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# Tribal Gaming Leader Strategies toward a Sustainable Future

Janie A. Hall
*Walden University*, janie.hall2@waldenu.edu

Patricia I. Fusch
*Walden University*, patricia.fusch@mail.waldenu.edu

Janet M. Booker
*Walden University*, janet.booker@mail.waldenu.edu

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**Abstract**

One aspect of leadership strategy is the need to account for the core values of the organization. The purpose of this case study was to explore the tribal gaming leader strategies used toward sustainability, an action that leads to tribal economic development and stability. The conceptual framework of situational leadership theory was used to guide the scope and analysis of this study. Six tribal gaming leaders from Oklahoma participated in a focus group session; 7 additional tribal gaming leaders from the same gaming organization participated in individual interview sessions. Member checking was used to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the interpretation of the participants' responses. Additionally, company documents were reviewed to triangulate the data. Four emergent themes were identified after data analysis: business value, which was attributed to tribal leaders' alignment to their mission; strategic vision, which included their marketing and overall business environment; collaboration, which was evident wherein the tribal gaming leaders utilized internal and external partnerships to improve local communities and maintain competitive advantage; and communication, which was emphasized for its importance as a daily skill for information sharing.

**Keywords**

Qualitative, Case Study, Native Americans, Corporate Social Responsibility, Business Value, Situational Leadership Theory

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Janie A. Hall, Patricia I. Fusch, and Janet M. Booker
Walden University, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

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## Introduction

In this study, we explored the strategies leaders use to ensure corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in the tribal gaming industry. The selection of a single, qualitative case study yielded rich and thick data. The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to discover the strategies leaders use to ensure CSR practices in the tribal gaming industry.

The researchers were influenced by the culture and circumstances in the Four States region since there are several tribal gaming institutions located within the state of Oklahoma. Tribal gaming began when voters approved the Oklahoma gaming act in 2004. The Oklahoma State Tribal Gaming Act created a compact that allows federally recognized Native American tribes to operate gaming activity for the use in economic development, general welfare, tribal government, and charitable organizations. The qualitative method is appropriate for the focus of this research study on the ways that leadership can incorporate CSR. Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2013) noted the high importance of customer perceptions and beliefs in tribal gaming. We conducted a focus group and semistructured interviews with tribal gaming leaders from the same casino to obtain data and answer the overarching research question.

The execution of strategic intent and planning has produced the acceptance of a long-term concentration and a broad set of culpabilities which focus on ethical practices, employees, environment, and customers (Ameer & Othman, 2012). Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2013) articulated CSR as the activities responsive to stakeholders that provide a sense of responsibility and voluntary commitment to social and environmental concerns. Organizational leaders may apply knowledge learned to instill CSR practices to communicate the need to implement CSR initiatives (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). The overarching research question for

this study was: What strategies do leaders use to ensure CSR practices in the tribal gaming industry?

## Cultural Heritage

Tribal members find their memberships as a radical and societal issue (Debenport, 2012). Native Americans formed reservations toward the end of the 19th century (Akee & Jorgensen, 2014). The U.S. Congress proposed Native American policy to break up the nations and encourage the Native Americans to live in American society and live as citizens (Echohawk, 2013). The lifestyles of the Native Americans varied by tribe and location; some tribes had domesticated crops and other tribes were nomadic in nature. Some Native Americans' methods for survival included the itinerant movement in search for food and water, changing with the seasons (Alzahrani, 2011). Women were leaders of some tribes; however, many of the tribes had male leaders. The tribal members' tools of resourcefulness were survival that included trading with the early European settlers, which forever changed the heritage of the Native Americans (Alzahrani, 2011).

The U.S. Supreme Court identified Indian tribes as a *domestic dependent nation* in 1831 (Echohawk, 2013). The tribal classification did not include United States citizenship until 1924; however, members followed the orders of the federal government (Echohawk, 2013). The tribes appeared before the Supreme Court in 1832 in an attempt to retain their lands, discovering their freedom from state laws, which provoked the act of multiple treaties until 1871 (Echohawk, 2013). United States government representatives enacted a New Deal policy in 1934 to turn the sovereign rights back to the individuals, and, until that time, congressional leaders recognized the tribes as *separate domestic dependent sovereign nations* (Echohawk, 2013).

Tribes requested federal aid and autonomy in the early 1970s; however, the American taxpayers opted for economic development on the tribal lands (Alzahrani, 2011). Tribal members followed the Indian policy introduced by Congress with the specific intent to end the tribal government and introduce the sovereign nations among the U.S. societal members (Echohawk, 2013). Tribal leaders and members follow the self-determination policy, which allows tribes to be a sovereign nation (Echohawk, 2013).

