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Social Media Policy to Support Employee Productivity in the Finance Industry

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Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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David Rogers

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Dr. Robert Hockin, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Craig Martin, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Rocky Dwyer, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

Social Media Policy to Support Employee Productivity in the Finance Industry

by

David Shaun Rogers

MBA, Regis University, 2011

MS, Kansas State University, 1993

BS, Oklahoma Christian University, 1984

AS, Rochester College, 1982

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April 2018

Abstract

Business leaders may see social media as a distraction for their workers; however, blocking access could lead to a reduction in productivity. Using social media technologies with knowledge workers could achieve cost reductions for payroll of 30% to 35%. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore how business leaders used a social media policy to support employee productivity. The conceptual framework for this study was social exchange theory, which supports the notion that dyad and small group interactions make up most interactions, and such interactions enhance employees' productivity. The research question was to explore how finance industry leaders are using a social media policy to enhance productivity. The target population for this study was leaders from financial companies in Charlotte, North Carolina, who have experience in using social media policies to increase employee productivity. Data collection included semistructured interviews with 9 technology leaders and company documents at two companies related to the research phenomenon. Yin's 5-step data analysis approach resulted in 3 themes: employee productivity, communication, and open company culture. Business leaders should consider using a social media policy to engage employees to support productivity, enhance communication both externally and internally, and enrich company culture in a way that is visible to employees. Employee engagement in a social media platform to connect and communicate with people could lead to a happier workplace and encourage employees to volunteer more frequently for social good.

Internal Social Media Policy in the Finance Industry

by

David Shaun Rogers

MBA, Regis University, 2011

MS, Kansas State University, 1993

BS, Oklahoma Christian University, 1984

AS, Rochester College, 1982

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Dedication

To my dear friends, and family who have supported me emotionally during my studies. I dedicate this research project to my departed father Henry Israel Rogers and my mother, Valda Lee Robinson. It is necessary to love all people, especially those you do not particularly like.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Modern business leaders are facing several emerging challenges. Among these challenges is how to use an internal social media policy to gain competitive advantage (Bear, 2015). Employees using social media in the workplace may lead to higher engagement and thus productivity (Bear, 2015; Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). Business leaders need to understand how to use an effective social media policy to enhance productivity and profits (Harrysson, Schoder, & Tavakoli, 2016). The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders used an effective social media policy to enable workers' productivity.

Background of the Problem

Most adults in the United States spend time on social networking sites, often during work hours (Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). There are many social media sites: (a) Facebook.com, (b) Twitter.com, (c) LinkedIn.com, (d) YouTube.com, and (e) Tumblr.com. These sites are increasingly popular with adults (Aichner & Jacob, 2015; Campbell et al., 2016; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). Because people are spending more time on social networking sites, those people must be attaching value to this activity, but business leaders have often put restrictions on using social networking sites in the workplace (Faci, Maamar, Burégio, Ugljanin, & Benslimane, 2017; Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015). Workers seem to have responded to these restrictions by increasing their use of mobile social media (Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Walden, 2016).

Without adequate employee social media policies, many business leaders may lose productivity among their workers (Harrysson et al., 2016). An opportunity may exist

for business leaders to improve employee productivity by modifying policies regarding the use of social networking sites in the workplace. The objective of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders use an effective social media policy to enable workers' productivity. Researchers need to understand factors such as autonomy and insight, which affect worker engagement and productivity (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Thus, a person can connect this doctoral study on how leaders use social media policy to other research.

Problem Statement

Repressive social media policies can damage employee productivity (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Nonetheless, 43% of workers claimed that leaders blocked social media access in the workplace (Schultz, Koehler, Phillipe, & Coronel, 2015). The general business problem is that without adequate employee social media policies, many business leaders may lose productivity among their workers. The specific business problem is some business leaders do not know how to use a social media policy to support employee productivity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how business leaders used a social media policy to support employee productivity. The target population was finance technology leaders at two financial companies in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte is a financial hub with 20 large financial companies and a greater number of midsize companies; each of the midsize companies had four or five leaders in finance. Finance technology leaders are well situated to understand how new technology

affects their business organizations and how leaders have used an effective social media policy. The implications for positive social change include the potential to affect positive changes in employee community connectedness and bonding.

Nature of the Study

The research method for this doctoral study was qualitative rather than quantitative or mixed. Researchers use a qualitative approach to explore and describe phenomena by collecting data through observations and interviews (Kahlke, 2014; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers use the quantitative method to examine relationships and differences between and among variables (Barnham, 2015). Mixed methods research is valuable, as it involves combining both qualitative and quantitative methods (Thomas, 2015). However, neither mixed methods nor quantitative methods were appropriate for the study because it did not examine relationships and differences between and among variables. Because the objective of the study was to explore and describe how leaders use social media to achieve productivity, the most appropriate research method was qualitative.

Qualitative researchers can choose from various designs, such as case study, phenomenology, and ethnography when conducting qualitative research (Thomas, 2015). Researchers use case study research designs to explore problems by using multiple perspectives and understanding the *how* and the *why* of business problems (Tsang, 2013; Walden, 2016; Yin, 2014). A researcher uses ethnography to study the perspectives of an entire culture of people (Thomas, 2015, Yin, 2014). The primary goal of phenomenology is to understand the lived experience from the viewpoint of those experiencing the

phenomena (Thomas, 2015). Because the purpose of the study was neither to explore a lived experience nor to explore an entire culture of peoples' perspective, neither phenomenology nor ethnography were appropriate. A case study was the most appropriate design for the study because the objective was to explore how business leaders used social media policy to support employee productivity.

Research Question

This doctoral study had one guiding research question:

RQ: How do finance industry business leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina, use a social media policy to support employee productivity?

Interview Questions

1. What are the critical factors you use to enable productivity in your employees through social media?
2. What social media policies do you use to enable productivity in your employees?
3. Which of your social media policy features are explicit and which are implicit?
4. What social media policies are most helpful for enabling productivity?
5. What legal requirements or regulations have you considered for constructing social media policy?
6. How do you measure policy features for effectiveness?

Conceptual Framework

In this case study, I used social exchange theory to understand how leaders effectively used employee social media policy to support employee productivity in the finance industry. Homans developed social exchange theory in 1958. Homans related the basic concepts of the social exchange theory to costs and rewards. The three propositions of the social exchange theory are (a) success, (b) stimulus, and (c) deprivation-satiation (Homans, 1958). The theory also holds that adults evaluate both good and bad consequences of social interactions (Keating, Hendy, & Can, 2016). Researchers using social exchange theory frame human interaction in microsocial terms, in which dyads and small group interactions make up most interactions in an organization (Homans, 1958; Kabo, 2016). Dyads and small group interactions constitute social interaction in larger organizations (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017; Kabo, 2016; Mosteller & Poddar, 2017; Oparaocha, 2016; Walden, 2016, Yan, Wang, Chen, Zhang, 2016). Rook (2015) identified both positive and negative social exchanges. Thus, social exchange theory was appropriate for studying company policies (Keating et al., 2016). Kabo (2016) found that managers spend more than twice as much time in collaboration as employees who are not managers (60% versus 25%-30%). Workers and management influence productivity through interactions. These interactions among workers and management conduct communication in dyads and small groups (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017; Keating et al., 2016; Oparaocha, 2016).

Operational Definitions

I used specific terminology defined below in this doctoral study. The reader will also find further definitions of terminology within the body of the text.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying is someone causing willful and repeated harm through an electronic medium (Hall & Lewis, 2014).

Digital native: A digital native is a person who has grown up with access to advanced technologies, such as computers and smartphones; they are comfortable with and adaptable toward technology (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015).

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is the drive of workers to work more energetically and productively based on their personal beliefs about their organization, its leaders, and their working conditions (Guenard, Katz, Bruno, & Lipa, 2013).

Generational cohort: A generational cohort is a group of people born in a range of years (Venters, Green, & Lopez, 2012).

Millennials: Millennials refers to the Millennial generation, people born between the years 1981 and 2000. These people typically have a superior familiarity with electronics, digital communications, and social networks (Johnson, 2015).

Polychronic: Polychronic refers to doing many things at the same time. Multitasking is synonymous with polychronic (Stephens, Cho, & Ballard, 2012).

Social networks: Social networks are web-based services that enable communication and the broadcast of information between people via public discussion

forums. These social networks include: (a) Facebook, (b) Twitter, (c) Instagram, and (d) LinkedIn (Elmedni, 2016).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Nenty (2009) defined assumptions as what the researcher has taken for granted; those behavioral factors that are taken as fact and are not testable. The study includes several assumptions: (a) technology leaders in the finance industry gave accurate and comprehensive responses describing their actions and motivations in using a social media policy, and (b) participants in the study were leaders who have been successful in using an effective social media policy for data saturation.

Limitations

Limitations of a study are those factors not under the control of the researcher (Nenty, 2009). There are several potential limitations in the study. First, participants in this doctoral study may not be able to recall or recount the details of using social media policy accurately. Second, the participants' location in Charlotte, North Carolina, may be unique in culture, resulting in biased findings. Third, findings may not apply to businesses outside of the financial industry. Fourth, findings may not apply to institutions much smaller or much larger than the cooperating institutions. Fifth, participants might be unwilling to share full details of business decisions and choices in an interview setting. Limitations include the extent to which I can transfer results from the study beyond the selection of two medium-sized financial institutions in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Delimitations

Nenty (2009) defined delimitations as how the research has narrowed the scope of the study. Because of the nature of answering how business leaders use an effective social media policy, there were several important delimitations to the study. The scope of the study was delimited to finance industry leadership knowledge of social media policy in two financial companies in Charlotte, North Carolina. The first delimitation was that only senior leaders would participate in the study. A second delimitation was the relatively small sample size of up to six leaders. The third delimitation was the geographical location restriction to the metropolitan area in and around the city of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Significance of the Study

Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) found the most productive workers use social media more and for more work purposes, and social media use at work had a significant and positive impact on worker performance. However, according to Schmidt and O'Connor (2015), many business leaders continue to support policies blocking workers from social media access in the workplace. In another study, 43% of workers claimed that leaders blocked social media access in the workplace (Schultz et al., 2015). Other researchers have recommended limiting social media actions rather than banning them entirely (Faci et al., 2017). Thus, some business leaders are limiting social media usage and failing to achieve increased productivity and increased profitability. Business leaders who know how to use social media policy may realize gains in profitability and add value to the business.

Contribution to Business Practice

Business leaders execute policies restricting employees' use of social media in the workplace (Faci et al., 2017; Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015; Schultz et al., 2015). However, Feinzig and Raisbeck (2017) found that access to social media in the workplace is important for employee engagement and inclusion. One reason business leaders might use a restrictive social media policy is to stem crossover of personal lives into business settings (Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Walden, 2016). However, other bank leaders used social media to amplify socially responsible and sustainable success (Dossa & Kaeufer, 2014). Findings from this case study on using an effective social media policy to support productivity may fill in the gaps in the understanding of leaders' use of social media policy and effective business practices concerning internal social media policy.

I hoped to achieve two business benefits by conducting this doctoral study. First, business leaders may find value in improving employees' productivity and engagement through allowing social media access. Second, employees with access to social media may become more engaged at work than is currently the case (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017).

Implications for Social Change

The results of this study might contribute to positive social change by promoting the development of individuals and communities in several ways. One social good is that people connect and communicate using social media; thus, a connected and communicating employee base might become more satisfied (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017;

Patroni, Briel, & Recker, 2016). Another social good is that social networking communities provide a modern method for strengthening existing communities, building new communities, and could lead to a firm's encouraging employees to volunteer more frequently (Ferri-Reed, 2014). Both Johnson (2015) and Sheppard (2016) identified achieving a work-life balance as a social good. The results of this study may help people find improved work-life balance and so achieve another social good. Oparaocha (2016) identified an in-group focus and an in-group bonding as a social good, possibly achieved by using social media in the workplace. Thus, the results of this study might contribute to positive social change.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how leaders effectively used internal employee social media policy to support employee productivity. Social media use has had a profound effect on modern Americans (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). Social media technology is critical for success among modern knowledge workers (Breunig, 2016). I organized the review of the professional and academic literature by topic including (a) conceptual frameworks, (b) employee productivity, (c) employee engagement, (d) differences in generational cohorts, (e) social networks and human well-being, (f) social networking in the workplace, and (f) legal considerations.

This literature review contains several sections. It includes comprehensive critical analysis and synthesis of the literature about the conceptual framework, social exchange theory, and the phenomenon of leaders using social media policy to promote productivity, comparing and contrasting different points of view, and the relationships of the study to

previous research and findings. The literature relates to the phenomenon of using employee social media policies that support productivity in six components. This review also contains a review of documents concerned with internal social media policies to support productivity, which includes peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, and websites. The specific focus areas include *employee productivity*, *employee engagement*, *generational cohorts*, *human well-being*, *social networking in the workplace*, *legal considerations*, *qualitative research methods*, *quantitative research methods*, *social exchange theory*, and *resource-based theory of competitive advantage*.

I used several primary research libraries including the Walden University electronic library, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Thoreau, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, and LexisNexis Academic. The literature review included 87 articles. Of the articles, 84 (96%) were peer-reviewed. Literature review articles published within 5 years of expected graduation date comprise 76 (87%) of the 87 sources.

Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework for this exploratory qualitative multiple case study is Homans' (1958) social exchange theory. Borrego, Foster, and Froyd (2014) said concepts are linking frameworks for research. Thus, the concept of social exchange theory was the linking framework between the literature, the method, and the results of the study.

Earlier researchers used social exchange theory to learn about employee engagement across generational boundaries (James, McKechnie, & Swanberg 2011). Later researchers used social exchange theory to gain insights into employees' intentions

to stay with their current employer (Chen et al., 2015; Supangco, 2015). In addition, researchers used Homan's (1958) theory to help understand engagement and productivity through reciprocity (Oparaocha, 2016). Likewise, researchers used social exchange theory to examine demographic and psychosocial variables with good and bad perceptions of social media use (Keating et al., 2016).

