Furthermore, researcher biases can also pose some challenges in case study research as the researcher might select cases influenced by his/her own subjective feelings or emotions towards the topic being researched.

Research Study Methodology: Multiple Case Study. The chosen method for this study was a multiple case study method. This method was used to study the problem in a real setting using multiple sources of information such as interviews of the employees within the organization as well as personnel in leadership roles. Some of the participants, which will be later discussed in detail, agreed to also participate in a focus group. Multiple case study method is a qualitative research approach in which researcher used real-life situations or 'cases' to explore the 'how' and the 'why' of the research question(s). With the use of this methodology, the researcher did not seek to describe a phenomenon or narrate someone's story and life

experiences but a more in-depth investigation to study an individual(s), a group, event, or an activity. Therefore, multiple case study design best fitted this research as the study focused on the potential failure of diversity training programs within the educational services industry in Central Texas. According to Yin (2018), the use of method will depend on the following conditions: research question seek to answer the why and the how; there is no control over behavioral events and researchers are looking to obtain data in a natural setting; and focuses on contemporary events. Indeed, the use of this methodology approach helped answer the following research questions: the why diversity programs fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination; the how understanding awareness initiatives versus training can help organizations attain results; and the why and what leadership values are critical for implementation. In order to answer these questions, a multiple case study was used to study the problem in a real setting, the potential failure of diversity training programs using multiple sources of information such as documents and interviews of the personnel in charge of developing and executing the training as well as personnel participating in the training.

Discussion of Triangulation

Triangulation is used for both qualitative and quantitative research using two or more data sources to check for their reliability and validity and establish credibility. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), to establish that trustworthiness, the use of terms such as credibility, authenticity, dependability, and confirmability are crucial for internal validation and reliability and objectivity of the research. Qualitative research must be credible based on actual data and real-life experiences, not based on statistical and numerical data as it will be in quantitative research. Therefore, for this qualitative study, it was imperative for the researcher to immerse herself and get closer to the participants through interviews and focus groups in order to

understand the field of study and ensure quality and reliability of the data collected. Although the use of multiple sources of data collection and sources of evidence gave the study more validity and reliability, the researcher also used triangulation as a method to corroborate and validate the data. As Yin (2018) discussed, there are four types of triangulations according to Patton (2015): data, investigator, theory, and methodological. From these four types, data triangulation pertained to my research study as the data were collected and analyzed from different data sources such as documented case studies, direct observations, and interviews that can also converge and confirm the same findings. Last, triangulation posed some challenges for the researcher due to the availability of data collected from interviews and focus groups as well as the data already available through annual reports publicly available online which were also used as a source of data or evidence for this study. Yin also stated that using multiple data collection sources such as the ones mentioned earlier is time consuming and at times, expensive when the data comes from different sources. Indeed, the collecting of the data from all the data sources was time consuming, then the analysis to ensure the reliability and validity of the sources and data collected consumed most of the researcher's time during the field study.

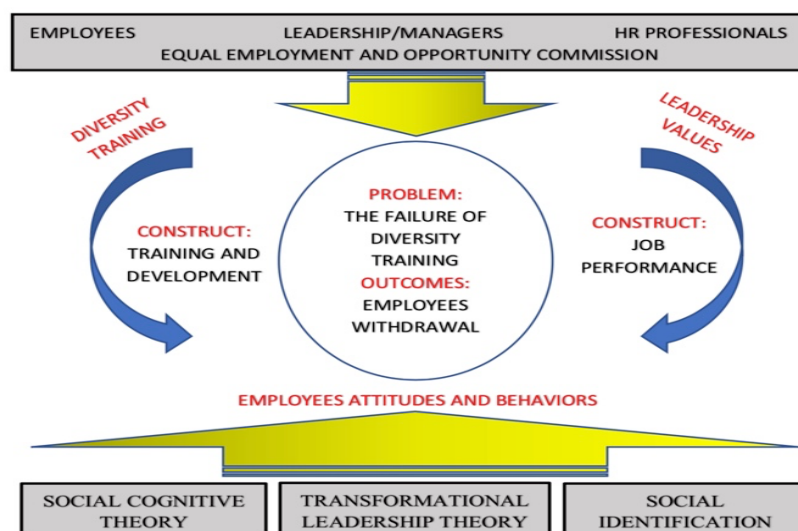
Summary of the Nature of the Study

The nature of the study discussed the different aspects of research design and the appropriateness to my research study. As discussed, research design is a process where the researcher lays out the approach that is more appropriate for the type of study and that will help the researcher understand, explore, and answer the research questions. Before the researcher moves forward with the study, he or she must understand their view of the world for the study to be based on factual data and not on personal experiences. Therefore, the researcher discussed the primary research paradigms and the chosen research paradigm, pragmatism, the why of her

approach and how she sees the world. I also discussed the three types of research designs: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods as well as the type of study each one is best suited for. The researcher further discussed why qualitative (flexible) research design was best suited for the type of research study I conducted. This section further explained the different types of methodologies associated with flexible design, the appropriateness of the chosen methodology to the research study and why the other methodologies were not appropriate for this research study. Lastly, since the chosen research design was flexible design, the researcher discussed the use of triangulation to validate the accuracy of the data sources and build credibility as a researcher.

Conceptual Framework

Diversity is a very complex topic to many organizations which makes training planning and implementation a more difficult task. Therefore, the research framework described below is a ‘word picture’ of the specific problem statement in this research study (see Figure 1). After conducting the study, it further described the conditions surrounding the problem and showed how these conditions were related and connected to current scholarly literature. This conceptual framework further discussed the concepts associated with the problem statement, the outcomes of those concepts and the theories related to this study which helped frame this research. In this section, the researcher also discussed the actors found in recent literature and how they were related to this study. Additionally, this section further discussed three formal theories related to this research which were found in current literature and helped understand and explore the problem statement. This conceptual framework discussed the constructs related to this study. Lastly, the researcher discussed in detail the relationships, interaction and flow of information and action among the elements of this research framework.

Figure 1*Conceptual Framework Diagram**Concepts*

As part of this research studied, the researcher identified three concepts which were directly related to the study: diversity training, leadership values and employees' attitudes and behaviors. Current scholarly literature showed that these three concepts could lead to diversity and inclusion strategies, such as training initiatives, to potentially fail consequently resulting in employees' withdrawal behaviors. Based upon the findings in this research study, the researcher discovered that employees also showed negative attitudes or did not care much about the training because they found it redundant and unnecessary. As discovered in this research study, employees who participated in the study found the current diversity training curriculum repetitive and unnecessary for employees with longevity therefore resulting in employees to assume a negative attitude or response to their annual training. This outcome was also found and supported by current literature and further discussed in this section and in the presentation of the findings.

Diversity Training. According to Alhejji et al. (2016), diversity training is “a distinct set of programs” that facilitates groups interactions, reduces discrimination, enhances people’s skills, and motivates them (p. 95). Build on this definition, diversity training can lead to positive organizational outcomes such as higher job performance, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover. The lack of training and understanding on diversity, on the other hand, could lead to negative organizational outcomes such as poor employee performance, poor team performance and employee withdrawal behaviors (Alhejji et al., 2016). Furthermore, employees can show some resistance towards diversity training when there is lack of diversity in the workplace, knowledge and understanding of diversity resulting in HR diversity practices and initiatives to fail (Guillaume et al., 2017).

Employees’ Attitudes and Behaviors. Employees sometimes look at HR diversity practices such as diversity and inclusion training as unnecessary because there are no other groups, or they are literally the majority. Based upon finding on this study, it was discovered that diversity training was unnecessary, redundant, and more applicable to newly hired employees and not so much for employees who have been working for the organization for over three to five years. These are negative attitudes and behaviors from employees which can potentially spread out to other employees resulting in negative organizational outcomes. Indeed, current scholarly literature showed that employee’s attitudes and behaviors are related to the failure or success of diversity training programs meeting their stated objectives. Furthermore, the success of diversity management initiatives highly depends on how employees perceive and support these initiatives and not all employees are supportive and have positive attitudes towards these measures (Madera, 2018). On the other hand, Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015) discussed that when the organization invest in diversity training, organizations demonstrate their commitment

to their employees which help develop positive employees' behaviors that will further contribute to the achievement of strategic goals. However, as discussed further in this study, leaders are not aware or do not understand the benefits of investing on diversity training can bring and how these programs can be linked to their business strategies to gain competitive advantage.

Leadership Values. Leadership involvement is crucial. Based upon the findings of this study, having a great program is not enough without the leadership being all inclusive, supportive of the initiatives and fully engage in the management and implementation of diversity and inclusion initiatives. As discovered during the field study, their direct involvement, attitudes, and moral values towards diversity management initiatives are pivotal to the effectiveness of diversity training programs in meeting the organizational goals. In fact, current literature showed that a pro-diversity and transformational leadership positively influences the implementation of diversity management initiatives such as training (Ng & Sears, 2020). Ng and Sears also discussed that when the top executives and CEO are pro-diversity and actively involved in the implementation of these programs, other managers are influenced by the top leadership's actions and behaviors. However, these managers are change agents and must all buy-in and embrace these initiatives for other employees to opt in and programs to meet their intent.

Formal Theories

The following formal theories discussed in this section were found in current literature and related to this research study and the key concepts discussed above: social cognitive theory, social identification theory, and transformational leadership theory.

Social Cognitive Theory. Ozyilmaz et al. (2018) suggested that when employees trust the organizations they work for, self-efficacy will have a stronger effect on job attitudes such as their job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and positive behaviors towards task performance.

Furthermore, the social cognitive theory is related to the specific problem as this theory seeks to explain how diversity training can result in negative organizational outcomes such as lower performance, particularly team's performance. When there is diversity within teams themselves, there is a positive response towards these initiatives. It can be found in current scholarly literature that people's behaviors are the result of their motivation to work and most important at work when working with others (e.g., team projects), therefore impacting their performance. According to Lin et al. (2020), based on this theory, dysfunctional conflict influences team's performance through their collective beliefs and their motivation.

Social Identification Theory. Another theory related to this study and the concepts mentioned above is the social identification theory. Like the cognitive theory, in this theory, employees' social identity and self-worth are enhanced by their perception of belonging to an organization (Scheidler et al., 2019). Furthermore, this theory is related to the specific problem as it seeks to explain how people see other members of a group which can result in negative organizational outcomes as members will not take diversity training as needed but imposed. Lin et al. (2020) suggested that this theory can negatively influence team dynamics and impede members performance. If employees do not identify themselves with the rest of the teams, it would impact the success of diversity training programs. According to Rawski and Conroy (2020), organizational identification would increase employees' voluntary participation in diversity training and most important, their motivation to learn as they do not like to feel obligated to attend and comply with annual training requirements. This could further have an impact in the failure or success of training programs.

Transformational Leadership. Lastly, the transformational leadership theory is related to the specific problem as it explains how a strong transformational leadership brings team

members together which shifts any negative member's attitudes and behaviors, decreases negative aspects of diversity, and generates positive outcomes (Kim, 2017). As mentioned above and discovered in the study, leadership involvement is crucial when implementing these training initiatives. Therefore, diversity management initiatives such as training are better off with transformational leaders because they are more inclusive and bring groups together which improves performance and reduces internal conflicts (Guillaume et al., 2017). Moreover, Moon (2016) discussed four important behaviors of a transformational leader: (a) influence others and build trust, (b) inspire motivation, (c) encourage employees to perform and be creative, and (d) most important, recognize the individual. Therefore, transformational leadership not just welcomes and embraces changes for the better of the organizations but are a more inclusive leadership and their behaviors influence the overall functioning of the organizations.

Actors

There are groups of people and organizations that play a critical role in this research study. Regardless of position employees hold, the workforce plays an intricate role in the failure or success of diversity training in the workplace. As explained earlier, it is their attitudes and support towards these initiatives that would dictate their failure or success. Furthermore, for organizations to leverage on these initiatives and serve as a competitive resource, the workforce needs to be supportive and receptive of these initiatives, otherwise, diversity management initiatives will fail (Madera, 2018).

According to Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015), when diversity management initiatives such as training are more inclusive of the organizational culture and it is visible to all employees, it will then positively impact the employees' loyalty to the organization and acceptance of the programs, and negative turnover ratio. Based upon the findings in this study, other key players

are managers and leaders at all levels who must be all inclusive, buy-in to these diversity management initiatives, and supportive of the training for these initiatives to be effective, otherwise, employees will start engaging in negative attitudes and withdrawal behaviors. Scholars demonstrated that leadership direct involvement and acceptance of diversity training will have positive organizational outcomes such as lower turnover and higher performance (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Furthermore, the Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is that key organization that will enforce compliance with federal and state regulation that prohibits employment and workplace discrimination. EEOC prohibits workplace discrimination in recruiting and hiring, job evaluations, promotion, training, compensation policies and disciplinary action plans (Durrani & Rajagopal, 2016). Last, HR managers and other professionals help ensure the organization complies with all regulations. HR managers are responsible for not just diversity training and enforcing all personnel related regulations, but they serve as role models for employees and their actions are perceived by all as ethical towards recruiting and diversity (Durrani & Rajagopal, 2016).

Constructs

The constructs found in current literature that are related to this study are training and development (T&D) and job performance. As previously discussed, there is a direct relationship between the concepts (employees' attitudes and behaviors, diversity training and leadership values) and the formal theories with the outcomes of training in the organization. Therefore, through observation and interviews, the researcher studied the effect of current training and development curriculum in the workplace as studies demonstrate that there is a direct relationship between workplace diversity and training, indicating that training received in the workplace influences diversity, therefore, increasing their motivation to work and job

performance (Bana et al., 2016). On the other hand, job performance is related to the specific problem because as this construct is related to the well-being of the employees, therefore, it can have effects on employees' behavior and attitudes towards work which can result in negative organizational outcomes such as job performance. Studies found that diversity training lowered team creativity and performance when the group is low on nationality diversity (Guillaume et al., 2017).

Relationship between the Concepts, Theories, Actors and Constructs

Throughout this conceptual framework, the researcher depicted the relationship between the concepts, theories, actors, and constructs related to the problem statement and the outcomes of it. As a whole, this diagram represented how this study will make use of these ideas to explore and understand the problem. The researcher found in current literature that diversity training, employees' behaviors, and attitudes as well as leadership values can lead to the failure of diversity training initiatives which will further result in employee withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor job performance. Furthermore, current scholarly articles demonstrated that leadership involvement, their values, and attitudes towards HR practices such as diversity management initiatives to include training were key to the success or failure of these practices. When leadership is all inclusive, fully supportive and 'walk the talk,' others will follow and buy-in to. This premise was also supported throughout the study as the researcher discussed further in this study. Once the leadership shows full commitment and support of these initiatives, employees would not only follow and support their leadership, yet their commitment to work for a pro-diversity leadership. These concepts along with the formal theories, social cognitive theory, social identification theory and transformational leadership theory, were found related to this research study and used as the base for the research to analyze and interpret the

results of the findings. In order to do so, the actors, employees, HR professionals, managers, and executives at all levels as well as the EEOC were integrated into the research study through direct observations and interviews in order to explore the problem and reject or accept the hypothesis. They were looked at as key players in understanding and exploring the problem and the why of the outcomes in some situations. Through current scholarly literature, the researcher learned that these actors, particularly, their attitudes and behaviors and whether they buy-in to these initiatives or not, will further determine the success or failure of diversity training initiatives. Lastly, the constructs identified in this conceptual framework were the results of the actions of the actors on the concepts. The planning and execution of training influenced the actors' motivation and most important to the organization, their job performance in a positive way.

Summary of the Research Framework

In this section, the researcher described the research framework and presented a diagram as a 'word picture' of the problem statement that guided this research study. This study helped frame the concepts connected to this study and explore the formal theories in current literature. In this section, the researcher also addressed the outcomes of the key concepts and how they are linked to the failure of diversity training and employees' withdrawal intentions. The concepts found in recent literature described above were diversity training, employee's behaviors, and leadership values, and these can lead to employees' negatives and withdrawal behaviors. This framework also addressed the role of leadership and their moral values in the failure or success of diversity management initiatives. The research concept framework showed the connection between the concepts, the outcomes, and the theories related to this study. Furthermore, the researcher identified formal theories found in current literature that are connected to this study

and will help the researcher understand and explore the why and the how of the problem statement. Lastly, two constructs were identified which will help the researcher explore and understand the problem: training and development, and job performance.

Definition of Terms

Diversity training: In this research study, diversity training refers to “one of the elements within the organization diversity management initiatives” encompassing training to learn about all aspects of diversity and managing diversity in the workplace in order to reduce discrimination in the workplace, increase awareness on the different perspectives and learn to work with people from different backgrounds. Fujimoto and Härtel (2017) explained diversity learning/training as an approach for employees to learn about different perspectives in order to reduce prejudices, stereotypes, and biases in the workplace.

Organizational outcomes: Another term referred throughout this research is organizational outcomes. This research study explored potential organizational outcomes from poor or lack of diversity management initiatives which directly impact the overall success of the organization. When referring to organizational outcomes, this study made reference to “the positive or negative results of an action taken by the organization,” in this case, the results of the implementation of these diversity learning/training initiatives. According to Leslie (2019), organizational outcomes are the goals of diversity initiatives which is to help groups facing disadvantages in an organization which in some instances could result in undesirable or unintended like increase on stereotypes or positive outcomes such as organizational performance.

Withdrawal behaviors: When referring to withdrawal behaviors, this study refers to “the employees’ negative changes in attitudes and behaviors that negatively affect the employees’ motivation towards work and commitment towards the organization.” Zimmerman et al. (2016)

explained three categories of withdrawal behaviors (lateness, absenteeism and turn-over) as the employees' physical removal for a day, part of the day or permanently. Moreover, these behaviors not only affect the employees (i.e., higher stress and withdrawals) but they are detrimental to the organization's overall performance and productivity which also affects stakeholders from within and outside (Rabl et al., 2020).

Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations

Diversity and inclusion are sensitive topics in today's world and supporting these are critical to businesses as they can impact their productivity and corporate social responsibility. Indeed, many studies have been conducted but no hard data are available to generalize the impact of diversity training initiatives in the organizations and their employees. Therefore, this section describes the boundaries and potential limitations of this studies. The first part of this section will discuss the assumptions moving forward on this study, the risks and how to mitigate the risk of each one of the identified assumptions. There are no perfect settings or conditions that make this study easier to conduct, however, the main assumption moving forward on this study is that all organizations participating on the study will have some sort of diversity training program in place. Another assumption moving forward is the honesty of each participant in their responses. Furthermore, this section will also lay out potential limitations of this study which can also carry potential risks such as potential biases, the number of case studies and the targeted population.

This research study is taking place in Central Texas which population could result too small to generalize and assume all diversity training programs are effective or not and why, or assuming withdrawal behaviors are the result of the failure of these programs. Another limitation to this research study is possible restrictions the chosen organizations might impose in order to

participate in the research study. Lastly, this study will describe the delimitations that will further determine the success of this study.

Assumptions

In recent decades, diversity has gained lots of attention as a result of changes in today's workforce which is radically different resulting in firms having to become more inclusive (Aldaibat et al., 2019). Therefore, organizations have had to adapt and integrate diversity training to coach and training employees at all levels in order to increase awareness, reduce discrimination, learn, and understand the different groups within the organization. That being said, this research study was built upon some assumptions moving forward: that all organizations have a training program in place, that all participants will be honest on their answers and that all participants have a sincere interest in participating in the research (participation is strictly volunteer). However, each of these assumptions poses a potential risk which can affect the study and potentially impact the findings.

Based on the fact that today's workforce consists of employees from different protected groups, the researcher assumed that all organizations have a diversity education program in place. Indeed, diversity training programs have become the cornerstone of many organizations these days in the United States; however, as discovered during the field study, diversity is not enough but being inclusive and 'walk the talk.' In a recent survey, 80% of 265 HR professionals and diversity specialists reported they have either mandatory or voluntary training for all employees (Fujimoto & Härtel, 2017). However, the risk is that organizations might have a well written and developed program in paper but never implemented due to lack of experience or knowledge on the subject. To mitigate this risk, researcher conducted the field study in an organization with diversity training program and other initiatives in place. Prior to requesting

their participation, the researcher ensured there was some sort of program in place regardless of their effectiveness. The study was not to judge on its effectiveness but to understand and explore the participants' perspectives on the initiatives.

Another assumption was that all participants will be honest on their answers and that there will be no retaliation by them being honest and exposing issues if any. Chandler et al. (2020) discussed that the quality of the research and data collected depends on the participants' honesty on their responses. This was a huge assumption throughout the field study which carried potential risks such as lack of participation, fear of retaliation, and not exposing real issues with the programs, therefore, making it difficult to gather data that will help the researcher answer the questions and explore the problem. As discovered during the study, there were employees who declined participation because they did not want to be in an open forum discussing diversity in the same room as supervisors and other coworkers. In order to mitigate these risks, when recruiting potential participants, they were informed about the intent of the study and that the collected data would not be released to anyone and kept secured and password protected in the researcher's computer. Additionally, the researcher reassured them that this was not an inspection conducted by an external agency, but research to help me understand the problem and seek potential solutions. The researcher reassured the organization and participants that no names or any identifiable information would be mentioned without prior authorization and the results of the study would be shared with the leadership.

Lastly, all participants would agree to participate in the study and not forced. It is imperative for participation in the research to be voluntarily versus compulsory. This assumption goes hand to hand with the aforementioned risk – fear of retaliation. Voluntary participation of employees increases their engagement, involvement in the organization and trust in the minds of

employees (Bapat & Upadhyay, 2021). However, there was a potential risk – their participation could be conditional. For example, the leadership might have offered an incentive if they agree to participate. This is a risk out of the researcher's control and difficult to mitigate, but willing to take since participants need some sort of motivation to partake on the study. However, to the researcher's knowledge, participants on this study were not bribed for their participation.

Limitations

Diversity training initiatives by itself could be too broad of a topic and this is a potential limitation or weakness of this research study. Many studies have been conducted on this topic with mixed evidence as mentioned earlier. One of the pitfalls of this research study was the amount of data collected that might lack relevancy to the problem being studied. Therefore, one of the limitations was deciding how many cases to explore and establishing boundaries (e.g., time frame of the studies to be researched in order to limit the number of studies because too many cases might skew the analysis due to the amount and relevancy of the data collected and the lack of time to conduct the research). Another potential limitation on this study was participants' personal biases which need to be set aside for the research to be more objective. Additionally, there were unknown factors about the participants such as the demographics which posed a risk as they could bias the participants' responses. To mitigate this risk, focus groups was conducted as part of the research ensuring the group was well diverse and represented by different demographics. Diverse focus groups provided the researcher with information on the challenges, if any, each member of the group face when it comes to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Another limitation was the targeted population which could result too small to draw conclusions and answer the research questions regarding all diversity training programs effectiveness or failure. To mitigate this risk, the chosen campuses within the school district were

around the same size (~100-500 employees) and comparable. Lastly, this study faced some restrictions the chosen organization imposed in order to participate in the research study. One of the restrictions was that participants needed to participate outside work hours which reduced the number of participants willing to partake in the study. The risk associated with this limitation was low because the organization had confidence on the effectiveness of their training program and was willing to having an external element explore the perspectives of their employees. Otherwise, if the organization did not have some sort of program in place, lots of restrictions would have been imposed by the leadership. To mitigate this risk, no names were released without prior consent and findings were not made public.

Delimitations

As depicted in the limitations, many studies have been conducted on this study and the researcher set boundaries and conditions to conduct the study on a specific sector of the population, otherwise, the amount of collected data will be overwhelming and might lack relevancy. The selected organization had diversity training programs in place. Although an assumption at this point, it is imperative for this study in order to explore and understand the problem and answer the research questions. Additionally, the workforce would need to be well represented to avoid biases in the participants' responses. The selected area, Central Texas, although a small part of the workforce population, it is well represented by five (5) of the largest ethnic groups: White (Non-Hispanic) at 51.6%, White (Hispanic) at 23.5%, Other (Hispanic) at 6.9%, Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) at 6.89%, and Asian (Non-Hispanic) at 5.9% (2020).