## Conceptual Framework

A leader is a person who succeeds and creates meaning (Fairhurst, 2009). Leaders who provide consistent leadership may realize the importance of the stability for the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Situational leadership theory (SLT) was the theory used as the foundation of this study. Situational leadership theory is a leadership style in which one changes the way one leads to best suit the maturity level of the subordinates and according to task detail (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969, p. 26). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) founded SLT on the belief that leadership embroils influencing the behaviors of others. Moreover, SLT is combination for leader behaviors that includes tasks and relationships (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Successful organizational leaders integrate sustainability tools within their strategic planning process to survive the long-term future and improve their financial performance (Ameer & Othman, 2012). The leader strategies and methods of corporate social responsibility (CSR) are practices that support important strategic mechanisms (Coulson-Thomas, 2013). Organizational leaders may discover solutions to creative challenges in handling the diversity of the sustainable efforts or with a combination of the innovative and adaptive solutions (Dincer & Dincer, 2013). The SLT fundamental concepts may create a better understanding of surroundings, which can help improve processes (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). The main issue

in this study was the strategies organizational leaders of the tribal gaming industry use to include the use of CSR within the organization.

## Literature Review

The following literature review is composed of three themes regarding CSR. The first section includes an overview of general strategies for CSR. The second section includes leadership strategies used to improve CSR. The third section includes an overview of how leadership can incorporate CSR in the gaming industry. Leadership and CSR peer reviewed articles were easy to locate; however, uncovering tribal leadership or American Indian peer reviewed articles were sparse.

### Corporate Social Responsibility

The definition for CSR as a social consensus is constantly changing by different actors for improving social change (Christensen, Mackey, & Whetten, 2014). Babiak and Trendafilova (2011) defined CSR practices as improving the social good. Organizational leaders focus on sustainability to improve the environmental protection, economic growth, and social progress for continued improvement (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). Leaders integrate CSR into their organizational mission and vision (Torugsa, O'Donohue, & Hecker, 2013). Low and Ang (2013) found that organizational leaders create a balance between the ideas, which can improve CSR efforts nationally and globally.

**Collaborative commitment.** Organizational leaders need to develop a form of generalized communication to encourage employees and society in the mission and vision of the organization for the communities' future to help facilitate balance and better solutions to CSR efforts (Abugre, 2014). Aragon-Correa, Martin-Tapia, and Hurtado-Torres (2013) discovered leaders incorporate collaboration and information sharing to improve performance to advance innovation on a local level. The development of collaboration encourages innovation among partners during the rapidly changing environmental changes (Meacham, Toms, Green, & Bhadauria, 2013). Organizational leaders provide trust to stakeholders to captivate organizational transparency and improve collaborative relationships of others (Ping, Mujtaba, Whetten, & Wei, 2012).

**Communication.** Dincer and Dincer (2013) documented the effects of communication and influence over time that has become CSR in business practices worldwide. Individuals use communication to express the collaborative efforts of CSR (Abugre, 2014). Organizational leaders embed CSR values and strategy within the organizational culture with shared information and good business practice (Torugsa et al., 2013). The organizational leader must share information with stakeholders to encourage the ownership of the organizational goals (Meacham et al., 2013).

**Innovation**. Leaders recognize innovation as it develops with an imaginative lens (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2013). Innovation is a combination of creative thinking and applied research that will take teamwork among all levels of the organization (Ping et al., 2012). Organizations value the steady stream of ideas from CSR innovation, which excel the need for additional education (Pearce, Albritton, Grant, Steed, & Zelenika, 2012). Leaders encourage the usefulness of innovation of CSR that includes the organization or personal level (Dincer & Dincer, 2013).

**Strategy.** Leaders strategize the use of CSR to validate local and global concerns as a fundamental portion of the organization's distinctiveness (Albertini, 2013). Organizational leaders can promote change by activating their guidance skill sets and implement strategies (Ji, Huang, Liu, Zhu, & Cai, 2012). A particular strategy that leaders use is the validation of local and global concerns as a fundamental portion of the organizations CSR distinctiveness (Albertini, 2013). Many leaders strategize to demonstrate their effectiveness and improve the efforts of the organization (Galpin & Whittington, 2012).

**Business value**. Organizational leaders must incorporate CSR into the core business values and strategy to portray the organizational culture (Albertini, 2013). Leaders who implement the information necessary to subordinates and stakeholder groups have been successful at the alignment of strategy and organizational culture (Albertini, 2013). Leaders consider strategic planning within green organizations (Ameer & Othman, 2012). Leaders activate the strategic choices for the organization and implement the decisions to create change and innovation (Ping et al., 2012). Leaders who incorporate CSR strategies also improve the relationship with stakeholders and collaborative partners by showing a common connection of the benefits and the organization (Strand, 2011).

## Leadership

Leader attributes include skills, strategies, and knowledge toward the achievement of personal and organizational objectives (Henry & Dietz, 2012). Situational leadership theory is combination for leader behaviors, which includes tasks and relationships (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Theories have significance for perceptive forecasting and encourage successful leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). Leader behavior changes as the tasks of the organization change (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Theorists ascertain that the leader behavior changes as tasks change (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Leaders can identify success through the leadership principals they attain (Burian, Burian, Maffei, & Peiffer, 2014). Effective leadership will strengthen the connection between society and businesses for improved social futures (Baumann-Pauly, Wickert, Spence, & Scherer, 2013).