Homans (1958) stated that social exchange theory provides a link between social behavior and economics and he described social exchange theory regarding profit and social control, distributive justice, exchange, and social structure. Later researchers such as Johnson (2015), Oparaocha (2016), and Uysal (2016) extended and expanded on social exchange theory. Yan et al. (2016) measured several factors using social exchange theory including (a) self-worth, (b) face concern, (c) knowledge sharing, (d) reputation, (e) social support, (f) execution costs, and (g) cognitive cost. The first mechanism is conditioning: Employees might find positive experiences in social media at work and translate those positive feelings to the workplace. The second mechanism is an exchange between leadership and workers. Employees may reward leaders' permissive social media policy with enhanced productivity. A good social media policy is important to business leaders (Johnson, 2015). The third mechanism, though indirect, is using social media as a medium for communication to enhance social connectivity (Brooks, Longstreet, & Califf, 2017; Clark, Fine, & Scheuer, 2017; Mosteller & Poddar, 2017; Uysal, 2016). The fourth mechanism is that healthful respect between workers and leaders (Homans, 1958). This healthful respect may result in permissive social media

policies (Oparaocha, 2016). Together, researchers can use these mechanisms to support the use of social exchange theory.

I considered the resource-based theory of competitive advantage as a conceptual framework for this study but found that social exchange theory was superior for understanding how leaders have used an effective social media policy. Grant introduced a resource-based theory of competitive advantage in 1991. The fundamental concepts of the resource-based theory include (a) resources, (b) capabilities, (c) competitive advantage, and (d) strategy (Grant, 1991). The key propositions of the resource-based theory concern (a) identifying resources, (b) identifying and appraising capabilities, (c) capabilities as organizational routines, and (d) sustainability. The resource-based theory of competitive advantage is, thus, suitable for exploring productivity in businesses (Grant, 1991; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp, & Agnihotri, 2014).

Business leaders may find value in understanding differences in the ways people in various generational cohorts view the workplace through social exchange theory (Chen et al., 2015). Trainor et al. (2014) presented a conceptual framework for including social media technologies to support productivity. Trainor et al. extended Grant's resource-based theory of competitive advantage framework. Earlier, James et al. (2011) found that most workers had similar motivation for engagement across four factors, except for those workers approaching retirement age. The four factors of engagement were: (a) support and recognition, (b) schedule satisfaction, (c) job clarity, and (d) career development. In addition, Chen et al. (2015) found that shared communication between supervisors and workers outside of the working context improved engagement. Furthermore, Uysal

(2016) found social support networks valuable as a contribution to social exchange theory. However, younger workers might see job autonomy as evidence of discretionary effort on the part of an organization, which in turn could lead to their reciprocity in the form of engagement, increasing discretionary efforts (Oparaocha, 2016; Tulu, 2017).

James et al. (2011) used social exchange theory to predict employee engagement. One precept of social exchange theory is employees' normative behavior is to reciprocate with employers because employers provide benefits for the employees (Homans, 1958). James et al. did not study social media as a method of increasing worker autonomy and engagement, nor did James et al. relate engagement to productivity. However, Oparaocha (2016) wrote that a reciprocal exchange between workers and leaders was critical to organizational performance. Clark et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between social media followers of an organization and feelings of connectivity. Chen et al. (2015) supported the view of the critical nature of reciprocal exchange, comparing the working relationship between leaders and employees to that of parents and children respectively.

Uysal (2016) used sense-of-community theory to help understand social media usage in the workplace. Uysal found that the increased communication channels available to employees using social media improved feelings of membership, influence, integration, and fulfillment among employees. However, sense-of-community theory focuses on the feelings of employees and emotional support rather than making business more effective, which is the purpose of this doctoral study. Therefore, social exchange theory was more appropriate than sense-of-community theory for studying how leaders use an effective social media policy.

In 1951, von Bertalanffy introduced general systems theory (as cited in Rousseau, 2015). The essential concepts of general systems theory are isomorphism, system structures, and system behaviors (Caws, 2015; Rousseau, 2015). General systems theory is very broad; researchers use it as a bridge between object-oriented and subject-oriented domains (Rousseau, 2015). However, researchers use social exchange theory to explain interactions between leaders, management, and employees (James et al., 2011). Thus, social exchange theory is superior for understanding how leaders use an effective social media policy.

Employee Productivity

Business leaders may see social media as a distraction for their workers; however, blocking access could lead to a reduction in productivity (Davison, Ou, Martinsons, Zhao, & Du, 2014; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Using social media technologies with knowledge workers could achieve cost reductions of 30% to 35% (Harrysson et al., 2016). Employees have a tendency to waste time at work and leaders often see social media as yet another temptation for workers to be unproductive (Davison et al., 2014; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Taman, 2014). However, software firms have designed several social media sites to promote worker productivity; for example, Google Docs (Taman, 2014), Chatter (Goldberg, 2015), Twitter (Mount & Garcia Martinez, 2014), and Yammer (Ferri-Reed, 2014). In addition, Taman (2014) claimed that social networks could boost productivity and drive high performance. Furthermore, some researchers found that despite being a distraction, employee use of social media led to improvements in employee communication, quality, and trust among employees (Leftheriotis &

Giannakos, 2014). Furthermore, Gerstner (2015) estimated a three-year return on investment from 365% to 624% for implementing an internal social network.

Another aspect considered for this study addressing social media use regarding employee productivity was the idea that using social media has the potential to bring employees closer together (greater cohesion). Sabre Holdings, for example, has a geographically dispersed workforce and leaders at Sabre Holdings have credited use of Facebook with bringing its employees closer together, promoting cohesion, and promoting communication (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). In addition, dispersed workers experienced less direct supervision compared to workers under direct supervision, which indicated higher autonomy (Rana, Ardichvili, & Tkachenko, 2014). Nduhura and Prieler (2017) found that people used social media more often in the cities of Rwanda though. However, Goldberg (2015) advised leaders to consider their firm's formal and informal structures when determining policy. It seemed reasonable to suggest that company leaders with geographically dispersed workforces may find greater opportunities in social media than other company leaders (Trees, 2015).

Guenard et al. (2013) found that employees using virtual technical networks, a special subsection of social media, could energize collaboration within an organization; leaders of organizations with many technical workers might achieve productivity benefits. In addition, researchers found that social media availability enables improved levels of collaboration and information sharing among employees (Bear, 2015; Gerstner, 2015; Goldberg, 2015; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). However, Kabo (2016) claimed that face-to-face collaboration remains critical for organizations. Leaders need additional

collaboration among workers in modern firms (Breunig, 2016; Gerstner, 2015; Goldberg, 2015). Furthermore, Mount and Garcia Martinez (2014) defined social media as a key platform for employee collaboration leading to innovation for modern firms.

Employee Engagement

Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) found that empowering leaders led to engaged followers. Also, Lev-On (2015) and Feinzig and Raisbeck (2017) all found social media to reduce the isolation of remote workers, empowering them to be more effective.

Empowering leadership optimized working conditions for motivation and enhanced the value of working conditions in high rational demand work (Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Lev-On, 2015). Researchers found that business leaders needed to engage employees and that using internal social media could help foster an engaged corporate culture (Patroni et al., 2016; Sievert & Scholz, 2017). Thus, empowering leadership provided a competitive advantage for worker engagement, which led to enhanced productivity by optimizing working conditions (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Trees, 2015).

Bear (2015) identified positive correlations between engagement and productivity, profit, and employee turnover, citing collaboration and efficiency improvements too. In addition, Wes (2015) identified feedback immediacy and worker attitude information as important for engagement improvements. Furthermore, Pereira and Medina (2014) noted that internal use of social media could lead to a sustainable competitive advantage. Employees engaged through social media develop emotions of trust to identify with their employer (Sievert & Scholz, 2017). Clark et al. (2017) used social exchange theory to explain a positive relationship between social media followers

of an organization and feelings of connectivity, though this study was in an educational environment. Thus, improved social networks may improve communications and cohesion, which in turn could lead to enhanced employee productivity and sustainable competitive advantage (Patroni et al., 2016; Pereira & Medina, 2014).

There was a strong correlation between employee engagement and productivity leading to higher net profits for organizations (Bear, 2015; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Rana et al., 2014). Rana et al. (2014) encouraged leaders to consider employee overload and the need for breaks, such as social media breaks. In addition, Gibbons (2015) noted positive social media uses for the promotion of engagement and provoking debate in political arenas. Furthermore, researchers urged leaders to act to improve engagement, especially among younger employees (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017). However, Gibbons (2015) discussed engagement in a broader social context; modern business leaders typically see value in engagement, and they see value in provoking debate in modern firms.

Other researchers have noted that employees using social networks could improve cohesion in a group (Davison et al., 2014). Figure 1 contains a graphic description of the relationship between the varying factors of social media use that contribute to business value.

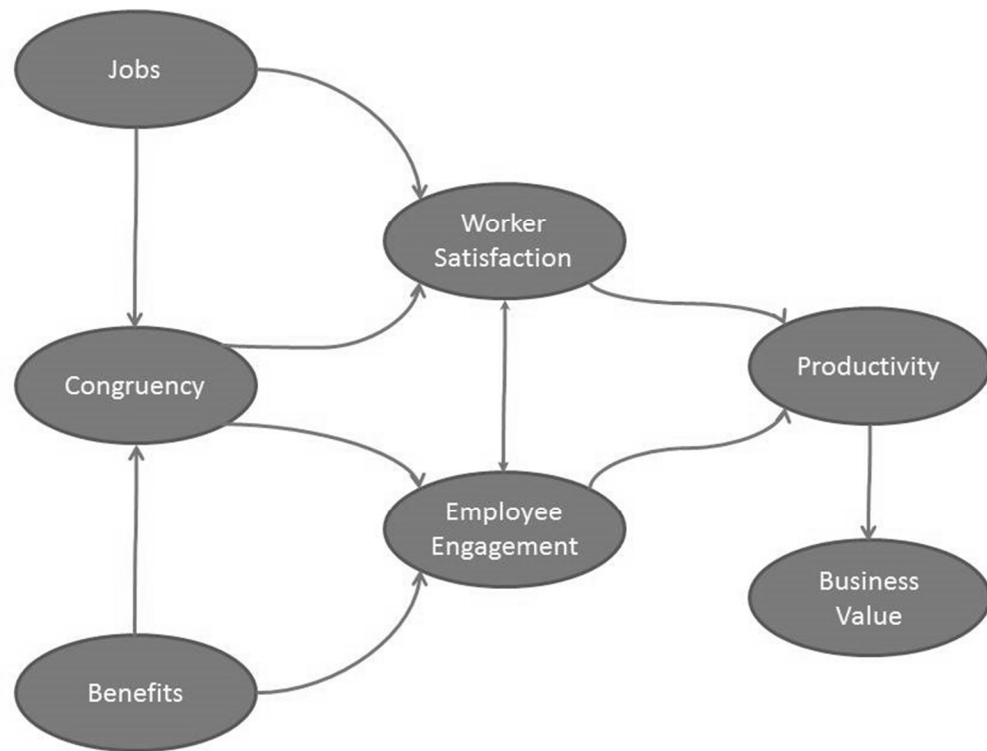


Figure 1. Jobs, congruency, and benefits lead to business value.

Differences in Generational Cohorts

Four generations are present in the current workforce: (a) Traditionalists (1925-1945), (b) Baby Boomers (1946-1964), (c) Generation X (1965-1980), and (d) Millennials (1981-1999), and researchers believe that generational changes, as represented by these four groups, occur gradually over time (Farr-Wharton, Farr-Wharton, Brunetto, & Bresolin, 2014). Modern business leaders face several emerging challenges as the economy improves (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015; Ferri-Reed, 2014; Keating et al., 2016). Leaders banning social media in the workplace might alienate younger workers, and large corporation leaders' slow adoption of new technologies might

be one cause for their difficulty in recruiting Generation Y employees (Ferri-Reed, 2014). In addition, younger people expect their careers to be both more engaging and more fulfilling than previous generations expected them to be (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). Second, the Baby Boomer generation is rapidly entering their retirement years; when Baby Boomers leave the workforce, they will create a worker shortage that employers must fill (James et al., 2011). This qualitative study contains an exploration of how business leaders use social media policy to enable employee productivity.

Generational differences may cause challenges in the workplace when Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials have different technology preferences (Clark, 2017). Researchers have shown that younger age groups adopt social media more thoroughly than older age groups (Clark, 2017; Keating et al., 2016; Trees, 2015; Tulu, 2017). Researchers also reminded leaders that Generation Y employees see the use of social media as a way of life much as older cohorts see the use of mobile phones as a way of life (Clark, 2017; Ferri-Reed, 2014; König, 2015; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Venters et al. (2012) cited many structural concerns that leaders had regarding social media in the workplace but also reported benefits in response to each of these concerns. These structural concerns included concerns over (a) organizations never embracing social media, (b) employees saying or posting inappropriate things, (c) employees posting incorrect information, and (d) social media systems compromising sensitive data (Venters et al., 2012). O'Connor, Schmidt, and Drouin (2016) noted an additional concern for leaders, how to inform young adult workers of the company's social media policies. However, since business leaders often seek to inspire their employees, it seems

reasonable to suggest that social media access at the workplace may provide a tool for accomplishing that goal (Trees, 2015).

Researchers noted that Millennials appreciated social media more than older workers (Ferri-Reed, 2014; König, 2015; Tulu, 2017). Ferri-Reed (2014) wrote that social media networks meet several needs, such as open communication, decision-making, and feedback. Patroni et al. (2016) cited open minds, collaboration, and innovation as positive benefits of enterprise social media. Other researchers had comparable assessments, stating that workers desired feedback from peers, from leaders, and to direct managers (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015; Goldberg, 2015). Similarly, König (2015) wrote that young employees desired immediate human resources feedback. Younger workers tend to use technology, including social media, on a continual basis (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). Furthermore, Rook (2015) found that for younger workers social media exchanges were more satisfying than for older workers. Clark (2017) found that employee use of social media tools may enable peer feedback, opportunities for interaction, and enhanced learning, especially for later generations. In addition, a goal for business leaders is to enable all employees to work productively and happily (Ferri-Reed, 2014).

Researchers and leaders wanted to understand multitasking preferences among young employees because if social media is available in the workplace, it may be a hindrance for some employees (Ferri-Reed, 2014). Stephens et al. (2012) studied polychronic preferences among Millennials and found that many Millennials associate multitasking with the pace of work. In addition, Tews, Michel, Xu, & Drost (2015)

studied Generation Y workers' attitudes toward workplace fun; they found workplace fun correlated with job embeddedness. Robertson and Kee (2017) found similar results; they found a positive correlation between social media interactions with co-workers and job satisfaction. Millennials blur the line between work time and leisure time (Johnson, 2015). However, Ferri-Reed (2014) supported Stephens et al.'s viewpoint, adding that Millennials tend to immerse themselves in technology. Some Millennials consider carrying on a single conversation to be unusual (Stephens et al., 2012).