Significance of the Study

We operate in a global environment with a very diverse workforce consisting of people from different ethnic groups, gender preferences, religions, and ages. Indeed, diversity training is needed in order to increase awareness, reduce discrimination in the workplace and for employees to feel they work in an environment that is free of discrimination and is more inclusive of all protected groups. Therefore, this study is needed to add in to the understanding and effective role of leadership and what leadership values are pivotal in the effectiveness of diversity management initiatives as well as the existing body of knowledge. This research study helped explore the reasons diversity training can potentially fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organization outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). It also addressed the how and why the failure of diversity training is linked to employees engaging in withdrawal behaviors. Moreover, this research study explored the implications for biblical integration and connection of the concepts in this study with the Word of God. Lastly, this research study addressed some of the benefits of business practice and the relationship of this research study with HRM as one of the roles in business. In fact, this research was built upon various research studies in HRD as organizations and their leadership try to understand why diversity training fails and find the gap of developing an efficient human resources development strategy that leads the organizations to a more inclusive working environment.

Reduction of Gaps in the Literature

In this study, it was important to address the role of leadership in the effectiveness of diversity management programs to include training. These programs or initiatives have become an integral part of organizations in today's rapidly shifting demographics. Therefore, the goals of

this study were to understand the effects of leadership styles, acceptance of changes and their involvement on the success or failure of these programs. Additionally, it was critical for the leadership to understand these changes in order to manage diversity in the workplace, create an environment free of discrimination and prejudice, and achieve competitive advantage. According to Vito and Sethi (2020), diversity management programs enhance recruiting, promotion, and retention which will help the organization achieve competitive advantage in today's highly competitive and globalized environment. In order to effectively implement such programs, leadership needs to be acceptable of changes, buy into these initiatives, be present, and be inclusive. Furthermore, leadership must be participative, meaning that they need to be involved in the change process versus being in a more directive role in order to be successful (Vito & Sethi, 2020).

Organizational and cultural changes do not happen overnight. Leadership does not all the sudden implement changes, decide to support these programs and expect success. This is a culture change process driven by leadership and the success or failure lays not just on their direct involvement, but them assessing their own leadership style. One of the theories identified in this research study was transformational leadership. As previously discussed, these cultural changes are better of transformational leaders rather than the leader-member exchange style, which could be detrimental to expanding diversity in the workplace because the in/out group relationships that can influence unconscious biases (Feyes, 2018). Additionally, these cultural changes are not merely reducing employee withdrawal behaviors and changing employees' attitudes, but leadership need to understand their own feelings and biases towards diversity in the workplace in order to understand the benefits of these programs and how to manage the challenges when working with a diverse population (Feyes, 2018). Leadership would then understand the needs of

the employees, how to manage diversity and how to promote and effectively implement diversity management programs.

Implications for Biblical Integration. Christians follow Jesus Christ's teachings and counsels which help them conduct themselves in an ethical manner. God created diversity when He created men and women, all equals, with specific attributes and aptitudes to serve and spread God's Word and continue building the human community. Furthermore, God did not teach us to discriminate against our neighbor, but to love one another and treat each other with dignity and respect. Christians are to follow God's teachings as His foundation in everything they do. Indeed, God's Word helps Christians discern between right or wrong. Through the Word of God, Christians learn to be better leaders, enhance their relationships with others within the organization, therefore enabling the organization improve performance, processes, and quality.

"But indeed, as Bible scholar Bruce Waltke points out, the Bible says that the very definition of righteous people is that they disadvantage themselves to advantage others, while 'the wicked...are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves'" (Keller & Alsdorf, 2012, p. 203). One of the concepts in this study is 'Leadership Moral Values' which go along with transformational leadership theory. Christian leaders seek for the benefits of others and not his/her own. Like the businessman described by Keller in his book *Every Good Endeavor*, leaders must be ethical, honest, and fair in their endeavors to gain employees' buy in to the diversity management initiatives. According to Keller and Alsdorf (2012), we impact others and make a difference in our field with our work in order to make this world a better place. According to Sandelands (2017), the Word of God teaches us moral conduct through Jesus Christ's commandments, teachings, and counsels that prepare us to do good to others and love our neighbors. Therefore, this research departs from the premise and understanding that diversity

and inclusiveness are two sensitive topics. Furthermore, there will be organizations whose leadership might not share a Christian's perspective, yet the study will be guided by the Word of God to avoid any personal feelings or first impressions of the actors involved in this research that could further interfere with the study.

Benefit to Business Practice and Relationship to Cognate. This research study on the potential failure of diversity training programs will benefit business practices as organizations learn to understand, manage, and adapt to diversity in the workplace, therefore, achieving competitive advantage and positive organizational outcomes such as increase in productivity, employees' satisfaction, and less absenteeism and turnover. However, current literature shows mixed evidence regarding these benefits. According to Ng and Sears (2020), there are CEOs who hold least positive views because when diversity management is about hiring less qualified candidates to meet the numbers and comply with employment laws. They do not see the benefits on the strategic opportunity. Therefore, it is imperative as mentioned earlier, that leadership at all levels get involved and support these initiatives as they will benefit the overall performance of the organization. The benefits go beyond improving productivity and performance, but it is the organization's corporate social responsibility to engage in these ethical related practices which will also help the organization achieve competitive advantage. When the senior leadership has a positive attitude and adapts and embraces cultural changes, employees' attitudes change and leadership understands and learns to manage their own biases, then these programs are more successful for the benefit of the organization. Until then, there will be mixed evidence on the benefits to business practice.

Furthermore, this research study relates to the cognate HRM as a function in business. HRM is a business discipline which role in the organization is to enforce state and federal

regulations as well as develop and implement personnel policies and programs in order to balance the needs of the employees and the company. Furthermore, HRM attains to protect the employees' rights ensuring fair labor, treatment, and equal pay. Therefore, workplace diversity affects the overall dynamics of the organization to include human resource functions (i.e., training, mentoring programs, and recruiting). It is imperative for organizations to integrate diversity and inclusion strategies into training, recruitment, performance, and leadership development programs in order to improve productivity, gain brand reputation and increase customer satisfaction, to name a few. As later discussed in the research study, the researcher made recommendations on business practices and strategies the organization can use to leverage on the findings of this study.

Summary of the Significance of the Study

The goals of this section was to review and fill the gaps in order to understand the pivotal role of leadership, the effects of leadership styles, acceptance of changes and their involvement on the success or failure of these programs. Therefore, this section discussed the reduction of gaps in literature, the implication of biblical integration and the benefit of this study to business practice and the relation to my cognate, human resource management. As found in current literature, today's workforce demographics have been shifting to a more diverse population. Therefore, organizations have become more adaptable and inclusive of a workforce that it is not just 'black or white,' 'male or female,' yet a workforce consisting of people from different ethnic groups, gender preferences, religions, and ages. On the other hand, it is imperative to integrate biblical concepts to this study with the Word of God as the foundation. God created all humans to his image with unique gifts and talents to continue his work and cultivate the society. His teachings and counsels are not to prejudice but to love our neighbors who all serve a purpose on

Earth. Lastly, another important aspect discussed in this section was the benefits of business practice and the relationship of this research study with human resources management as one of the roles in business. The benefits go beyond organization's high productivity. When leadership focuses on their own advantages as described by Keller and Alsdorf (2012) when describing the wicked businessman, leadership must engage in ethical practices to understand and see the value of diversity management initiatives in their organization. It is therefore the job of HR professionals to ensure these initiatives are integrated as part of the organization's business strategy.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

"Diversity and inclusion" are two terms we constantly hear in the news, at work and even at home. "We have to be more inclusive." "Workforce needs to be more diverse." Today's leadership strives to integrate diversity and inclusion into their business strategies in order to achieve competitive advantage, improve organizational performance and productivity. However, what leadership fails to do is understanding what they are in order for these strategies to achieve their end state. Integrating these strategies goes beyond hiring employees from different cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to connect current literature and existing body of knowledge on diversity and inclusion training initiatives and strategies with the research study. The goal is not to add new knowledge but to fill the gap where knowledge is missing in order to understand the why diversity management initiatives such as training fail to meet the intent in order to make further recommendations.

This literature review presents a review of current literature related to the problem. This literature review was broken down into seven parts in which the researcher reviews books, journal articles and studies for a '360 degree' view of the problem, not just the author's

perspectives but scholarly literature. The first section of this literature review discussed in detailed some of the business practices related to the problem being studied – the failure of diversity training to meet the goals of reducing discrimination and prejudice in the workplace resulting in employees' withdrawal behaviors. The second section of this literature review discussed the problem being studied and explore its connection with current literature both supporting and contradictory material. The third section of this literature review discussed in detailed the concepts, formal theories and constructs found in the research framework as they relate to the problem being studied. The researcher discussed in detailed the anticipated themes known prior to the study and discovered themes following the study. The last section of this literature review discussed in detailed some of the related studies found in recent literature. In fact, many studies have been conducted regarding the success or failure of diversity training delivering mixed evidence. Therefore, the researcher further discussed both sides of the spectrum and finalized this literature review with a summary of all sections and further recommendations moving forward in this research study.

Business Practices Implemented by Organization in Diversity Training

In the last decades, diversity and inclusion training has become, in a sense, a business strategy for many organizations to attain competitive advantage and recruit a diverse population which would bring new knowledge and experience to the team, therefore improving job performance and productivity. However, what is there to achieve if management as discussed by Feyes (2018) still need to understand their own feelings and biases towards diversity in order to understand the benefits of being more inclusive and diverse and how to manage challenges along the way. As mentioned earlier, it is therefore imperative for leadership at all levels to buy into diversity management initiatives which will then benefit business practices as organizations learn

to understand, manage, and adapt to diversity in the workplace in order to achieve positive organizational outcomes such as retention of highly qualified employees, reducing absenteeism and improving performance and productivity.

In this literature review, the researcher discussed five common business practices found in current scholarly literature: (a) continuing education; (b) design, content, and participant factors; (c) engage executive; (d) attitudinal learning; and (e) integrating ethics in training. These common business practices, if implemented and supported by management, could definitely impact diversity management initiatives, therefore resulting in positive organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, without management buy-in, we would continue seeing mixed evidence and benefits of these business practice. Furthermore, and as discussed by Brewis (2018), diversity training effectiveness must also be understood from the marginalized employees' point of view and the individuals engaged in those practices, diversity training is intended to promote.

Continuing Education Versus Static Training. Many scholars agreed on the premise that training is key to resolve many problems within the organization and the workforce itself. In recent literature and as discussed by Robinson et al. (2020), training helps mitigate discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, Robinson et al. discussed that static training will not be effective in the long run but continuous education which can foster a deeper understanding of information. A meta-analysis demonstrated that continuous diversity education has a positive impact on employee performance. Indeed, the intentional result when designing training and enforcing it in the workplace was for the workforce to stay abreast of changes in laws and regulations, to learn to cope and work with people not just from different racial backgrounds, but education, cultural, gender and age differences to name a few. Diversity training (training in general) should not be taken as a training requirement for new hires or

refresher training once a year but continuing education to continue reinforcing guidelines which will therefore achieve the intent of reducing prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, with continuing training employees would be afforded the opportunity to apply lessons learned and make it a habit. As discussed by Robinson et al. (2020), diversity education is not a short-term fuse that leadership pulls when needed but a continuous process in order to ‘educate’ not just train employees to ‘tolerate’ others. Moreover, diversity education should not be taken as training for new hires and part of their onboarding of new employees’ type training. Based upon the findings of the study, the researcher discovered that employees with longevity engaged in negative attitudes and behaviors because the training seemed tailor for newly hired and unnecessary. Furthermore, the researcher discovered negative attitudes and become less supportive when employees perceive the training being the same year after year. On the other hand, a well-developed diversity training program focused on continuing education and learning which allow all employees regardless of longevity to share lessons learned, provide feedback, and foster a better understanding of all the information delivered during training which will therefore allow organizations to create performance metrics to link not only the diversity program but employee performance appraisal systems (Robinson et al., 2020).

Importance of Design, Context and Participant Factors in Diversity Training.

Today’s workforce demographics have shifted to a more diverse workforce. Therefore, the rapid changes in demographics have forced organizations to design diversity training initiatives to rapidly adapt to those changes and comply with state and federal regulations with the intent to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. Bezrukova et al. (2016) defined diversity training as a set of programs (design) that will facilitate the interaction of people from different groups (participants) which will therefore reduce discrimination and prejudice and enhance the

participation and motivation of all participants. This framework described by Bezrukova et al. (2016) and Phillips et al. (2016) in current literature as a framework that would result in positive organizational outcomes like job performance as participants not just interact with people from their same “group” but with other diverse groups. As found in current scholarly literature, in prior meta-analysis conducted on disability diversity training laid out design, context and participant factors are best practices for consideration which will enhance and have positive effects of diversity training initiatives (Phillips et al., 2016). Indeed, understanding training design, as explained in current literature, and its context coupled with upper-level leadership (participant factor) will have positive organizational outcomes such as performance and productivity, and positive effects on employees’ attitudes and behaviors especially when leadership is involved and supportive of the training initiatives. Another aspect of training design that will have stronger and positive effects on the outcomes is deciding what do the organization want to attain – just awareness in a classroom setting with a large group of people or maximize learning through a combination of instructional methods.

In doing research, current literature discussed the results of a meta-analysis of 260 independent samples considering all these aspects of design in order to understand diversity training outcomes overtime – focus groups or targeted to one group; the duration of training (>30 minutes); and awareness, behavioral training, or a combination of both (Bezrukova et al., 2016). According to Phillips et al. (2016), the duration of training influences the outcomes of diversity training. In various research studies as discussed by Phillips and colleagues, when training is designed to last 4-6 hours, training will then change people’s attitudes and behaviors. However, Bezrukova et al. discussed that positives effects were greater when training combined awareness and behavioral/skills training. Not only the length but the frequency of the training affects

employees' attitudes and behaviors. In the research study, the researcher found that annual training can be easily forgotten because no one discusses the outcomes or lessons learned from the training in the beginning of the year until it is that time again to comply with the annual training plan.

Benefits of an Engaged Leadership/Executives. As explained earlier, diversity and inclusion are two different terms which need to be understood in order for upper management to focus on the design, context, and participants. But first, leadership needs to determine the need for the training – why and what is the business need as explained by Morley (2018). Here is where the third business practice discussed in this literature review comes into play, leadership integration and engagement. As found in scholarly literature that the success of diversity management and training initiatives starts at the top, with the leadership buy-in and support of these programs. When employees perceive an engaged leadership, the success of diversity program helps improve employer brand, employees' performance, reputation, and recognition (Morley, 2018). However, literature on diversity management has yet to empirically point out the role of leadership despite being a strategy executed from the top (Jin et al., 2017).

Leadership needs to be more inclusive, and according to Jin et al., leadership needs to also immerse themselves with their followers, interact with them, being more opened and accessible which will therefore improve performance and productivity. As discovered during the research study, diversity is not enough but an all-inclusive leadership who 'walk the talk' and is fully supportive of the programs not just in paper but turning those initiative into actions. Additionally, employees need to feel that their voice matters. They need to be engaged on the planning, implementation, and execution of these initiatives for the leadership to understand what matters to employees and what they actually need versus implementing and imposed a

cookie cutter training that might not be applicable to all. Why is that? Employees feel that they are empowered and allowed to use their skill sets giving them a sense of belonging. Furthermore, many scholars have found that the effects of diversity management will also depend on the type of diversity – racial, cultural, age, and other groups, not so much on the leadership involvement but more on their inclusiveness. According to Jin et al. (2017), “this means that in order to develop a strong culture of inclusion, leaders must practice inclusive leadership.” Indeed, having programs in place and allocating big sums of money towards developing and implementing these initiatives are great business practices. However, these initiatives will not have a positive effect because this is a leadership role – to enforce these rules and ensure all employees are respected and treated equally. If leadership is not supportive and inclusive, they will not drive the expected results.

Effects of Diversity Training on Attitudinal Learning. There are different types of diversity training that can potentially bring many benefits to the organization (i.e., enhance job performance, hire and retain quality employees, and improve the overall working environment to a more diverse and inclusive workplace). Therefore, when selecting the type of training strategy/initiative to put in place, organizations need to take into consideration their audience – how do they learn – cognitive, behavioral, or attitudinal learning. The latter is being used as a business practice to empower employees and make them feel their feelings and opinions are heard and considered when diversity issues arise. Furthermore, it changes attitudes, beliefs, and motivation at work. Although many scholars agree that it is not a long-term solution because external forces like media and government who can influence the outcome of training. Current literature examines the effects of diversity training on attitudinal learning. According to Bezrukova et al. (2016), attitudinal/affective learning captures stronger effects than cognitive and

behavioral learning; however, studies predict that cognitive learning will persist while attitudinal will subside overtime. This hypothesis discussed by Bezrukova et al. does show a stronger effect on diversity training (positive or negative) if changes in attitudes are triggered by training itself or influenced by the media once training ends. During training, employees' behaviors might have changed, or employees might have had reconsidered their attitudes and behaviors, yet the environment in which the employees surround themselves outside of work may trigger those changes back to prior training stage which as Bezrukova et al. explained, it will subside over time due to media negative reports on immigrants, for instance.

Furthermore, attitudinal learning allows diverse groups of employees to interact and learn from each other their values, identities, and perspectives in order not to just overcome certain stereotypes and prejudices, but also in valuing others (Fujimoto & Härtel, 2017). Fujimoto and Härtel stated that diversity training will fail to achieve these objectives when the training does not attract a diverse population and it is targeted to a particular group, therefore inhibiting the organization's employees attitudinal and behavioral changes through work relationships and interactions with different groups. Bottom-line, the effects of diversity training on attitudinal learning can deliver positive outcomes when employees are given the opportunity to interact and share beliefs and values with other people, therefore enhancing their feelings towards different perspectives and not just their own group.

Importance of Integrating Ethics Training in Diversity Training. Ethics are 'moral values and principles' which help us discern between right or wrong. Therefore, ethical behavior enables the organization to create and foster an ethical organizational culture in which employees feel motivated to work for because the moral values and principles the organization abide by. Employees' performance and motivation to work improves because they feel accepted and

valued for who they are and what they bring to the plate regardless of their cultural, racial, education, experiences, gender preferences, and other groupings. So, why integrating ethics training an important business practice in diversity training? Evidence found in current literature demonstrates that diversity training greatly impacts ethical behaviors in the workplace, and vice versa. Ermasova et al. (2017) suggested that ethics training influenced corporate and social responsibility practices which in turn influence employee satisfaction. Furthermore, ethics training teaches employees values and ethical practices that will therefore help them respect others and learn to manage and understand multicultural, education and experience differences as well as help managers overcome challenges in the workplace in an ethical manner. According to Ermasova et al. (2017), in a study conducted on 488 participants reported a direct correlation between ethical behavior and diversity professional development. Ermasova et al. suggested that diversity training improves awareness of ethical issues. Therefore, when organizations integrate ethics training in diversity training, it creates a more ethical work environment.

The Problem

Many organizations have gone global which means their workforce at all levels consists of people from different backgrounds not just racial differences but gender preferences and cultural differences. Therefore, one of the most used initiatives to manage, learn and understand diversity in the workplace is diversity training. Organizations these days have had to adapt quickly to the shifts in demographics in order to stay abreast and in compliance with state and federal laws. For instance, there are countries/societies where having women in leadership roles or being more inclusive with members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community are normal practices. On the other hand, for patriarchal societies it would take more time to accept and adapt to a new culture which is more diverse and inclusive particularly

accepting women in the workforce. These are barriers or challenges management at all levels are facing in order for diversity training to meet the intended goals of reducing discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.

As mentioned, workforce demographics are rapidly changing and no longer dominated by a particular group but a more diverse population. According to David et al. (2015), within 30 years there will not be a “majority” group in the workplace and these demographic dissimilarities will result in withdrawal behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and employee turnover because employees will not feel identify with any group in particular. Therefore, diversity training needs to go beyond just creating awareness in the workplace but learning and understanding that there are differences in personalities, attitudes, and behaviors. Furthermore, being aware of biases does not necessarily eliminate discriminatory attitudes or even conducting ‘unconscious bias training’ reduces discrimination in the workplace. On the contrary, it is unlikely to eliminate racism in the workplace (Noon, 2018). Therefore, diversity training is more complex problem than just setting up a classroom once a year or taking an online course to create awareness in the workplace. Noon (2018) further discussed that the least effective method of diversity training initiatives is when biases are addressed. Why is that? The answer is simple – if biases did not exist, the training will make employees aware of those (attitudinal learning). In fact, the researcher found in current literature that being aware of biases and discrimination against protected groups do not reduce discrimination in the workplace, increase awareness or change employees and managers’ attitudes and behaviors towards training and the organization itself. On the contrary, leaders and executives are put through online testing which proves the existence of unconscious biases which can negatively affect social interactions in the workplace as well as the effectiveness of diversity training (Noon, 2018).

Another mistake that organizations are making when developing and implementing diversity training initiatives is expectations. Organizations are expecting for diversity training to convert people into more inclusive individuals. This is not the case. Many scholars agree that you cannot force employees to attend training or change their beliefs after a session or two. When doing so, employees can rebel against imposed training resulting in negative organizational outcomes as previously described. Another problem with diversity training is tailoring training to a specific audience. Because the audience is from a marginalized population does not mean that they are more inclusive than and 'all whites' audience. According to Brewis (2019), this causes tension in diversity training between what the participants know about being inclusive, their core self they want to protect as they know it, and the diversity practitioners training which is trying to change participants' core self. Training cannot be imposed, otherwise, participants will not want to participate in training and further result in negative organizational outcomes as described in this study. On the contrary, trainees are therefore encouraged to learn about each other and themselves in order to reduce marginalization of certain people just because who they are or how they look like (Brewis, 2019).

Therefore, in this research study, the general problem to be addressed is the failure of diversity training to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance. David et al. (2015) presented evidence showing that diversity training fails to meet its goals to increase awareness and reduce discrimination when the workplace is unsupportive of diversity, therefore causing employee withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. Rawski and Conroy (2020) supported these views and presented evidence showing that diversity training fails and lead to negative organizational outcomes when nationality diversity is low and training

is imposed failing to increase awareness, reduce prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Furthermore, Guillaume et al. (2017) noted that diversity training engenders organizational performance, team creativity and team members interaction when diversity-oriented training is not aligned with HR diversity-oriented strategies and nationality diversity is low. Peretz et al. (2015) supported these views by explaining that for diversity training programs not to fail, they must be congruent with the national cultural practices, otherwise, employee's commitment to the organization will be lower and they will start engaging in withdrawal behaviors such as higher turnover and absenteeism. The specific problem to be addressed is the failure of diversity training within the educational services industry in Central Texas to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance.

Concepts

As previously discussed, the researcher identified three concepts that are clearly related to the problem being studied: diversity training, leadership values and employees' attitudes and behaviors. Below, the researcher discussed these concepts as discovered in current scholarly literature which could potentially lead to HR related practices, such as diversity training initiatives, to fail consequently resulting in employees' withdrawal behaviors. In this section, the researcher discussed how these concepts relate to the problem being studied and connect them to current scholarly literature.

Diversity Training. As previously discussed, diversity training is one of the most used strategies to manage diversity in the workplace. According to Alhejji et al. (2016), diversity training is "a distinct set of programs" that facilitates groups interactions, reduces discrimination, enhances people's skills, and motivates them. Build on this definition, diversity training can lead

to positive organizational outcomes such as higher job performance, lower absenteeism, and lower turnover. The lack of training and understanding on diversity, on the other hand, could lead to negative organizational outcomes such as poor employee performance, poor team performance, and employee withdrawal behaviors (Alhejji et al., 2016). Furthermore, diversity training can also fail when there is lack of diversity in the workplace resulting in HR diversity practices or initiatives to fail (Guillaume et al., 2017).

However, diversity training goes beyond reducing racial discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. Diversity training also entails educating the workplace on differences (e.g., personality differences, level of education, and cultural differences to name a few) in order to foster a more inclusive environment. Not only in the workplace, but members of the society in general tend to exclude or isolate themselves from others who do not share the same beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, many scholars have devoted their efforts to explore these programs and initiatives such as mentoring programs for women and minorities in order to develop a workforce where people can work together, respect each other, treat everyone with dignity and respect, and are afforded the opportunity to grow and promote within the organization (Madera et al., 2018). Madera et al. also suggested that the benefits are not just among employees but upper management who perceives diversity training as beneficial to them as well because it makes them better managers, create a stress-free atmosphere adding value to the organization. Other benefits found in current literature are retention and attract new applicants because of the positive working environment, equal treatment, and respect of all employees alike (Madera et al., 2018).

Diversity training is a way for organizations to stay in compliance with legislation, but also the organization focuses on paper because 'it is the right thing to do' or 'it is the norm'

(Brewis, 2019). Scholars are focusing on the mechanics behind training – is it making organizations more inclusive or in actuality is creating or changing attitudes and behaviors by making them more aware of the differences resulting in exclusion or isolation from the others instead of making them more inclusive. Brewis (2019) further discussed the language used in training and the way individuals are taught to be more inclusive which can further influence who they are and who they want to be, therefore making them rethink ‘inclusiveness’ as they understood it before training.