**Resilience.** Kemp (2011) noted organizational leaders should possess several traits to provide the flexibility required to handle a variety of situations. Organizational leaders have discovered flexibility as an important skill (Quiros, 2014). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) noted that SLT provides flexibility for the leaders and subordinates. An organizational leader's success can have a strong correlation with the factors of emotional intelligence and resilience (Maulding, Peters, Roberts, Leonard, & Sparkman, 2012). Leaders who provide consistent leadership may realize the importance of the stability for the organization (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

**Strategic vision.** Organizational leaders have experienced the ability to engage in strategically focused CSR rather than socially focused CSR activities because of a surge in intellectual stimulation (Strand, 2011). Leaders also have increased intellectual stimulation to strategize the organizational operations effectively (Maulding et al., 2012). An organizational leader's success consists of vision (Maulding et al., 2012). Leaders use vision as a way to engage subordinates to follow the direction of the organization (Fioravante, 2013).

**Motivation and innovation**. Leaders bring talents, awareness, and vanity to the organization, which may be the leaders' motivation to engage in systematic goals (Gupta &

Kumar, 2013). Motivation was a factor resulting in a strong correlation of emotional intelligence and resilience in leadership success (Maulding et al., 2012).

Innovation is critical to remain competitive (Hogan & Coote, 2013). Innovation and change are necessary in divisions, corporations, cultures, and countries. Innovation requires creativity and a vision (Wang et al., 2013). Organizational leaders understand when organizations want to remain an industry leader; therefore, organizational leaders must lead the team toward innovation and embrace change (Ping et al., 2012).

**Communication.** Leaders realize effective communication with subordinates may increase organizational efficiency (Fioravante, 2013). An organizational leader's success improves with effective communication (Maulding et al., 2012). Organizational leaders may vary the communication to improve the outcomes of the situation (Fioravante, 2013). Leaders will have more control with communication as the subordinates communicate accountability (Fioravante, 2013).

**Collaboration.** Leaders discover appreciation that could strengthen collaborative efforts (Maulding et al., 2012). Organizational leaders can exercise effective collaboration within society (Kruschwitz, 2013). Business leaders serve a large role in CSR but excel with collaboration with other businesses and environmental groups (Fontaine, 2013). Collaborative organizational leaders of CSR efforts aid the encouragement of CSR for social well-being, environmental fortification, and humanity (Kruschwitz, 2013).

## Tribal Gaming

Tribal gaming is a for-profit business designed to relieve tribal poverty (Anderson, 2013). The United States government created the Dawes Act; this law permitted the sale of tribal reservations to nontribal members (Akee & Jorgensen, 2014). Tribal leaders encouraged the stimulation of their resources by opening gaming parlors on their reservations, which addressed poverty to tribal members and the surrounding communities (Anderson, 2013). Tribal leaders use the commercial casinos for the tribal efforts of job creation (Humphreys & Merchand, 2013). The tribal leaders began their innovation by salvaging their cultural heritage and promoting economic development (Alzahrani, 2011).

**Economic development.** Tribes experienced deep changes in their properties and their native economies as the congressional laws changed throughout the history of Native Americans (Denson, 2004). The Native American tribes were encouraged to become farmers even though two-thirds of their land was lost to the Dawes Act (Akee & Jorgensen, 2014). Tribes voted in favor of gaming on their reservations to stimulate their economies in 1970s (Anderson, 2013). Native Americans received compensations through American law, which began with the tribal reservation system (Alzahrani, 2011). Anderson (2013) posited tribal leaders use the gaming indemnities to advance the socioeconomic status of their tribe and local communities. The leaders have encouraged economic development, which has improved health, education, housing, and aided in additional funding for necessary programs (Debenport, 2012). Ackerman and Bunch (2012) posited a strong association of Indian reservations and the locations of Indian casinos. Tribal leaders have experienced success in the gaming and hospitality industries (Debenport, 2012).

**Sustainable development**. Ameer and Othman (2012) defined sustainable development as furnishing the current needs of society without weakening the needs of future generations. Native Americans must explore the economic avenues to remain viable

(Harrington, 2012). Ethical business practices are at the forefront of corporate sustainability performance principals (Epstein & Buhovac, 2014). Tribes use necessary economic systems in an effort to expand upon their liberation as a sovereign nation (Denson, 2004). Wolfe, Jakubowski, Haveman, and Courey, (2012) posited the increase in economic development of communities improves the health and welfare of the tribal community.

## Social Change

We are contributing faculty members who promote positive social change in applied research methods courses. The three of us have all led and served our communities through our social change efforts and have inspired positive social change through our core beliefs and commitments. We appreciate the challenges researchers' experience—the highs and the lows of their masterpiece. We believe in the power of the individual to bring about social change on a larger scale. Positive social change comes about through our actions. Each little thing we do contributes to the greater good.

Wright (2010) posited that the time has come for a revision of contemporary social theory. Putting the social back into social change, so to speak, is the advent of the future (Fusch, Hall, & Fusch, 2018). Community based resilience research at the individual level aids in the perceptions of the social-ecological system to bring about social change (Fusch et al., 2018). The assumption of empire as the driver of social change is no longer valid (Fusch et al., 2018). It is no longer realistic to expect corporations to bring about social change at the macro level without individual motivation at the micro level beginning the process. Someone has to be the instigator; we see ourselves in that position.