Workplace fun among Generation Y employees significantly correlated to job embeddedness; there was measurable business value to enjoyable perquisites for Generation Y employees (Tews et al., 2015). Clark (2017) stated Millennial generation employees demonstrated greater levels of commitment to the organization than older employees did. However, Millennials were also more likely to be confrontational to managers when there was perceived unfairness (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017). Researchers found social media policy was an important issue for leaders (Campbell et al., 2016; Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017). In addition, leaders should consider the importance of using social media policy to enable innovation (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Mount & Garcia Martinez, 2014; Oparaocha, 2015). Therefore, leaders may expect these young professionals to value social networking in workplace settings, given these values (Trees, 2015).

Allowing or encouraging social media in the workplace may necessitate cultural change (Keating et al., 2016; Patroni et al., 2016). In addition, Jassawalla and Sashittal (2017) noted conflicts in vertical dyads between Millennials and managers. Conflicts

arose when people mixed work personas with social personas (Keating et al., 2016). Leaders should bring cultural values and social media values into alignment while simultaneously demonstrating the ability to listen; this should lessen the amount of verbal aggression and conflict in the workplace (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017). In addition, when employees use social media at work perceptions of supervisor support are amplified (Keating et al., 2016).

Johnson (2015) found that Millennials view themselves as distinct from earlier generations. Feinzig and Raisbeck (2017) found that social media enabled employee voice but that Baby Boomers felt less likely to be heard than Millennials did. In addition, it became evident that the most urgent threat to engagement was employer reputation and supervisor support (Keating et al., 2016). In summary, three decisive factors for Millennials: (a) improved salaries, (b) quick advancement, and (c) enjoyable work (Schullery, 2013). Generational cohorts tend to have differences in attitudes and values about their work (Farr-Wharton et al., 2014; Patroni et al., 2016).

Generational cohorts held similar values and preferences amongst themselves while differing from other cohorts (Johnson, 2015). Generation X employees valued extrinsic rewards the most and Millennials valued leisure rewards the most while Boomers valued intrinsic, altruistic, and social interaction most highly (Schullery, 2013). Millennials think technology makes their lives easier rather than more difficult (Johnson, 2015; Patroni et al., 2016). Millennials valued direct social interaction little, which is a surprising result needing further study (Schullery, 2013). It may be that digital natives supplant direct social interaction with digital social interaction (Johnson, 2015).

Differences in generational behavior are important because leadership policies that help to engage current employees may not help to engage younger employees (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). Researchers found Millennials more engaged with technology and called for greater acceptance of social media in the workplace (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). Smith and Knudson (2016) found that Millennials were more likely to engage in unethical behaviors such as violating privacy and exposing confidential information as compared to older workers. They also found that employee use of social media correlated with unethical behavior (Smith & Knudson, 2016). However, researchers, such as Delbourg-Delphis (2015) cautioned leaders not to disrupt older workers. Although Patroni et al. (2016) found the positive effects of using social media originating with Millennials, it spread to workers of other generations. Social media policy changes nevertheless, do seem imminent with younger workers set to dominate the workplace (Campbell et al., 2016).

Researchers used many methods for research in the generational cohort field, as seen in Figure 2 below. Some used the case study method (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas 2015). Researchers, such as Delbourg-Delphis (2015) and König (2015) wrote from experience, rather than using formal research methods.

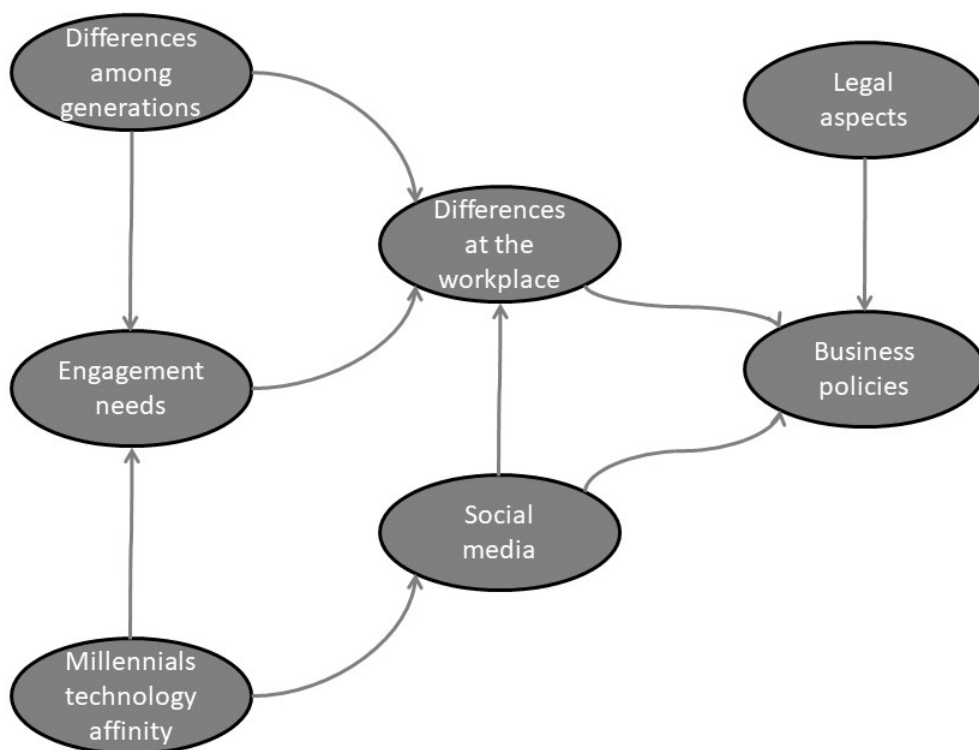


Figure 2. Generational differences drive new business policy needs.

Employers assign a value to attributes of potential workers who want social media access, and business leaders find value in recruiting and retaining young employees who have just graduated from college (Johnson, 2015). In 2011, the United States was facing a skills shortage and employers had a critical need to recruit talented young professionals (James et al., 2011). Young people continue to graduate and enter the workforce; attracting and retaining these young and technically competent professionals will be valuable to company leaders because older retiring workers must be replaced (Farr-Wharton et al., 2014; Johnson, 2015). This younger pool of potential workers experienced new forms of social media that caused participation to become a key issue

(Johnson, 2015). Younger people used the Internet and social networking sites more often than older users; as these younger people age, access to social networking will increase in importance (König, 2015). Digital natives also found engagement by similar, but still significantly different, regimes (Johnson, 2015; Wes, 2015). Business leaders might find the changing profiles of generational cohorts indicate a need to develop an interest in social change to accommodate employee engagement among workers. Significant benefits for both employees and leaders may occur if social media policies were less draconian. Engaged employees are more productive than nonengaged employees, and a happier workplace suits both employees and employers (Nduhuru & Preiler, 2017). Additionally, employees themselves benefit from personal engagement, and social media may contribute to employee well-being and create a more enjoyable work environment (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Rook, 2015).

Social Networks and Human Well-being

Social media use has had a significant effect on civil society (Brooks et al., 2017; Sommerfeldt & Kent, 2015). In addition, Aichner and Jacob (2015) wrote that Facebook had 1.19 billion users with a growth rate of 18% annually. High amounts of Internet usage may be problematic among employees; conversely, access to social networking sites may be especially attractive to certain populations within society (Keating et al., 2016; Kim & Kim, 2015; Trees, 2015). Furthermore, Wes (2015) noted that workers handled many menial face-to-face interactions through social media; McFarland and Ployhart (2015) showed that social media was an entirely new context for interaction quite unlike other contexts.

A negative aspect regarding the use of social media in the workplace is that people have been careless when using said media (Hooper, 2017; Walden, 2016). Selective self-presentation is a process in which humans make conscious decisions regarding their behaviors in different situations (Keating et al., 2016). However, audiences are usually undefined at the time of social media postings (Keating et al., 2016; Mosteller & Poddar; 2017). Users in Walden's study saw audiences for their posts as homogenous but were concerned that their posts might affect their privacy in the workplace. Furthermore, Barnett (2015) found evidence that union leaders also had privacy concerns with social media sites. Hooper (2017) found that social media policies were required to inhibit misbehavior among student-athletes. A researcher may impute that social media usage at work may foster better communications leading to greater work satisfaction, but given the possibility for negative use, leaders will need further research to determine the truth of this hypothesis (Brooks et al., 2017; Robertson & Kee, 2017; Walden, 2016).

In 2016, Brailovskaia and Margraf studied correlations between self-esteem and Facebook usage. In addition, Aladwani and Almarzouq (2016) found that students with low self-esteem were more likely to form compulsive social media use patterns. However, Facebook users' self-esteem correlated positively with feelings of happiness and social support (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016). Furthermore, Kim and Kim (2017) found student's happiness and well-being correlated with their use of social media. Thus, self-esteem - a quality that business leaders may desire in young employees - correlated with Facebook usage (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016). Still, problematic social media use

correlated with low self-esteem and self-awareness problems, leading to poor learning outcomes for students (Aladwani & Almarzouq, 2016). Kim and Kim, and Aladwani and Almarzouq focused on college students only, and their studies were cross-sectional rather than longitudinal.

Business leaders should be interested in the relationship between social media use and positive personality traits such as agreeableness and extraversion. Keating et al. (2016) studied relationships among social media use, self-esteem, job satisfaction, and perceptions of social media use; they found people use social media to release anger and to gather social support. Brailovskaia and Margraf (2016) executed an exploratory study to determine correlations between Facebook use and mental health variables. There was a positive and significant correlation between Facebook usage and (a) life satisfaction, (b) self-esteem, (c) extraversion, (d) happiness, and (e) social support (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016). In addition, other researchers found strong, and positive correlations between social media use at work and both job satisfaction and self-esteem (Keating et al., 2016). However, other researchers found problematic use of social media in American adults; they found that 39% of the adults in the study admitted to experiencing an addiction to Facebook (Akin & Akin, 2015; Nduhura & Prieler, 2017). Researchers found problems with internet addiction in other nations as well (Tulu, 2017). However, there was a negative correlation between heavy Facebook use and life satisfaction (Akin & Akin, 2015). Some researchers focused on general social media usage, and some researchers focused only on Facebook usage, which may explain contradictory results among the studies.

Another negative social activity, which has found its way into digital social media is bullying, more aptly known as cyberbullying when it takes place online. Hall and Lewis (2014) studied bullying in the workplace, including cyberbullying. Leaders might use an effective social media to address cyberbullying by setting out norms and guidelines for both worker and manager social media activity (Stott, 2015). Hall and Lewis suggested some such guidelines for social media use in their study - including the prohibition of posting messages concerning the workplace; however, this type of broad prohibition would certainly not be compliant with a worker's right to communicate about workplace conditions (Schultz et al., 2015). In a survey of 112 publicly available business policies in 2015, researchers found that a majority inhibit employee communications on social media to the detriment of free speech, information sharing, dialog, and stakeholder engagement (Stohl, Etter, Banghart, Woo, 2017). Stott (2015) encouraged employee guidelines that warn against cyberbullying. The intent of such studies should be to improve well-being in the workplace, not harm it.

Researchers have wondered about the relationship between human well-being and the rapidly growing popularity of social networks (Kim & Kim, 2017; Rook, 2015). In addition, some have found a relationship between measurable personality traits - both positive and negative - and social network usage (Akin & Akin, 2015). Akin and Akin's (2015) findings were important because prospective employees with positive personality traits may appreciate access to social networks in the workplace. Hooper (2017) found privacy issues, even though students desired freedom from control and supervision on social media, they occasionally involved other students in their posts which raised

privacy concerns. Furthermore, Brooks et al. (2017) identified social media use as a factor contributing technology stress for employees. The factors inducing stress included (a) overload, (b) invasiveness, (c) complexity, (d) insecurity, and (e) uncertainty. It seems reasonable to think that employees using social media are transforming work culture in unexpected, unexplored, and poorly understood ways (Sievert & Scholz, 2017; Trees, 2015).

In summary, some researchers noted positive behavior by younger generational cohorts during social networking (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2017; Van Zoonen, Verhoeven, Vliegthart, 2017), while others identified negative behaviors in addition to positive behaviors (Bear, 2015; Brooks et al., 2017; Van Zoonen et al., 2017). In addition, researchers found that some people had difficulty distinguishing between private data and public data while those people used social media and this difficulty could be problematic in work situations (Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Robertson & Kee, 2017; Walden, 2016). Researchers also found that humans engage in cyberbullying on social media, another negative expression (Hall & Lewis, 2014). Other researchers found that mobile technology with social networks was an important development, influencing employee's use of social media in the workplace since employees could easily use mobile technology to circumvent leaders' policies banning social network usage (Brooks et al., 2017; Johnson, 2015). This factor influenced liberal social media policies, as shown in Figure 3 below.