Employees’ Attitudes and Behaviors. “You are offended! I am offended!” (Bernerth, 2020). The second concept being explored is employees’ attitudes and behaviors as they relate to the problem being studied. How employees feel towards their job and the workplace impacts their overall performance, productivity, and motivation. Furthermore, how employees are treated by supervisors and coworkers, affects the overall dynamic within the organization affects employees’ attitudes and behaviors. In current literature, scholars agree there are six outcomes related to this concept: task performance, citizenship behavior, sportsmanship (positive attitude when working with others), counterproductive work behaviors, job satisfaction, and employee engagement (Bernerth, 2020). Indeed, that feeling of being offended by social issues or actions at work, whether it is a new management or implemented policy, triggers negative attitudes and behaviors. As described by Bernerth (2020), studies document a strong relationship between perceptions of organizational unfairness and employees’ behaviors and attitudes as employees who feel being treated unfairly will not feel the need to reciprocate with strong behavior or high performance. On the contrary, they will soon start showing withdrawal behaviors because of rules and procedures imposed by management.

Another area to explore that can potentially affects employees' attitudes and behaviors is the corporate social responsibility (CSR) which is also linked to the problem being studies, diversity training. CSR is not just influencing how a customer feels towards the organization as a result of philanthropic activities the organization engages for a positive image, but how the organization promotes their CSR on how they treat their employees and care for their overall well-being (Perez et al., 2018). Furthermore, studies as they relate to employees' perception on the organizations' CSR and employees' attitudes and behaviors show a great impact not just on job performance but in employees' commitment and loyalty to the organization (Perez et al., 2018).

As described above, when employees feel mistreated, not respected, or easily offended, there is a need for diversity training. However, how this training is perceived or taught can also trigger negative outcomes. Indeed, employees' attitudes and behaviors towards diversity training, or any training in general, will change as a result of how the training is taught or even the language or type of training used to deliver the training. Furthermore, if the training is imposed, employees will then have a negative attitude towards training. Employees look at HR initiatives (e.g., diversity management initiatives) as unnecessary because there are no other groups or they are the majority. Current scholarly literature shows that employee's attitudes and behaviors are related to the failure or success of diversity training programs meeting their stated objectives. According to Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015), when the organization invest in diversity training, organizations demonstrate their commitment to their employees which help develop positive employees' behaviors that will further contribute to the achievement of strategic goals. However, many leaders are not aware or do not understand the benefits investing on diversity training can

bring and how these programs can be linked to their business strategies to gain competitive advantage. This brings me to the third concept related to this study, leadership values.

Leadership Values. In current literature, the concept of values refers to what is important to the individual (e.g., openness, honesty, compassion, and respect for human rights) while behaviors are the manifestation of the individual values (Žydžiūnaitė, 2018). Therefore, leadership values are the leadership actions within the organization. If leadership possesses high values and moral standards, employees perceive those values, therefore influencing employees to change attitudes and behaviors towards work and the organization itself. Žydžiūnaitė suggests that values “are the guiding principles in our lives” and by focusing on those values, leadership can make a difference in the organization and have a stronger influence in others. However, leadership needs to identify their own values and put them into practice through their leadership styles and actions. As mentioned, employees can perceive those values through leadership actions, otherwise, employees will not trust their leadership and leadership will fail in their attempt to implement programs within the organization. Leadership will only succeed if they implement their core values into teaching and mentoring their employees, therefore inspiring loyalty and commitment in their employees (Žydžiūnaitė, 2018).

“Does Leadership Matter?” (Jin et al., 2017). Current literature shows that leadership does matters and is crucial to the overall success of any type of organization, its management, and daily operations. Having a highly educated and experienced leadership is not enough to determine the success of the organization or the effectiveness of its internal processes, but the leadership ethics and values. Furthermore, a great program is not enough without the support and engagement of the leadership from the top executives down. According to Jin et al. (2017), inclusive leadership strongly predicts work cohesion. Jin et al. also suggested that inclusive

leadership contributes to employees' feelings which therefore facilitates the integration of a more diverse workforce, lower turnover ratio and higher performance. Involvement of leadership positively impacts diversity and inclusion because leadership cares about all employees alike and would do anything to eliminate any barriers that prohibit equal participation of all employees resulting in higher performance among minorities because they feel supported by their leadership (Jin et al., 2017).

Their direct involvement, attitudes and moral values towards diversity management initiatives are pivotal to the effectiveness of diversity training programs in meeting the organizational goals. Furthermore, a pro-diversity and transformational leadership positively influences the implementation of diversity management initiatives such as training (Ng & Sears, 2020). Ng and Sears also suggested that when the top executives and CEO are pro-diversity and actively involved in the implementation of these programs, other managers are influenced by the top leadership's actions and behaviors. However, these managers are change agents and must all buy-in and embrace these initiatives for other employees to opt in and programs to meet their intent.

Formal Theories

The following formal theories were identified as they relate to this research study and the key concepts discussed above: social cognitive theory, social identification theory, and transformational leadership theory. In this section, the researcher discussed how these theories relate to the problem being studied and connect them to current scholarly literature. As found in current literature, these formal theories are related to team performance, job motivation, and satisfaction among other positive organizational outcomes of having a strong leadership that can lead and positively influence all employees alike.

Social Cognitive Theory. This theory relates to people's trust in the organization which will therefore influence their attitudes (job performance and withdrawal behaviors such as turnover) and behaviors (task performance). According to this theory, people's behaviors are the result of motivation or team performance, collective efficacy or team engagement and competition or conflict (Lin et al., 2020). As previously discussed, employees' behaviors will impact how they perform, their motivation and satisfaction, as well as their loyalty and commitment to the organization. Lin et al. also suggests that collective efficacy is critical to organizational performance as this relates to sharing beliefs and built that trust among coworkers which will then influence how much effort they will put towards accomplishing projects. Lack of collective efficacy will result in lower team performance. The lack of trust or how employees feel about the organization's core values will then become a barrier in the workplace causing employees to be more cautious and reduce their efforts and efficacy (Ozyilmaz et al., 2018). Ozyilmaz et al. (2018) suggests that when employees trust the organizations they work for, self-efficacy will have a stronger effect on job attitudes such as their job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and positive behaviors towards task performance. Ozyilmaz et al. further discussed a study conducted in Turkey among 300 employees and their supervisors demonstrating that trust had stronger positive outcomes on job performance and satisfaction, reducing the employees' intentions to leave the organization.

Furthermore, the social cognitive theory is related to the specific problem as this theory seeks to explain how diversity training can result in negative organizational outcomes such as lower performance, particularly team's performance. When there is diversity within teams themselves, there is a positive response towards these initiatives. It can be found in current scholarly literature that people's behaviors are the result of their motivation to work and most

important at work when working with others (e.g., team projects), therefore impacting their performance. According to Lin et al. (2020), based on this theory, dysfunctional conflict influences team's performance through their collective beliefs and their motivation.

Social Identification Theory. Another theory related to this study and the concepts mentioned above is the social identification theory. According to current literature, social identification theory allows people to be part of a group and identify themselves to a group categorizing themselves in a group based on age, gender, experiences, or lifestyle, among other factors which will then shape their attitudes (Devlin & Dillard, 2016). Furthermore, the researcher found on current literature that this theory relates to how individuals identify themselves to other members of the team (i.e., share common interests, beliefs, and ideas) which will determine their job performance and motivation to work. If they cannot identify with the group, it will result in withdrawal behaviors. Employees want to feel that they belong to a group and share common experiences. According to Lin et al. (2020), social identification is a precondition that influences team dynamics.

Like the cognitive theory, in this theory, employees' social identity and self-worth are enhanced by their perception of belonging to an organization (Scheidler et al., 2019). Furthermore, this theory is related to the specific problem as it seeks to explain how people see other members of a group which can result in negative organizational outcomes as members will not take diversity training as needed but imposed. Lin et al. (2020) suggests that this theory can negatively influence team dynamics and impede members performance. If employees do not identify themselves with the rest of the teams, it will impact the success of diversity training programs. According to Rawski and Conroy (2020), organizational identification will increase employees' voluntary participation in diversity training and most important, their motivation to

learn as they do not like to feel obligated to attend and comply with annual training requirements. This will further have a direct impact in the failure or success of training programs.

Transformational Leadership Theory. Throughout this literature review, the researcher has discussed the role of leadership in diversity management initiatives and how leadership influences organizational outcomes. Many studies can be found on transformation leadership theory and the impact of transformational leaders on employees. As demonstrated in current literature, earlier research shows that transformational leadership is more effective in influencing, inspiring, motivating, and mentoring followers in achieving the organizational goals (Mahmood et al., 2019). Mahmood et al. also suggests that transformational leadership creates a working environment that motivates and influences employees by developing a fair climate and fostering employees' creativity making jobs more enjoyable. Furthermore, because leaders have given employees the authority to be creative, employees take ownership on the outcomes of the given project.

If social identification theory relates to how individuals identify themselves to other members of the group, transformational leadership theory explains how a strong transformational leadership brings team members together which shifts any negative member's attitudes and behaviors, decreases negative aspects of diversity, and generates positive outcomes (Kim, 2017). As mentioned above, leadership involvement is crucial when implementing these training initiatives. Therefore, diversity management initiatives such as training are better off with transformational leaders because they bring groups together which improves performance and reduces internal conflicts (Guillaume et al., 2017). Moreover, Moon (2016) discussed four important behaviors of a transformational leader: (a) influence others and build trust, (b) inspire

motivation, (c) encourage employees to perform and be creative, and (d) most important, recognize the individual. Therefore, transformational leadership not just welcomes and embraces changes for the better of the organizations but are a more inclusive leadership and their behaviors influence the overall functioning of the organizations.

Actors

In this section, the researcher explores the main actors who play a critical role in this research study: employees/workforce, supervisors/managers, HR professionals and the EEOC. These entities and key players are connected to the problem being studied as their actions will affect the outcomes of diversity management initiatives in the workplace. As discussed earlier, leaders' actions and values will change employees' attitudes and behaviors towards the organization and their job itself. Employees' feelings towards the organization can result in something positive because they feel appreciated and taken care of or turn into something negative because they feel mistreated and discriminated against. HR professionals need to work closely with other managers to develop business strategies that are not just focused on improving processes in order to increase performance and productivity. Employees and customers are the number one business stakeholders. Therefore, when developing these initiatives and strategies, they have to be focused with them in mind. How can their programs benefit employees' well-being and result in positive organizational outcomes? For these programs to work and organizations to be in compliance, leadership and HR professionals need to work closely with the EEOC to ensure they are in compliance with federal legislation against workplace discrimination.

First, employees are the second most important stakeholder, number one is customers. In current scholarly literature, scholars agree that employees' attitudes and behaviors will depend

on how they are treated in the workplace or feel they are treated. Employees are the focus of HR professionals when developing more inclusive diversity strategies (Buengeler et al., 2018). Furthermore, Buengeler et al. support the social cognitive and social identification theories when explaining that HR inclusion policies, employees must feel and “experience uniqueness, belongingness, and communality” for these initiatives to be effective and attain the end goals of being more inclusive and reduce prejudice and discrimination. Furthermore, organizations are also focused on developing retention and hiring strategies with diversity and inclusion in mind in order to attract and retain highly qualified employees. These strategies will also create competitive advantages over main competitors because employees not just want to work for the organization, but their job motivation and performance reflects in the overall organization’s performance and productivity. When employees feel discriminated or mistreated, or there is no opportunity for career progression because of the ‘group’ they belong to, employees start engaging in withdrawal behaviors. Employees are the driver for diversity management initiatives such as training. In current literature, the researcher found that when these programs are more inclusive of the organizational culture and it is visible to all employees, it will then positively impact the employees’ loyalty to the organization and acceptance of the programs, and negative turnover ratio (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015).

Another key player in this research study is the leadership/management whose actions will influence employees’ behaviors and attitudes which will therefore affect the outcomes of diversity management initiatives. In a nutshell, managers and leaders at all levels must buy-in to these HR business strategies and show full support for those initiatives to include training to be effective, otherwise, employees will start engaging in withdrawal behaviors. Current studies show that leadership direct involvement and acceptance of diversity training will have positive

organizational outcomes such as lower turnover and higher performance (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Furthermore, in current literature, scholars demonstrate how leaders co-determine inclusion programs through their reactions or acceptance of HR practices (Buengeler et al., 2018). These two actors' actions and responsibilities intertwined to shape inclusion and diversity programs in the workplace. If they do not work together, these initiatives will fail. Furthermore, diversity literature mentions that these two actors, HR and leadership, need to enact on diversity management initiatives, taking the following aspects of inclusion into account: uniqueness, belongingness, and communality in order for employees to have inclusion in the workplace (Buengeler et al., 2018). Nevertheless, current literature shows mixed evidence on the leadership effects on diversity and inclusion practices. According to Jin et al. (2016), despite diversity management being a managerial function, empirical studies cannot clearly distinguish the effects of leadership on cultivating inclusive organizational culture. Despite these studies, Jin et al. suggest that leadership does matter in the effectiveness of these programs and employees' attitudes and behaviors as the result of leadership actions. Indeed, studies on leadership involvement are scattered, scholars suggested that an inclusive leadership (e.g., a leadership who emphasizes on the employees above themselves) gives these initiatives more credibility on managing diversity in a more diverse environment (Jin et al., 2016).

The third actor to discuss is the role of HR managers. "HR on board!" (Mullins, 2018). Indeed, HR plays a critical role in developing and integrating diversity management initiatives. Mullins explored a study conducted with 423 firms listed in the 500 S&P from 200-2006 indicated that firms that integrate HR expertise in their board of directors have stronger diversity management programs (Mullins, 2018). The reason behind that asseveration is that HR managers and other professionals must work together to ensure the organization complies with current

legislation to ensure compliance. HR managers are responsible for not just diversity training and enforcing all personnel related regulations, but they serve as role models for employees and their actions are perceived by all as ethical towards recruiting and diversity (Durrani & Rajagopal, 2016). HR professionals will not just influence diversity management strategies but other HR practices that will help the organization attain competitive advantage among main competitors. As mentioned earlier, when HR practices are targeted to a more diverse and inclusive organizational culture, it will result in higher job satisfaction, motivation, and performance, new employees are attracted to work for the organization and current employees will continue working for the more inclusive and pro-diversity organization.

Last actor to discuss in this section is the EEOC. The EEOC is plays a critical role in antidiscrimination efforts by enforce compliance with federal and state regulation that prohibits employment and workplace discrimination. EEOC prohibits workplace discrimination in recruiting and hiring, job evaluations, promotion, training, compensation policies, and disciplinary action plans (Durrani & Rajagopal, 2016). Not only are they in charge of enforcing legislation but conducting a thorough investigation on any alleged charges on employee discrimination in accordance with Title VII Civil Rights.

Constructs

The constructs found in current literature that are related to this study are training and development and job performance. As previously discussed, there is a direct relationship between the concepts (i.e., employees' attitudes and behaviors, diversity training, and leadership values) and the formal theories with the outcomes of training in the organization. Therefore, through observation and interviews, the researcher will study the effect of training and development in the workplace as studies demonstrate that there is a direct relationship between

workplace diversity and training, indicating that training influences diversity, therefore, increasing their motivation to work and job performance (Bana et al., 2016). Training and development are critical to organizational success. According to Sartori et al. (2018), training and development are critical to organizational success because it empowers the competences of employees and managers with the objective of improving organizational performance.

Furthermore, Sartori et al. suggested that training and development allows employees and managers to be creative and bring new ideas to the table in order to adapt to any changes in the organization. As it relates to the problem being studied, training and development brings diverse teams together to develop new ideas and innovation, therefore job motivation is high as well as team performance and productivity which is the end state of an effective program. By innovation, Sartori et al. (2018) mean “introduction of something new resulting in strengthening the defendable competitive advantage of an organization” (p. 313).

Studies found that diversity training lowered team creativity and performance when the group is low on nationality diversity (Guillaume et al., 2017). Job performance is related to the well-being of the employees; therefore, it can have effects on employees’ behavior and attitudes towards work which can result in negative organizational outcomes such as job performance. Employees need to perceive that value in diversity by the organization, therefore enhancing performance. According to Guillaume et al. (2017), diversity not always work so constructs such as employee’s morale, well-being and performance are used to study the effectiveness of diversity training. Lastly, it can be found in scholarly literature how diversity training initiatives and growth-oriented strategies positively moderate the effects of organizational performance as they are perceived like the organization values diversity (Guillaume et al., 2017). When employees perceived that value in diversity, it increases performance.

Related Studies

When looking back in the history of the workforce in the United States (U.S.), women were not part of the workforce as they were stay-home, higher level of education was probably high school, leadership positions were filled by wealthy white males, while the lower-income white male population worked in the factories, just to name a few. However, during the past decades the U.S. labor force demographics have drastically changed as a direct result of changes in the U.S. population demographics and globalization. A study conducted to observe the labor force trends in a 100-year span, from 1950 – 2050 determined that external forces (e.g., demographic, social, political, and historical forces) are shaping the U.S. labor force based on the following facts: the growth of the labor force, more women joining the labor force, 55-year and older will make up 19% of the labor force by 2050, and the rapid changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the labor force (Toosi, 2002). Furthermore, Toosi also explained in the research study that the white non-Hispanic population, which for decades has been the majority, is projected to decrease from 73% in 2000 to 53% in 2050. As the U.S. labor force' demographics shift to a more diverse population so do the organizations need to rapidly adapt to these changes and revamp their diversity management initiatives in order to meet the demands and challenges of diversity in the workplace. Indeed, the labor market will become not just widely diverse but more competitive. Therefore, organizations would have to aim their hiring and retention efforts to a more diverse population and start valuing and managing diversity more efficiently in order to achieve competitive advantage as they face globalization. In this section of the literature review, the researcher will review related studies found in current scholarly literature and discuss all viewpoints to support or contradict the problem being studied.

In recent literature, scholars discussed that diversity has played a huge role in the organizational culture due to globalization, workforce diversity and the complexity of jobs, requiring organizations to develop HR practices in accordance with international HR policies and procedures (Sukalova & Ceniga, 2019). Today's workforce consists of executives and employees from different ethnic groups, culture, genders, age, and religions. Consequently, to meet globalization demands and the needs of the organization, executive training and coaching needs to be more inclusive and take into consideration all the factors that can affect the organization's performance such as diversity management. As mentioned above, many organizations these days operate in an international scale resulting in the organization being led by people from different cultural backgrounds which have a direct impact on the way organizations do business. Therefore, it has affected how management develop and implement diversity management strategies. Furthermore, when you have people from different backgrounds, you have to take other factors into consideration to develop a plan of action. In order to be effective and meet the objectives, leadership must not only consider the different protected groups and cultural differences but the type of personalities and learning styles.

In recent literature, the researcher found that by year 2020 the number of people seeking global careers will increase by 50% (Parish, 2016). What does this mean for diversity training? That those global organizations will now have to focus on developing those competencies required for those jobs abroad. Still today, leadership does not understand what diversity management and initiatives like training entails. Therefore, organizations need to treat diversity training as a long-term investment and allocate the necessary resources towards it to maintain or improve their competitiveness and avoid employees' turnover, particularly at the executive level. Furthermore, the executive level leadership in the international setting must also have a thorough

understanding on diversity and HR policies in the host country as well as a global mindset in order to develop effective and efficient initiatives. As a result, it will then be a return on investment (ROI) for that organization to improve their performance and productivity levels.

Current scholarly articles demonstrate the diversity intelligence (DQ) is key on the training and development of the organization's leadership which will therefore impact organizational changes. According to Hughes (2018), leadership own thoughts and actions influence the organization's overall success, therefore, DQ plays an intricate role as it will further influence employee's performance. If employees or followers in the protected groups feel appreciated and recognized, diversity education will have achieved positive organizational goals such as described by Hughes: reduced turnover, improved job productivity, and increased morale and motivation. Indeed, DQ is another critical skill that needs to be integrate in training strategies in order to develop those soft skills like interpersonal relationship skills. Management needs to understand the differences both emotional and intelligence diversity and their relationship with executive coaching and how it can enhance leader's development (Wittmer & Hopkins, 2018). Diversity should not be seen as a barrier in an organization but as an opportunity to leverage on. A diverse workforce brings a different perspective to the organization that can positively impact their future performance. "Working across cultures (including race, gender, ethnicity and country of origin) actually is a rich and rewarding experience for all involved. There is so much learning that takes place, it should be pursued rather than avoided" (Hunt & Weintraub, 2017). If leadership considers diversity when planning strategies, then it will be more effective and efficient for a global/international organization resulting in higher performance and productivity.

In other related studies, Bezrukova et al. (2016) noted that diversity scholars have provided guidelines for diversity training implementation and evaluation. However, there is no clear evidence of being successful. In fact, in 65 studies there was found mixed evidence on the effectiveness of diversity training (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Evidence showed that diversity training in some cases can either increase prejudice and stereotypes or deliver positive outcomes such as increase productivity or employee's behaviors and attitudes towards work. However, it cannot be predicted the short- or long-time effects or consequences of diversity training. Therefore, diversity training in some cases is not given the priority required and labeled as an 'add-on' task in some annual training schedule. Indeed, the frequency in which diversity training is conducted in an organization impacts the success or failure of diversity training. A one-time training session does not change attitudes and behaviors or increase the knowledge and awareness in diversity. As evidence suggests, the success will come overtime and it is related to the frequency which could be in the form of continuing education motivating employees to consider continuous training versus training only during onboarding process (Robinson et al., 2020). Diversity training cannot be done in a standalone session as noted by Bezrukova et al. (2016), but integrated or complemented with other initiatives in order to keep the trainees' attention and motivation to learn, otherwise, training will not meet the intent. According to studies, studies that integrated diversity into other initiatives had larger effect sizes for attitudinal/affective and behavioral learning than the standalone training sessions (Bezrukova et al., 2016). Bezrukova et al. also noted in this study that there was no significant correlation between mandatory or voluntary training.

Furthermore, there are studies neglecting the role of leadership in the success of diversity training. Throughout, this literature review, the researcher has discussed the impact of leadership

integration for diversity training to be effective. However, there is mixed evidence among scholars on this matter. While some agree that diversity management is crucial, others emphasize more on the leadership role in diversity management (Jin et al., 2017). In the review of current literature, there are studies showing no correlation between diversity policies and leadership behaviors in cultivating a more inclusive organization. Nevertheless, other studies suggest that inclusive leadership have a positive effect in managing diversity in a globally diverse and inclusive environment, therefore improving employees' performance (Jin et al., 2017). Jin et al. discussed their findings in a study with a large sample of U.S. federal government employees ($n = 415,696$) to determine whether or not inclusive leadership impacts job performance. This survey is from data collected in 2012 with a response rate of 46%.

According to Jin et al. (2017), the results driven from this survey suggest that diversity policy and leadership directly impact the relationship between racial diversity and organizational performance. Many assumptions can be drawn from this assertion. First, that racial minority groups tend to be less satisfied at work when compared to whites because their leadership is not pro-diversity or does not portray itself as being one. Second, diversity management initiatives in paper are not enough. Furthermore, studies show leadership must be involved in these initiatives, otherwise, they fail to favor minority groups as it gives the perception that they strongly favor white employees (Jin et al., 2017). Therefore, these results support the hypothesis about the important role of leadership in diversity management initiatives and its relationship with job performance. In another study, conducted in 2009, also supports that an inclusive leadership not just results in higher performance but lower turnover ratio (Jin et al., 2017). Indeed, when diversity policies support minority groups (e.g., racial, gender, age, ethics groups, etc.) and the

leadership is pro-diversity not just in paper but in actions, it creates a more productive working environment.

Throughout this literature review, the researcher has discovered mixed evidence. All related studies and scholarly literature reviewed presented mixed evidence based on the following perspectives: business (profitability of diversity training), social (reduction of discrimination and prejudice) and learning (training design and context). As noted by Alhejji et al. (2016), organizations use different learning/training approaches which can explain why of the different outcomes across different studies. Consequently, literature on diversity training shows both positive and negative outcomes such as improving skills to work with diverse groups and negative interpersonal attitudes, respectively. Furthermore, Alhejji et al. (2016) suggested that one of the reasons these programs fail is because leadership does not understand that diversity training is good for business and profitability. Literature also suggests that the impact of diversity training in the organizational outcomes is related to the deliverables, the design, and the context. Therefore, it is difficult to draw conclusions on why diversity training does not deliver per expectations.