The motivation for this study was to explore the for-profit sector in a meaningful context. Individuals such as organizational leaders may begin the CSR process by reviewing the mission statement; this act could ensure organizational motivation toward sustainability, with a solid core value for future generations. The purpose of this qualitative, descriptive case study was to explore what strategies leaders use to ensure CSR practices in the tribal gaming industry. Forte (2013) found self-motivation for improved impact on the organizational CSR process. The evolution and progress made toward sustainability proves commitment and encouragement for future generations (Lee, Wahid, & Goh, 2013). Customer perceptions and beliefs or organizations are of high importance (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013). Organizational and governmental leaders may guide society in the path of sustainability and degrowth while choices still remain (Karlsson, 2013). Researchers could use the findings of the case study to aid in the organizational strategy to forecasting, and aid in the overall business value.

## Methodology

The study presented in this paper was intended to explore the tribal gaming leader strategies used toward sustainability, in a qualitative method. Scholars have a choice of qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods (Condie, 2012). Qualitative research is a method of inquiry of the practice or process of a phenomenon, whereas the quantitative researcher evaluates the design with numbers and a theoretical framework (Slevitch, 2011). A qualitative single case study was selected to explore the overarching research question of this study. Researchers use the case study research method to explore complex contemporary events (Yin, 2018). Moreover, researchers and scholars use of the case study design to identify the associations between events over time (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2017; Klonoski, 2013; Vissak, 2010; Yin, 2018). Researchers use a systematic approach for a robust case study that includes (a) research questions, (b) data collection, (c) data analysis, (d) method, and (e) limitations

(Yin, 2018). The case study design was appropriate because the focus of the study was to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participant population regarding leader strategies concerning obstacles and opportunities in the advancement of CSR in the tribal gaming industry. To provide evidence for this study, we posited four interview questions for the individual interviews and four focus group questions. In this qualitative study, we captured rich and thick data from the research participants in a casual atmosphere. We reviewed company documents that correlated with the data obtained during the focus group session and individual interview sessions to triangulate the data.

## Study Participants

The target population for this single case study included tribal gaming leaders who support or lead subordinates in their duties through collaboration or guidance. The core benefit of a case study design allows researchers to explore how individuals construct meaning concerning events, programs, or processes in a reasonable manner in a specific situation (Yin, 2018). Individual interview participants consisted of 13 leadership team members of the same casino. We conducted seven individual interviews, which were different participants from the six focus group participants for a total of 13 leadership team members as the study participants. The participants were enlisted volunteers, who received a *thank you* for their time as compensation for their participation. Carlsen and Glenton (2011) posited the selection of individuals is determined as a researcher analyzes the responses. The research participants were validated by asking the contributors to verify inclusive questions: (a) work in the gaming industry, (b) have a leadership role, and (c) were at least 18 years old. Researchers use a snowball sampling in the study based on the referral of other people who were previously interviewed (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). We used a snowball sampling strategy to gather participants for the individual interview sessions.

## Data Collection

We selected three data collection methods that included (a) individual leader interview sessions, (b) a focus group, and (c) a review of company archival documents. The data collection methods were used to create raw data for analysis for the qualitative study. We submitted email invitations to the target population and received a small response from the tribal gaming leaders. Therefore, we began with six tribal gaming leaders in a focus group session and continued with the individual interview sessions. We interviewed leaders who (a) worked in the gaming industry, (b) had a leadership role, and (c) were at least 18 years old. The four interview questions and four focus group questions were based on the overarching research question to clarify the previous literature and the research topic. Yin (2018) offered a five-step interview protocol, which was used in this study. First, we received an informed consent from each participant, greeted the participant, and provided an opening statement prior to the activation of the audio recording devices. Second, we asked the interview questions from participants in the same order during the focus group and individual interview sessions. Third, individuals were asked probing questions to gain further insight regarding the real-life event in the interview and focus group sessions. Fourth, we asked the participants to verify the themes and codes noted during the interview and focus group sessions. Finally, we recorded reflective notes during and after the interviews. The participants' answers became the series of events that accounted for the leaders' actions to ensure reliability (Yin, 2018). Rich and thick data was gathered with the use of probing questions for a deeper understanding of the leaders' recollections and allow a thorough explanation of the events when necessary.

The focus group sessions were conducted in an off-stage meeting room with six tribal gaming leaders. We asked the focus group participants four questions that pertained to the overarching research question. During the focus group session, one question was asked, and the participants answered the question in the same order for each question. Finally, we collected company archival documents as supportive documentation of the leader claims. We established credibility through methodological triangulation, likewise, the determination of dependability was sought by mitigating researcher bias with the exertion of wholesome data. Moreover, data saturation is met when no new essential data is obtained and the information becomes repetitive (Carlsen & Glenton, 2011; Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Field notes and voice recorders were used to document the face-to-face interviews and focus group sessions. Researchers write narratives of the interviews based on textual, visual, and verbal forms of data (White & Drew, 2011). Leader participants were voice recorded and the direct observations of the participants were documented as they responded to the real life event. The participants' answers became the series of events that accounted for the leaders' actions to ensure reliability (Yin, 2018).