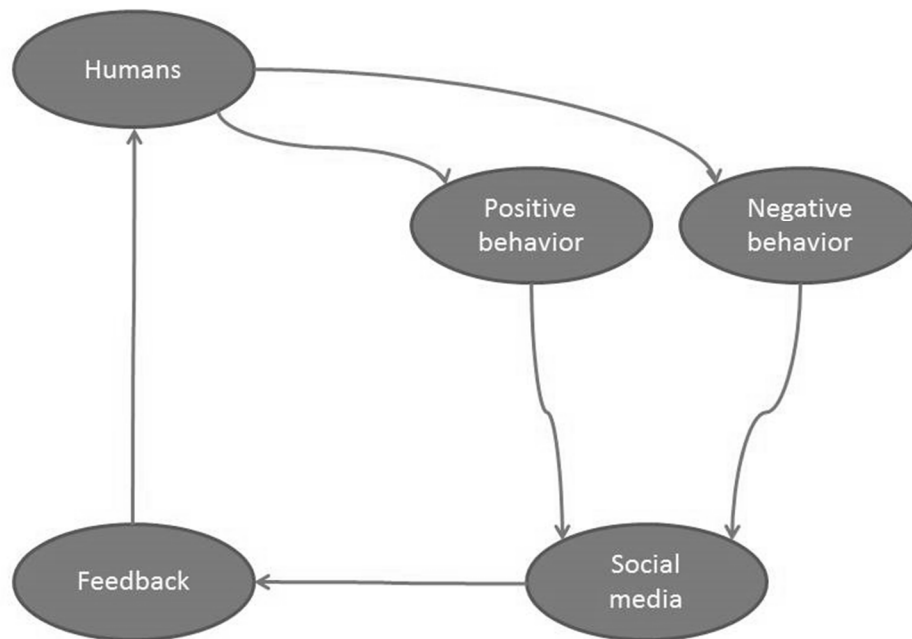


Figure 3. Humans and social media behavior feedback

Social Networking in the Workplace

If leaders allow social networking in the workplace, it will affect productivity (Bear, 2015; Tulu, 2017). Early business uses of social media delivered no business value and business leaders experienced challenges with online communities and did not understand the extent of employees using social media (Schultz et al., 2015; Taman, 2014). Leaders' social media policy may open avenues for abuse in the workplace; Giumetti, McKibben, Hatfield, Schroeder, and Kowalski (2012) studied how supervisors used cyberbullying and found a positive correlation between burnout in workers and the workers experiencing cyber incivility. Similarly, Hall and Lewis (2014) noted

cyberbullying by managers in the workplace though Forssell (2016) found that managers are more likely to experience bullying than nonmanagerial employees are. In their study, they found manager's cyber incivility also predicted employee absenteeism and that effects were more negative in neurotic persons, leading to a much higher turnover level, and absenteeism, in those cases (Giumetti et al., 2012). Furthermore, Keating et al. (2016) found social media use at work exacerbated negative feelings toward perceived supervisor support. Giumetti et al. identified other possible adverse effects of social networking in the workplace that led them to recommend that organizations need to adopt a social media policy with clearly identified training requirements for supervisors and employees. Stott (2015) stated that leaders' guidance to employees should include precautions against bullying on social media. Furthermore, researchers caution that one abusive person could damage an organization much more rapidly and widely via social media (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015)

Trainor et al. (2014) used a capabilities-based perspective to explain competitive advantage by relating social media technologies to performance. The theory was organizational resources could lead to distinctive capabilities which would be difficult for other organization's leaders to emulate. The organization's leaders could exploit these distinctive capabilities to achieve competitive advantage (Trainor et al., 2014). Both König (2015) and Wes (2015) supported this theory, as they noted leaders' capacity for using social media to provide useful and immediate feedback. Breunig (2016) found social media use valuable in business situations for training, collaboration, knowledge management, and communication. Lev-On (2015) supported that, noting workers were

able to build lasting stores of knowledge through using social media. Furthermore, Nduhura and Prieler (2017) found that employees and managers used social media to communicate and coordinate actions enhancing organizational performance. McFarland and Ployhart (2015) identified (a) recruitment, (b) training, and (c) knowledge management as benefits of social media use for employees. Trainor's theory may be used to support this study since developing an organizational resource, which could include the use of social media, that is capable of enabling productivity through engagement would be a competitive advantage.

Union leaders can also use social media to increase engagement; Panagiotopoulos and Barnett (2015) found that social media use created opportunities for engagement with unions and that Internet use could affect participation beyond existing engagement patterns. Many employees have social media connections with other employees (Oswalt, 2016; Schmidt, Lelchook, & Martin, 2016). Panagiotopoulos and Barnett also found 69.8% of survey respondents used Facebook for union based groups or pages though only 12% of union members chose a social media site as their favorite mode of union communication. In addition, the percentage of social media connections workers have with other workers is highly correlated with feelings of organizational support (Schmidt et al., 2016). Thus, social media connections among workers are important both to union leaders and to company leaders.

Other researchers have, however, investigated the ethical issues of social networking site usage for stakeholders and found that using social networks gave a competitive advantage to highly socially responsible corporations (Dossa & Kaeufer,

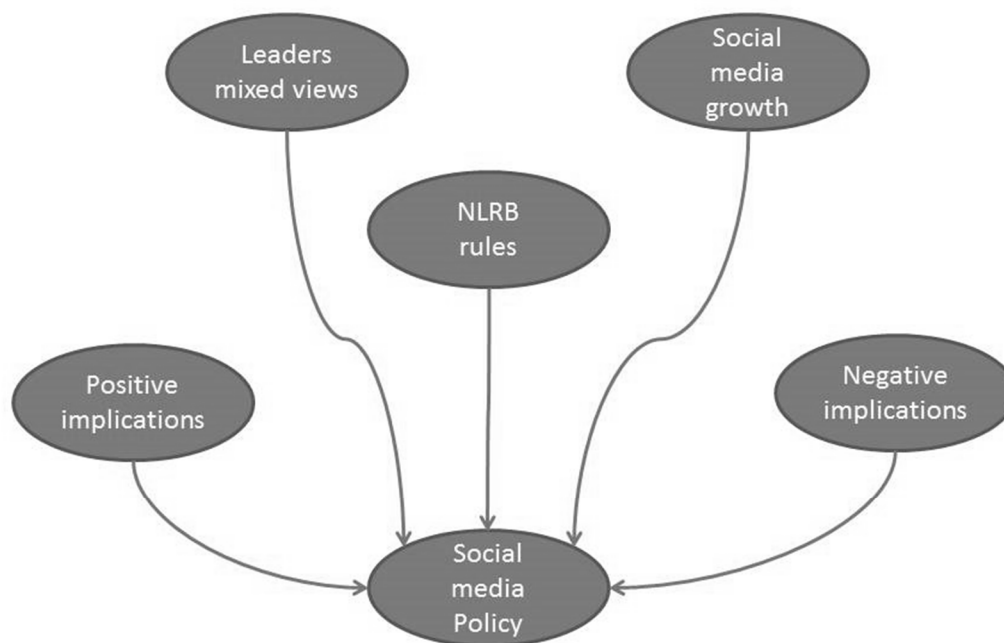
2014). Accelerated adoption of social networks was a multiplier for this positive result, and a firm's size positively correlated with Twitter adoption, but that the debt-to-equity ratio had a negative outcome (Lee, Oh, & Kim, 2013). Furthermore, socially responsible firms were able to amplify sustainability through social media (Dossa & Kaeufer, 2014). A firm's corporate social responsibility was also a significant predictor of Twitter adoption, a popular social media website (Lee et al., 2013). However, Lee et al. did not know whether employees' social network usage correlated with social network usage within firms.

Other positive information about internal social networks and using social networks is also available (Bear, 2015; Breunig, 2016; Carpenter, 2015). Both Bear (2015) and Nduhura and Prieler (2017) cited efficiency and productivity improvements as well. Feinzig and Raisbeck (2017) identified engagement as a primary advantage of firms' usage of social media. Leaders realized benefits of connectedness, flow of knowledge, and inclusion by using an internal social network at Merck (Guenard et al., 2013). Leaders using social media were more connected and had more social capital than leaders who did not use social media (Carpenter, 2015). The social network implemented in the Merck case study was a virtual technical network for knowledge management (Guenard et al., 2013). In addition, Breunig (2016) found social networks usage valuable for enhancing the flow of knowledge among knowledge workers.

Business leader's attitudes toward social media were changing in 2013 (Richter, Muhlestein, & Wilks, 2014). Hospital administrators used social media in the workplace for staff discussions, hospital awards, and introducing new staff members (Richter et al.,

2014). Business leaders expressed mixed views about using social media in the workplace (Pereira & Medina, 2014). Social media became an integral part of management activities (Pereira & Medina, 2014). Some researchers noted the rapid growth in the use of social media in corporations because business leaders saw the value of social media in the workplace (Rodriguez, Ajjan, & Peterson, 2014). Other researchers argued that social media in the workplace was primarily positive (Mount & Garcia Martinez, 2014; Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015). The other researchers cited many positive factors, including communication and collaboration, accountability, self-development, and improved engagement (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Goldberg, 2015; Panagiotopoulos & Barnett, 2015; Patroni et al., 2016; Taman, 2014).

However, not all views of social media in the workplace were positive. Other researchers argued that social media use was of mixed value (Delbourg-Delphis, 2015). In addition, some researchers cautioned that leaders should understand that social media in the workplace presented both risks and rewards (Schultz et al., 2015). Researchers



cited many negative factors including distraction, and incivility (Brooks et al., 2017; Facci et al., 2017). Figure 4 below represents the convergence of mixed views by business leaders, social media growth, and different implications that indicated the need for improved social media policy.

Figure 4. Social media policy drivers.

Legal Considerations

Leaders had concerns over legal issues regarding social media as new technology (Elefant, 2011). For example, Elefant (2011) wrote about legal considerations for utility companies using social media. Elefant used legal documents, regulations concerning the utility industry, and other sources of information from the social media sphere. Elefant included nine reasons why social media could be beneficial to corporations: (a) communications between customers and employees, (b) advertising, (c) crisis response, (d) event promotion, (e) public relations, (f) customer education, (g) promoting green power, (h) recruitment, and (i) branding. Elefant included guidelines for employers on how to use social media in the hiring process in the study. Elefant also addressed issues surrounding a firm's incurrence of legal liability for its employees' inappropriate use of social media, as well as issues of copyright infringement and trademark protection. Elefant noted other concerns held by a firm's leaders: (a) defamation, (b) privacy, (c) disabilities act, and (d) terms of service issues. Elefant also remarked that regulated entities leaders must also beware of Securities and Exchange Commission issues and other regulatory matters.

Elefant (2011) recommended against banning social media and claimed that banning social media should not form part of a social media policy as prohibiting employees from using social media may result in morale problems for an organization's employees and leaders. However, Johnson (2015) noted that banning social media inside the workplace to be somewhat common at 20%. Instead, Elefant recommended that firm's leaders should determine what social media tools to use for specific organizational

goals. Leaders of organizations should distinguish between legitimate employee use of social media and other uses and should establish a privacy policy to protect information from inadvertent or intentional exposure (Hooper, 2017). The creation of social media policy is, therefore, critical for firm's leaders in the digital age (Campbell et al., 2016; Hooper, 2017; Schultz et al., 2015).

Many researchers devoted significant effort to explain the requirements for protecting concerted activity by employees, and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has been clear in an employer's use of social media policy (Brown, 2016; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015, Stohl et al., 2017). This NLRB rule includes the right to use the like button to support other employees' complaints (Brown, 2016). Employers may legally restrict access to social networks during work (Lucero et al., 2013); however, leaders must take proper care to define employer policies about social media outside of work (Hooper, 2017; Schultz et al., 2015). Furthermore, Lucero et al. (2013) stated that workers have a right to protected concerted activities, and employers cannot take negative action against those employees for such activities. Researchers such as Brown (2016), Schultz et al. (2015), and Stohl et al. (2017) supported Lucero et al. in this opinion. In addition, employees have a right to password privacy on their private accounts; thus, employers have no right to demand passwords on private accounts (Brown, 2016).

Another concern regarding legal considerations is that leaders have received differing advice on social media policy (Johnson, 2015). Some issues that leaders raised were privacy concerns, issues about morale, labor relations, and copyright issues

(Hooper, 2017; Oswald, 2016; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015; Schultz et al., 2015). Some researchers expressed the opinion that employees could not expect any right to privacy for posts made during the workday (Schultz et al., 2015). However, Schmidt and O'Connor (2015) cautioned that business leaders should limit surveillance of social media use in the workplace to genuine business concerns and that the surveillance should not be overly broad. Feinzig and Raisbeck (2017) noted that privacy was critical to listening programs success. Other researchers merely provided cautions to leaders as to whether or not those leaders allowed access to social media in the workplace (Brown, 2016; Johnson, 2015). However, most researchers seemed to agree that corporate leaders needed a well thought out social media policy for the workplace (Johnson, 2015).

This literature review contained six major sections covering employee productivity, employee engagement, differences in generational cohorts, social networks, and human well-being, social networking in the workplace, and legal considerations. The entirety of this literature supports the research question of how business leaders can improve their competitive advantage in enabling productivity with social media policies, as seen in Figure 5 below.

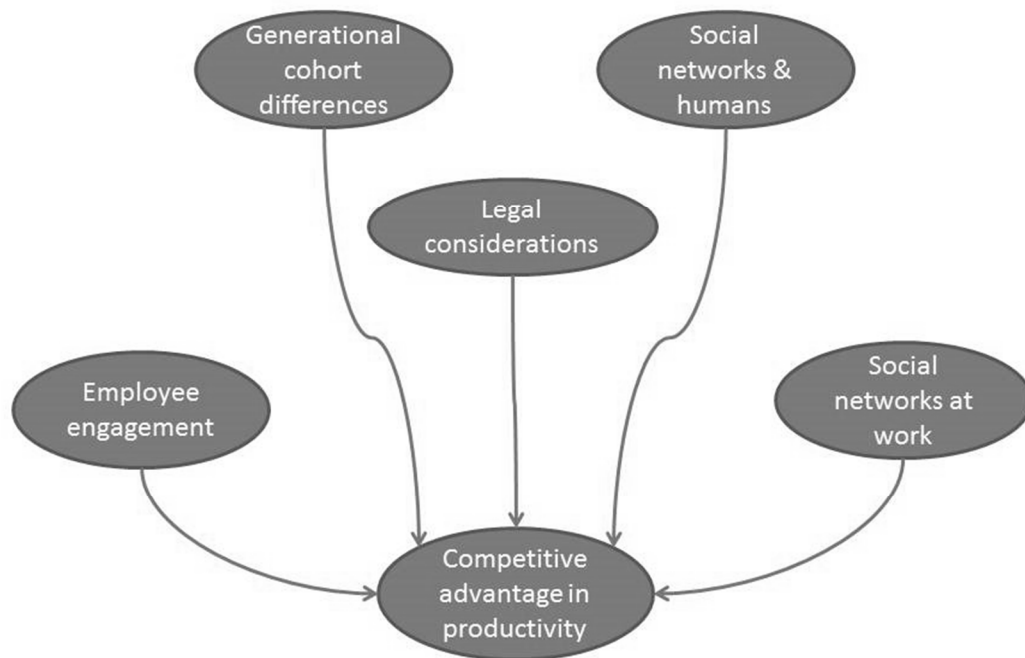


Figure 5. Literature review's support of the research question.

Transition

Section 1 was an introduction to the doctoral study. The section contains background and motivation for the study. Furthermore, Section 1 includes the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the nature of the study. Section 1 also includes the nature of the study, the research question, definition of key terms, and the conceptual framework by Homan. The purpose of this qualitative, multiple case study was to explore how business leaders have used an effective social media policy. Section 1 also included a review of the existing professional and academic literature. Thus, the material in

Section 1 includes information that motivates, defines, and relates to the study. The literature review contained subsections on the conceptual frameworks, employee productivity, employee engagement, differences in generational cohorts, human well-being, social networking in the workplace, and legal considerations. In addition, the literature review contained five diagrams that outline how these factors relate to the study.