Based on the three perspectives drawn by the research conducted by Alhejji et al. (2016), there are knowledge gaps. Indeed, it is understood that diversity training results on individual outcomes such as lack of motivation and low performance, yet research is not clear about the organizational-level outcomes like team level performance. Therefore, Alhejji et al. noted that there is a need for further research on the effects of diversity training on team level performance. Regarding social perspective, Alhejji et al. suggested that diversity training will impact the employees' perception of fairness and diversity in the workplace, further impacting the overall climate of the organization and the team. Indeed, diversity training will impact employees'

perception not just how they think of the organization as a whole but the organizational culture belief and tolerance of diversity.

Anticipated and Discovered Themes

Employees' behaviors and attitudes are a common/anticipated theme in most articles the researcher came across. Employees' actions are a reflection on how they feel about their workplace. As seen throughout this literature review and depicted in the findings, evidence shows that job motivation and job performance are the result of their behaviors and attitudes (individual outcomes that can further affect the organization). For instance, when training is imposed by the organization, behaviors turn to negative because it is taken as a punishment. On the other hand, when employees are part of training coupled with leadership engagement, it appeals to the employees and they engage in the programs, diversity training will be more effective and more likely result in positive attitudes and behaviors (Robinson et al., 2020).

Another anticipated theme found in most articles is leadership support. When leadership at all levels buy-in to diversity management initiatives, it results in acceptance of those initiatives by employees and organizational positive outcomes (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Employees will follow their leaders when they are engaged. Based upon the findings, diversity management is not just in paper, but active engagement and understanding that the organizational benefits as a result of leadership support are endless. The initiatives draft on paper must be turned into actions, otherwise, employees would engage on negative behaviors such as resistance to training because they feel training is unnecessary and redundant.

Leadership diversity intelligence (DQ) is a discovered theme the researcher was not familiar with. If leadership participates in training development programs where diversity lessons

are an integral part of the training, leadership DQ will be higher resulting in a more understanding and more equitable leadership (Hughes, 2018).

Another theme found in scholarly literature is workplace withdrawal which refers to employees' attitudes and behaviors when job satisfaction and motivation are lacking. These refer to behaviors such as turnover, absenteeism, and poor job performance when employees lack the support from the organization. According to Kong (2016), this refers to how employees 'escape' or temporary removal from dissatisfaction in the workplace by being always late or leave work earlier, absenteeism and taking longer breaks.

Lastly, attitudinal learning refers to affective training or how the employee (or trainee) feels after training. This theme is found in several articles discussing the outcomes of diversity training on employees' behaviors. According to Bezrukova et al. (2016), the effects of diversity training will vary and employees' attitudes or feelings towards diversity would change overtime. This cannot be used to predict whether diversity training is effective or not.

Summary of the Literature Review

This literature review laid out some of the best business practices associated with this study and connected them to current scholarly literature. It also framed the concepts connected to this study and explored the formal theories in current literature. The researcher also addressed the outcomes of the key concepts and how they are linked to the failure of diversity training and employees' withdrawal intentions which will guide this study. These concepts are also described in the related studies section of this literature review which will further help the researcher during the research to explore and understand how diversity education influences both leadership values and employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance. Furthermore, the related studies will further allow the researcher to answer the research questions as she explores the why and the

how of diversity training initiatives as well as why these initiatives fail to meet organizational goals such as increasing knowledge and awareness in diversity. Lastly, this literature review also described some of the anticipated and discovered themes understood prior to the study and found in current scholarly literature, respectively. All in all, leadership matters, HR must be on board, and employees' feelings and inclusiveness are critical aspects to an effective diversity management program. Although many studies have been conducted regarding the success or failure of diversity training, current literature shows mixed evidence. Therefore, as the researcher moved forward in this research study, she conducted further research on the role of leadership and HR professionals on the effectiveness of these initiatives and how these actors can turn the switch and integrate programs that deliver positive organizational outcomes.

Summary of Section 1 and Transition

In Section 1 of this research study, the goal was to provide the foundation and the significance of this study. Current literature shows many scholars focusing their efforts in understanding not just why demographics are shifting to a widely diverse workforce due to globalization but the how management is responding to these changes and why in many cases diversity management initiatives fail to achieve the end state. Therefore, Section 1 started with the background of the problem and how this topic is worth of studying in order to explore and understand why certain diversity management initiatives such as training fail to achieve the desired results. This section also laid out the research type, methodology and design best suited for the problem which will further help the researcher explore and understand the why and the how of the problem. Additionally, the researcher discussed the problem statement and the purpose statement which describe the focus of the study and help the researcher answer the research questions. In this section the researcher created a conceptual framework which

identified the concepts, theories, actors, and constructs surrounding the problem and their relationships with current literature. The researcher also identified the assumptions, limitations and delimitations, and potential risks moving forward and how to mitigate the potential risks that might impact the study. In this section, the researcher identified the gaps in current literature, the significance of the study as well as the role and impact of leadership in business practice. Moreover, the researcher discussed how this research study will benefit today's business practice and its relationship to the cognate HRM. Lastly, this section examined the application and integration of Biblical concepts to this study and the formal theories described in the conceptual framework. This section concluded with the literature review outline which will be further completed in Section 2.

While in Section 1, the researcher framed the research study, in Section 2, the researcher will conduct a more in-depth framing of the study beginning with a literature review previously outline in Section 1. The purpose of the literature review is to create that connection found in current scholarly articles not older than 5 years, identify any new knowledge and fill any missing gaps in current literature with new knowledge. Moving forward, the researcher will discuss her role in the study and bracketing to avoid any personal bias. As discussed in Section 1, this study will be conducted using a flexible design qualitative method, specifically, a multiple case study research method. However, in this section the researcher will include a detailed discussion on the appropriateness of the chosen research design and methodology for the research study. The nature of this study calls for a flexible design because it is not based on theories, and it will take place in multiple locations. Furthermore, this research study will use multiple sources of information to collect relevant data such as documents, interviews and focus groups to help the researcher explore and understand the problem. In order to collect the data using multiple

sources, the researcher will first get the consent from the participants. No information or data will be collected and reported in this study without the participants' consent. The last part of Section 2 will consist of a discussion regarding data collection and analysis. The researcher will discuss the size of the population to be studied and the appropriateness of the sample group and population size to this research study. Additionally, the researcher will explain how personnel interviews and focus groups will be conducted as well as an overview of the plan to gather and organize the collected data. Lastly, this section will conclude with a discussion on how the researcher will ensure reliability and validity in the study and the bracketing techniques to be used in order to avoid biases.

Section 2: The Project

We all perceive the world in different ways and research is at times triggered by the researcher's personal experiences or assumptions mistakenly viewed as facts. Therefore, the researcher needs to have a clear understanding of the connection between philosophical worldviews and research methodologies in order to conduct a research based on factual data and not on personal experiences. In this section, the researcher discussed her actions moving forward with the study followed by an explanation of her chosen research design and its appropriateness for this research study. Furthermore, the researcher discussed the chosen method associated with the design and the appropriateness of the chosen methodology as it relates to the research study. Lastly, since the chosen research design is flexible design, the researcher discussed triangulation to establish credibility and validity of the data sources.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on employees at all levels in the educational services industry in Central Texas. This study further explored the reasons diversity training fails to increase awareness of diversity in the workplace and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). Additionally, this qualitative study explored the how and why the failure of diversity training is linked to employees engaging in the withdrawal behaviors. Lastly, at this stage of the research study, the potential failure of diversity management and training initiatives on employees was defined as the negative effects (e.g., poor performance, withdrawal behaviors, etc.) of these initiatives on the organization and its employees.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to understand the why participants think, act, or feel in a certain way towards the problem being studied. At this point in the research study, the researcher has already framed the study. Additionally, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review of current scholarly literature regarding the problem being studied. As the researcher moves forward, the researcher will then define the population, the data collection methods, collect and analyze the data in order to explore and understand the why and the how of the problem.

According to Sutton and Austin (2015), the most difficult role of the researcher is to select or define the population because it involves asking people what they think or feel about the problem being studied. In this study, the researcher tried to understand the potential impact of diversity training in employees' attitudes and behaviors as well as their feelings about the training itself and how it impacts their performance in the workplace. Another role of the researcher is to collect the data, which is the researcher's primary responsibility to safeguard the participants and their data (Sutton & Austin, 2015). Regarding the data collection, the researcher used in this study multiple sources of information to collect relevant data such as archival data, interviews and focus groups to help her explore and understand the problem. In order to collect the data using multiple sources, the researcher received the consent from the participants. The researcher also discussed below the size of the population to be studied and the appropriateness of the sample group and population size to this research study. Additionally, the researcher explained how personnel interviews and focus groups were conducted as well as an overview of the plan to gather and organize the collected data. Lastly, the researcher ensured reliability and validity in the study and the bracketing techniques to be used to avoid biases.

Research Methodology

According to Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), research design is an important step in the research process as it lays out the strategy to collect and analyze the data in order to understand the problem being studied. Indeed, the research design will not only guide the process, but it is critical for the researcher as she will need to determine how the data will be collected, analyzed, interpreted, and reported. It is imperative for the researchers to understand each one of the approaches in order to select the most appropriate design for the study in order to determine the what data needs to be collected, the how that data will be analyzed and the why of the data resulted from the research in order to further answer the research questions. Having said that, the most appropriate for this research study was the qualitative (flexible) as discussed below. Once the researcher identified the research design that was best suited for the research study, the researcher decided on the methodology approach. Choosing the right methodology was an intricate part of the research design as researcher made important decisions such as how to collect data and how to analyze the data which will therefore guide the study and answer the research questions. In this section, the researcher discussed the research design, methodology and triangulation chosen for this research study and their appropriateness to the study.

Discussion of Flexible Design

Creswell and Poth (2018) defined this method as an inquiry process that explores a social or human problem where the researcher observes participants, analyzes words, and conducts study in a natural setting. Moreover, in qualitative research the researcher is trying to explore or understand a problem not to validate a hypothesis allowing more ‘flexibility’ with data collection such as open-ended questions, interviews, observations, and case studies. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), this exploration or understanding is needed because there is a need to study a

group and variables are not quantifiable or easily measured. A perfect example is this research study which further explained why this type of method is best suited for my research. Creswell and Poth further discussed five approaches to qualitative research which will be discussed below in further details.

This study was conducted using a flexible design qualitative method, specifically, a multiple case study research method. Flexible research design was appropriate for this study because this is not a theory driven study, but ‘flexible’ research to explore and try to understand the problem and answer the research questions. Additionally, flexible research design was appropriate for this type of qualitative research since this study will take place in multiple locations using documented case studies and research as well as interviews and direct face-to-face observations, which dictated the course of this research.

Discussion of Case Study

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case study research must be view as a methodology where the researcher explores real-life cases or situations and gathers detailed data through different sources of information such as observations, interviews, and reports. Case studies are used to research or investigate an individual, a group, or an event in real-life or setting. Creswell and Poth pointed out common characteristics among case studies: (a) identify the case to be analyzed that can be described by different parameters, (b) present an in-depth understanding of the case to be studied, (c) use multiple sources of information to conduct the analysis, and (d) always conclude studies with the researcher’s findings and conclusions or assertions after exploring and analyzing all sources of qualitative data. The use of case studies is best suited when the researchers want to explore real-world cases bounded by parameters such as time and place. Like the previously discussed approaches, researchers may face some challenges

when using case study as the qualitative research approach. Some of the challenges, as described by Creswell and Poth, are the scope of the case selected, deciding how many cases to study, single or multiple studies, and the amount of data collected which might lack relevancy with the study. Furthermore, researcher biases can also pose some challenges in case study research as the researcher might select cases influenced by their own subjective feelings or emotions towards the topic being researched.

The chosen method for this study was a multiple case study method. This method was used to study the problem in a real setting using multiple sources of information such as documents and interviews of the personnel in charge of developing and executing the training as well as personnel participating in the training. Multiple case study method is a qualitative research approach which researcher use real-life situations or ‘cases’ to explore the ‘how’ and the ‘why’ of the research question(s). This method does not seek to describe a phenomenon or narrate someone’s story and life experiences but a more in-depth investigation to study an individual(s), a group, event, or an activity. Case study research involves studying real life issues, consequently, a multiple case study design best fitted this research as this research is focusing on the potential failure of diversity training programs within the educational services industry in Central Texas. According to Yin (2018), the use of method will depend on the following conditions: research question seek to answer the why and the how; there is no control over behavioral events and researchers are looking to obtain data in a natural setting; and focuses on contemporary events. Consequently, the use of this methodology approach helped answer the following research questions: (a) the why diversity programs potentially fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination, (b) the how understanding awareness initiatives versus training help organizations attain results, and (c) the why and what leadership values are critical

for implementation. In order to answer these questions, a multiple case study was used to study the problem in a real setting, the failure of diversity training programs using multiple sources of information such as documents and interviews of the personnel in charge of developing and executing the training as well as personnel participating in the training.

Discussion of Methods for Triangulation

According to Jentoft and Olsen (2019), triangulation is used by the researcher to compare data across different data sources for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the problem being studied. It is also used for both qualitative and quantitative research using two or more data sources to check for their reliability and validity and establish credibility. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), to establish trustworthiness, the use of terms such as credibility, authenticity, dependability, and confirmability are crucial for internal validation and reliability and objectivity of the research. Qualitative research must be credible based on actual data and real-life experiences, not based on statistical and numerical data as it will be in quantitative research. Therefore, for this qualitative study, it was imperative for the researcher to immerse him or herself and get closer to the participants through interviews and observations to understand the field of study and ensure quality and reliability of the data collected. Although the use of multiple sources of data collection and sources of evidence give the study more validity and reliability and a fuller picture of the problem being studied, the researcher used data triangulation as a method to corroborate and validate the data. Data triangulation pertains to my research study as the data will be collected and analyzed from different data sources such as documented case studies, focus groups and interviews that can also converge and confirm the same findings. As previously discussed in Section 1, triangulation posed some challenges for the researcher due to the availability of data collected from interviews and focus groups as well as

the data already available through annual reports publicly available online which were also used as a source of data or evidence for this study. Therefore, the researcher used data triangulation by collecting the data regarding the problem being studied from multiple sources. The sources were the actors: employees who agreed to participate in one-on-one interviews and focus and the supervisors who agreed to be part of the interviews and focus group. Although the primary method used by the researcher was the personal interviews, the researcher used archival data that was publicly available for the researcher to use in the study.

Summary of Research Methodology

In this section, the researcher discussed the chosen research design and the appropriateness to the research study. As discussed, research design is a process where the researcher lays out the approach that is more appropriate for the type of study and that will help the researcher understand, explore, and answer the research questions. Therefore, the most appropriate design for this study is the qualitative (flexible) research design because this is not a theory driven study but a study to understand and explore why the participants act, feel, or think the way they do. In this section, the researcher also explained the methodology associated with this design which is multiple case studies and the appropriateness of the chosen methodology to this research study. Lastly, since the chosen research design is flexible design, the researcher discussed the use of triangulation to validate the accuracy of the data sources and build credibility as a researcher.

Participants

This research study involved the selection of specific participants who could best answer and inform the research questions in order to understand and explore the problem being studied. Therefore, the researcher purposely selected employees by their role in the organization and

industry being studied (management and employees not in leadership roles) and by diversity groups (i.e., nationality/ethnicity, age, gender, and any other protected group). The researcher coordinated with the HR department to query employees (participants) based on specific criteria (e.g., role and diversity group category). The researcher provided a list of characteristics the participants should have, then the researcher sampled every person who met the selection criteria (e.g., leadership role and diversity groups). List from the HR department only listed employees by name and contact information to avoid preconceived biases of the participants. The researcher asked participants for their signed consent to participate in the research study. The first group of participants (by role) consisted of supervisors and teachers who could best inform the research questions and achieve the following objectives: (a) determined the reasons why diversity training initiatives failed to achieve stated goals, (b) what employee behaviors influenced the outcomes, and (c) the impact of the leadership on diversity training initiatives. The second group of participants consisted of employees from diverse backgrounds regardless of their role in the organization in order to understand their feelings and thoughts regarding diversity training initiatives.

Population and Sampling

In this section, the researcher described the characteristics of the targeted population, the size of the population and the appropriateness of the selected population for the research study. In qualitative research, the researcher focuses on a sample that can represent the larger population and can inform a better understanding of the problem being studied. Therefore, the researcher purposely sampled the population using stratified purposely sampling method. The researcher further discussed this method and why is it appropriate for the research study. Additionally, in this section the researcher discussed the sample frame and its appropriateness.

The researcher also discussed the sample to be used, which in this case the researcher sampled from employees in leadership roles and another sample group based on diversity. The samples of the population to be used were appropriate for this research study as it gave the researcher the opportunity to understand the problem from different perspectives. Lastly, the researcher discussed (a) the sample size, (b) its appropriateness and how the sample size helped reach saturation, and (c) how the researcher will gain access to the sample.

Discussion of Population

The population being studied is the educational services industry in Central Texas which population is widely diverse due to this area having a large population of active military personnel and veterans who settled in this area for less than 5 years making it a mobile population. Furthermore, the second and third ethnic groups represented in this central region where the school district is located are Black/African-American (Non-Hispanic) at 22.4% and Hispanics at 25.6%. DataUSA reported that in 2020, Central Texas, which includes the cities of Austin and Waco, registered the five largest ethnic groups: White (Non-Hispanic) at 51.6%, White (Hispanic) at 23.5%, Other (Hispanic) at 6.9%, Black or African American (Non-Hispanic) at 6.89%, and Asian (Non-Hispanic) at 5.9% (Deloitte, 2020). Additionally, the surge of minority groups such as Hispanic and Asians in Central Texas, particularly in Austin, exceeds Whites (Non-Hispanics) making Austin an attractive “majority-minority city” as the quality of life and economic boom in recent decades have contributed to people from all over the world to settle in Central Texas (Robinson & Chang, 2016). Therefore, the Central Texas population seemed to be appropriate for this research study due to the diverse population which will help the researcher understand and explore the phenomenon being studied and get a better understanding from different points of view. Regarding the size of the eligible population, the number of

participants in this study was targeted at 20 participants per category. However, the actual number of participants was 15 participants in Group 1 and 18 participants in Group 2 at which point the researcher reached saturation.

Discussion of Sampling

Participants were purposely selected. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the concept of purposely sampling means that the researcher will select individuals and locations that can inform an understanding of the problem being studied. The sampling was not just a representation of the population, but they have relevancy to the problem being studied. Therefore, the sampling type or method used was stratified purposely sampling as the researcher will purposely divide the participants in subgroups or categories to understand the problem from different perspectives. This sampling method was best suited for this study because the population being studied has different groups or subgroups but are more likely to be a representation of the population. As mentioned, the workforce demographics in Central Texas represent five of the largest ethnic groups. Consequently, it was appropriate to stratify the sampling to represent the population as the researcher took segments or samples of the population to understand and explored the problem being studied.

Regarding the sample frame, the researcher selected individuals gradually from two groups of people or categories selected for this study which seem appropriate as the researcher is trying to understand the problem from different perspectives. According to Yin (2018), having two cases (sites/organizations) should be the researcher's goal but having a single case will require the researcher to make an extremely strong argument to justify the selection. Furthermore, the two groups as mentioned were selected or grouped by role and by diversity in order to get different perspectives, from leadership and from members of protected groups.

These two groups were part of interviews and focus groups to understand their thoughts and feelings regarding diversity training and other initiatives in the workplace. The list of participants in each group were determined before the field study when the researcher had a better picture of the potential participants and respondents who were willing to participate in the research.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), selecting the sampling method is as important as the sample size because it will give the researcher an understanding (or inference) of most of the population. Therefore, recruiting and sampling the right participants was crucial as they informed a better understanding of the problem being studied. For this research study, the researcher targeted a sample size of 20 people per sample frame (total sample size of 40). Over 50 employees were contacted. However, only 15 and 18, respectively, gave their consent to participate. The appropriateness of the sample size could be subject to debate in current literature where scholars agree that there is no straightforward answer; however, it cannot be too small in order to preserve the credibility and validity of the results (Vasileiou et al., 2018). The sample size was appropriate because the population was diverse and quite large. Additionally, the problem being studied is complex. Therefore, this sample size was appropriate enough to collect extensive details and data about the problem being studied. Keeping the sample size to a manageable size not just helped with data collection and analysis but helped the researcher avoid repetitive themes. A large sample like the one selected in this study was needed to better address the research questions, however, themes started repeating, which was a signal for the researcher to conclude the study as it had reached saturation. Last, the researcher gained access to the sample by requesting permission through the school district superintendent for approval. Before the researcher recruited participants and requested their participation and consent, the researcher submitted a written request per district policy for their permission.

Summary of Population and Sampling

In summary, the researcher provided an overview of the industry population in the Central Texas area. As discussed, the population is large and widely diverse. Therefore, the targeted population was appropriate to sample from in order to have a better understanding of the problem. In this section, the researcher also explained the sampling method to be used in this research study which is the stratified purposely sampling method. This method seemed appropriate for this study as the researcher will purposely select participants and divide them into two groups, by leadership role and by diversity (protected groups). Additionally, in this section the researcher discussed the sample frame which is the two subgroups from which the researcher will select participants to gain a better understanding of the problem. The sample to be used was taken from within the industry and will consist of employees in leadership roles and group based on diversity. Lastly, the researcher also discussed how the sample size helped reach saturation and how the researcher gained access to the sample.

Data Collection and Organization

Qualitative research produces large amounts of data from focus groups, direct observations, interviews, archival data, surveys, and other sources. Furthermore, the analysis takes time to ensure all collected is coded, interpreted, and analyzed to ensure a detailed understanding and exploration of the problem being studied. Therefore, data collection and organization are crucial stages on the research study. In this section, the researcher provided an overview of the data to be collected and the methods to be used for her research. Additionally, the researcher discussed why archival data, interviews and focus groups were the most appropriate method for this research project. In this section, the researcher also discussed the semi-structure interview guide to be used and how these questions address the research

questions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher did not use surveys but focus groups, interviews, and archival data. Lastly, this section discussed how the researcher planned on organizing the data and why this was the most appropriate method for this study. Because this research generated large amounts of data, the researcher maintained a log and timeline as well as a naming convention to label and file data.

Data Collection Plan

In this research study, the researcher planned to collect the participants feelings and thoughts towards diversity training initiatives in the workplace as well as their thoughts regarding leadership involvement and support of these initiatives. Moreover, the intent of the one-on-one interviews was to collect information about the effectiveness or potential failure of such initiatives in the workplace since implementation. The data collected gave the researcher new insights into the employees' behaviors and attitudes towards the organization's diversity management initiatives.

As noted by Hamilton and Finley (2019), interviewing people and focus groups are the most used data collection methods in qualitative research to understand the participants' feelings on the problem being studied. Interviews allow the researcher to have a one-on-one conversation with interviewees to understand the problem from the interviewee's point of view and understand their experiences, thoughts, and feelings about the problem. While focus groups allow the researcher to interview all in a group setting, it can be advantageous because participants might feel more at ease in providing information versus in a one-on-one session. Therefore, the researcher used both approaches to collect data for this research study.

These approaches were appropriate for this study as they allow the researcher to understand the feeling and thoughts of the participants. The use of these methods enabled the

researcher to gain a better understanding of the problem from different perspectives. The reason why the researcher selected the use of both approaches, despite the time and other resources needed, was because as mentioned, some people felt more comfortable and willing to discuss the problem when in a group with similar characteristics. According to Adler et al. (2019), the use of these methods is suitable to create a safe environment for the participants to tell their own stories and enable the researcher to collect in-depth data on the phenomenon being study. Furthermore, Adler et al. also noted that with the use of internet these days, participants feel empowered and comfortable to participate in focus groups without having to be in a room with other participants making it easier to share their thoughts and feelings particularly when dealing with sensitive information.

Regarding member checking, the researcher reviewed their interview transcript for accuracy, validate their responses and ask additional questions during interviews just to get clarification and to elaborate on their responses. Reviewing the interview transcripts with a follow-up interview is a more interactive way to check on the participants' answers and validate their answers; however, due to time, the researcher was not able to conduct follow-up interviews. Many times, interviewees remember or share new information as they feel more comfortable with the interviewer during a second round of questions, which might be of benefit to the research study in achieving its purpose. Instead, the researcher used focus group to ask the same questions and see if there were any differences in their responses.