The overarching research question determined the core of the case study (Yin, 2018). Likewise, individuals were asked probing questions to gain further insight regarding the real life event in the interview and focus group sessions. The central research question of this study was, "What strategies do leaders use to ensure CSR practices in the tribal gaming industry?'

Individuals were allowed to add to their response to reflect an accurate response to the research questions posed during member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Member checking was used to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the interpretation of the participants' responses. We used member checking to endorse the validity of the individual responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). One individual requested a modification their initial response to the interview question to reflect a correct response during member checking. We left the transcript in the current state; conversely, a notation was made on the transcript to reflect new wording and both items were coded.

We transcribed the answers from the individual interviews, focus group session, note taking, and entered the corporate documents into the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) for coding. We used Dedoose to identify the codes for this study. Researchers organize and sort the collected data into categories from organizational units or codes (Vissak, 2010). Marshall and Rossman (2016) posited the categorization of the research responses into clusters of reoccurring themes and word patterns. The transcribed interviews were checked for accuracy before member checking began, to ensure credibility of methodological triangulation. Triangulation involves the employment of multiple external data collection methods concerning the same events may be enhanced by multiple external analysis methods (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). Triangulation is one method by which the researcher analyzes data and then presents the results to others to understand the experience of a common phenomenon (Fusch, Fusch, & Ness, 2018). Researchers and scholars use multiple sources of data to examine the business problem (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Through the use of Yin's 5-step data analysis plan, we completed the following steps. The compiling phase involves in organizing of the data in an order, to create a database, while disassembling phases involves breaking down the complied data in to fragments and labels. The reassembling process involves in clustering and categorizing the labels into sequence of groups. The interpretation stage involves in creating narratives from the sequences and groups for conclusions (Fusch, 2015). We reviewed each transcript for codes and themes to answer the overarching research question. Next, we reviewed and analyzed all data (notes, journal, interview transcripts, document review, and analysis) by marking the reoccurring concepts that were relevant as codes. Next, we were able to identify the items with the same codes to

determine the common themes of the study through the analysis and summarized the results in eight common themes.

**Credibility and confirmability.** Yin (2018) described researchers use readability, credibility, and objectivity to determine verifiable results in a qualitative study. We established credibility in three ways. First, we used member checking to review the responses the tribal gaming leaders made to confirm our understanding their answers. Second, we maintained persistent observation during the individual interview sessions and focus group session to note basic demographic information. Third, we used journaling as a supporting source for the audiotaped face to face interview and focus group sessions. We established confirmability in two ways. First, we maintained neutrality and established the appropriate amount of distance from the research participants to mitigate bias. Second, we used an interview protocol to ensure an accurate account of the leaders' experiences.

## Results

Initial codes were identified from the individual interviews, focus group session, and corporate documents. Eight relevant themes emerged from the initial codes (see Figure 1). The literature review and the conceptual framework were compared with the themes to evaluate the reliability of the study. The analysis and interpretation of the findings addressed the central research question that was related to the conceptual framework theory SLT.
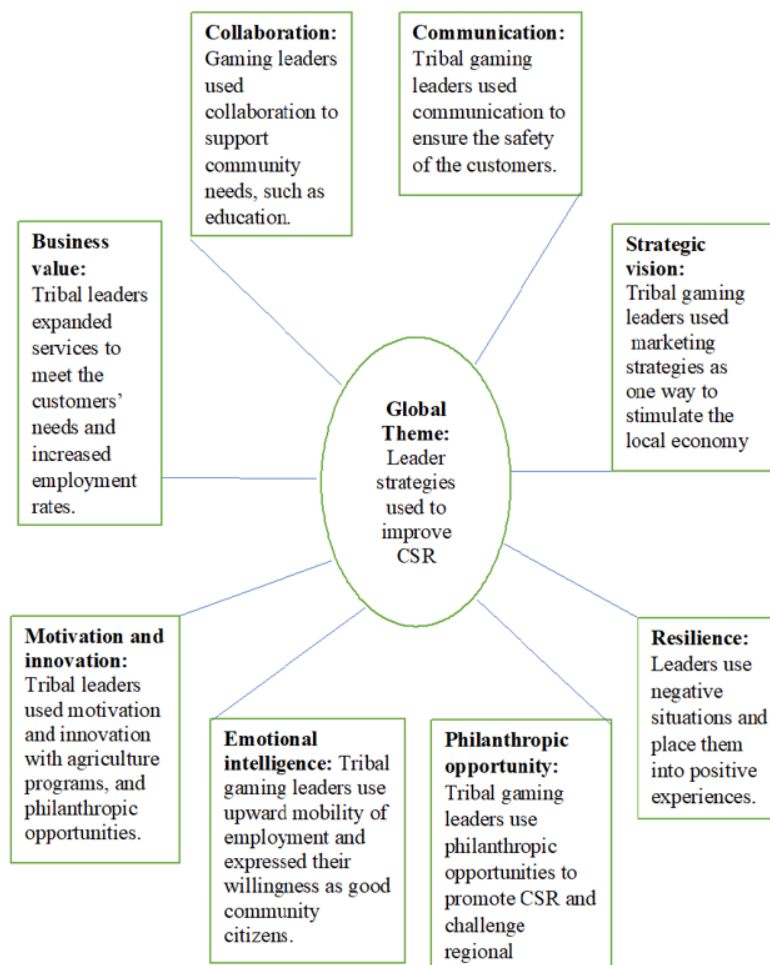


*Figure 1.* Mind map of eight relevant themes that emerged from the initial codes.