Section 2 contains a description of the key features of the project. Section 2 contains a description of the role of the researcher. The participants are technology leaders in the finance industry. The study was a qualitative, multiple case study of financial institutions. The population for the study was leaders in these institutions. Section 2 contains a plan to maintain ethical research practices during the study. Thomas' (2015) interview instrument is the basis for the interview instrument in the study. I organized and analyzed the data using NVivo 11 software. Finally, the section contains a discussion of reliability and validity concerns for this doctoral study.

Section 3 includes the findings of the study and includes applications to the professional practice and implications for social change. Section 3 also contains a discussion of recommendations for action and need for further research. The study concludes with my reflections and a summary of the study.

Section 2: The Project

This section includes several major subsections. The first subsection contains the purpose statement, the second subsection includes discussion of the role of the researcher, and the third subsection includes discussion of the participants of the study. The fourth subsection contains information related to the research method and design. The fifth subsection contains a description of the study population, sample, and sampling method. The sixth subsection contains information related to ethical considerations. The remainder of the section contains a detailed discussion of the data collection and data organization and analysis techniques used. This section also includes a subsection on reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how business leaders used a social media policy to support employee productivity. The target population were finance technology leaders at two financial companies in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte is a financial hub with 20 large financial companies and a greater number of midsize companies; each of the midsize companies had four or five leaders in finance. Finance technology leaders are well situated to understand how new technology affects their business organizations and how leaders have used an effective social media policy. The implications for positive social change include the potential to affect positive changes in employee community connectedness and bonding.

Role of the Researcher

Researchers define the research problem and its scope (Moon, 2015). The investigator's subjective experience forms the basis for these decisions. The investigator's norms and biases may not be readily apparent to the reader (Moon, 2015). Moon observed that researchers must make themselves transparent to the reader by providing background information and locating themselves in the research (Thomas, 2015). Yin (2014) noted several responsibilities of the researcher; these were: (a) set the parameters of the study, (b) collect the data, (c) present the data, and (d) analyze the data (Yin, 2014). My role in the study, as the researcher, was to (a) set the parameters of the study, (b) collect the data, (c) present the data, and (d) analyze the data.

I am familiar with the topic of this study because of my work history in the finance industry and use of social media. However, researchers must collect data in a responsible and ethical manner (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). To mitigate bias, the study participants will not include people who work for my current employer. Thus, I will avoid the problem of backyard research (Thomas, 2015).

The Belmont Report is a protocol for conducting human research in an ethical fashion (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). The Belmont Report includes protections for vulnerable people such as those with mental challenges and disabilities. I followed the Belmont Report to protect participants and did not interview any vulnerable participants. A researcher can use purposive sampling to ensure that vulnerable people are not participants in the study (Akaeze, 2016). The study design included purposive sampling

to select participants. The risk of harm to the participants was small because the study design included steps to ensure participant anonymity.

The study design included an interview protocol from a similar study Thomas conducted in 2015. The interview questions contained in the protocol are in Appendix A. Thomas's study was similar to this study in several ways including topics of engagement, social media, and information technology. Permission to use and modify the interview protocol is included in Appendix B. The interview protocol is valuable for describing experiences in depth and when researching the *how* and *why* of phenomena (Kahlke, 2014; Thomas, 2015). Interviews are appropriate for qualitative case studies (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Researchers use an interview protocol to ensure trustworthiness and consistency in the data collection process (Kumar, Osborne, & Lehmann, 2015). The study design includes the interview protocol to ensure an in-depth exploration of the how and why of the RQ: How do finance industry business leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina, use a social media policy to support employee productivity?

My history includes my current position as a technology expert in a financial corporation, which may allow me to provide valuable insights. However, my personal biases could have influenced the findings and made the analysis incomplete or inaccurate. Researchers may view a qualitative exploration of the research question subjectively because of their subjective experiences, so the researcher must exercise due care to avoid personal bias (Cope, 2014). Yin (2014) recommends that the researcher be sensitive to contrary evidence. To mitigate bias, I remained open to all data collected from the study participants, especially contrary evidence, and kept my personal views of social media

policy separate from participants' reactions and opinions. One method of avoiding bias is to provide rich quotes from the study participants (Cope, 2014). I used rich quotes from the participants in the study research findings. I also followed the study design interview protocols strictly and conducted member checking.

Participants

To be eligible to participate in the study, individuals had to be executives in the finance industry in Charlotte, North Carolina. I relied on personal connections in the finance industry to gain access to this population, particularly executives such as chief information officers, chief technology officers, and technical executives. The leaders I contacted gave me contact information for people who would be appropriate participants in this study. In addition, the participants had to supervise two or more employees. Earlier studies required participants to have knowledge of social media policy in their firms (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015). The study design included selecting participants based on their knowledge of social media policy.

To establish a working relationship with the participants the study protocol included discussing the purpose of the study, the informed consent form, and the interview protocol. In this study, I discussed the purpose of the study, informed consent, and the interview protocol immediately before the semistructured interview. When establishing a working relationship with participants, a researcher should have frank discussions of prejudices and roles to foster collaboration (Bindels, Baur, Cox, Heijing, & Abma, 2014). Establishing an effective working relationship with participants in a qualitative study may include consistent communication through e-mail and phone

communication (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Turnage & Goodboy, 2014). I established a working relationship with participants through frank, consistent communication through multiple channels.

Research Method and Design

The research method and design are critical to conducting reliable research (Sheppard, 2016; Yin, 2014). The researcher must choose both the method and the design to answer the research question (Borrego et al., 2014; Breunig, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The correct research design will contain the right options for realizing the research method (Sheppard, 2016).

Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders use social media policy to enable productivity. Productivity is critical to business leaders, but substantive research to assist leaders in using social media policy is lacking. To understand how leaders have used an effective social media policy, I chose a qualitative method and an exploratory multiple case study design.

The plan for the study was to use qualitative research to explore the how and the why of phenomena, such as the means leaders use to craft an effective social media policy. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies involve different approaches because they have researchers using them have different goals (Barnham, 2015). Using a qualitative design allowed participants to describe their understanding of the phenomena in their words (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Qualitative research is valuable for describing phenomena and experiences in depth (Kahlke, 2014; Thomas, 2015). Using a qualitative

research design was critical in supporting the research question of how and why leaders use social media policy.

Qualitative research was appropriate for the study because qualitative research explores the how and why of phenomena whereas quantitative research seeks to find relationships between variables. Quantitative methods of research do not support in-depth descriptions of the how and why (Kahlke, 2014; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). A researcher uses quantitative research method as appropriate for the resolution of hypotheses when researchers use numeric data to discover correlations between variables (Barnham, 2015). However, this study did not contain hypotheses or variables; rather, the study involved exploring how leaders might use social media policy to enable productivity among workers.

I chose not to use the mixed-method for the study. Mixed methods studies contain both quantitative and qualitative features in the same research project (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Quantitative features can support case study research when such research contains hypotheses (Alsurehi & Youbi, 2014). However, there were no hypotheses in the study, and the research question contained no dependent or independent variables. Therefore, using mixed method research was inappropriate for the study. My intent for the study was to explore how leaders successfully used employee social media policy to support employee productivity in the finance industry in Charlotte, North Carolina. Thus, neither mixed-methods design nor only quantitative design was fitting for the study. The qualitative research method alone was a suitable data collection tool.

Research Design

I chose a qualitative method and a multiple case study design to conduct research. A researcher chooses the research design to answer the research question (Borrego et al., 2014; Breunig, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers use case studies when they need a deep understanding of social and organization processes (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015). Furthermore, results from case studies are often transferable to theory (Tsang, 2013). In addition, case study results may be better than quantitative studies for falsifying hypotheses (Tsang, 2013). A multiple case study is useful to researchers when they are studying specific phenomena in multiple settings, thereby gaining additional understanding of the how and why of those phenomena (Stake, 2006). In addition, a case study approach is appropriate for work settings (Akaeze, 2016; Breunig, 2016; Davison et al., 2014; Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Thus, the case study approach is appropriate for the study of how finance technology leaders use social media policy to gain productivity. Furthermore, Tsang (2013) stated that multiple case studies produce strong generalization for theories since researchers can discover idiosyncrasies of a single case. Thus, I considered a multiple case study the best option for a research design for the study.

Many researchers found case studies appropriate for studying social media. Breunig (2016) found the case study design appropriate for exploring social network communities. The study contained an exploration of the use of social networks for productivity purposes. In addition, Davison et al. (2014) used a multiple case study design to study the use of Web 2.0 technologies, such as social media, in the workplace.

Akazeze (2016) used a multiple case study to explore sustainability for small businesses. Thomas (2015) studied strategies for retaining information technology professionals using a case study design.

Case studies are common for research design in business because the case study design requires that the researcher analyze the business process (Akazeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Therefore, a multiple case study design is appropriate for the study to determine how business leaders use social media policy. However, qualitative researchers also conduct research with other designs (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Qualitative researchers might also conduct research through an ethnographic design or a phenomenological approach.

Ethnographic researchers study humans, artifacts, and concepts in the cultural or ethnographic environment in which they occur (Jensen, 2015; Thomas, 2015). This research design requires researchers to embed themselves over a long period to understand the culture fully that they are studying (Jensen, 2015). Additionally, the researcher should approach the problem without prior conceptions and values that may interfere with understanding different worldviews (Jensen, 2015; Thomas, 2015). Ethnographic researchers seek to understand the behavior of cultures (Jensen, 2015; Thomas, 2015). Thus, an ethnographic research design was inappropriate for answering how business leaders use social media policy to enhance productivity.

Researchers engaging in phenomenological research seek to understand and analyze the lived experience of participants (Finlay, 2014). Researchers reflect on lived experiences and may uncover themes that challenge earlier assumptions (Finlay, 2014;

Thomas, 2015). However, the research question of this study was in regard to the use of social media policy for business leaders seeking to enhance productivity rather than lived experiences. Therefore, phenomenology was an inappropriate choice for the study.

For researchers using case study design, saturation is a requirement to support validity (Yin, 2014). Achieving saturation helps researchers avoid bias in research (Thomas, 2015). The researcher must keep doing interviews until the researcher gains no new information, discovers no new themes, and documents enough information to replicate the study (Thomas, 2015). The study design included conducting semistructured interviews and collecting data until no new ideas appeared to achieve saturation.

Population and Sampling

This section contains a definition of the study population, the sampling technique, and data saturation. The participants for the study were senior finance technology leaders within the finance industry in metropolitan Charlotte, North Carolina. The study design includes interviewing up to six participants. When designing qualitative sampling, the researcher determines the universe of possible participants and subsequently chooses a sample size taking into account what is ideal and what is practical (Robinson, 2014). Because researchers collect data from many sources in a case study, smaller sample size is justified (Kahlke, 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). The number of participants was appropriate because people with knowledge to answer the research question are few within each organization. Senior technology leaders at two financial institutions were appropriate participants based on their deep understanding and success at using social media policies to promote productivity. Senior leaders in information technology include

positions such as (a) chief information officer, (b) chief technology officer, (c) technology executive, (d) senior vice president, (e) managing director, and (f) director (Thomas, 2015). The participants came from two medium-sized companies in the financial industry in Charlotte, North Carolina. Eligible participants must satisfy the following criteria for inclusion in the study.

- They must currently hold a senior information technology leadership position.
- They must work at least 50% of their job in Charlotte, North Carolina.
- They must supervise two or more employees.

The sampling technique for the study is snowball sampling. Stake (2006) and Thomas (2015) found snowball sampling appropriate for the case study design; snowball sampling occurs if the researcher asks initial participants for contacts to other potential participants for the study. The study design includes selecting participants using snowball sampling since finance technology leaders in the organization will know the other leaders involved in setting social media policy. Snowball sampling is a type of purposeful sampling; this sampling is the best method for gaining insight into the detail of how and why phenomena happen (Thomas, 2015). Since the research question was answering the how and why of the phenomena of how business leaders use social media policy to enable productivity, purposeful sampling was appropriate. The study design included selecting participants through nonprobabilistic, snowball sampling.

The study design contains several methods for achieving data saturation. In addition to interviews, case study researchers rely on other data such as documents, participant observations, and direct observations (Kahlke, 2014; Yin, 2014). The study

design includes using semistructured interviews to elicit in-depth information for each case. Additionally, the researcher collects data outside of the interviews to support triangulation for each instance (Kahlke, 2014; Yin, 2014). Because researchers collect data from many sources, smaller sample size was justified (Kahlke, 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Thomas (2015) agreed that snowball sampling (also called chain-referral sampling) is a type of purposeful sampling, is appropriate for case studies when researchers need to understand participant's perspectives in depth.

The study design includes achieving data saturation by conducting three interviews at each location for a total of six at two sites. However, saturation determines sample size (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2015). The researcher must keep doing interviews until the researcher gains no new information, discovers no new themes, and documents enough information to replicate the study (Thomas, 2015). Thus, if I had not reached data saturation after six interviews, the plan was to continue to do more interviews until I reached saturation. In this study, I reached data saturation in company A in four interviews, and in company B in five interviews. Once case study researchers identify a population for the interviews, it is important for validity that the researcher conducts the interviews properly. In the study, I continued interviews until no new information or themes appeared.

Several factors are important to conducting reliable interviews, and those factors should be contained in an interview protocol. Interview participants should have a comfortable setting at their time and convenience (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The plan was to ask the interview participants to select a comfortable setting at their time and

convenience. A comfortable, nonthreatening venue for interviews is important because the participant must feel comfortable answering openly about ambiguous and complex topics (Hashim, 2015; Yin, 2014). Several researchers have recorded interviews to make certain that the researcher can make an accurate analysis (Davison et al., 2014; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Therefore, the study plan was to record the interviews electronically if the participant was comfortable with the device and remained so throughout the interview; I recorded all the interviews. Recording an interview is not a substitute for close listening and paying attention to detail (Yin, 2014). The plan was to member check the interview recordings and protect them in the same manner as other data used to support the study. Protecting participant data was a key to ethical research.

Ethical Research

I followed professionally accepted practices for conducting ethical research. The first requirement was to seek approval of the Walden University institutional review board (IRB) before beginning research to protect the research participants. The IRB reviews research proposals to protect participant's rights (Akaeze, 2016; Sheppard, 2016). The final doctoral manuscript included the Walden IRB approval number 04-06-17-0332976. Yin (2014) identified several factors contributing to ethical research including (a) informed consent, (b) avoiding deception, (c) protecting privacy and confidentiality, (d) protecting vulnerable groups, and (e) selecting participants equitably. I did these things and followed the practices outlined below.