According to Birt et al. (2016), member checking is a method of returning to an interview to validate, verify, and assess the trustworthiness of the results. As discussed, the researcher used focus group as a member checking method. As mentioned earlier, focus groups allow the participants to feel more at ease when answering interview questions because all participants

share similar characteristics and interests. Although it is not commonly used, focus groups are a way to explore the participants beliefs, opinions and attitudes in a group setting where every participant is interacting and responding to follow up questions (Birt et al., 2016). The researcher conducted one focus group with 12 of the 33 participants and using the same interview questions to gain their perspectives on the problem being studied. The original plan was to conduct two sessions; however, not all participants recruited for the study agreed to participate in open forums for reasons they did not discuss. Yet, some participants made comments regarding not wanting to participate in open forums where supervisors and co-workers were part of. They would not feel comfortable.

Instruments

This research study used semi-structure interviews and archive data to collect data. As the name suggests, semi-structured interviews meet in the middle between an unstructured conversation and structured survey. The intent was to collect people's ideas and experiences with the problem being studied. See Appendix A for the interview guide used in this research study. Archive data used in this study were from public sources online and the organization website itself. The semi-structured interview guide used in this research study considered the following aspects.

1. All questions were in English; however, questions were translated in Spanish to one of the participants who felt more comfortable using Spanish to answer question.
2. There were questions to capture demographic information from all participants.

These questions were optional for the participants to answer. The researcher also requested their consent to use and release their personal information for the purpose of this study.

3. All questions were open-ended questions in order to capture their beliefs, thoughts, opinions, and experiences on the problem being studies.
4. Semi-structured interview recorded with the participants' consent.
5. Semi-structure interview complied with ethical standards. Since participants might disclose personal information and opinions, the researcher conducted herself in an ethical manner and always respected the interviewees.
6. A question-answer (Q&A) session took place at the end of the interview to answer any questions participants had for the researcher and collected their final thoughts on the interview.

As seen in Appendix A, each interview question addressed the research questions. The first three questions were designed to get to know the participants. Questions four through eight addressed Research Question 1, which seek to understand how employees' behaviors and attitudes affect the outcomes of diversity training programs. Furthermore, these questions addressed employees' behaviors and attitudes towards training but most important, towards the organization and how the outcomes of training contributed to the organization's performance and productivity. Questions 9 through 12 address Research Question 2 as they sought to understand the differences between awareness training and diversity training, and how understanding these differences helped the organization meet their training objectives. Alhejji et al. (2016) suggested that diversity training, not just awareness training, helps to align the knowledge and skills of employees on diversity with their business strategy which will then enhance the employee's commitment to the organization, improve team's performance and gain competitive advantage. It was crucial for this research study to address employees understanding and opinions regarding diversity training versus awareness training. Lastly, questions 13 through 20 addressed Research

Question 3 as they sought to explain what leadership qualities or values were needed to successfully implement diversity management initiatives. Furthermore, questions 13 and 14 addressed the employees' feelings, opinions, and about how much their leadership is involved. With these questions, the researcher was trying to understand whether the leadership is engaged and supportive of diversity management initiatives. During this research, the researcher learned that when leadership had fewer positive views on diversity, they would not buy-in to implementing these initiatives unless they have the moral obligation to do it. Furthermore, the researcher also learned that the leadership qualities and ethical values are pivotal for the successful implementation of diversity initiatives and employees' acceptance of these initiatives.

Since this is a broad topic and there were large amounts of information, the researcher also used archival data method to collect data in order to develop a better understanding of the problem being studied. Today, archival data are being used by scholars as a viable resource due to the greater amount of information that can be found on the internet. The researcher therefore used public data found on the internet that were relevant to the study and answer the research questions. The researcher also requested as secondary data any internal articles published from within the corporation and the industry being studied, if available for release, as well as any study conducted from within. Additionally, the researcher requested internal training program documentation (e.g., manuscripts, surveys, annual reports, etc.) to better understand what the organizations had been doing and the results their efforts have delivered. However, the researcher was not able to get these reports but the Campus Improvement Plans (CIP) each campus within the district reports on an annual basis. Although there are some disadvantages in using this method because the research is primarily online and might not answer all the research questions, the researcher selected relevant sources that will contribute to the efforts of

understanding the potential failure of diversity training in achieving the end goals and reducing negative organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, to make appropriate choices of what archive data to use, the researcher used the research questions as a guide to retrieve specific data that were appropriate and relevant to the study.

Data Organization Plan

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), data analysis is a “choreographed” process which it is depicted by the authors in the Data Analysis Spiral as the process to collect, analyze and report data. The first step in the process of data management and organization (first loop or step in the process) is the most crucial step where the researcher is preparing files, properly filing and storing of files, and establishing the methods to analyze the data (e.g., transcribing files verbatim or with a software).

Qualitative research generates large amounts of data, from interviews to direct observation and archival data which could be overwhelming for the researcher if there is no plan from the start. Furthermore, a data organization plan is crucial for the research project as it will help the researcher with the analysis of the data. Therefore, the researcher maintained a log and field notes of all interviews and focus groups by participants’ names, date, time, and location. At the conclusion of each interview and focus group, the researcher recorded the findings in a spreadsheet and coded all audio, video, or data files to avoid mixed up of data and facilitate data analysis. Additionally, the researcher established a timeline and maintained a journal to ensure all tasks were completed and deadlines met in a timely manner. The researcher used naming convention that included date, location, interviewee’s name, and organization in order to record and organize all files. Regarding using participants’ names or any identifying feature, the researcher abided by the organization’s code of ethics and removed any identifiable information

from transcripts and files. No personal identifiable information was used in the presentation of the findings to include the name of the organization this study took place. All participants were coded from P1 – P33. Interviews and recordings were transcribed and analyzed by the researcher for accuracy in order to catch any discrepancies between the recordings and the transcripts in a timely manner.

Summary of Data Collection and Organization

In summary, this section discussed the first loop in the Data Analysis Spiral model discussed by Creswell and Poth (2018). In this section, the researcher discussed the importance of data collection and organization of the data in qualitative research. As mentioned, qualitative research produces large amounts of data, and it was crucial to not just collect the data, but manage and organize it to facilitate the analysis. The researcher discussed the methods or instruments she will use to collect data: archival data, interviews, and focus groups. These were the most appropriate instruments because they will allow the researcher to gather from participants their feelings and thoughts about the problem being studied. With the use of the semi-structure interview guide, the researcher had a better understanding of the problem as they addressed the research questions. The last part of this section discussed how the researcher is planning on organizing the data and why this is the most appropriate method for this study. Organizing the data facilitated the researcher with the next spiral loop phases, reading and memoing emergent ideas.

Data Analysis

In this section, the researcher discussed the other four phases of the Data Analysis Spiral process which entails the data collection, which was discussed in the previous section, reading and memoing of emergent ideas, coding these ideas into themes, interpret these ideas and finally,

representing these ideas to better visualize the data. First, the researcher discussed the process for reading and memoing emergent ideas. In a nutshell, this process helped the researcher during the initial stages of data analysis right before coding into themes. Reading and memoing emergent ideas allowed the researcher to read and write notes around the margins of the manuscripts. Second, she discussed the process for describing and classifying codes into themes which consist of categorizing the data into themes and sub-categories. Then, she discussed the process for developing and accessing interpretations, followed by a discussion of the process for representing and visualizing the data. Lastly, the researcher provided a detailed discussion of how she plans to conduct analysis for the triangulation of the interview data in order to establish credibility.

Emergent Ideas

The second loop in the data analysis spiral is reading and memoing emergent ideas. In a nutshell, this process is like coding ideas as the researcher read over the notes and interview transcripts. It is like looking at data to have a general understanding or idea of the information. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of data collection plan, qualitative research produces large amount of data and researchers are humans who would easily forget things that were said or observed. Therefore, taking notes or memos was a useful tool in the data analysis process as described by Creswell and Poth in the data analysis spiral. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that after organizing the data, the researcher needs to read all transcripts several times and “immerse” herself into the details before breaking it into parts. This second step or loop refers to reading first and writing short notes (key words or ideas) in the margins to facilitate the analysis. There is no right or wrong method to take notes because these are the researcher’s notes from the collected data. During this process, as described by Creswell and Poth, the researcher scanned all

collected data to pinpoint any major or emergent ideas, then record and look over the memos from interviews, focus groups, and observations. The memos are not notes from or about the participants but about conceptualizing ideas and concepts to facilitate the data analysis. Conlon et al. (2020) noted that memoing is where the researcher cycles back and forth through all the data and where emergent ideas can materialize. It is the process where researchers get more creative and analytical as memos capture the researchers' critical thinking and conceptualize their ideas (Conlon et al., 2020).

Coding Themes

The third loop in the data analysis spiral is describing and classifying codes into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Coding is a way of categorizing text and images into themes or features in the text that will be later helpful for the researcher to analyze the data. Just like the researcher analyze numerical data in quantitative research, the researcher will label or code data into categories to create a framework of themes or ideas. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), data coding is the heart of qualitative data analysis. In this stage of the data analysis process, the researcher described the ideas in detailed within the actual settings of the person, time, and place (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, the researcher tagged and labelled segments of words within the text to create a category of the themes. Once all data were coded, the researcher had overarching themes and sub-categories to make analysis and reporting of findings much easier. Coding also facilitated the analysis as the researcher was able to see consistency in the themes. In this research study, the researcher used NVivo software to help her identify and code themes during the qualitative research analysis. As a result, four themes were discovered based upon the findings which the researcher further discussed in Section 3 of this study.

1. Employees' attitudes and how they perceived the training influence training outcomes.
2. Leadership involvement is essential for a successful implementation of diversity management initiatives.
3. Employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making help improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation.
4. Multi-cultural awareness and education are key in the educational services industry.

Interpretations

Data analysis is not just being able to collect and record data but interpret the data collected. The next loop in the Data Analysis Spiral model is developing and assessing interpretations. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that data interpretation goes beyond coding into themes to “making sense of the data” (p. 195). Furthermore, Creswell and Poth explained that this process begins with coding the data to take larger segments of data for interpretation. The intent of this process is to answer questions about the research or lessons learned as Creswell and Poth noted. Therefore, the process of assessing and interpreting data requires the researcher to read the data over or as described by Creswell and Poth, obtain peer feedback in order to assess “how I know what I know” to have an assessment of the data. Bottomline, it must make sense. Interpretation of the data must construct a logical interpretation of the data so it can be meaningful to the research. The researcher can use diagrams to represent and provide a visual representation of the data as described in the last phase of the spiral: representing and visualizing of the data.

Data Representation

In this phase, the researcher presented the collected data already assessed and provided a visual representation of the data using tables. In this phase, the researcher represented the data in a way that made sense and turned the raw data into meaningful and relevant information. Tables 1 through 3 presented the raw data (participants categories by group) collected in this study. As described by Creswell and Poth (2018), there is no format but use a format that work best for the researcher to communicate clearly. Data representation helped the researcher understand the data and helped identify patterns within larger segments of data which therefore helped the researcher understand and clarify ideas. According to Azzam et al. (2013), visualizing data is a process used to represent in an image raw data from interviews, recorded conversations, focus groups, observations, or documents to better understand the content of the data. During this process, the researcher needed to be careful when assessing and interpreting the data to ensure she did not omit relevant information for the research.

Analysis for Triangulation

Triangulation is used for both qualitative and quantitative research using two of more data sources to check for their reliability and validity and establish credibility. It is a validation strategy to help the researcher interpret the collected data. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), to establish that trustworthiness, the use of terms such as credibility, authenticity, dependability, and confirmability are crucial for internal validation and reliability and objectivity of the research. Qualitative research must be credible based on actual data and real-life experiences, not based on statistical and numerical data as it will be in quantitative research. Therefore, for this qualitative study, it was imperative for the researcher to immerse herself and get closer to the participants through interviews and observations in order to understand the field

of study and ensure quality and reliability of the data collected. Although the use of multiple sources of data collection and sources of evidence gave the study more validity and reliability, the researcher also used data triangulation as a method to corroborate and validate the data. As explained, data triangulation pertained to this research study as the data were collected and analyzed from multiple sources: focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and archival data. Data triangulation helped the researcher validate and strengthen the interview data and corroborated the findings. Last, data triangulation posed challenges for the researcher because of the large amount of data collected she had to cross examine the data and triple checked to ensure the credibility of the resources. Indeed, this process consumed most of the time as the researcher had to corroborate and analyze 33 different interviewees along with archival data to increase and ensure validity and reliability of the data to arrive at a more wholesome picture of the findings. According to Yin (2018), using multiple data collection sources such as the ones mentioned earlier is time consuming and at times, expensive when the data comes from different sources.

Summary of Data Analysis

In summary, the researcher discussed the processes for reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data. As discussed, reading and memoing emergent ideas allowed the researcher to scan the data back and forth and take notes. In this section, the researcher also discussed the processes during the third loop in the data analysis spiral, describing and classifying codes into themes. Furthermore, the researcher provided a brief discussion on how NVivo was used during the research to help her identify and code themes. The researcher also discussed the process of developing and assessing interpretations which consist of taking the data and interpret it in a way that makes sense through peer feedback and

diagramming to visually represent the relationship between concepts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The last phase of the data analysis spiral was representing and visualizing the data through visual images to better understand the data. During this process, as explained above, the researcher used tables to represent the raw data. Lastly, the researcher discussed how she used data triangulation to analyze the collected data in order to corroborate data and increase reliability and credibility of the multiple sources of collecting data the researcher used in this study.

Reliability and Validity

Validity and reliability help the researcher to be unbiased and transparent throughout the research study (Simon & Goes, 2016). Qualitative research relies on information obtained through interviews, documents, direct observations, focus groups, and other ways. Therefore, the information is non-numerical with the intent to explore and understand a social phenomenon. The information gained through multiple sources was subjective, therefore, the researcher had to use validation and reliability techniques to establish trustworthiness and credibility of the study. In this section, the researcher discussed how she ensured reliability in your study to include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Then, the researcher discussed how she ensured validity in the study to include such as bracketing, triangulation, and saturation. Lastly, the researcher discussed bracketing techniques to be used in this research.

Reliability

Reliability is one of the “tests” or criteria used to minimize errors and biases in qualitative research and ensure the quality of the research study (Yin, 2018). According to Golafshani (2003), reliability is a concept to evaluate quality in quantitative study to explain with numerical and factual data, while quality concept in qualitative study has the purpose of “generating understanding” (p. 601). The researcher achieved reliability when she encountered

consistency and stability in the responses using the same set of questions during the interviews and focus groups in order to achieve the same results and not deviate from the procedures used throughout. When the researcher uses the same data collection instruments repeatedly and consistently, the researcher achieves the same results (Yin, 2018). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), reliability refers to the stability of responses which can be achieved through intercoder agreement as a result of using multiple codes to analyze data. Furthermore, intercoder reliability can derive benefits to the study like improving transparency of the process and trustworthiness of the research (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). In order to achieve the transparency and consistency mentioned by Connor and Joffe and supported by Creswell and Poth readings, the researcher must follow certain procedures to assess intercoder agreements. One of Creswell and Poth's (2018) recommendations is the use of computer software such as NVivo as a common platform to use for coding. Additionally, O'Connor and Joffe noted that the researcher must develop and apply a coding frame which consist of a list of codes organized by categories and accompanied by definitions and examples of data segments.

In this study, the researcher used a voice recording application to record all one-on-one interviews and then transcribed all files both data and digital files. In order to do so, the researcher ensured reliability in her study by taking detailed notes during interviews, focus groups, and from direct observations, in addition to recording and capturing every answer to avoid missing any useful information relevant to the study. Furthermore, to ensure reliability, all interviews and focus groups were conducted under the same circumstances. All interviews were conducted after working hours in a neutral setting for all participants and using the same set of questions for the findings to be comparable. Additionally, participation was kept anonymous to avoid other participants who were already interviewed to discuss with other potential participants

the type of questions asked during interviews and focus groups which could further affect their responses. Furthermore, the researcher remained neutral throughout the interview. She did not interact with participants outside the interview and focus group sessions, otherwise her findings could be biased. As mentioned, all questions during interviews and focus groups were the same and clearly articulated during the sessions to ensure that participants did not take questions differently or think the questions had a double meaning.

Validity

It is important for the researcher to establish trustworthiness and credibility in the research study. In order to do so, the researcher needs to be subjective, otherwise, the researcher will be biased and the findings will lack accuracy. Therefore, in this qualitative research it was imperative for the researcher to immerse herself and get closer to the participants through interviews and observations in order to understand the problem being studied and ensure quality and reliability of the data collected, yet keep it professional, and as mentioned earlier, do not interact with participants outside of the interviews and focus groups. Bottomline, validity was used in this qualitative research to “validate” the accuracy of the collected data. In quantitative research, validating the findings is easier because of the numerical data; however, in qualitative research, the researcher needs to go even further and use bracketing and triangulation techniques to validate the data and reduce biases. Why is that? The researcher needs to remain objective and cannot deviate herself from what she is trying to explore and understand, otherwise, personal biases and experiences interfere with the study and accuracy and validity of the data will not be maintained.

Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended the use at least two validation strategies of the three in any given study: researcher’s lens, reader’s lens, and participant’s lens. In this research

study, the researcher used researcher's lens and participant's lens validation strategy to validate the evidence and accuracy of the findings. As previously explained, the researcher corroborated evidence through data triangulation due to the multiple sources to be used as part of this research study. The researcher code data into themes and sub-categories (triangulation) in order to validate or corroborate the findings. Additionally, through this validation strategy the researcher was able to clarify and make connections from any personal biases and experiences prior to the research with emerging ideas. The other strategy and probably the most important in this research study was the participant's lens – understanding the problem being studied from the participant's perspective. Indeed, it was the most important one for this research study because the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews and focus groups in order to understand and explore the problem from the participants' perspectives. As Creswell and Poth (2018) noted, this is the most critical technique to establish credibility because the information or feedback comes from the participants and not manipulated by researcher's biases. On the contrary, raw data or transcripts are not given to the participants but the preliminary analysis to gain the participants' feedback (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As previously mentioned, the researcher embed herself with the participants through direct observation to better understand the problem being studied from their perspectives. This strategy added validity to the findings.

Bracketing

Given there could be a relationship between this research topic and the researcher, bracketing technique played a crucial role in this study to avoid pre-judgments and biases prior to and during the field study. Indeed, this was a huge challenge the researcher faced throughout to ensure transparency, credibility, accuracy, and validity of the findings. Creswell and Poth (2018) explained some of the challenges faced by researchers: bracketing personal experiences

(did it really happen?) and how the researcher personal experiences can be introduced to the research, and how interpretive phenomenology fits within the study. Furthermore, Creswell and Poth defined bracketing as the first step in the process of data analysis where the researcher needs to set aside any preconceived experiences and biases to better understand the phenomenon. The amount of data collected from interviews, observations and documents could be personal (e.g., the researcher identify herself with the participants) and skewed the data, resulting in the research being more subjective. Therefore, the interpretation of the data could be difficult as the researcher will always have a particular interest drawing herself into investigating the phenomenon. In this research study, the researcher remained unbiased and avoided reaching to conclusions based on her own personal experiences with the phenomenon and focus more on the experiences of the participants to maintain objectivity of the research, enhance validity and reliability. Just as Sorsa et al. (2015) suggested separating completely from presuppositions may be impossible but bracketing will allow the researcher to put assumptions aside and conduct interviews and focus groups with an open mind. Indeed, during the interviews and focus groups the researcher conducted, the researcher-built rapport with participants to ensure they felt comfortable answering the questions and unfold their feelings as well as disclose their experiences without fear of retaliation. The researcher reassured participants that the collected data from their interviews was confidential and would not be shared with anyone but kept password protected in the researcher's computer. This helped the participants to agree to participate and consent participation without fear of retaliation. The researcher further approached each event with a non-judgmental approach and without letting her emotions and personal experiences with the phenomena come afloat. Lastly, the researcher maintained a journal to allow her reflects before, during, and after interviews and focus groups on the research

questions driving the research, the why of the research, assumptions regarding the protected groups and role of the leadership, any potential conflicts with participants, and other possibilities. These two bracketing methods facilitated the data analysis and mitigated any presumptions on the phenomena being studied.

Summary of Reliability and Validity

In this section, the researcher discussed how she is planning on ensuring reliability and validity of the study. This qualitative research relied on non-numerical information collected through interviews and focus groups. Therefore, the information can be at times subjective because of the participants' feelings and personal experiences towards the phenomenon being study. In this section, the researcher discussed how critical it is for the researcher to establish reliability and validity of the research being studied to increase transparency and avoid biases. Additionally, the researcher discussed how she will ensure reliability in the study to include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The researcher discussed how she will ensure validity in the study to include bracketing, triangulation, and saturation. She further explained the two validation strategies she will use: researcher's lens and participant's lens to validate the findings and their accuracy. Lastly, the researcher discussed how the use of bracketing techniques helped her avoid pre-judgement and biases before, during, and after focus groups and interviews are conducted.

Summary of Section 2 and Transition

This research proposal consisted in two parts: Section 1 and Section 2 in which the researcher provided the foundation and the significance of this study as well as defined her role in the study and discussed the data analysis and collection plan to be used. In Section 1, the researcher presented the background of the problem and how diversity training is worthy of

studying in order to explore and understand why certain diversity management initiatives fail to achieve the desired results. Transitioning into Section 2 of this research study, the researcher conducted a more in-depth framing of the study beginning with a literature review previously outlined in Section 1. In this section, the researcher defined her role in this study. The researcher immersed in the selection of the participants and data collection to maintain the integrity, reliability, and validity of the study. As mentioned above, the primary role of the researcher was to select participants, then safeguard the collected data. The researcher was personally involved without letting personal feelings and bias interfere with the data collection (e.g., interview process and focus groups).

As previously discussed in Section I, this study was conducted using a flexible design qualitative method, specifically, a multiple case study research method. Therefore, in Section 2 the researcher included a detailed discussion on the appropriateness of the chosen research design and methodology for the research study. The nature of this study called for a flexible design because this is not a theory driven study but a study to understand and explore why the participants act, feel, or think the way they do, and it will take place in multiple settings. The researcher also explained the methodology associated with this design which is multiple case studies and the appropriateness of the chosen methodology to this research study. Since the chosen research design was flexible design, the researcher discussed the use of triangulation to validate the accuracy of the data sources and build credibility as a researcher. Furthermore, the researcher provided an overview of the education industry population in the Central Texas area. As discussed, the population was large and widely diverse. Therefore, the targeted population was appropriate to sample from to have a better understanding of the problem. In this section, the researcher also explained the sampling method to be used in this research study, which is the

stratified purposely sampling method. This method seemed appropriate for this study as the researcher will purposely select participants and divide them in two groups, by leadership role and by diversity (protected groups).

The researcher also discussed the sample frame, which is the two subgroups from which the researcher will select participants to gain a better understanding of the problem. The sample to be used was taken from within the industry and consisted of employees in leadership roles and groups based on diversity. The researcher also discussed how the sample size helped reach saturation and how the researcher gained access to the sample. In the last part of Section 2, the researcher discussed the data analysis spiral loops and how the researcher plans on collecting, organizing, and analyzing the data. Additionally, the researcher explained how personnel interviews and focus groups were conducted as well as an overview of the plan to gather and organize the collected data. Lastly, this section discussed how the researcher ensured reliability and validity in the study and the bracketing techniques to be used in order to avoid biases.

As she moved forward to conduct the field study, in Section 3 the researcher proceeded to recruit potential participants and gained their consent to participate in the research study. The researcher proceeded with the interview process. Upon completion of all interviews and focus groups, the researcher coded and transcribed the collected data and proceeded to analyze to determine the discovered themes. This section included a thorough analysis of the data and the presentation of the findings. The researcher further discussed how the findings were related to each research question, conceptual framework, anticipated themes, and the problem being studied. The researcher identified common business practices found in current literature and discussed in detail how the results of this study could improve general business practice and the potential application strategies the organization can use to leverage the findings of this study.

Additionally, the researcher made recommendations that are worth studying in order to expand the study to other sectors of the population to explore and understand other aspects of diversity and inclusion programs as teachers and students' demographics continue shifting to a more diverse population. Lastly, in Section 3, the researcher reflected on her journey and discussed how this research study related to the Bible from the Christian Worldview.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on the employees. This study further explored the reasons diversity training fails to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). Additionally, this qualitative study explored the how and why the failure of diversity training is linked to employees engaging in the withdrawal behaviors. Lastly, this study also explored how leadership involvement and support of diversity and inclusion initiatives impact employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance. The methodology and research design employed to conduct this study are discussed in detail in Section 1 of this research study. This qualitative research multiple case study used semi-structured interviews and archived data research to collect data for this research study.