**Business value.** The leaders suggested that business value was a leadership strategy the casino uses toward sustainability. Business value was evidenced in our study among multiple services that were offered after the casino opened. A convenience store and RV park were implemented to aid the local economy, provide jobs, and reduce the number of patrons that are turned away when rooms are not available. IIQ6 replied the horticultural team produces items that are used in the onsite spa. Business value was added with the addition of the horticulturalist in addition to other services provided by the leaders. IIQ6 stated "We are not just a casino; we are a hotel, a spa, a golf course: we are an entertainment facility, a training facility; we are restaurants, food, and beverage; we are a social escape for senior citizens, and people who have gone through trauma; it is so much more than gaming, and people forget that." Tribal leader flexibility to change has incorporated the expansion of services to increased employment rates and aid in overall business value.

**Strategic vision**. Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough (2015) defined strategic vision as the clarity and collective values through leadership and sensemaking. Leaders may be encouraged to customize their procedures, methods, and strategies to improve their overall success, as posited by Galpin and Whittington (2012). The tribal gaming leaders identified strategic vision as a leadership skill that is used at the tribal gaming casino with the use of local vendors to aid in the stimulation of the local economy. The economic impact of local vendors includes $41 million in the purchase of service and goods annually. Corporate social responsibility leaders can improve financial performance and create a significant contribution for competitive advantage with the use of *strategic proactivity* (Torugsa et al., 2013).

IIQ6 answered leaders identify the importance of the mailers used for marketing customers, which are creatively written to be geared toward the individual customer based on their strata and serve as a notification for customers that their contribution is being recognized. "Customers are notified about gift parties, give-a-ways, and events, which arrive at their homes in mailers because they want to feel special" as stated by IQ6. The tribal casino lists many marketing strategies on the mailers to encourage the many features the casino offers such as the spa, entertainment, and gaming features for the month (press release 12, 6/2015).

IIQ3 replied that the casino is undergoing a carpet installation; the bright colors and swirl pattern in the carpet is customized for marketing (IIQ7, personal communication May 15, 2015). The tribal gaming leaders collaborated with a design team to share the overall vision with the customers with designs that are appealing to local citizens (press release one, 7/5/2008; press release six, 11/1/2008; and press release eight, 1/18/2013).

**Collaboration.** Leaders collaborate when they work with others to attain the same desirable goal (Le Pennac & Raufflet, 2018). Leaders must understand the value of trust and the implications of good relationships with collaborative partners to decrease time loss from collaboration (Parker & Brey, 2015). We discovered some gaming leaders identified strategic vision as a leadership skill that is used with the encouragement of the Four States communities to raise money for tribal scholarships toward a higher education and donate money to local communities to support community education programs for elementary aged students. P5 stated "The tribal casino is not just writing a check and saying here it is, instead they are interacting with the people and enjoying special moments with them." Tribes collaborate with other tribes to support education, which is a value the tribe supports (Mission Statement; press release 15, 5/1/2015).

**Communication.** Ethnography of communication is defined as the methodology that reflects the knowledge and meanings within a cultural group, which can aid in the interpretation of the communicative phenomenon (Zhu & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013). The tribal gaming

leaders suggested that communication is a strategy the casino uses toward sustainability through a daily communicated briefing to subordinates in relation to recycling, customer service, and any pertinent information that will improve efficiency throughout their day. A tribal gaming leader provides the employees with a blog which represents the last seven years of business, celebrating the events that happened on that particular date since its inception (internal communication, 5/15/2015). Business should be responsive to the needs of their stakeholders in ethical, philanthropic, and societal lenses (Abugre, 2014). P6 stated he "collaborate(s) with the local and state authorities for specific cases to solve various crimes" to provide additional security and safety measures for guests, employees, and local communities.

**Motivation and innovation.** Motivation is defined as the leaders' ability to begin new ideas or the influence to create excellent outcomes from the new idea (Sterman, Repenning, & Kofinan, 1997). Innovation can aid in community interaction, innovation, and collaboration (Pearce et al., 2012). The gaming leaders in the focus group noted the motivational efforts toward subordinate employees to bring in new and innovative ideas toward sustainability. We discovered soaps and lotions are recycled by a collaborative partner and given to the homeless shelters.

P3 individual answered the tribal gaming leaders are motivated to use gaming revenues toward an innovation such as the arts, education, environment, veterans, and to "live in harmony with the earth." Motivation and innovation towards evident in the native décor to attract customers for entertainment at their location (press release one, 7/5/2008; press release six, 11/1/2008; IIQ7). Tribal gaming leaders portray a particular motivation and innovation toward the environment with the agricultural programs, philanthropic opportunities, the social, environmental and economic influence in multiple states with gaming revenues (press release three, 2/11/2014, press release four, 4/21/2014; press release eight, 1/18/2013; press release nine, 12/19/2013; internal communication, 5/15/2015; and mission statement).