A critical aspect of ethical research and informed consent is to allow participants to withdraw at any time (Akaeze, 2016; Sheppard, 2016). Within the informed consent

form, participants will read how to withdraw from the study; participants may withdraw at any time without penalty through e-mail or phone request. Voluntary participation is important to ethical research (Sheppard, 2016). Therefore, I explained informed consent verbally to validate that the participant had fully understood participation in the study. The informed consent form includes my name, telephone number, and e-mail address so participants can request to withdraw. If the participant chose to withdraw, I destroyed all transcripts, paraphrasing, and data from the interview permanently; no participants withdrew.

The IRB exists to ensure that researchers treat study participants ethically (Akaeze, 2016). Recent doctoral studies have not included any monetary compensation for interview participants because of ethical considerations (Akaeze, 2016; Sheppard, 2016, Thomas, 2015). Therefore, the participants of the study received neither extravagant compensation nor monetary compensation.

A researcher should do their best to eliminate risks to the participants by providing ethical protection (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). There were no known psychological, social, legal, economic, professional, or physical risks foreseen for this interview. The case study design may include collecting other data, such as pertinent company documents (Yin, 2014). The research design includes following any rule the community partner has for sharing information in these documents. Confidentiality is often important for both the people and the organizations participating in a study (Sheppard, 2016). Therefore, the identities of people and organizations were

undocumented in the study. I only shared the participant's data with my review committee as directed by Walden University faculty, and no one else.

Walden University requires the researcher to provide informed consent to participants. The study design includes several actions to ensure the safety of the study participants. First, provide the participants with contact information on the informed consent form and inform the participants they can request summary data upon request. Second, transcribe the e-mail addresses to an Excel spreadsheet and store them in an encrypted zip file on my home machine. Third, control completed interviews at all times during data collection and store securely in my residence for 5 years.

Researchers must exercise due diligence to maximize participant confidentiality and privacy (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers have recommended that to protect participant confidentiality that the interviewer assigns each participant a unique alphanumeric code (Sheppard, 2016). The plan for the study was to assign generic alphanumeric codes to each participant to protect participant confidentiality.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument for this case study. Qualitative case study researchers commonly use semistructured interviews to collect interview data (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). In a qualitative case study, the researcher uses interviews to generate data (Akaeze, 2016). Researchers use other sources to confirm the validity of the interview data (Watts et al., 2017). Case study best practices include semistructured interviews and physical documents such as policies, and historical records

(Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The study plan was to conduct semistructured interviews and collect other physical documents from the community partner.

Interview questions used by Thomas in an earlier research paper are the basis for interview questions in the study. Thomas (2015) used general systems theory and transformational leadership theory. However, the study design includes using social exchange theory (Homans, 1958) to gain new perspectives.

The research plan included supporting the research instrument's reliability and validity through member checking. Member checking is the process of the researcher paraphrasing the interview data and presenting the paraphrasing back to the participant to ensure that the researcher has fully understood what the participant has said (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The researcher must paraphrase the data from interviews and provide the results to the participants for member checking (Harvey, 2015). Thus, I used member checking to support reliability and validity in the study.

The research plan included supporting the research instrument's reliability and validity through methodological triangulation. The study design included collecting other forms of data as part of the multiple case study for this doctoral study to support triangulation. If the company permitted, the data included: (a) company records, (b) process documents, and (c) policy statements. The data collection plan included the note taking form in Appendix C to record information from these documents, and which social networks were available to workers as listed in Appendix D. These notes supplemented the semistructured interviews and helped me to validate the interview data. Thomas (2015) and Yin (2014) encouraged using many sources in addition to interviews to

triangulate information and understand the *how* and the *why* of phenomena. A researcher may use methodological triangulation to alleviate the problem of strict boundaries in data collection (Watts et al., 2017). The purpose of this doctoral study was to understand and explore how leaders used a social media policy to enable employee productivity in the finance industry. By answering the interview questions in Appendix A, participants described their experience of using social media policy. After IRB approval, I contacted potential participants by e-mailing them a consent form describing the study, scheduling 60-minute personal interviews. Those who agreed to participate signed an informed consent agreement, and I personally ensured that each participant understood that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Reliability and validity are essential features of the doctoral study. Multiple case studies tend to have more reliability and validity since the research can compare between cases (Davison et al., 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). The study design included several actions to address reliability and validity concerns. First, keep an audit trail of all data collected to improve both dependability and confirmability (Akaeze, 2016). Second, paraphrase the results and provide the results to the participants for member checking (Harvey, 2015). Third, use methodological triangulation to validate the data from semistructured interviews. Fourth, reach out to other researchers to obtain their expert opinions on the analysis of data, as described by Thomas (2015). These efforts ensured both reliability and validity of the research instruments.

Data Collection Technique

Case study researchers may use many sources to collect data. These sources include interviews, historical documents, business publications, observations, and focus groups (Davison et al., 2014; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The study design included several processes to ensure that the data collection technique was repeatable. Earlier researchers used a semistructured interview protocol (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015). It is important to schedule interviews at times and locations convenient and comfortable to the participant (Akaeze, 2016; Sheppard, 2016; Thomas, 2015). The plan for this doctoral study was to schedule convenient, comfortable, semistructured interviews with participants. Second, the plan was to schedule in-person interviews with date, time, and physical locations amenable and comfortable to both the participant and the interviewer. Third, expect each interview to take about 60 minutes. However, if that time was insufficient, I attempted to extend the interview. The data collection technique did not include conducting a pilot study. The plan was to audio record the interview if the participant permitted. In addition, I took notes with paper and pen during the interview. Thomas (2015) successfully used five techniques to ensure an effective interview: (a) ensuring the recording device, if used, is operating properly; (b) asking the participant only one question at a time; (c) encouraging the participant to move on to the next question to control the length of the interview; (d) maintaining neutral expressions and tone of voice; (e) avoiding the expressing of emotions such as approval or disapproval during note taking and; (f) observe and note behaviors of the participant. I used this collection technique in the study.

There are both advantages and disadvantages when interviewing participants in person (Yin, 2014). One advantage is the ability to observe and note participant behaviors (Thomas, 2015). Another advantage is the ability to follow up on important unexpected themes (Yin, 2014). Disadvantages include unexpected interruptions, the need to cater to participants' schedules, and difficult workload for researchers (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). When a researcher attempts to collect physical documents other challenges arise such as unavailability or lack of permission to use the information (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014).

In addition to the semistructured interview, researchers augment the information with physical company documents such as processes and policies (Davison et al., 2014; Thomas, 2015). In addition, those researchers may expect to observe policy as implemented on company equipment (Appendix D). As stated above, case study research allows researchers to collect information from many sources to enhance understanding, reliability, and validity (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). This is the reason for including multiple sources. Member checking is the process of paraphrasing interview data and verifying with the participant that the researchers' understanding is accurate and complete (Yin, 2014). The study included member checking. Taking these steps helped ensure reliability, validity, and repeatability of the study. The study design included the following process, in the given order.

1. Request permission to conduct the study from the Walden IRB.
2. Receive permission to conduct the study from the Walden IRB.
3. Gather contact information for potential participants.
4. Make initial contact with potential study participants.

5. Introduce the informed consent form to each participant.
6. Answer any questions or provide clarification for each participant.
7. Retrieve in person the signed consent forms indicating voluntary participation.
8. Schedule interviews with the study participants.
9. Review the informed consent form at the beginning of each interview.
10. Collect the interview data face-to-face, or by phone.
11. Paraphrase the interview in Microsoft Word.
12. Conduct member checking with the participant.
13. Update the paraphrase to reflect participant's requests.
14. Import the data in NVivo 11 for analysis.
15. Analyze the data according to Yin (2014).

In the study, I collected documents from the community partners to help answer the research question of how leaders use social media policy to enhance productivity. The community partner must approve any documents used for this case study as stated in the letter of cooperation. These documents might include archives, policies, and printed materials that pertain to the research question.

Data Organization Techniques

The study did not include intimate personal disclosure but rather included business process and business policy. Researchers must exercise due diligence to maximize participant confidentiality and privacy (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014), so the plan is to assign generic alphanumeric codes to each participant to protect participant confidentiality (Sheppard, 2016). Participants signaled cooperation by signing the

consent form, consenting by e-mail, or consenting by voice recording. The plan was to assign each participant a two-character code; the first character was the organization and the second character participant number within the organization. Researchers used NVivo 11 software to organize and analyze data from multiple sources (Akaeze, 2016; Castleberry, 2014; Thomas, 2015). The plan for the study was to use NVivo 11 software on a secure home computer, in a locked office, to input and store both the interview data and document data. Once stored, I used NVivo 11 for coding and exploring themes. The study plan is to store data to ensure participant's privacy by storing the information on a password-protected flash drive in a locked safe in my home office. I will keep the data for 5 years; after that time has elapsed, the study design includes shredding all paper notes and destroying the flash drive.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for the qualitative multiple case study included several means. The first research means was triangulation. The second means was NVivo 11 software. The final means was the conceptual framework social exchange theory.

Triangulation is a process wherein case study researchers use multiple inputs to form conclusions (Akaeze, 2016; Cope, 2014; Stake, 2006). Methodological triangulation includes collecting data from multiple sources (Akaeze, 2016; Cope, 2014; Thomas, 2015). The triangulation for this multiple case study is methodological triangulation. Researchers collect data from multiple sources to triangulate, uncover themes and answer the how and why of phenomena (Alsurehi & Youbi, 2014; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Triangulation in multiple case studies can strengthen credibility (Leung, 2015; Stake,

2006). This multiple case study design includes triangulation between cases. Sheppard (2016) used methodological triangulation to identify themes. The study design included using the data from various sources to triangulate, uncover themes, and answer answering how business leaders use an effective social media policy. These sources were the conceptual framework, themes from the literature review, archival records, physical artifacts, documented company policies, memos, and guidelines in addition to the data from semistructured face-to-face interviews. The themes evident in the literature review are (a) productivity, (b) engagement, (c) generational cohorts, (d) well-being, (e) social networks in the workplace, and (f) legal considerations. In addition, I continued to review the literature to identify new themes and information after the proposal for this doctoral study was accepted.

Qualitative researchers often use semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to collect data (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). The interview protocol defined in Appendix A contains the interview questions for the study. After member checking the interview data, the study design included entering the data into NVivo 11 software. I entered the interview data into NVivo 11 by importing the paraphrased interviews directly into NVivo software after member checking. Recent researchers, such as Akaeze (2016), Sheppard (2016), and Thomas (2015) used NVivo software.

Data analysis in the qualitative case study design presents challenges to researchers because no widely accepted data analysis practices such as in the analysis of quantitative data exist (Yin, 2014). The NVivo tool may be useful, but it is no substitute

for a data analysis strategy (Yin, 2014). Earlier researchers (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014) discussed data analysis in qualitative studies. The data analysis strategy for this doctoral study may change once the analysis phase begins. The study data analysis strategy is contained here.

1. Identify the questions in the case study protocol.
2. Divide data into cases.
3. Enter all data into NVivo 11.
4. Make a matrix of categories addressing the questions.
5. Place evidence into the categories.
6. Tabulate the frequency of events.
7. Draw a tentative conclusion for each question based on theory and evidence.
8. Assess each conclusion.
9. Classify effective means to display the evidence to the readers so that they can check the assessment.
10. Display the evidence.

I organized and showed the analysis in a logical manner to answer answering how business leaders used an effective social media policy. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders use social media policy to enable productivity. Analysis and presentation should convey enough information for the reader to trust and repeat the conclusions of this doctoral study.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are important concepts for qualitative research as well. Denzin (1993) stated that there was a need for quality criteria in qualitative research. Denzin listed the quality criteria validity, reliability, and objectivity. Other qualitative researchers have added terms such as credibility and confirmability (Cope, 2014; Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014; Rapport, Clement, Doel, & Hutchings, 2015).

The following paragraphs contain discussions of reliability, focusing on dependability. Following that, come discussions of issues related to credibility, confirmability, transferability, and validity in the context of the qualitative, multiple case study design. Following the study design is important to mitigate bias and improve repeatability.

Reliability

Reliability, an essential attribute of scholarly research, refers to how a researcher will address dependability. Researchers demonstrate dependability in their studies by showing constancy of data over comparable situations (Cope, 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Researchers can attain a strong form of dependability when they collect data from more than one situation (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). In a multiple case study, the researcher can make a strong argument for repeatability by literal replication (Khan, 2015; Stake 2006; Yin, 2014). Furthermore, researchers can enhance dependability by thoroughly documenting the working processes of the study (Rapport et al., 2015; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). This doctoral study, to explore how leaders use social media policy to

enhance productivity, supported dependability by the exploration of two comparable situations and by thoroughly documenting the working process of the study.

Researchers enhance reliability through consistency and repeatability (Leung, 2015; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researchers obtain consistency in a case study by using triangulation (Yin, 2014). Repeatability is the ability to repeat the research; given a similar situation, method, and design, a similar researcher should be able to obtain comparable conclusions (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Member checking is critical for supporting repeatability since it ensures that the researcher has thoroughly understood data they have collected from interviews (Thomas, 2015). Researchers obtain repeatability by thoroughly documenting their data collection techniques and their data analysis techniques (Kahlke, 2014; Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015). This doctoral study design included member checking, thoroughly documenting the data collection, and thoroughly documenting the data analysis to enhance repeatability.

Validity

One method for establishing validity in a qualitative study is ensuring credibility. Credibility refers to the representation of the truth of the data by the researcher (Cope, 2014; Rapport et al., 2015). A researcher can enhance the credibility of a study through various methods such as methodological triangulation (Akaeze, 2016; Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015). In this doctoral study, I used methodological triangulation.

Another method researchers use in qualitative multiple case study research to strengthen credibility is triangulation (Akaeze, 2016; Leung, 2015; Stake, 2006). Using methodological triangulation within a multiple case study will enhance the credibility of

this doctoral study. In addition, researchers use methodological triangulation to support validity (Yin, 2014). Researchers using methodological triangulation use other documents to validate data collected during interviews (Yin, 2014). Therefore, this doctoral study design included using methodological triangulation of interviews, and other documents to support validity in this doctoral study.