This study was conducted in an independent school district located in the Central Texas area, which is the fourth most diverse school district in the State of Texas. This school district serves a large population of students and faculty/staff who are described as a mobile population as the majority of the habitants in these communities are military families who settled in the area an average of 3 years from other states or abroad. Therefore, the selected school district seemed appropriate for the study because of its diverse population, not just based on race, but language, cultural backgrounds, gender preference, among other protected groups.

A total of 33 men and women participated in this study. All participants work at the school district and their time with the organization ranges between 2 and 13 years of service. The researcher purposely divided them into two groups to understand their perspective regarding

diversity training impact in the workplace: 15 employees in group one based on their role (management/supervisory role and non-management roles) and the second group consisted of 18 employees regardless of job held in the organization but purposely selected based on nationality/ethnicity, age, gender, and any other protected group. A focus group was also conducted with 12 participants out of the 33 who were interviewed using the same questions in order to understand the problem from different perspectives and in an open forum.

In Group 1, diversity was not a factor but the participants' role in the organization was (managerial/supervisory role versus non-managerial roles). Group 1 consisted of four males and 11 females. Out of this group, only two were in supervisory roles. Everyone was asked the same questions; however, the two in supervisory roles were asked three additional questions to understand their perspectives from a leadership standpoint. On the other hand, Group 2 consisted of six male participants and 12 female participants. This group was purposely selected based on ethnicity assigned to this group. No other factors were considered because not all participants disclosed that information (i.e., age or any other protected groups under Title VII of The Civil Right). A focus group was also conducted and 12 of the 33 employees participated in an open forum. The 12 participants were the only ones who agreed to participate. The other 21 participants declined to participate in an open forum for various reasons (e.g., not agreeing to share their feelings and thoughts about the topic in the same room with co-workers and possibly supervisors). Regardless of how they were divided for the research study, employees who participated in the field study agreed that job satisfaction and how they are equally treated and respected in the workplace play an intricate role in their job performance and how they feel about their leadership and the organization.

Participants were interviewed to explore and understand their perspectives regarding the impact of diversity training in the workplace. Participants' responses were explored to determine the reasons why diversity training initiatives fail to achieve stated goals to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. Participants' perspectives were also explored to understand changes in their attitudes and behaviors as a result of diversity training. Participants' perspectives were explored to understand if employees were engaging in withdrawal behaviors as demonstrated in current literature. Participants' responses were explored to understand the difference between diversity awareness and diversity training in order to determine how diversity training can influence the organizations attain the stated goals. Participants' personal experiences were also noted in order to understand their feelings regarding diversity training initiatives and the role of their leadership in the implementation and execution of these programs. Participants' responses were explored to assess the impact of leadership values to the successful implementation of diversity management initiatives. Their perspectives were explored to understand how leadership support and engagement benefit the overall performance of the organization.

Participants' responses were also explored to determine how employees' attitudes and their perception of training influence training outcomes. Their responses did not demonstrate that employees are engaging in withdrawal behaviors; however, the study demonstrated a change in attitudes from employees with longevity in the workplace. The data collected suggested that training is more beneficial to newly hired employees; otherwise, training is unnecessary and redundant. Participants also felt that leadership involvement is essential for a successful implementation of diversity training initiatives. Based on their personal experiences and what they have witnessed through the years working at the school district, the data suggested that the

school district's leadership fosters an all-inclusive environment, which have resulted in a working environment where all employees as well as the student community are valued and treated equitable. Another important outcome of this study is the integration of employees in the decision-making-process. For the majority of the participants who were interviewed, it is important to be engaged with the leadership. Engaged employees feel valued in the workplace. At the moment the study was conducted, the data collected suggested that employees in the school district are not part of the decision-making process but their perspectives on the subject were explored to understand why they want to be part of the process. The responses suggested that they want to be heard, feel valued and that their opinions matter. They do not want to just do the training as mandated by higher yet provide their input and train on areas that are relevant to each campus. Lastly, multi-cultural awareness and education are key in the educational services industry. Participants' responses demonstrated that the multi-cultural events, "ESL nights," among other initiatives hosted by the district have a positive impact on both the school district's employees and students. Furthermore, these training or hosted events help them develop a diversity mindset that will further develop tolerance of others and understanding of a multi-cultural environment we operate these days. The research questions below were used to understand the participants' perspectives on how diversity training programs impact employees in the workplace.

RQ1. How do diversity training programs fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?

RQ1a. What employee behaviors contribute to the failure of diversity training programs?

RQ1b. What employee behaviors contribute to the effectiveness of diversity training programs?

RQ2. What makes awareness training initiatives in the organization different than diversity training?

RQ2a. How the understanding of those differences helps organizations attain the end goals to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?

RQ3. What are the most critical leadership qualities for an organization to successfully implement diversity training programs in the educational services industry?

Presentation of the Findings

The purpose of this research study was to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity training initiatives on the employees and the organizations. This study focused on exploring and understanding the reasons diversity training fails to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as lower employee morale and poorer job performance (Guillaume et al., 2017). Additionally, this study explored how diversity training is linked to employees engaging in withdrawal behaviors. Therefore, the researcher conducted a field study in an independent school district in Central Texas to explore and understand the how and the why employees in the educational services industry could engage in withdrawal behaviors resulting in the potential failure of diversity training initiatives to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. The methodology and research design employed to conduct this study are discussed in detail in Section 1 of this research study. This qualitative research multiple case study used semi-structured interviews and archive data research to collect data for this research study.

After a thorough analysis of the data, the researcher will present the findings, provide a detailed discussion of how the findings relate to key areas from the research proposal. The researcher will address how the findings relate to each research question, conceptual framework,

anticipated themes, and the problem being studied. Lastly, the researcher will discuss the findings as they relate to current literature with a focus on similarities and difference.

The field study was conducted in an independent school district in Central Texas. The researcher began the research study by interviewing participants using interview questions in Appendix A. However, if the participant was in a manager/supervisory role, there were additional questions to explore how involved there are with diversity management initiatives and how their leadership qualities impact the outcomes of such initiatives. Initially, the groups were going to consist of 20 participants each; however, the researcher reached saturation and answers were repetitive. Therefore, a total of 33 employees split into two groups were interviewed and 12 of those were part of a focus group using the same set of questions in order to understand the problem from different perspectives and in an open forum. The researcher purposely divided them into two groups: 15 employees in group one based on their role (e.g., management/supervisory role and non-management roles) and the second group consisted of 18 employees regardless of job held in the organization but purposely selected based on nationality/ethnicity, age, gender, and any other protected group. Table 1 presents a detailed breakdown of Group 1 based on gender and role in the organization (managerial/supervisory role versus non-managerial roles). Table 2 presents a detailed breakdown of Group 2 based on demographics. A focus group was also conducted and 12 of the 33 employees participated in an open forum, Table 3 presents the demographics of this group. All participants work at the school district and their time with the organization ranges between 2 and 13 years of service. Regardless of how they were divided for the research study, employees who participated in the field study agreed that job satisfaction and how they are equally treated and respected in the workplace play

an intricate role in their job performance and how they feel about their leadership from the superintendence level down.

Table 1

Gender and Role in the Organization

Gender	# of Participants	Percentage %
Male	4	27%
Female	11	73%
Role in the Organization	# of Participants	Percentage %
Managerial/Supervisory Role	2	13%
Non-Managerial Role	13	87%

Note. In Group 1 Ethnicity was not considered.

Table 2

Based on Demographics

Gender	# of Participants	Percentage %
Male	6	33%
Female	12	67%
Ethnic Distribution	# of Participants	Percentage %
White	4	22%
African American	5	28%
Hispanics	5	28%
Asian	3	17%
Other Races	1	5%

Table 3*Focus Group Demographics*

Gender	# of Participants	Percentage %
Male	3	25%
Female	9	75%
Ethnic Distribution	# of Participants	Percentage %
White	2	17%
African American	3	25%
Hispanics	5	42%
Asian	1	8%
Other Races	1	8%

The researcher conducted a thorough analysis and transcription of all the data collected from interviews, focus group, organization publicly available data and current scholarly literature. After concluding the field study and transcribing all the data, four themes emerged from the collected data and will be further discussed in this section. Throughout this research, the researcher found that these themes relate to the research questions and support the problem being studied regarding the impact diversity training initiatives have in the workplace. The themes discovered discussed in this section are listed below and relate to each of the research questions. The findings will further discuss how each theme relate also to each key area from the research proposal.

1. Employees' attitudes and how they perceived the training influence training outcomes.

2. Leadership involvement is essential for a successful implementation of diversity management initiatives.
3. Employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making help improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation.
4. Multi-cultural awareness and education are key in the educational services industry.

The Problem

Many organizations have gone global and operating in global markets means a diverse workforce consisting of different ethnic groups, gender preferences, religions, and ages. As a matter of fact, David et al. (2015) projected that within 30 years there will not be a “majority” group in the workplace and these demographic dissimilarities will result in withdrawal behaviors such as tardiness, absenteeism, and employee turnover because employees will not feel identify with any group. Therefore, training the workforce not just on diversity awareness but on how to manage diversity in the workplace and most importantly, how to train employees and executives in a widely diverse environment are challenges organizations face these days which result in negative organizational outcomes as previously stated. Furthermore, employees not only need to be aware or understand diversity in the workplace, yet the customers that many of these organizations served are also diverse (e.g., in the educational services industry where teachers need to learn and understand how to manage diversity in order to provide quality services to their students and parents.

There is a misconception when it comes to awareness training in the workplace, which in some instances, causes training to fail and achieve its end state creating more challenges for the leadership at all levels. Being aware of biases and discrimination against protected groups do not reduce discrimination in the workplace, increase awareness or change employees and managers’

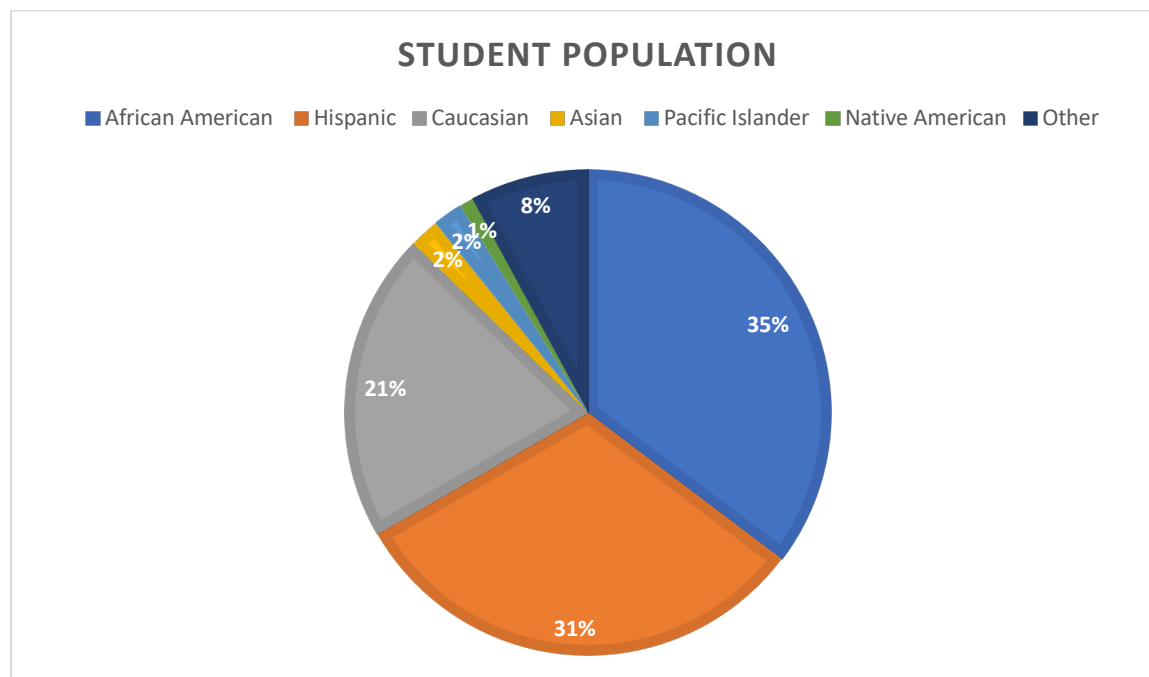
behaviors towards training, and the organization itself. So, understanding the role of leadership, their values and potential biases are pivotal to this study in order to understand why diversity management initiatives fail to achieve the objectives.

Throughout the field study, the researcher learned that the school district the study took place in was the fourth most diverse school district in Texas, therefore, it was appropriate to conduct the study within the district to explore the impact of training in the organization. The finding of this research study has shown that “The school district believes that a quality education begins with quality staff and resources” and the district achieves that through a district wide program called “Campus Improvement Program” in which awareness training on diversity is embedded to foster an environment free of discrimination and harassment not just among employees, but student community. Indeed, this is an increasingly important aspect of today’s school curriculum, not just to educate the staff at the superintendence but teacher and students. Findings also showed that teachers need to learn and understand the diverse population they face in order to understand and serve the needs to the community. According to Yuan (2017), there is a need to implement training of culturally responsive teachers as a result of challenges emerging from students’ cultural, racial, linguistic, socioeconomic, and educational diversities. Therefore, when thinking on the educational services industry in Central Texas, we have to think outside of a particular race or ethnicity, but a widely diverse population that includes other groups such as students with learning and physical disabilities, active military, military disabled veterans, military retirees, and their families as well as members of the LGTBT community. It was also reported that the diversity within the independent school district in which this study was conducted comes as of a result of the area being a military community resulting in a student mobility rate of 28.2% and 35% of the population being military dependents as reported during

2019-2020 school year. Figure 2 below depicts the current demographics as reported in the district's website on February 2022.

Figure 2

Independent School District's Demographics



Anticipated Themes

Employees' Behaviors and Attitudes

As previously discussed, employees' behaviors and attitudes are a common/anticipated theme in most articles the author came across. Employees' actions are a reflection on how they feel about their workplace. As seen throughout the literature review, evidence shows that job motivation and job performance are the result of their behaviors and attitudes (i.e., individual outcomes that can further affect the organization). For instance, when training is imposed by the organization, behaviors turn to be negative because it is taken as a punishment. When employees are part of the planning, are asked for their feedback and input, and they see their leadership engaged in the planning and execution of these initiatives, employees buy-in and are engaged in

the programs. Therefore, diversity training will be more effective and more likely result in positive attitudes and behaviors (Robinson et al., 2020). The findings of the study demonstrated that employees in independent school district have not experienced withdrawal behaviors; however, participants in this study noted that training is redundant and not beneficial for employees with more longevity with the district but for newly hired teachers who are not familiar with the diversity of the independent school district. Indeed, the findings did not demonstrate that employees engaged in withdrawal behaviors, yet the training itself, although well received by the majority, 17% of participants in Group 2 thought that the training is the same every year and no one talks about it until it is that time again before school starts. This theme was very much noted and supported while interviewing the participants. Employees would be more receptive of awareness training and other diversity initiatives when it is reinforced throughout the academic year.

Leadership Support

Another anticipated theme found in current literature was leadership support. When leadership at all levels buy-in to diversity management initiatives, it results in acceptance of those initiatives by employees and organizational positive outcomes (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Furthermore, employees will follow their leaders when they are engaged. As discussed throughout this research, diversity management is not just in paper, but active engagement and understanding that the organizational benefits as a result of leadership support are endless. This anticipated theme was demonstrated throughout the field study. Participant 3 (P3) in Group 1, stated that leading by example by being present and celebrating diversity is a quality all leaders should have. When a leader leads by example, others will follow. P3 stated:

As a leader, you celebrate what you want to see more of. Therefore, if a leader wants to see more opened minded of what diversity is, a leader must be involved, leads by example and has invested resources to what it is important for the organization, then others will emulate and follow.

This statement from P3 supports what is found in current literature. According to Feyes (2018), leaders play a vital role in promoting and celebrating diversity in the workplace because employees look up to the leadership to establish and promote the desire culture and behaviors the organization wants to see more of. Additionally, participants in the study noted that their leadership in the district is very much engaged in managing diversity in the organization for two reasons: (1) ensure employees understand the diversity of the population they served and (2) understand the areas each campus need to focus on. The latter is achieved through a district's initiative called Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) whereas each campus identifies problem areas and solutions.

Leadership Diversity Intelligence (DQ)

The third anticipated them in this study was leadership diversity intelligence (DQ). This is an anticipated theme the researcher was not familiar with; however, throughout the research study she discovered the direct relationship with the problem being studied, diversity training. In current literature the researcher found that DQ is the core of diversity training. Organizations not only need an engaged leadership on paper, but a leadership that is supportive of diversity and treat everyone with dignity and respect. Therefore, if the leadership participates in training development programs where diversity lessons are an integral part of the training, the leadership DQ will be higher resulting in a more understanding and more equitable leadership who will know who these protected groups are and what motivate them in the workplace (Hughes, 2018).

Furthermore, Hughes noted that HRD professionals and scholars suggested that diversity training will further help resolve problems in the workplace. The findings of this study supported this theme. Participants in this study noted that their leadership fosters a working environment in which all are treated equal and with respect, both faculty and student community. This is a direct result of the professional development and training opportunities every employee in the school district is put through, not only the leadership, prior to the start of the new academic year. This training enables leaders to better understand their teaching staff diversity for equitable distribution per student ratio and for the teaching staff to understand the student's diversity in order to provide better service and further identify needed resources.

Workplace Withdrawal

Another theme found in scholarly literature is workplace withdrawal which refers to employees' attitudes and behaviors when job satisfaction and motivation are lacking. These refer to behaviors such as turnover, absenteeism, and poor job performance when employees lack the support from the organization. According to Kong (2016), this refers to how employees 'escape' or temporary removal from dissatisfaction in the workplace by being always late or leave work earlier, absenteeism, and taking longer breaks. This anticipated theme was not observed throughout the field study. This does not mean that it does not exist, or it is not related to the problem being studied. Although the people interviewed stated that they have not observed this type of behavior among their co-workers as the result of diversity training or diversity management initiatives, two participants mentioned that teachers are leaving the classrooms for other reasons. One of the reasons mentioned was the lack of accountability from the students and their level of maturity based on current grade is lower than the average student their age. Nevertheless, participants did notice negative attitudes and behaviors after training from some

co-workers, particularly from those with more longevity. According to researchers, employees' perception of diversity in the workplace impacts their attitudes and behaviors, commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, and performance (Stewart et al., 2011). Indeed, it is a challenge for the leadership to hire and retain employees when their perception of the organization's diversity and inclusion policies is lacking. Furthermore, Stewart et al. noted that fulfilling these expectations in paper and hiring more employees from protected groups are enough to reduce withdrawal intentions in the workplace, but to instill the confidence in the employees that the leadership has a zero tolerance and will act on any violations to their policies.

Attitudinal Learning

Attitudinal learning was another theme anticipated prior to the field study. This theme was anticipated; however, this theme was also discovered throughout the field study which demonstrated the relationship with the problem being studied. As previously discussed, attitudinal learning refers to affective training or how the employee (or trainee) feels after training. This theme is found in several articles discussing the outcomes of diversity training on employees' behaviors. According to Bezrukova et al. (2016), the effects of diversity training will vary and employees' attitudes or feelings towards diversity would change overtime. This cannot be used to predict whether diversity training is effective or not. Indeed, as found in the field study, how participants felt after training cannot be used to demonstrate whether training is effective or not. Throughout this study, participants answered questions regarding their feelings about training and how they perceive changes in attitudes and behaviors. Their answers were subjective, based on their own opinions and hearsays, what they heard from co-workers. Nevertheless, many of the participants regardless of the group they were categorized for this

study noted a negative vibe after training not so much related to withdrawal intentions, but how they felt about the training. This is a challenge many organizations face these days.

The leadership understands the importance of diversity learning and develop these training and marketing strategies, but the problem still is how employees perceived the training. According to scholars, the shortcomings of diversity programs can be resolved by integrating minority groups in the organizational decision-making process to gain their perspectives on these initiatives (Fujimoto & Härtel, 2016). This was also demonstrated during the research study when participants were asked if they would like the leadership to include them in the planning and execution of these training initiatives. Eighty-five percent of participants regardless of the group they were assigned to express their desire to be included. The other 15% did not express any opinions on this matter because they have too much already on their plate. By doing so, employees will have the opportunity to interact with other employees they do not normally work with, therefore, improving working relationships.

Discovered Themes

Employees' Attitudes and How They Perceived the Training Influence Training Outcomes

During the research study and after coding all collected data resulting from the one-on-one interviews and focus groups, it was noted that employees' attitudes directly influence the outcome of training and how it is perceived by others. This theme was discovered after coding all participants' responses in both groups. The interviews responses demonstrated that employees' attitudes and perceptions of the training are also linked to the number of years the employee has served at the organization. Throughout the research study, the interviewees' responses demonstrated that the employees with more longevity with the organization find the training to be redundant. Although this research study did not consider employees with less than

2 years working for the organization or substitute teachers, many participants addressed that training is redundant and more targeted to newly hired employees (P1-P4, P5, P7, P10, & P13). As previously discussed in anticipated themes, if training is imposed by leadership, employees are going to have a negative attitude towards the training itself which can further affect the overall performance of the organization. When employees perceived the training as unnecessary and redundant and no new information is being put out, it has a direct impact on the outcomes of the training. Moreover, it can also result in negative attitudes towards training, therefore, impacting the end goal of the training program. This premise resulted from various responses derived from participants who have been part of the school district for over 5 years, regardless of position held or ethnicity. Many of the interviewees identified this redundancy as the main push-back from employees with longevity in the district, not so much from the new hires or employees with less than 3 years working at the school district. This theme helped the researcher answer research question 1. Participant 17 (P17) with almost 8 years of experience working for the school district, explained:

...training is well received from some but not all. Training meets the intent to increase awareness and reduce discrimination, and although my leadership is very much involved and supportive of diversity, training should not be a check in the box.

A follow up question was asked for the participant to further explain her answer and the participant noted the following:

Training should not start and finish in the beginning of the year and forget about it. Yet, the lessons learned and what was instructed throughout the summer training sessions should be carried out throughout the school year. She said that many times those summer

sessions are waste of time because people never talk about it again until is that time again in the summer before school starts.

Indeed, this type of attitude or behavior from the employee could be perceived as a negative outcome of diversity training as found in current literature. As previously addressed in the literature review, when training is imposed or mandated by the organization, behaviors turn to be negative (i.e., comments like training is boring, why do we need to go, same old training, etc.) because it is taken as a punishment, not seeing the benefits of the training at the moment. According to Israel et al. (2017), the impact of diversity training or response to training is linked to workplace diversity resistance (e.g., open prejudice, refusal to engage on training, and verbal or nonverbal hostility in the workplace). This diversity resistance Israel et al. is referring to are negative attitudes and behaviors resulting from employees' feelings towards training being imposed, non-applicable to them and redundant.

Participant 5 (P5) was asked the same questions during a phone interview, and he felt similar to other interviewees in the district. P5 noted that employees' attitudes towards the training in general are positive ones; however, the redundancy of the training directly impact how employees perceived the training. P5 was also asked to elaborate on her response, why does she think the redundancy affects employees' attitudes and she responded:

I will not say my co-workers engaged in withdrawal behaviors or the training received is not beneficial, but it is the negative comments you hear from some employees after the training that impact the overall intent of it. That kind of negativity affects the organization as a whole and negatively influence how other co-workers perceive the training, particularly the ones new to the district, as they hear negative comments on the training. I will not say you hear comments from the majority of attendees, but it is always

one or two employees who have to bring that negativity to the workplace and are not receptive of the training.

P19, with 4 years working for the school district was asked the same question. She acknowledged that employees' attitudes towards training are different for her as a newer employee, not just for the school district, but in the State of Texas, compared to another employee with longevity working for the school district. However, P19 noted in her response the following:

I personally have not noticed any changes on attitudes and behaviors on my part because I am a minority and identify with the community we served. Therefore, the training is relevant to me not only because I am trying to learn the diverse community we served not just based on race or ethnic group but other protected groups such as people with learning and physical disabilities and the LGBTQ community. However, I can understand how my co-workers might feel the training is not relevant because they already know what to expect of our community and there is nothing new to learn.