**Emotional intelligence.** Serrat (2017) defined emotional intelligence as the capability to manage the emotions of one's self, others, and groups to explain the ability, capacity, skill, or self-perceived ability in which leaders use to identify assess situations. Organizational leaders must maintain complexity, collaborate for organizational change, and engage in emotional intelligence (Metcalf & Benn, 2013).

We discovered some gaming leaders suggested that emotional intelligence is a leader skill used in the tribal gaming casino. IIQ1 answered that self-respect and leading by example aided his leadership skills aims to work with the subordinate employees for the maximum success. The tribal gaming leaders expressed the opportunities for upward mobility of employment based on specific qualities and experience; the same is true for subordinates (press release two, 2/10/2011). IQ6 stated "Leadership, casino recruiters, and department directors encourage upward mobility within the organization. The employee is ultimately responsible for filling out the appropriate paperwork to do so." We discovered the gaming leaders develop hiring skills and to keep the employees happy during their employment and prevent other issues from arising. Moreover, the leaders expressed their capabilities and willingness to become good community citizens (press release eight, 1/18/2013; mission statement).

IIQ7 answered the goal is to develop hiring skills and to keep the employees happy during their employment and prevent other issues from arising. Leaders have incorporated the agricultural program, permanent employment, and customer service to enhance to lives of the subordinate and associate members (press release three, 2/11/2014; press release eight, 1/18/2013; press release 11, 8/2010; IIQ4, and mission statement).

**Resilience.** Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, and Jaramillo (2015) posited resilience is an emotional intelligence that is apparent in the workplace, and, with increased emotional skills, employees will have decreased *work-related stress*. The gaming leaders conveyed resilience as a skill they use to provide structure to the subordinates during good and bad times. Tribal gaming leaders have experienced the opportunities and obstacles their communities have experienced given a grand opening, concerts, celebrations, and also acts of nature that resulted in the receipt of a humanitarian award (internal communication, 5/15/2015). "We monitor the weather for the guests. The guests are the guests on our property."

IIQ4 answered in the leadership role that her duty is to take a negative situation and put it into a positive situation to keep the subordinates motivated. The tribal gaming leaders were preparing a celebration when The Tornado interrupted; however, one year later leaders were aiding in the community rebuilding process and won a humanitarian service award (internal communication, 5/15/2015).

P5 reported he provides structure to the subordinates during good and bad times. Tribal gaming leaders have experienced the opportunities and obstacles their communities have experienced given a grand opening, concerts, celebrations, and acts of nature (internal communication, 5/15/2015). Leadership, resilience, and emotional intelligence behaviors were studied to determine the emotional and resilience of school administrators (Maulding et al., 2012).

**Philanthropic opportunity.** Leaders use corporate philanthropy opportunities to provide support or gifs for charitable or social causes (Porter & Kramer, 2002).). We found the tribal gaming leaders used philanthropic opportunities as a leadership skill to challenge regional corporations in an annual food drive. The tribal gaming leaders donate pallets of food in several local communities' food banks, as noted in the focus group session. The focus group session yielded the added business value of the cattle company on the property has allowed the tribal leaders to give away beef to the Title 6 program, aiding in CSR.

> The tribe has dozens of buffalo or American bison on the property, part of their tribal heritage reflects the spiritual ritualization of using the meat from the land. There are 140 angus black cattle on the property, the cattle are not injected with any immunization, they are grass fed.

## Discussion

The tribal gaming casino in this study has aided in CSR over the past seven years with the use of the eight leader strategies identified in this study. The findings from this study are relative to SLT and indicated that organizational leaders require strategies toward CSR (Torugsa et al., 2013). Social progress, environmental protection, and economic growth can signify organizational leaders' obligations to the stakeholders; however, complexity is required to think through the broad concepts of CSR (Metcalf & Benn, 2013).

The leaders explained the importance their agricultural program in relation to business value and CSR. Human capital remained important as the leaders described their strategies of providing employment, green practices, and developing a product that can be used in many areas of their organization. Leaders may adopt the strategic vision practice by increasing their efficiency and financial performance while making a significant impact on the surrounding communities. The tribal gaming leaders collaborate with multiple community partners. Some of the leaders posited their abilities to collaborate on community boards, events, subordinates, and local charitable events. Organizational leaders encourage CSR involvement through corporate credibility to promote consumer activism (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013).

Communication was depicted by the leaders as an additional concept. Leaders must have a working knowledge of CSR to express the importance of CSR to stakeholders (Guthey & Morsing, 2014). The tribal gaming organization uses communication to provide education, efficiency, and customer service. Moreover, leaders of multicultural organizations can improve the learning approach with a sensitivity to culture (Zhu & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2013). The four major concepts can be utilized by organizations in a real world setting.