Researchers may enhance credibility via member checking (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Member checking is the process of the researcher paraphrasing the interview data and checking with the participant to ensure that the researcher has fully understood what the participant meant (Akaeze, 2016; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Researcher bias may be reduced when the participants of the study are directly involved in confirming the interview data has been understood (Birt et al., 2016). Therefore, I used member checking to reduce bias and enhance credibility in this doctoral study.

Another method for establishing validity in a qualitative study is addressing transferability. Transferability is the degree one can transfer the findings of the research to other contexts, whether similar or not similar to the original study (Salvador-Carulla et al., 2014). A researcher supports transferability by following documented and strict procedures, so that other researchers could understand and repeat the study, transferring the results to other venues (Yin, 2014). Therefore, this doctoral study design included following the procedures identified in the research design and method, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data organization, and data analysis sections

strictly. This doctoral study contains appendices A, B, C, D, and E to help document the research process.

This doctoral study may be transferable to financial institutions since I drew the sample group from those institutions. However, it may be reasonable for a researcher to transfer information gained in this doctoral study to other industries with many office workers, or even educational institutions. Readers of this doctoral study must decide on the transferability of the study.

To establish confirmability, the researcher must describe the methods they use to interpret the data and come to conclusions regarding the data (Cope, 2014; Munn et al., 2014; Thomas 2015). This doctoral study design included using this method to demonstrate that the findings of the study follow directly from the data rather than personal biases. Furthermore, I used direct quotes from the participants to show confirmability.

I explained the process of member checking with each of the participants of the study. Member checking is used to assure data saturation (Radesky et al., 2016). First, the researcher must paraphrase each interview using both interview recordings and interview notes (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Second, the researcher must ask interviewees to review the paraphrasing of their interviews based on three criteria: (a) completeness, (b) clarity, and (c) correctness (Probst, 2015). Third, the researcher must use the participant feedback to rewrite the paraphrasing and repeat until further review adds no new data and no new themes (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). Using this process in this doctoral study helped ensure full understanding the lived experience of each participant.

A final method for establishing validity in a qualitative study is ensuring data saturation. With purposive sampling, researchers judge when they reach data saturation (Akaeze, 2016; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Fusch and Ness (2015) defined data saturation as the point in which no new themes, no new information emerges, and when further coding is no longer feasible. Thomas (2015) used interviewing senior IT leaders in a company to help achieve saturation. Case study researchers used member checking to achieve triangulation of data gathering and assure that they have reached data saturation (Radesky et al., 2016).

This doctoral study design included achieving data saturation by interviewing participants until no new data on using social media policy is gained. However, the population of leaders and executives with the specific knowledge of social media policy was small. This doctoral study design includes interviewing three to five leaders in each organization. Finally, a researcher using methodological triangulation has other sources of data available to reach data saturation (Thomas, 2015; Yin, 2014). This doctoral study design included using triangulation as a tool to reach data saturation.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders use social media policy to enable productivity. I used Yin's (2014) book to assist me in this exploration. This included a plan to use semistructured interviews to collect data exploring the personal experiences and understanding of participants. Further, plans included triangulating the data with physical artifacts from each case and using literal replication to enhance both internal and external validity. In addition, the plan for this

doctoral study was to use a purposeful snowball sampling technique to select senior finance technology leaders in the finance industry for the semistructured interviews in Charlotte, North Carolina. At Walden University, a researcher must receive permission from the Walden University IRB before commencing data collection. Once I member checked the semistructured interviews, I loaded the data into NVivo 11 qualitative software to identify themes and patterns in the data.

In Section 3, I first present the findings of the study. Second, Section 3 includes applications to the professional practice and implications for social change. The third item is recommendations for action and need for further research. Fourth, Section 3 concludes with my reflections and summary of the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how business leaders used a social media policy to support employee productivity. The target population was finance technology leaders at two financial companies in Charlotte, North Carolina. Based on my interviews with business leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina, I identified overarching themes of social media policy to support productivity. The three themes are (a) employee productivity, (b) communication, and (c) open company culture. The findings of the study show how company leaders can effectively use social media policy to enhance the productivity of their employees. The implications for positive social change include the potential to affect positive changes in employee community connectedness and bonding. Employees connecting and communicating using social media might become more satisfied (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Patroni et al., 2016). Section 3 includes the presentation of the findings, the application to professional practice, the implications for social change, the recommendations for action and future research, reflections, and the conclusion of the study.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question for this study was: How are business leaders using social media policies to support employee productivity in the finance industry in Charlotte, North Carolina? Using social exchange theory as a conceptual framework and Yin's (2014) five stages of data analysis approach, I came up with three themes. The data were culled from nine semistructured interviews, two employee handbooks, a review of

social media sites available on company networks, and six online articles published by the participants on social media. The identified themes provided answers to the central research question. The table below shows the themes and the frequency of appearance in the combined interviews and company policies.

Table 1

Frequency of Themes

Themes	<i>n</i>	Incidence
Employee engagement	60	13.5%
Communication	57	12.9%
Open company culture	43	9.7%

Note. $N = 9$.

Theme 1: Employee Engagement

Participant responses to interview questions 1, 2, and 4 showed a connection between social media policies and engagement. In a survey of 112 publicly available business policies, researchers found that a majority inhibit employee engagement on social media to the detriment of free speech, information sharing, dialog, and stakeholder engagement (Stohl et al., 2017). However, many researchers identified the connection between employee engagement and productivity (Bear, 2015; Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Nduhuru & Preiler, 2017; Rana et al., 2014; Trees, 2015).

Participant 1 stated that a solid commitment from employees to engage in social media for business productivity requires management involvement. According to Jose

and Mampilly (2014), a solid commitment means employees are engaging physically, emotionally, and cognitively. Participant 2 noted that the company surveyed its employees to understand the effectiveness of the company leader's social media policy. Participant 2 added that the company took feedback from employees in shaping the company's current social media policies so that employees feel comfortable in engaging in social media.

All participants said that their companies give their employees access to external social media platforms. Conversely, in a survey of 112 publicly available business policies, researchers found that a majority inhibit employee communications on social media to the detriment of free speech, information sharing, dialog, and stakeholder engagement (Stohl et al., 2017). The data from the interviews aligned with my observation that all 10 social media sites listed in Appendix D were available on company networks.

All participants noted that they held employees accountable for the length of use, the frequency of use, the content, and the audience they reached using external social media. Participant 4 noted that the company social media policies deterred their employees from distraction. This information aligns with the literature review in regard to leaders' concerns that social media may be a distraction to workers; researchers identified both distraction and incivility as possible negative factors (Brooks et al., 2017; Faci et al., 2017).

All participants noted that the business leaders used internal and external social media platforms to engage employees. Altogether, the participants stated using 10

external social media sites listed in Appendix D. Participant 5 said the company's leaders encourage employees to participate in external social media to build the company brand. Participant 2 noted that social media are a means to reach potential bank customers. Participant 2 added that employee access to and use of certain social media sites (especially LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter) to engage with company prospects to both drive sales and for recruitment purposes. Participant 5 said the company encourages employees to participate in external social media to build the company brand. Participant 4 stated that employees have the flexibility to engage in external social media to build business networks and other social connections. Participant 6 noted that the company gives access to external social media sites to reach out to company prospects, to drive sales, and for recruitment purposes. These statements align with information from the literature review; Stohl (2017) identified social media as a business tool to increase productivity. Business leaders seem to be using existing employee engagement to enhance the company's public brand.

Various authors said that internal social media sites promote employee effectiveness (Ferri-Reed, 2014; Goldberg, 2015; Mount & Garcia Martinez, 2014; Taman, 2014). Guenard et al. (2013) identified connectedness, the flow of knowledge, and inclusion as benefits derived by using an internal social network. In this multiple case study, Company A used Slack, and Company B used Yammer as internal social media sites. Slack is a social media tool that supports team collaboration; the name Slack is an acronym for a searchable log of all conversation and knowledge. Yammer is a social media tool designed for private communications within organizations; Microsoft owns

Yammer. The participants said Yammer is a platform that allows them to monitor internal conversations. In addition, Participant 2 noted that using internal social media platform avoids distraction compared to external social media platforms since business leaders have more administrative control over the content. Participant 4 said that the Slack platform is efficient for information sharing, project planning, and team building through collaboration and cohesiveness. Both of these platforms allow business leaders visibility on employees work productivity and provides real-time live engagement to both coach and guide employees. Thus, the data collected in this multiple case study aligned with information contained in the literature review.

Participant 2 noted that internal social media platform avoids distraction compared to external social media platforms because business leaders have administrative control of the content. Researchers use social exchange theory to explain the link between social behavior and economics (Homans, 1958). Researchers noted the use of social media to enhance social connectivity (Brooks et al., 2017; Mosteller & Poddar, 2017; Uysal, 2016). In an organization, intranet and other internal social media allow employees to stay connected, build networks within the departmental level, and build relationships. As supported by social exchange theory, employee engagement through social media use allows employees to link social behaviors with business productivity through productive dialogues, the frequency of communication, information sharing, and relationships. Homans (1958) noted that social engagement must be respectful to be effective.

All participants noted that they held employees accountable for the length of use, frequencies of use, the content, and the audience they reached using external social media. Participant 4 noted that the company social media policies deter their employees from distraction. Various authors in the literature supported the notion that if not administered correctly social media can be a distraction to employees, which could affect employee productivity negatively (Brooks et al., 2017; Faci et al., 2017).

Participant 3 cautioned that too much reliance on internal social media for communication could be counterproductive. Various authors supported that notion that complete freedom to social media uses can be a distraction to workers (Davison et al., 2014; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014). Participant 1 noted that management expected that employees would not waste time on social media. According to Participant 3, there are certain communications and engagements that require the presence of humans, in person, to deliver the message effectively. In Participant 3's company, leaders decide the level of communication stating what communications require internal social media and what communications require in-person delivery. Various authors in the literature noted an increase in business productivity by employees engaging in social media in the work environment (Bear, 2015; Chen et al., 2015; Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017; Leftheriotis & Giannakos, 2014; Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Trees, 2015).

Theme 2: Communication

Interview questions 3 and 5 elicited responses linked to communication. Within the theme of communication, there were two primary subtheme categories: (a) internal communications, and (b) external communications. Social media provides a business

platform to carry out both internal and external communication (Elmedni, 2016). Ferri-Reed (2014) supported the notion that leaders used social media to foster dialogue and solicit feedback. Brooks et al. (2017) mentioned social media as a tool to enhance social connectivity. Various authors in the literature stated that the social media platform enables information sharing among company stakeholders (Bear, 2015; Gerstner, 2015; Goldberg, 2015; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). In this multiple case study, I found that the participants' share information, ideas, and feedback openly with their stakeholders. Stakeholders in this context include: (a) organizational leaders, (b) employees, (c) customers, (d) clients, and (e) the community. Furthermore, the discussions with participants revealed that building a robust social media platform for communication is part of their core strategy.

Social media has become a channel for communication, in some cases supplanting existing channels. Participant 5 cautioned leaders not to force communication flow through limited channels such as telephone, text, and e-mail, but to use an open social media platform with some degree of monitoring. Participant 5 noted that not all social media is effective to distribute information; therefore, business leaders need to identify communication channels that meet the company's persona. The company persona depends on peoples' ages, preferences, and locations (Kelly, Johnston, & Danheiser, 2017). Participant 2 said that the internal social media platform, Slack, meets the company persona and it replaces e-mail as the primary form of communication within the company. Participant 9 stated the Yammer platform fits within their business landscape. Participant 9 added that the company leaders use Yammer to build cohesion among

cohorts of people they hired. Participant 3 stated that the company handbook provides communication etiquette instructions on how employees should share knowledge and deliver messages on social media. Information from the participants aligned with information in the literature review. Leaders, using company policies, often make a distinction between private social media use and corporate social media use by employees (Stohl et al., 2017); the interview data from the participants in this study supported this distinction gleaned from the literature.

Internal communication consists primarily of workers and management conducting conversations in dyads and small groups (Jassawalla & Sashittal, 2017; Keating et al., 2016; Oparaocha, 2016). Chen et al. (2015) found that shared communication between supervisors and workers outside of the working context improves engagement. Leaders can enable internal communications through internally managed social media. Participant 6 said that the company's leaders distribute industry news, trends, technology, fun news, and even humor through internal social media platforms. In addition, Participant 2 indicated that social media helps people connect with coworkers and leaders, which is a challenge with the pace of modern society. Thus, the data from the interviews aligns with information contained in the literature review.

Participants 3 and 5 noted that external communication channels should be similar to the channels the company's customers are using. Researchers found social media valuable in business situations for collaboration and communication (Breunig, 2016). External communications include discussions between employees of the company at any level and the community, customers, clients, partners, and anyone else who does not

work for the company. Improved external social networks may improve communications that could support a sustainable competitive advantage (Patroni et al., 2016; Pereira & Medina, 2014). Information sharing includes a transfer of knowledge, whether dialog or broadcast, via social media. Participants found value in sharing information externally through social media. The participants' said that the company adds value in communication by tailoring a specific message to customers' personae.

The participants stated that companies' social media platforms allow customers and employees to interact through two-way communication to improve a relationship and provide value-added information. Wang and Kim (2017) posited that employees using social media platforms enabled two-way communication to foster productivity. Elefant (2011) noted that social media platforms might benefit corporations by facilitating communications between customers and employees. External communications were important to the leaders who participated in this multiple case study. Participants stated they encouraged complete transparency (except sharing proprietary information) in their operation to build rapport with external stakeholders.

Most participants stated they used social media for external communications for recruiting purposes. Participant 2 said that social media is an effective way to identify recruits who would be a good fit for the company. Participant 1 said that they ask the company employees to promote a "good face" for the company on social media. All participants stated that LinkedIn is an essential external social media platform for recruiting; LinkedIn provides statistical analysis tools for responses from potential hires and a method to reach them directly via InMail.

There is a negative aspect of communication through social media if not administered well (Venters et al., 2012). According to Participant 3, the negative aspect of communication is employees' possible distributing incorrect information, compromising sensitive data, or divulging confidential data. All participants noted that their companies have a robust training program to familiarize employees with social media communication etiquette. Furthermore, the Company A handbook prohibits employees from disparaging clients and vendors; therefore, the participant statements align with written company policy. Hooper (2017) posited that companies should have guidelines for legitimate employee uses of social media to protect information from exposure. Furthermore, more organizations are implementing social media policy, but a useful policy requires a valid distribution method and training (O'Connor et al., 2016). However, for a policy to be productive people must be aware of it; this means educating employees about the policy is critical to success. In addition, according to O'Connor et al. (2016), organizations should create social media policies that prohibit social media postings that are inappropriate or detrimental to the organization. Each participant noted that their company uses key performance indicators to understand the effectiveness and nature of communication carried through social media platform. According to Ahmed et al. (2017), periodic evaluation of key performance indicators is critical for organizational success. Thus, the data were aligned with information gleaned in the literature review.