P5, P17, and P19 responses are supported by current literature and related studies. Despite all the effort, time, and resources allocated to these training initiatives, it is not enough. Madera (2018) explained that for organizations to leverage on diversity management as a competitive resource, employees must be supportive of them; however, not all employees have positive attitudes and are supportive of these programs because employees do not feel these initiatives are applicable to them. Madera stated that as long as employees' attitudes towards these initiatives do not improve and they do not embrace such programs as beneficial to them and the organization, the negative attitudes will impact the efficacy of these programs. As many participants alluded to during interviews, when the training does not seem to be different every

school year and employees' perception is that the organization is only supportive on paper, training is not significant, becomes redundant, and static as referred to in current literature (P3-P8, P12, P15, & P22). According to Rabl et al. (2020), scholars agree that many of the criticisms against some diversity management initiatives is employees' perceptions on such initiatives. Furthermore, studies have demonstrated employees think of some initiatives as insincere and for profit motives, not for the benefit of the workforce (Rabl et al., 2020). Lastly, diversity training (or training in general) should not be taken as just a training requirement for new hires or refresher training or just applicable to specific groups, but continuing education for all employees to reinforce guidelines and change old habits which will help achieve the intent of reducing prejudice and discrimination in the workplace.

This theme relates to the social identification theory in which employees' social identity and self-worth are enhanced by their perception of belonging to an organization (Scheidler et al., 2019). Furthermore, this theory explains how people see other members of a group which can result in negative organizational outcomes as members will not take diversity training as needed. If employees do not identify themselves with others (e.g., they do not value diversity or do not think diversity is an important topic to discuss), it will create negative attitudes towards others. Lin et al. (2020) suggests that this theory can negatively influence team dynamics and impede members' performance. Therefore, if employees do not identify themselves with the rest of the teams, it will impact the success of diversity training programs. According to Rawski and Conroy (2020), organizational identification will increase employees' voluntary participation in diversity training, and most important, their motivation to learn as they do not like to feel obligated to attend and comply with annual training requirements. This will have a direct impact in the failure or success of training programs.

Leadership Involvement is Essential for a Successful Implementation of Diversity

Management Initiatives

Another common theme found throughout this study was leadership involvement. This theme was discovered after coding all the data from the participants' responses derived from the interviews and the focus group which outlined why participants believe leadership engagement and support of diversity management initiatives, such as diversity training positively impact the outcomes of these initiatives. What helped the researcher generate this theme was (a) participants highly feel the school district fosters a diverse and all-inclusive workplace, (b) everyone is treated with respect, (c) leadership understands the diverse community they serve and their needs, and (d) participants feel that leadership qualities are important for programs to be successful. Each one of the premises are related to the problem being studied. The interviewees' responses demonstrated that leadership involvement is essential for the successful implementation of diversity management initiatives. This theme helped the researcher answer research question 3.

As addressed in the literature review, diversity management is not just on paper, leadership must be engaged and understand that the organizational benefits are endless. Therefore, participants were asked how much their leadership was involved and what leadership qualities are the most critical for an organization to successfully implement diversity training programs. During this research study, many participants stated that the leadership from the superintendent down is actively involved and support diversity in the workplace. All participants of the focus group concurred they have not experienced discrimination in the workplace or witnessed someone else whether it is student-student or supervisor-employee or any sort of prejudice (P1-12). As earlier discussed, participants attributed this to the leadership who have

fostered an inclusive working environment. P4, who has been working for the school district for over 8 years, responded:

The principal at my school has been very supportive of diversity. But I want to make something clear, in the education services industry, diversity and inclusion go beyond us employees treating each other with respect, kindness and courtesy. I cannot tell you that in this campus I have ever experienced and encountered discrimination or even witnessed situations when another employee or student has been mistreated because of their race, nationality, gender preference, etcetera. Our leadership has trained us to understand not just diversity among employees, but our student population. In addition, she thinks that these positive outcomes are the result of the training teachers receive in the beginning of the year in which diversity is not a separate training topic, but it is embedded into the training sessions to reduce discrimination and increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

She was further asked about the most critical leadership qualities for an organization to successfully implement diversity training programs and she responded:

Leaders need to set the example for others to follow and everything else will fall into place. Leaders need to emphasize that everyone deserves kindness, respect, and courtesy; not just one race or grouping of people. For these programs to succeed, we as teacher also need to know our students, the resources they need, and have a supportive leadership so we can meet our goals for the year.

Another participant from Group 2, P21 (female-Hispanic), who has worked at the school district for 4 years, was asked the same questions and she provided similar responses. She noted:

The leadership at my school is very much involved in training. Our principal is an advocate of diversity and has fostered a working environment where we all feel welcomed, respected, and equally treated. Here, diversity management and inclusion initiatives go beyond the annual written plan, but we see actions. He sets the example by being present which is a must have quality for any program to succeed in an organization. If our leadership is not present in faculty meetings and our multi-cultural events, for example, we as teachers will feel unsupportive because of the lack of empathy and understanding towards the diverse groups. Therefore, our motivation to work will go down. Why should I work at a school whose leadership shows no empathy and support for others?

P8 from Group 1 also responded similar to the rest of the participants in both groups. Regarding leadership support and involvement, the interviewee stated the following when asked questions about the leadership qualities and support of diversity programs:

I feel that they are all involved and are very supportive of all the training and social events hosted in support of diversity in the workplace but also on those programs targeted to meet the needs of the special needs and other at-risk students in the community. Employees are all involved and greatly support these initiatives, but he stated that they could be more involved and contribute more to the planning and execution of these initiatives versus just mandate the training and tell them how to execute. With this statement, I am not saying leadership is not involved but that the leaders should get employees more involved in setting up objectives for the year and the planning of activities. This will encourage them to take ownership of the given tasks which will result in higher motivation and job performance upon completing the tasks.

Current literature supports the responses from P4, P8, and P21 regarding the direct relationship between leadership support of diversity management initiatives and the effectiveness of such programs and initiatives. Vito and Sethi (2020) reported that recent studies demonstrated that leaders who were more involved were more successful in changing diversity management initiatives. Furthermore, research has shown that organizations are six times more likely to succeed because their employees feel the sense of inclusion (Wyche, 2021). Moreover, Wyche discussed that when leadership promotes these initiatives and create a movement that might not be aligned with their business goals now, but “the payout can be exponential.” Indeed, it is not about sending the right message to employees or putting a plan of action in paper, yet changing the organizational culture which will take time but will reduce employee turnover, increase job performance, and employee motivation. Current literature supports this notion when Lee (2020) noted that leadership can influence others to behave in a particular way. Furthermore, Lee also mentioned the results of a study conducted in the United Kingdom supports P3’s response regarding celebrating diversity. P3 stated, “Leaders need to celebrate diversity and set the example. We need to celebrate what we need to see more of and others will follow.” The study in UK revealed that LGBTQ teachers feel discriminated against when they come out because of their unsupportive leadership. According to Lee (2020), in the UK they developed and promoted a program called Courageous Leaders targeted to teachers to become leaders and was designed around “the authentic leadership qualities and values” that promotes inclusion, celebrates diversity, and achieves social justice (p. 5). Indeed, when leaders promote diversity beyond paper and turn into action, others will be influenced and will create changes for future generations to embrace.

This theme was viewed from the transformational leadership theory. The transformational leadership theory is related to this as it explains how a strong transformational leadership brings team members together, which shifts any negative member's attitudes and behaviors, decreases negative aspects of diversity, and generates positive outcomes (Kim, 2017). As mentioned above, leadership involvement is crucial when implementing these training initiatives. Therefore, diversity management initiatives such as training is better off with transformational leaders because they bring groups together which improves performance and reduces internal conflicts (Guillaume et al., 2017). Moreover, Moon (2016) discussed four important behaviors of a transformational leader: (a) influence others and build trust, (b) inspire motivation, (c) encourage employees to perform and be creative, and (d) most important, recognize the individual. However, as discussed by Lee (2020), authority needs to be earned and to do that, leaders need to build trust and exhibit the values, skills, and expertise that will convince others to follow. Transformational leadership not only welcomes and embraces changes for the better of the organizations, but is a more inclusive and participative leadership whose behaviors will influence and be more beneficial to the overall functioning of the organizations.

Employee-Engagement in the Planning and Decision-Making Help Improve Employee's Interpersonal Skills and Job Motivation

The third theme discovered in this research study is employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making that helps improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation. This theme was discovered after coding all the data collected from the interviews and focus groups. What helped the researcher generate this theme was the participants' responses to questions 3 and 4 in which participants expressed their desire to be part of the planning and be more involved in the process.

Participants were asked if the leadership gets them involved in the decision-making process. If not, would they want to be part of it? With these questions, the researcher wanted to explore how important was leadership involvement and that the leadership get them involved as well because their interpersonal skills and motivation at work will improve. Additionally, leadership will also gain the employees perspective on what they want for diversity training versus the leadership mandating what training they need. It was found during the research that employees want to be involved in the planning and feel their opinions matter. In this research study, 85% of the participants positively responded to these questions and they would like leadership to be involved and for them to get employees involved in the planning and execution of diversity management initiatives. Therefore, the participants' responses demonstrated their active participation and engagement in the planning and decision-making are important to them and will improve working relationships (interpersonal skills), job motivation, and job performance. Current literature supports this notion when Berneth (2020) discussed employee engagement as one of the direct outcomes of positive employee attitudes and job performance. This theme helped the researcher answer research questions 1 and 3.

As previously discussed, employees need to feel their opinions matter, but more important, they will get to work and interact with other employees and staff. Furthermore, this interaction with others and engagement in the designing of training and other initiatives will give them a sense of belonging. Employees will feel that their supervisors want to hear their opinions and they belong to a team, then they will reward the employer with a higher performance. P6, white female in Group 1 who has been working for the school district for over 3 years, noted the following:

I have never been asked for my input nor my participation in any decision-making process meeting. However, I would be interested in assisting and providing my input. I think training should not be top fed but a team effort. If we as teachers provide our input, training will then be based on areas we are interested in versus being a cookie cutter. Sometimes what work for a group at one school might not work the same way in another one. Additionally, I would get the opportunity to work with others who under different circumstances I would not get the chance to work with.

P13 was asked the same questions regarding their participation in the decision-making process and whether he would like to be part of this process. He stated a similar answer:

Employees are all involved and greatly support diversity training initiatives, but I feel that we could do more. I think we could be more involved and contribute more to the planning and execution of these initiatives versus being in the receiving end and just execute what is mandated by our leadership. I feel that we could be more involved in setting up objectives for the year and the planning of activities rather than just be the executioner. This will encourage all to take ownership of the given tasks which will result in higher motivation and job performance upon completing the tasks.

P20, female-Hispanic from Group 2, also concurred with previous statements from other P6 and P13. She noted:

As a minority, I want to be more involved in the planning and decision-making process. If I am given the opportunity to volunteer not just to plan multi-cultural events at the school but to participate in planning and developing a training program on diversity and inclusion, I will be there to assist.

Nevertheless, P5 from Group 1 negatively responded to these questions and provided a different answer. P5 stated:

I am not interested in participating in decision-making process not because my opinion does not matter but I am not going to keep adding additional tasks onto my plate. I fully support these programs and actively participate in training and multi-cultural events at school but not in the position to make decisions on school programs.

Responses from P5-P6, P13, and P20 are supported by current literature. Organizations these days operate in competitive and global markets where organizations' hiring and retention efforts are not just on employees with the education and experience, but on employees with interpersonal skills which allow them to work with others and help them grow as professionals. Therefore, establishing diversity management practices in the workplace on engaged employees positively influences what they think about the organization which further results in higher engagement and performance (Ganji et al., 2021). When leadership allow employees to be engaged in training programs, it helps employees feel valued and appreciated, therefore, increasing job performance and motivation. Ganji et al. (2021) supports this notion regarding engaged employees. Ganji et al. stated that engaged employees tend to be more receptive and supportive of new ideas leading to innovative behaviors and commitment to the organization.

Other scholars suggest that organizations need to encourage employees to participate and communicate their perspectives among each other during organizational activities, which also promotes diversity learning among employees from distinct groups (Fujimoto & Härtel, 2016). Fujimoto and Härtel referred to be the Thomas and Ely's diversity learning perspective which promote employees at all levels to learn from others regardless of groups or hierarchies to achieve organizational objectives. Tackling diversity in the workplace by hiring a diverse

workforce or conducting diversity training to increase awareness and reduce discrimination are not enough for organizations these days. However, integrating different perspectives from employees with different backgrounds will improve diversity learning, therefore, improving interpersonal skills, job motivation, and job performance.

This theme was viewed through the social cognitive theory. This theory relates to people's trust in the organization which will influence their attitudes (job performance and withdrawal behaviors such as turnover) and behaviors (task performance). According to this theory, behaviors are the result of motivation or team performance, collective efficacy, or team engagement and competition or conflict (Lin et al., 2020). Team engagement or the integration of employees in the planning, designing, and execution process will influence their attitudes and behaviors, their motivation, and commitment to the organization. Lin et al. also suggests that collective efficacy is critical to organizational performance as this relates to sharing beliefs and built that trust among co-workers which will then influence how much effort they will put towards accomplishing projects. Lack of collective efficacy will result in lower team performance. The lack of trust or how employees feel about the organization's core values will then become a barrier in the workplace causing employees to be more cautious and reduce their efforts and efficacy (Ozyilmaz et al., 2018). Ozyilmaz et al. (2018) suggests that when employees trust their organization, self-efficacy will have a stronger effect on job attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and positive behaviors) towards task performance.

Multi-Cultural Awareness and Education are Key in the Educational Services Industry

The last discovered theme in this research study is multi-cultural awareness and education is key in the educational services industry. This theme was discovered after coding all the data collected from the interviews and focus groups. What helped the researcher generate this

theme was the participants' responses to the questions regarding diversity training initiatives in the school district. Throughout the interviews, participants responded that diversity awareness training was important to the educational services industry not just for the faculty to be aware and understand how to manage diversity in the workplace, but also among students. P16 referred to this as 'unity in diversity' because of the widely diverse population in campus influence their organizational culture and who they are. The participants' responses suggested that multi-cultural awareness events and education initiatives played an intricate role in the school district diversity and inclusion programs for both the faculty and the staff because (a) new hires have never been exposed to a multi-cultural community, (b) campus improvement plans help the school district identify areas where they need to focus, (c) these programs help the faculty understand the needs of their student community, and (d) these programs help students connect with other cultures in the classroom. The participants, regardless of group, identified these as reasons why these initiatives have been essential for the school district and meeting the objectives of diversity and inclusion. P1, P7-P8, and P18 agree on the premise that multi-cultural awareness and education help develop a diversity mindset that will further develop tolerance of others and understanding of a multi-cultural environment we operate in these days. This theme answered research question 2.

P18, who identified himself as African American, provided input in support of this theme. He noted:

The school district designates a day each year where it celebrates and highlights cultures from around the world which help 'promote diversity.' This campus hosts a multi-cultural night and ESL event for students and their parents to learn also about other cultures to further develop tolerance of others and promote understanding of other

cultures in and outside the classroom. Although these events targeted to the students and their parents, we all benefit and learn from these events. These are training opportunities we have on multi-cultural and diversity awareness. It is important for all to learn from each other which will help us grow as individuals and professionals.

P7 agreed that multi-cultural awareness and education are key for diversity training initiatives to achieve their objectives. The participant explained:

Keep in mind that the school district is a widely diverse district not just a black, white, or Hispanic community, but as a whole it is a multi-cultural community. Therefore, we receive both awareness training and diversity training annually to help us manage diversity in the workplace and further understand diversity in the classroom. We as teachers need to have a global mindset to accomplish the objectives of these initiatives. Many educators coming from other states and countries are unaware of the huge diverse area we live in Central Texas.

P7 was further asked if the training was enough. He explained: “I believe that the training received is sufficient and meets the intent to increase awareness and reduce discrimination. I believe the training is highly beneficial to teachers who are new to the district and to the profession.”

P1, an employee who has worked for the school district for over 3 years, provided her perspective on the importance of multi-cultural awareness in the educational services industry. She stated:

Multi-cultural awareness helps us all, faculty and students, be more aware of the situation as it affects the classroom’s dynamic. We all need to know who our students are, understand the diversity in the classroom to be able to approach different scenarios and

individuals' wit. Although we celebrate diversity and inclusion and conduct different multi-cultural awareness events, I believe diversity training needs to be also embedded in the classroom and not just focused on the workplace. It is our responsibility as educators to teach our students inclusiveness and respect of others, knowledge on diversity, stigmas, and awareness of personal bias. Today's students must be prepared and better understand the global environment we live these days.

Current literature supports P1's response regarding the need for an importance of multi-cultural awareness in the industry. Related studies demonstrate this is a gap the educational services industry needs to work on because teachers are lacking multi-cultural awareness which is essential for teachers to work for minority areas (Ou & Du, 2017). Ou and Du added in their discussion the importance of teachers' multicultural awareness which can further help them in the classroom, not just understanding the culture of the students they teach, but may influence the students' ethnic identity and improve their academic achievements.

Nevertheless, P8 in Group 1 disagrees with P1's statements regarding teaching students about diversity. He explained the following:

In the school district, we support diversity and inclusion. Training is conducted every year for teachers to prepare us, the faculty, to manage diversity and to understand our student population. But if your questions are regarding diversity awareness training in the classroom, we do not conduct that type of training with our students. Our campus hosts multi-cultural events and ESL events once or twice a year. Other than that, I focus on the subject I teach, and I would say, my peers do too. I do not feel prepared to teach a class on diversity awareness and feel like none of the teachers are. Do I think multi-cultural awareness training is important for the student community as well? I fully agree, but that

training, or education starts at home and we as teachers are here to reinforce it and support.

P1, P7-P8, and P18's responses support what is found in current literature. Today's educational services industry face challenges in and outside the classroom as a result of the changes in demographic diversity. It is imperative for the educational services industry to build that multi-cultural competency among teachers in order to incorporate cultural diversity in the classroom which will help enhance diversity awareness, not only among teachers, but students. According to current literature, multicultural education and literature can help not only students but teaches the teachers how to manage diversity in the classroom, provide beneficial and relevant instruction, and understand others' perspectives (Linder, 2021). Furthermore, recent studies also demonstrate the importance of adding diversity-focused courses as part of the education curriculum as it will offer more opportunities for new teachers to interact with diverse communities (Yuan, 2017). Teachers have to be prepared to manage diversity in the classroom as teachers these days have to be prepared to have more and more students from low-income communities, English as Second Language households, diverse socioeconomic status, and other challenges (Yuan, 2017). Therefore, it is important for all schools to embed multi-cultural awareness training into their continuous education curriculum to prepare teachers for these challenges. Furthermore, Yuan emphasized that one of the challenges the industry faces in educating preservice teachers is the lack of diversity-focused courses that allow them to be effective teachers for all students, regardless of protected groups.

This theme is related to the social cognitive theory. This theory allows people to be part of a group and identify themselves to a group categorizing themselves in a group based on age, gender, experiences, or lifestyle, among other factors which will then shape their attitudes

(Devlin & Dillard, 2016). This theory seeks to explain how people see other members of a group which can help teachers understand the complexity of certain behaviors and social interaction in the classroom, therefore, impacting their job performance and motivation. According to Lin et al. (2020), it also influences team's dynamics if the individual does not identify him/herself with any group. Furthermore, social cognitive theory is one of the social learning theories in which people learn or are influenced from others, therefore, determining how they learn, their attitudes, and behaviors. Many scholars suggest that multi-cultural awareness education need to be introduced to teacher's professional development programs to build a multi-cultural competency that will help them become more effective in a diverse classroom environment, therefore, improving attitudes and behaviors (Abacioglu et al., 2020).

Application to Professional Practice

The results of this study generated three common business practices also found in current literature: (a) continuing education, (b) engaged executive/leadership, and (c) engaged employees in the decision-making process. These common business practices, if implemented and continued to be supported by the leadership, could impact diversity management initiatives in the workplace regardless of industry and improve general business practices, therefore, resulting in positive organizational outcomes (e.g., higher job performance and job motivation). Nevertheless, for these business practices to be effective, organizations might need to change their processes and possibly their organizational culture. In this section, the researcher will discuss in detail how the results of this study can improve general business practice and the potential application strategies the organization can use to leverage the findings of this study.

Improving General Business Practice

Throughout this research, one of the common business practices found that could help improve the general business practice is continuing education. The findings demonstrated that training the workforce is important; however, it should not be once a year but continuous training to reemphasize what was learned in the beginning of the year. Diversity training should not be taken as an annual training requirement for new hires or refresher training once a year, but continuing education to reinforce guidelines which will achieve the intent of reducing prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Additionally, with continuing training, employees are afforded the opportunity to apply lessons learned and make it a habit. As discussed by Robinson et al. (2020), diversity education is not a short-term fuse that leadership pulls when needed, but a continuous process in order to ‘educate’ not just train employees to ‘tolerate’ others. Moreover, it should not be taken as part of the onboarding process but professional development which will allow employees to share lessons learned, provide feedback, and applied lessons learned.

Another business practice derived from the findings is leadership engagement. Participants in this study noted they have not witnessed or experienced discrimination or prejudice in the workplace and they attributed that to their leadership from the superintendent on down. Participants in this study agreed their leadership foster a working environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. This is also found in current literature. The success of diversity management and training initiatives starts at the top, with the leadership buy-in and support of these programs. Furthermore, it was demonstrated in the findings that leadership needs to celebrate what they want to see more of. Therefore, if they want to see more tolerance of diversity, the leadership needs to be present by setting the example, celebrate diversity and others will follow. According to scholarly literature, when employees perceive an engaged

leadership, the success of diversity programs helps improve employer brand, employees' performance, reputation, and recognition (Morley, 2018).

Lastly, organizations need to engage employees in the decision-making process. This is another business practice found in the study that the organization needs to improve on and found in current literature. According to Jin et al. (2017), in order to develop a strong culture of inclusion, leaders must practice inclusiveness. This goes beyond having programs in place and allocating big sums of money towards developing and implementing these initiatives. There can be diversity programs, but inclusiveness means to celebrate and promote diversity, ensure employees despite their race, culture, or ethnic group, and have a say in an organization's decisions. Leadership needs to be more inclusive, and according to Jin et al., leadership needs to immerse themselves with their followers, interact with them, being more open and accessible, which will improve performance and productivity. When leadership is engaged and employees feel included irrespective of who they are, employees will be motivated to work and committed to the organization because they feel their opinions matter.

Potential Application Strategies

The outcomes of this study demonstrated that diversity, if not managed efficiently and effectively, is not enough. Throughout this study, the researcher learned that having a diverse workforce and conducting diversity training once a year does not make the organization all-inclusive. Additionally, the outcomes of this study demonstrated that diversity management initiatives need to be valued and work for the organization not against it. The leadership needs to also buy-in to the diversity management strategies and support those initiatives to leverage on the findings of this study. The following are potential strategies organizations can use to leverage on the findings of this study: (a) to develop employee engagement strategies, (b) develop a more

diverse and inclusive leadership, and (c) reassess current programs and align training with organization's strategic plans. In this section, the researcher will discuss in detail these potential strategies that the organization can use to leverage on the findings. Having a poorly managed diversity and inclusion program will be a disadvantage for the organization rather than a benefit.

Develop Employee Engagement Strategies. Employee engagement is linked to job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and empowerment, therefore, if employees are engaged, they will want to work harder towards meeting the company's goals and objectives (Alshaabani et al., 2021). Organizations need to understand that engaged employees feel more motivated to work because they feel valued and feel their well-being is important. Additionally, studies demonstrate that the more employees are exposed to diversity management initiatives, the more committed they are to the organization (Ganji et al., 2021). Ganji et al. also noted that there is a positive correlation between diversity management initiatives and employee engagement strategies. Organizations need to take advantage of having a diverse workforce and diversity management initiatives in place to engage employees and develop dynamic and high functioning teams that can further help them tackle issues, develop successful programs, and improve organizational performance. When employees perceive that their leadership supports diversity and understand their differences, employees will then feel more connected to the organization.

Consequently, a potential strategy organizations can leverage on the results of this study is developing employee engagement strategies which can have a positive impact in diversity management initiatives such as training. As demonstrated in the findings of this study, employees want to be engaged with the leadership and co-workers in the planning and execution of diversity management initiatives. They want to feel valued and that their differences and

opinions matter. HR professionals need to work alongside the executive level leadership to develop employee engagement strategies (i.e., building teams, professional development, and training events) as diverse as the workforce. These strategies will enhance organizational performance and productivity, help build better working relationships among diverse team members, and foster a positive working environment because it is an all-inclusive organization, not one type of employee, but all employees included.