Leaders depicted motivation and innovation as strategies used toward CSR. A top-down, bottom-up approach is utilized to enhance the services they provide. Additionally, their motivation and innovation strategies were directed toward other identified key concepts. Organizational leaders may use sustainable strategies as an ethical practice to meet the needs of the stakeholders with an understanding to promote environmental and community needs currently and in the future (Ji et al., 2012). Tribal gaming leaders acknowledged emotional intelligence as a common leader strategy used in their organization. Leading by example, willingness, and upward employment mobility are essential strategies that are used within the organization. Moreover, organizational leaders must assume the responsibilities for the products they create and distribute to societies to maintain CSR efforts (Aragon-Correa et al., 2013).

Resiliency was a skill identified by the organizational leaders. Many of the leaders identified organizational structure, societal support and preparedness as a factor of the organization. Empowering leaders can have a positive impact on the organization (Humborstad, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2014). Philanthropic opportunity was a concept the leaders identified as skill used in the tribal gaming organization. Organizational leaders identified donations of time, money, and benefits of their philanthropic opportunity. Leaders are compelled to implement operational changes based on existing trends and projected trajectories (French & Holden, 2012). Furthermore, leaders encourage conservation and improve economic development connections in a sustainability lens (Brookshire & Kaza, 2013).

A serendipitous concept was raised regarding the definition of CSR. The organizational leaders defined the value of CSR as it related to their organization. Corporate ethos may be accomplished and controlled as culture that may be communicated in society and among subordinates (Lozano, 2012). Strand (2011) discovered the culture of CSR as it pertained to different leadership styles. Organizations may use this research to guide them toward sustainability when determining their long term organizational goals and success. As organizational leaders continue to enhance skills and strategies, the result of this research study may encourage the development of a solid foundation for a clear understanding and the benefits for the long term future.

The major and minor themes that emerged were a clear indication of the strategies tribal gaming leaders used toward corporate social responsibility. The research findings were consistent with the descriptive case study, which provides a method that tribal gaming leaders use toward CSR. Situational leadership theory remains different from other leadership theories because the levels of leader behaviors are varied and based on *Initiating Structure* and *Consideration* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). The results of the research contribute a deeper understanding of the role leaders make in everyday decisions and CSR for future generations. This descriptive case study has contributed to a body of knowledge relating to tribal gaming, situational leadership, and corporate social responsibility. Though leaders experience challenges understanding the tri-dimensional CSR business model, their involvement could lead to successful techniques to mitigate environmental management, issues management, and stakeholder management (Forte, 2013). Moreover, the lack of leader skills may create challenges for the overall contribution of sustainability of the organization.

**Limitations**

Consequently, researchers should conduct further studies to examine problems, delimitations, and sectors that were not covered in the study. A limitation of this study was that it was conducted in one tribal gaming casino and in the same geographic locality. The participants were from the same organization and same geographic locality, which may limit diversity and originality of experiences, perceptions, and meanings collected in the study.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

The need exists to conduct research on the strategies that leaders use toward CSR. Precarious knowledge gaps exist for researchers in an attempt to understand the micro foundations of CSR outcome measures at the organizational level (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Given the increasing need for social progress, environmental protection, and economic growth for future generations; the development of effective strategies for CSR in nonprofit, for-profit, and public sectors could be beneficial. Leaders are compelled to implement operational changes based on existing trends and projected trajectories (French & Holden, 2012).

Researchers could examine the differences of tribal gaming leader strategies in two or more regions. A further exploration could include the financial savings of an organization with a developed CSR program versus the organization that is beginning a CSR program. Lee, Scandura, and Sharif (2014) posited emic and etic perspectives of leader-member exchange theory and organizational change in two cultures for further research. The emic and etic perspectives of SLT among different tribal casinos may offer an area of further study.

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**Author Note**

Dr. Janie Hall is a contributing faculty member at Walden University. Her research focuses on culture, diversity, emotional intelligence, leadership strategies, employee retention and reducing turnover, employee recruitment, motivation, marketing, Native American casinos, organizational design, organizational leadership and management, philanthropy, process reengineering, business resilience, social responsibility, sustainability, systems thinking, teambuilding, healthcare management. Dr. Hall has experience in healthcare leadership and community health resilience. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: janie.hall2@mail.waldenu.edu.

Dr. Patricia Fusch is contributing faculty at Walden University. Her research focuses on leadership, manufacturing, women in business; ethnographic design, case study design, change management initiatives, focus group facilitation, and organizational development. Dr.

Fusch has experience as a performance improvement consultant in the public and private sector. Her publications can be found in *The Qualitative Report* and in *The International Journal of Applied Management and Technology*. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: patricia.fusch@mail.waldenu.edu.

Dr. Janet Booker is contributing faculty at Walden University. Her research focuses on management, leadership, employee rights, change management, dispute resolution, workplace organization and culture tactics, ADA accommodations, entrepreneurship, small business, mental health management, student success and motivation. Dr. Booker has been in a university setting since 1997. Dr. Booker's business-related experience includes serving as director of ombuds services, working in areas such as employee rights, change management, dispute resolution, workplace organization, and culture tactics. She has also been a small business owner, and manager of a group home for the mentally ill. Her publications can be found in the *Journal of Social Change* and *The Qualitative Report*. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed directly to: janet.booker@mail.waldenu.edu.

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