Social exchange theory was the conceptual framework for this multiple case study. Leaders using social exchange theory are primarily concerned with explaining communication regarding behavioral psychology, economics, influence, and the structure

of small groups (Homans, 1958; Johnson, 2015; Yan et al., 2016). Extensions by James et al. (2011), Oparaocha (2016), and Uysal (2016) expanded social exchange theory with concepts of cohesion, connectivity, and reciprocity. Both internal and external communication helps business leaders with cohesion, connectivity, and reciprocity. Communication supports the idea of cohesion as it builds trust by bringing people together, creating bonds, and adding coherence. Connectivity is sharing information that is important to business productivity, and communication helps business professionals with the needed information to accomplish tasks. An important aspect of social exchange theory is connectivity, which is linking human behaviors to business economics (James et al., 2011; Oparaocha, 2016; Uysal, 2016). Reciprocity, as supported by social exchange theory, refers to engaging in activities beneficial to the parties involved. Most participants mentioned the importance of trust and authenticity among recruits, employees, and managers; this trust enables reciprocity among recruits because recruits can believe leaders statements with few reservations. For example, using the LinkedIn platform provides opportunities to human resource to recruit the best talents, and job seekers can engage in dialogue with a recruiter to find out if the company is the best fit.

Theme 3: Open Company Culture

Interview question 3 helped me to explore how open company cultures affect social media use in a business environment. Various authors stated that a corporate culture that allows social media uses nurture a productive corporate environment (Patroni et al., 2016; Sievert & Scholz, 2017). There is a positive correlation between employee engagement and productivity (Feinzig & Raisbeck, 2017). Leaders fostering an open

corporate culture drives employee engagement at work (Trees, 2015). Participants in this multiple case study stated that their corporate culture supports the uses of social media to enhance productivity. Through analysis, I found four major categories to build a corporate culture and these categories are (a) values and trust, (b) flexibility, (c) respect, and (d) cohesion.

All participants mentioned values and trust are essential for leadership. Social media use may promote trust among employees and managers (Sievert & Scholz, 2017). Participant 4 said that the company's leaders do not micromanage their employees. This was because of leaders trusting employees to behave responsibly. Leftheriotis and Giannakos (2014) found social media use promoted trust among employees and managers. Participant 6 listed employees' honesty and integrity as two key corporate values. Participant 6 added that authenticity and consistency in how employees behave in a social media setting are essential in building trust. Thus, social media policy may be a component of trust as an element of open corporate culture.

The second category within culture subtheme is flexibility. Participant 1 said that their company's leaders are flexible about work location and times. Participant 2 stated that the company leaders rely on specific policies, but are flexible in the work location. Participant 3 posited that big banks, as human organizations, are slow when it comes to giving work flexibility to bank employees. Participant 4 claimed that their company leadership is open, relaxed, and people do not think they are constrained or restricted to specific work location. Uysal (2016) wrote that employees using social media had enhanced tools for membership, influence, integration, and fulfillment. Participants stated

the adult business population is adapting to social media and their companies are embracing work-life flexibility by allowing unrestricted social media access in the workplace.

The third category within the culture subtheme is respect. Participant 1 expressed the need for mutual respect between workforce and management to increase productivity. Participant 2 stated that in his company, business leaders expect employees to monitor their use of social media and show respect to company policies. All participants said that their corporate culture promotes respect and the companies are supportive of employees using social media for business purposes. Participant 8 also gave an insightful and powerful statement:

I think it is reflective of value that respects the individual spirit and the role of the individual not just the role of the team. Therefore, we are not clamping down and controlling our employees. I think respect for the individual drives a great place to work. We are very lenient and supportive of employees using social media for business purposes.

The fourth category within the culture subtheme is cohesion. Patroni et al., (2016) and Periera and Medina (2014) found that social media use correlates with positive feelings and cohesion in the organization. Participant 1 said that their small company is more like a family. Participant 2 noted that cohesion and connection could be a challenge in a high-pressure corporate environment. The percentage of social media connections workers have with other workers is highly correlated with feelings of organizational support (Schmidt et al., 2016). Furthermore, participant 2 added that it is

hard to find like-minded people with a passion for technology, including social media, for business productivity. Participant 9 said that the company's leaders use social media to enhance connectivity among hiring cohorts. Thus, leaders drive cohesion and connectivity via an open, unrestrictive social media policy.

Applications to Professional Practice

A multiple case study is relevant to understanding the how and why of internal social media policy in the finance industry. The objective of this qualitative study was to explore how business leaders used an effective social media policy to enable worker productivity. The findings section includes the evidence from the participants, company handbooks, analysis of the data, and interpretation of the results. The findings and recommendations may serve as a foundation for leaders to evolve their business practices leading the development of sound internal social media policies. The results could guide finance industry leaders struggling with the rapidly changing use of social media; in addition, it may help those leaders achieve higher productivity in their employees. This study expands the body of literature for the finance industry in which social media is important for employee engagement and employee productivity.

Homans' (1958) social exchange theory provided a conceptual framework to help explain the permissive social media policy expressed by the participants of this study. Earlier researchers used social exchange theory to help explain culture, reciprocity, connectivity, and respect (Brooks et al., 2017; Mosteller & Poddar, 2017; Oparaocha, 2016; Uysal, 2016). The analysis of the interview data show support for these aspects of

social exchange theory; these findings might support business leader confidence in the academic literature.

The results also extend the literature in the form of measurements for social media effectiveness in the finance industry. Participants in the survey expressed support for measurements of social media effectiveness. Thus, business leaders may learn to construct new or better measurements for their own companies that lead to superior productivity. The result of the study is relevant to professional practice because it may help leaders to gain a competitive advantage by constructing effective social media policy. Building trust between management and the workforce promotes productivity. In addition, mutual respect benefits the workers, the managers, and the leaders of a company. Leaders should use social media to encourage an environment of trust. The study's findings and recommendations add to the knowledge of business practice by identifying the importance of internal social media policy in the finance industry.

Implications for Social Change

The findings contribute to social change by adding knowledge about the study of social media access in the workplace. Business leaders may gain a better understanding of communication, social connectivity, a positive company culture, and enable a happier workforce. Other researchers confirmed the correlation between social media use and feelings of happiness and well-being (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2016; Kim & Kim, 2017).

Free and open access to social media in the workplace might allow workers to stay more connected with family and community during the workday while building a brand reputation for companies. Furthermore, Uysal (2016) stated that employees using

internal social media developed a deeper sense of community. The data collected in this study corroborates a connection between the sense of community, employee engagement, and productivity. Hooper (2017) noted that college-age people wanted freedom with social media use. Business leaders may realize the enhanced business value in authenticity, respect for individual rights, and community involvement, through improved social media policy while improving working conditions for their employees. Good social media policies may result in the happy workforce, which could result in employee's commitment toward work through reciprocity. Committed employees drive productivity, which may result in company growth. When a company grows, it provides more employment opportunities, raising the standard of living and well-being of their employees.

Recommendations for Action

My research was intended to explore social media policy that leaders at multiple finance industry companies in the Charlotte, North Carolina region used to promote employee productivity. Social media policy is a tool for leaders to improve both working conditions and productivity. However, some business leaders execute policies restricting employees' use of social media in the workplace (Faci et al., 2017; Nduhura & Prieler, 2017; Schmidt & O'Connor, 2015; Schultz et al., 2015). Leaders, whom I interviewed in this multiple case study supported several policies not aligned to blocking social media. These policies were (a) building employee engagement by allowing full access to external social media, (b) supporting cohesion and information sharing by implementing internal social media, (c) promoting a company culture through social media that values

mutual trust and respect for the individual worker, and (d) effective measures of social media effects on employee productivity. Therefore, I recommend that business leaders use the study findings on social media policy to engage employees to support productivity, enhance communication both externally and internally, and to enrich company culture in a way that is visible to employees.

Social media use has become pervasive in the American workplace, especially on mobile devices. Blocking social media alienates younger workers. In addition, since people store technical information on social media sites, blocking social media makes technology workers less effective. Leaders should consider unblocking access to this channel of communication to enable an engaged workforce. While giving access to social media to employees, business leaders must make sure that their social media policy highlights that employees are responsible for the content of the post, the audience, and the potential negative impact from social media use if any. Implementing internal social media provides leaders a platform for communication and information sharing. However, the business leaders must ensure that they monitor and manage internal social media for appropriateness and content.

The other recommendation is that business leaders should justify the need for social media policy. The leaders must understand the cost implications to business. If the business leaders over commit to social media, it can be costly and if they under commit, then there is a risk of losing some benefits from a social media platform.

As the researcher, I am committed to informing business leaders of the findings from this study as they relate to social media policy. In general, business leaders play a

key role in helping to define social media policy to maximize workers' job performance, while enhancing employees' connection to coworkers, family, and the broader community. Leaders may use the information contained in this multiple case study to use social media policy to realize further benefits in improving employee engagement, retention, and recruiting.

My goal is to publish the findings of this study for the broader audience. I will submit the findings of this study to the following professional journals, (a) *Computers in Human Behavior*, (b) *IT Professional*, (c) *Workforce Solutions Review*, and (d) *Computers in Industry*. In addition, I intend to publicize the research findings using appropriate professional platforms such as conferences, panels, and presentations to specific financial institutions in the Charlotte, North Carolina region. The findings of this study indicate that there is a need for business leaders to use social media policy to improve communications, employee engagement, and enhance productivity among employees.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, I discovered how business leaders use social media policy to enhance employee productivity. However, a few study limitations that require further research exist. The social media policy can change over time with business growth, industry landscape, and technology breakthrough. Therefore, I recommend a longitudinal study visiting companies' multiple times over a span of years to understand companies' adaptation to new social media policies.

The participants' location in Charlotte, North Carolina may be unique in culture, resulting in biased findings. Future studies in other locations might yield discoveries. The findings may not apply to businesses outside of the financial industry. Similar studies in other industries might yield new information. Moreover, for future research, I recommend exploring strategies that business leaders use to measure the effectiveness of social media policies. Researchers may want to quantify the effects of social media policy on business productivity. Such understanding will enable business leaders to make a strategic decision regarding investment in social media policies that drive results and eliminate costly and counterproductive policies.

Reflections

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore how business leaders use social media policies to support employee productivity. I am familiar with the topic of this study because of my work history in the finance industry and use of social media. However, selection bias may have been present in this study as leaders who support a permissive and open company culture may be more likely to participate in research.

The doctoral study journey has been rewarding to me. The information I obtained from the company handbooks, the interviews, and the review of the literature has changed my understanding of the research problem. The study findings provided a better perspective on my research inquiry. For example, I found that some business leaders are concerned with profit but also, they were interested in creating a happy work environment for their employees. Furthermore, I found that leaders generating a healthy

company culture seemed to be at the core of driving employee engagement and productivity. I noticed that an unrestrictive social media policy merely conformed to unrestrictive company culture.

Conclusion

Business leaders may lose employees productivity because of the absence of social media policies (Harrysson et al., 2016). The problem is that some business leaders do not know how to use social media policies to their advantage. In this multiple case study, I explored how business leaders use social media policies to increase employees' productivity. The study findings resulted in three themes, which are (a) employee engagement, (b) communication, and (c) company culture.

In this study, I found that both company's leaders allowed complete access to external social media at the workplace. Also, I found that leaders enabled information sharing and communication among employees by deploying internal social media platform for workers. The leaders who participated in this study noted that the social media policies are reflective of their companies' culture.

The significance of the study is that the research findings may help a business leader to refine their existing social media policies or implement new policies that drive employees' productivity. Johnson (2015) stated achieving a work-life balance as a social good. The implication for social change is that the study finding may help employees to maintain healthy work-life balance through social networking and bonding.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

These are the semistructured interview questions:

1. What are the critical factors you use to enable productivity in your employees through social media?
2. What social media policies do you use to enable productivity in your employees?
3. Which of your social media policy features are explicit and which are implicit?
4. What social media policies are most helpful for enabling productivity?
5. What legal requirements or regulations have you considered for constructing social media policy?
6. How do you measure policy features for effectiveness?

Appendix B: Consent to Use and Reproduce

from: shannon.thomas2@xxxxxx.edu
reply-to: shannon.thomas2@xxxxxx.edu
to: david.rogers2@waldenu.edu
date: Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 11:34 AM

Shannon Thomas shannon.thomas2@xxxxxx.cedu

to me

Future Dr. Rogers,

It will an honor to allow you to produce and reproduce this research instrument for your doctoral study. Therefore, I grant you permission to use and reproduce the interview instrument or a variation of the instrument from your study. "Social Media Policy to Support Employee Productivity in the Finance Industry" based in the conditions that you stated in your request email.

Have a blessed day.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 2, 2016 at 10:58 AM, "David Rogers" <david.rogers2@waldenu.edu>

wrote:

Hello Dr. Thomas,

I am a doctoral student at Walden University pursuing a Doctor of Business

Administration degree. I am writing my doctoral study project tentatively titled "Social

Media Policy to Support Employee Productivity in the Finance Industry." I am requesting your permission to use and reproduce in my study some or the entire interviewing instrument (or a variation of the instrument) from the following study: "Exploring Strategies for Retaining Information Technology Professionals: A Case Study."

I am requesting to use and reproduce this instrument under the following conditions:

- I will use this interview only for my research study and will not sell or use it with any compensated or curriculum development activities.
- I will send a copy of my doctoral study that uses this instrument promptly to your attention upon final approval.
- If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by emailing a written approval by replying to this email and given your written consent of use.

Sincerely,

David S. Rogers

Doctoral Candidate

Walden University

Appendix C: Notes for Archival Documents

Productivity theme: _____

Engagement theme: _____

Generational cohorts theme: _____

Human well-being theme: _____

Social networks at work theme: _____

Legal considerations theme: _____

New themes: _____

Appendix D: Social Networks Available

To be collected once from each community partner.

1. Facebook: _____
2. Twitter: _____
3. LinkedIn: _____
4. Pinterest: _____
5. Google Plus+: _____
6. Tumblr: _____
7. Instagram: _____
8. Flickr: _____
9. Vine: _____
10. Meetup: _____