Develop Diverse and More Inclusive Leadership. The outcomes of this study demonstrated the importance of leadership qualities and direct involvement for diversity management initiatives to be effective and meet their goals. Therefore, for leaders to be effective in their roles, they need to set the example, be more inclusive, and ‘walk the talk,’ particularly when organizations are going through organizational changes and/or implementing new policies and initiatives. According to Chen and Yang (2021), training educational leadership on diversity is not enough to develop them into more inclusive and culturally responsive leadership. A more inclusive leadership places more emphasis on the employees, their feelings, and their talents and appreciates their contributions regardless of age, race, nationality, and other groupings (Guo et al., 2020). Guo et al. (2020) also suggested that inclusive management as well as leadership have become an important management strategy to deal with diversity in an organization.

Another recommendation for the organization to leverage on the findings of this study is to develop and build a more diverse and inclusive leadership. HR professionals must look at diversity within the organization and assess current HR practices (i.e., hiring and retaining practices to determine where to fill the gaps). It is imperative for the organization to assess current leadership and what their strength and weaknesses are in order to develop an effective professional development and training program geared towards developing current and future

leaders. It is not just about hiring or retaining a diverse workforce to follow federal and state laws, yet, professionally develop future leaders to be more inclusive. Organizations need to understand the need for inclusive leaders to foster a more inclusive environment in the workplace where employees feel they matter despite the differences. According to Ashikali and Groeneveld (2015), inclusive leaders influence employees' experiences of equity and perception of inclusiveness in the workplace.

Reassess Current Programs and Align Training with Organization's Strategic Plans. Organizations need to empower their workforce through training. Diversity and inclusion is an important topic for all organizations regardless of industry, therefore, organizations need to reassess their programs and initiatives and identify what is working and what is not in order to understand what changes they need to make. Leadership and HR professionals cannot make assumptions that all employees are aware of diversity. Sometimes diversity training in the workplace is their first formal exposure of some employees to diversity management (Sarkar, 2022). Therefore, these programs cannot be a "check on the box" for the leadership to show their "corporate social responsibility" to the public. On the contrary, Sarkar (2022) suggests that for diversity training to be successful, it needs to be integrated in the organizations' strategic plan, needs assessments of employees and organizations, and follow-up of the training to understand and gain participants experiences.

The recommendation for the organization to leverage on the findings of this study is to assess their internal programs, initiatives, and processes. Organizations need to first identify the gaps in personnel, experts who can lead the training, and develop a program based on the needs of the organization. Diversity training should not be exactly the same, so tailor the training to the organization and ensure it aligns with the organization's strategic plans. Second, the organization

need to develop a training program that is not based on one type of instruction or learning type. Diversity is not just workforce diversity, but behavioral diversity (i.e., learning styles). Consequently, the hired experts need to develop a training solution that does not rely on one type of training for all, but a training solution aligned with the organization's strategic plans. Additionally, training must be designed based on workforce and behavioral diversity and must include in-classroom instruction, virtual and online-refresher training, seminars, activities and multi-cultural events, and situational and role-playing training instruction. This recommendation will take time to implement and to see results. Changing the organizational culture takes time and patience.

Recommendations for Further Study

This qualitative research study was conducted to explore and understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on the employees in the educational services industry in Central Texas. This study further explored the reasons diversity training fail to increase awareness and reduce discrimination that could potentially result in employees engaging in withdrawal behaviors among other negative organizational outcomes (e.g., low morale and poorer job performance). Additionally, this study explored how leadership involvement and support of diversity and inclusion initiatives that impact employees' behaviors, attitudes, and performance. Throughout this study, it was discovered that employees with over 5 years working for the organization found the training redundant and unnecessary. The time in the organization was not taken into account nor the years of working experience outside of the school district. Additionally, this study was conducted in the public school system. Therefore, the recommendation for further study is to conduct a further analysis within the

private schools to explore and understand the employees' perspectives on diversity and inclusion programs.

Another recommendation for further study is to expand the analysis and explore the impact of diversity management initiatives considering the following factors: time with the organization and work experience (in years) in the educational services industry. When this study was conducted the requirement for participants was to be a full-time employee with over 2 years with the organization. However, the study demonstrated that employees with more time in the district found the training was redundant and unnecessary. Therefore, expanding the study to consider these factors will enable the researcher to find the why of the negative attitudes towards training.

Although this study concluded that withdrawal behaviors in the education industry is not due to poor management and execution of diversity management initiatives or lack or poor execution of diversity training, this study demonstrated that teachers are leaving the classroom. Therefore, another recommendation for further study is to expand research to low-income school districts in the state of Texas in order to explore the impact on that sector and if teachers engage in withdrawal behaviors in those areas, the why and the correlation with diversity and inclusion initiatives within that sector. It was found during this research that teachers are leaving the classroom for different reasons, including student's lack of accountability and their level of maturity for current age and grade among other challenges presented in the classrooms where topics such as gender orientation and race issues cannot be discussed. Furthermore, schools serving low-income students are at a higher risk of principal and teacher turnover and they are hard to staff because the teaching faculty avoids working with "more challenging student population" and poor working conditions further affecting teaching (DeMatthews et al., 2022).

Although this is not an issue directly related to diversity training, it is worthwhile to further study other aspects of diversity and inclusion as teachers and students' demographics continue shifting to a more diverse population.

Reflections

Throughout this research study, I learned that the topic of diversity and inclusion is still a sensitive subject in 2022. While recruiting participants and even approaching organizations, I encountered some resistance. Although I was expecting some push backs, it became more obvious to me that people, despite business strategies, HR policies, and programs in place, do not feel comfortable discussing diversity and inclusion in the workplace or even participate in open forums if supervisors are present. Furthermore, I understood that employees take diversity training for granted, not recognizing the added value to the organization. The purpose of this research was to understand the potential failure and negative impact of diversity management and training initiatives on employees at all levels in the educational services industry in Central Texas. However, I also learned through online research for the literature review and from personal experience working with the federal government for over 20 years that this is applicable to all industries. Organizations recognize the need to fill the gap, but diversity and inclusion programs are not enough if the plans are not turned into actions.

Personal and Professional Growth

Before this journey started, I knew I could do this but did not know that I would come out spiritually and mentally stronger. Through this journey, I discovered that I am a strong and resilient woman who will not let negativity interfere with her goals. I learned that in life there will be times when things get difficult, and you have to remain optimistic and resilient to overcome the challenges ahead. There were times during the recruitment of participants when I

thought I was making progress, but instead I got negative responses from potential organizations. They did not even let me pitch my research. Instead, I got “we cannot support,” “we are not interested,” “sorry, but no.” However, I did not let those negative responses discourage me. On the contrary, I learned that even during the toughest times, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I learned to be optimistic and confident that rather sooner than later, things were going to shift in my favor. When I had to resubmit changes to my research through IRB, not once but twice, I learned not to panic because things happen and I cannot have control over how private organizations and other entities do business. This research taught me not to give up when things are not going my way. Life has taught me that things happen for a reason and God has a plan for all of us. Throughout this journey, I also became a more persistent individual. All those challenges I faced made me persevere and learn not to let those obstacles become barriers but motivators that made me a better person. God never left my side, and my nightly prayers were all for strength throughout this process.

As a professional, I cannot say it was an easy process either because of the sensitivity of the topic for some people. As mentioned, I knew I would be facing some resistance, but not to the point of organizations not authorizing the research. When I decided to conduct a study on diversity training, I was thinking of the marketing efforts and the many resources allocated to diversity management initiatives, but employees as well as the leadership do not always embrace these initiatives or give them the importance they deserve for the programs to be effective and meet their objectives. However, from the professional standpoint I understood the importance of exploring and understanding employees’ perspectives on these programs. As a federal employee and former military officer, I have witnessed changes in attitudes and behaviors. There was negative feedback towards the training conducted because the leadership is forcing employees to

attend 8- to 40-hours training sessions on an annual basis. Therefore, as an HR professional I learned through this study that you cannot mandate training but rather promote it and set the example for all others to follow. This study helped me understand how important is to gain the employees' feedback and get them engaged in programs which are going to help them grow professionally. Furthermore, this study helped me as a Hispanic woman, military veteran, and retiree in the HR field that we cannot be a number and let others make changes on our behalf, but instead, speak up and provide feedback to the leadership for them to understand our thoughts and feelings on these initiatives. As a result, I have volunteered to be part of a panel on diversity and inclusion which will be held this summer for the Department of the Army Civilian employees titled Your Voice Matters.

Biblical Perspective

In 1 Genesis 27, "So God created the human race in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Amplified Standard Version, 2016). From the very beginning, God created all equal. He created diversity, each human with unique traits and specific attributes and aptitudes to serve God's will and continue serving him. He later invited us in 1 Genesis 28, "...fill the earth and subdue it" (Amplified Standard Version, 2016). Through his teachings, God commanded us not to discriminate against our neighbor, but to love one another and treat each other with dignity and respect. Christians are to follow God's teachings as His foundation in everything they do. Furthermore, through His word, Christians learn to be better leaders, enhance their relationships with others within the organization, therefore, enabling the organization improve performance, processes, and quality. In this section, I will provide an in-depth discussion on how the business functions explored in this study relate to and integrate with a Christian worldview.

Today's workforce consist of people from different cultures, nationality, gender preferences, race, and religions. Diversity is not a bad thing in today's society or in business. On the contrary, God created this diversity – the human race. In 17 Acts 26, Paul preached that God made the human race from one man to populate the whole Earth (Amplified Standard Version, 2016). God calls us to cultivate the human race, scatters the human race to continue His work which also suggests for cultural diversification. Diversity is a competency Christian leaders can leverage on as a business advantage and not to create hate in the workplace. Diversity in the workplace is beneficial to the organization as every member of the team must be seen as an asset coming into the team to contribute with new ideas and problem-solving. However, discrimination and prejudice against these differences are present in the workplace and leaders are creating a work environment against what God intended. Keller and Alsdorf (2012) noted that leaders are supposed to treat all with dignity and create a positive environment where all can flourish and contribute to the society.

In 3 Galatians 28 and 29 God says that we are all one man from Abraham's seed (Amplified Standard Version, 2016). This is God inviting us to celebrate and promote diversity on Earth. This is God calling for unity of the human race and not to fight against diversity. Before God, it does not matter our differences in ethnicity or religion. Before God, we are His children. God's teachings are also inviting and teaching us to embrace diversity and celebrate the differences God created for the human race to come together because we are united in Jesus Christ as one. Here is where the Christian worldview relates to the business function discussed in this study. This cultural diversification God created and invited us to cultivate on Earth will contribute to the organization and its diversity and inclusion initiatives. Leaders need to understand and leverage on diversity and the benefits for the organization. Cultural

diversification can bring both value and new ideas as well as help employees develop their interpersonal skills when working alongside co-workers they would not otherwise be working with.

Christian leaders seek for the benefits of others and not his/her own. God equipped us Christians with talents and gifts to build up the human community and continue serving others (Keller & Alsdorf, 2012). However, as Christian leaders, it is our responsibility to answer God's call and develop future leaders and employees through training and professional development strategies. According to Keller and Alsdorf (2012), we, as HR professionals and leaders, make an impact on others and make a difference in our field with our work in order to make this world a better place. Therefore, as Christians, it is our responsibility to develop employees and leaders to be more inclusive. It is our moral responsibility as HR professionals and leaders to answer His call and continue His work on Earth. As Christians, we must use God's word as the foundation on everything we do, therefore, employees in the organization will follow and cultivate God's work like He called us to do on Earth – scatters the human race to continue His work.

Summary of Section 3

In Section 3 of this research study, the goal was to provide the applications to professional practice. This section includes an overview of the study, presentation of the findings, application to professional practice, recommendation for further study, and reflection on this journey. After conducting the field study, the findings helped the researcher address the problem being studied regarding the impact of diversity training in the workplace, particularly in the educational services industry and answered the research questions. After analyzing and transcribing the collected data from interviews, focus group, organization publicly available data and current scholarly literature, four themes emerged from the collected data based on

participants perspectives which helped me answered the research questions generated prior to the study. The four themes were: (a) employees' attitudes and how they perceived the training influence training outcomes, (b) leadership involvement is essential for a successful implementation of diversity management initiatives, (c) employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making help improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation, and (d) multi-cultural awareness and education are key in the educational services industry. The findings addressed the problem being studied, the purpose of the research, and the research questions. After the research, it was noted that employees' attitudes directly influence the outcome of training and how it is perceived by others. Out of 33 participants in this study, regardless of group they were assigned to by the researcher, the responses from 14 participants supported this theme. Furthermore, they agreed that the employees' attitudes and perceptions of the training might be linked to the number of years the employee has served at the organization. Many of the participants believe that the training gets redundant year after year. Therefore, the longer you have been with the organization, the more repetitive the training feels.

This training did not consider the time in service or time with the organization as a determining factor influencing employees' attitudes and behaviors. One of the participants responded that new employees benefit more from this training and have a more positive attitude coming to the training because they have never been exposed to a multi-cultural community like the population targeted in this study. Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that when employees perceived the training as unnecessary and redundant, no new information is being put out, and it impacts the outcome of the training and how it is perceived by the employees. As discussed, diversity training (or training in general) should not be "a check in the box," but turned into actions. Furthermore, it should not be taken as just a training requirement for new

hires or refresher training for all others, but continuing education in order to reinforce guidelines which will achieve the intent of reducing prejudice and discrimination in the workplace.

The second theme discussed is leadership support and their involvement. Throughout this research study, the researcher learned that leadership engagement matters and greatly influenced the outcomes of diversity management initiatives. Participants felt that the leadership in the school district foster a diverse and all-inclusive workplace environment which they believe to be a contributing factor for the successful implementation of diversity management initiatives. They noted that leadership involvement has resulted in an environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Additionally, leadership qualities are essential for programs to be successful. One of the participants stated that leaders need to set the example and others will then follow. As a leader, he responded that you must celebrate what you want to see more of. Therefore, a leader needs to have invested resources to what is important for the organization and employees will follow.

The third theme discovered in this study is employee-engagement in the planning and decision-making help improve employee's interpersonal skills and job motivation. Throughout this study, the researcher asked participants if their leadership asked them to be involved and participate in the decision-making process. The study demonstrated that 85% of the participants would like to play a more active role in the decision-making process. They feel that their voice needs to be heard and their input and active participation will improve working relationships (interpersonal skills), job motivation, and job performance, which are positive organizational outcomes. When employees are asked for their input, they feel valued and appreciated, therefore, increasing their job motivation and performance. Furthermore, tackling diversity issues does not get solved through just hiring a diverse workforce, but integrating different perspectives from

different backgrounds will improve diversity learning as well as their interpersonal skills as each member will get to learn from one another.

The last theme discussed the importance of multi-cultural awareness and education in the educational services industry. Throughout this study, the researcher discovered that participants believe multi-cultural awareness training was important to the educational services industry not just for the faculty to be aware and understand diversity in the classroom, but for students. Furthermore, participants feel that it is imperative for teachers to have a global mindset that will further help them understand their students and help them develop tolerance for other cultures and understanding of the diverse environment we live in these days. Like social cognitive theory seeks to explain, multi-cultural awareness education needs to be introduced to teacher's professional development programs to build a multi-cultural competency that will help them become more effective in a diverse classroom environment, therefore, improving attitudes and behaviors and improving self-efficacy.

The findings of this study and current literature demonstrated that diversity training as well as multi-cultural awareness training are essential for diversity management initiatives to be effective and meet organizational goals. Although this study did not demonstrate that employees engage in withdrawal behaviors, it does not mean that it does not exist. This study discovered that teachers in Central Texas are leaving the classrooms for other reasons, including the lack of accountability from the students and their level of maturity based on current grade is lower than the average student their age. The findings also demonstrated that some employees have observed negative attitudes and behaviors after training, particularly from those with longevity. However, there is a difference between this study's findings and those found in current literature where scholars agree on the premise that employees might engage on withdrawal behaviors

when diversity training fails to achieve the end goals of reducing discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. As stated, this could not be demonstrated with the sample population. Lastly, the findings demonstrated that a supportive leadership, engaged employees, and multi-cultural awareness and education are imperative for diversity training initiatives to be effective in the educational services industry, therefore, resulting in positive organizational outcomes such as job motivation, job performance, and foster a working environment free of discrimination and prejudice.

Additionally, the researcher discussed how the results of this study can improve general business practices and the potential application strategies the organization can use to leverage the findings of this study. The results of this study generated three common business practices that could help organizations manage diversity training and other initiatives effectively and efficiently. The researcher discovered that if these practices are put into play with the leadership's support and direct involvement, it will result in positive organizational outcomes such as job motivation, performance, and satisfaction. These business practices are continuing education, engaged executive/leadership, and engaged employees in the decision-making process.

In the last part of this section, the researcher identified and further discussed three potential strategies organizations can use to leverage on the findings of this study: (a) to develop employee engagement strategies, (b) develop a more diverse and inclusive leadership, and (c) reassess current programs and align training with organization's strategic plans. The researcher learned that a poorly managed diversity and inclusion programs will be a disadvantage for the organization rather than a benefit. Organizations need to leverage on these strategies and

understand that changes happen over time, but it will require leadership buy-in to these strategies and periodically reassess the programs to ensure they are meeting the objectives.

In the last part of Section 3, I reflected through my journey in conducting this research. I understood what I was getting myself into, but I was not prepared to encounter resistance when I was approaching organizations to request their permission to conduct field studies. As I moved forward, it became more obvious that despite business strategies, HR policies, and programs in place, employers in 2022 still feel uncomfortable discussing diversity and inclusion in the workplace for various reasons. Employees might fear retaliation or leaders do not want to be the center of controversy. Therefore, this research helped me grow as an individual and professional. Despite my work experience as an HR professional in the military and now as a Federal employee, I do not know it all. There is so much to learn and understand in the field. As an individual, I learned to be persistence. I learned that through difficult times, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I learned that I am a resilient woman, despite tough times, I know how to turn negative situations into learning experiences. As a professional, on the other hand, I learned how important being a Christian leader is on dealing with employees from different backgrounds. Lastly, I thank God for this opportunity of growth and development into the professional He had made me.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The general problem addressed in this study was the potential failure of diversity training to increase awareness and reduce discrimination resulting in negative organizational outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, and poor organizational performance. Throughout this research study, the researcher was trying to explore and understand participants' perspectives regarding the impact of diversity training initiatives in the workplace. Current literature demonstrated that

diversity training initiatives can potentially result in employees engaging in negative attitudes and withdrawal behaviors when employees find training unnecessary and/or merely employees do not feel training is needed if they are “the majority.” However, the field study did not demonstrate that the employees engage on withdrawal behaviors, but negative attitudes from employees who felt the training was tailored to newly hired individuals who were not aware or never worked in a school district as diverse as the one where the study took place.

The researcher conducted the research study in an independent school district in Central Texas area which serves a large population of students and employed a faculty/staff who are described as a mobile population. Most of the habitants in the community where the study took place are military families who relocated from other states or overseas locations for a period averaging 3 years. Furthermore, the study took place in a district which is the fourth most diverse district in the state of Texas, which made the population appropriate for the study being conducted.

Throughout this research and literature review, the researcher discovered that in recent decades, many organizations have gone global, making diversity management initiatives a priority at least on paper. Furthermore, organizations had become widely diverse mainly due to globalized markets and shifting demographics which bring people into the workforce from different backgrounds. As discovered in the literature review, many studies had been conducted to explore and understand how to manage diversity in the workplace to achieve a competitive advantage in a very competitive global market. According to Maturo et al. (2019), “diversity and inclusion have become an important part of business strategic plan as a response to recent shifts on the workforce demographics where knowledge and innovation play an important role in today’s environment” (p. 358). However, during the research it was discovered that these

initiatives cannot stay on paper, but need to be turned into actions. Having programs in place, hiring, and retaining diverse employees does not make an organization all inclusive. On the contrary, diversity is not enough, but taking those initiatives into action and for the leadership to be more inclusive. Only then, these initiatives will achieve their end goals of reducing discrimination and prejudice in the workplace.

As explained in the presentation of the findings, this research study and current literature demonstrated that diversity training as well as multi-cultural awareness training are essential for diversity management initiatives to be effective and meet organizational goals. As previously presented, this study concluded that withdrawal behaviors in the education industry is not due to poor management and execution of diversity management initiatives or lack or poor execution of diversity training. This study demonstrated that teachers are leaving the classroom for other reasons. However, this does not mean that it does not exist. In fact, this study discovered another problem: shortage of teachers and high turnover in Central Texas. One of the reasons mentioned in the study was the lack of accountability from the students and their level of maturity based on current grade being lower than the average student their age. The findings did demonstrate that some employees have observed negative attitudes and behaviors after training, particularly from those with longevity. However, the researcher found that there is a difference between this study's findings and those found in current literature where scholars agree on the premise that employees might engage on withdrawal behaviors when diversity training fails to achieve the end goals of reducing discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. As stated, this could not be demonstrated with the sample population, but it cannot be discarded as a potential issue within the industry. Consequently, it is recommended to conduct a further analysis within the private schools to explore and understand the employees' perspectives on diversity and inclusion

programs as well as to expand the analysis and explore the impact of diversity management initiatives considering the following factors: time with the organization and work experience (in years) in the educational services industry. Additionally, it is recommended to expand research to low-income school districts in the state of Texas in order to explore the impact on that sector and if teachers engage in withdrawal behaviors in those areas, the why and the correlation with diversity and inclusion initiatives within that sector. The reason for this recommendation is because during the research, it was found on current literature that schools serving low-income students are at a higher risk of principal and teacher turnover and they are hard to staff because the teaching faculty avoids working with “more challenging student population” and poor working conditions further affecting teaching (DeMatthews et al., 2022). Although not related to diversity training but to diversity and inclusion in the workplace, the latter recommendation is relevant to the field of human resources management and is worth further study to explore and understand why teachers are leaving the classroom, teachers’ shortage, and high turnover in Central Texas.

In summary, diversity training needs to be studied because it is important. It cannot be taken for granted that all employees, to include leadership, understand what diversity is and how to manage diversity in the workplace. Training on diversity once a year does not make an organization all inclusive. On the contrary, organizations need to be consistent on their training initiatives and make diversity and inclusion a priority in order to reduce discrimination and prejudice in the workplace. As one of the participants alluded, we need to put more emphasis to what we want to see more of. The study discovered that diversity in the workplace is not enough. Just because an organization hires and retains a diverse workforce to comply with laws and regulations such as affirmative action, does not make an organization all inclusive. However,

organizations' diversity management initiatives need to be turned into actions and to do that, leadership needs to be more inclusive, be more involved and supportive of diversity management strategies, and engage employees into their planning and execution to gain their perspectives and contributions on what they want to be trained on, not for the training to be mandated from the top. More importantly, diversity and inclusion attain to not only engage employees from different backgrounds, but employees want to be taken seriously and valued by their organization which will further enable the organization to gain competitive advantages and retain the diverse talent the organization attracted.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Background

1. Tell me about your work/responsibility in this organization. Can you tell me what you do?
2. What is your experience with diversity training or other diversity management initiatives?
3. Are you involved in any decisions when it comes to planning and conducting diversity training? Would you like management to ask employees for their input and be more involved in the decision making?

Personal experiences and opinions

4. What are your thoughts about your organization's diversity training program?
5. How often does your organization conduct training?
6. How do you feel about the training itself and the frequency in which is conducted?
7. Do you believe the training is adequate and meet the intent to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?
8. Do you think your coworkers' attitudes and behaviors change after attending training? Do you think their attitudes affect the outcome of the training? In what way?
9. What type of training does the organization conduct? Is it classroom/hand-on awareness training or online training?
10. Do you think there is a difference between awareness training and diversity training that is focused more on managing diversity in the workplace?
11. Would you rather receive awareness training or diversity training that is focused on managing diversity in the workplace and ethical issues?

12. Do you think these differences help your organization attend the goals of diversity training to increase awareness and reduce discrimination?
13. How much is your leadership involved in training?
14. What do you think are the most critical leadership qualities for an organization to successfully implement diversity training programs?

Follow-up question

15. Do you have any final thoughts? Anything else you would like to share?

Additional Questions for Leadership only

16. What is your leadership style and how do you describe your leadership qualities?
17. What is your role in developing and executing diversity management strategies?
18. What does it mean to you as a leader in this organization to have a commitment to diversity and diversity management initiatives in the workplace?
19. How have you demonstrated your commitment and efforts towards diversity management initiatives and diversity in general?
20. How would you approach making these efforts valued by everyone in the organization in order to meet the intent?