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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Vanessa Cox

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Obstacles to Economic Growth and Business Attraction in Georgia

by

Vanessa Cox

MBA, Troy University, 2009

BA, Georgia State University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

May 2018

Abstract

The problem addressed in the study was that Georgia's economic development leadership faced obstacles that challenged the state's growth in attracting new business and developing existing business. The purpose of this case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by a specific agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. Assessing obstacles that hinder leaders to promote the state of Georgia growth is pertinent, including exploring where the system may be constrained. The theory of constraints guided this study to investigate what obstacles state leaders face in economic development. An embedded case study was conducted using purposeful sampling to select 11 participants for interviews, including managers, directors, and a deputy commissioner from a state agency in Atlanta with significant experience in attracting and maintaining businesses for growth. Inductive coding using Attride-Stirling, Braun and Clark's 6-step approach resulted in 4 themes. Themes that emerged as findings were: low quality education, time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia, perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime, and infrastructure and accessibility dilemmas. The implications for positive social change included needed improvements to education, elimination of traffic barriers, expansion of public transportation, and development of infrastructure to benefit and enhance a better life for Georgia residents.

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Dedication

First, I would like to dedicate this research study to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who helped me through his journey. Without his love and strength, I would not be here. Second, I would like to dedicate this research to my late mother Overseer Mary R. Cox, who taught me through example, continued encouragement, and support. Her favorite scripture for me was, “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The state of Georgia has faced obstacles to economic growth and attracting new business to the state. Sjoquist (2013) studied the state of Georgia to determine whether this once economically robust state would experience growth again, and the author determined that the recession of 2008 was not the cause of the economic downfall; instead, economic growth rate, population, and income trends were contributing factors. Sjoquist also identified factors that challenge the state of Georgia's leadership ability to attract businesses to the state.

The state of Georgia's population increased 3.1% between 2010 and 2013, to an estimated 9.9 million citizens (Selig Center for Economic Growth, 2014). By 2020, this number will increase approximately 13% (Selig Center Economic Growth, 2014); therefore, as Georgia's population grows, it is imperative that economic growth and development meet the demand for jobs and business opportunities. Craig (2011) reported that Georgia companies developed quickly over previous decades, causing them to be fragile and sensitive to economic instability. To advance, the state needs a strategic plan for both attracting new businesses and expanding existing businesses (Craig, 2011). Establishing a secure economy contributes to a society's active and productive development. Azzopardi (2015) asserted that local government and business leaders should resolve pressing issues concerning economic growth to make life viable. Economic growth often affords progression in all career fields, in turn creating a beneficial outcome that can solve many economic problems.

In the remainder of this chapter, the background of study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework are presented. In this chapter, I evaluate the nature of study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. The chapter concludes with a summary and transition to Chapter 2.

Background of the Study

Kohn (2009) explained that economists find it difficult to recognize obstacles that affect economic growth. Ricardian theory and Smithian theory are two approaches explored in the literature. Ricardian theory proposed that economic growth is due to output, whereas Smithian theory suggested that economists examine growth through institutions such as social and political organizations (Kohn, 2009). These models approach the economy through the lenses of macroeconomics (Kohn, 2009). Bruce, Deskins, Hill, and Rork (2009) noted that public and private investment, cost factors, industry mix, and national trends all influence state economic growth (p. 232).

Economic development commonly uses principal–agent theory, a theory that is important to explain development because shared interests between private and public organizations bring businesses to the state (Lombard & Morris, 2012). An explanation of principal–agent theory provided by Lombard and Morris (2012) included the concept of partnership and privatization to determine growth. For example, the XYZ agency (pseudonym for privacy) represents the state of Georgia to attract new businesses and assists with the expansion of existing businesses; in this case, Georgia is the principal, and the department is the agent. Prado-Lorenzo, Garcia-Sanchez, and Cuadrado-

Ballesteros (2012) agreed that it is the responsibility of local lawmakers and state agencies to educate business executives about residents' desires and expectations of quality goods and services. Prado-Lorenzo et al. suggested that lawmakers and state agencies influenced sustainability, quality of life, and economic development.

Lombard and Morris (2012) used the proposed location of a Mercedes assembly plant as an example of growth and competitiveness. Many states, including Georgia, competed with Alabama for this project. Alabama involved surrounding counties and cities to work with the state on securing this deal and thus won the bid for the assembly plant (Lombard & Morris, 2012). Bringing in as many stakeholders as possible usually boosts the chances of a business locating in the state. By winning the Mercedes deal over Georgia, Alabama's economy experienced growth and job creation (Lombard & Morris, 2012). Vojtovich (2011) focused on the relationship between economic growth and the unemployment rate, emphasizing that when the real GDP decreases by 1%, the demand for workers drops 20%. The state of Alabama applied principal-agent theory to secure the bid for Mercedes assembly plant. Increasing economic growth within a state requires partnership with other stakeholders with shared interest.

Limited research is available on factors hindering or contributing to the state of Georgia's economic growth and development. Reducing the gap in the literature may be valuable in understanding the challenges facing Georgia's leadership. The results from this study were beneficial to those examining the economic systems to promote a stable growing economy. Researchers may use this study as a blueprint to conduct further research on challenges to other states' economic growth and development.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (2015) has implemented five programs to develop relationships with the private sector to encourage economic development: tax credits, tax exemptions, hiring, training and education assistance for small business and entrepreneurs, and assistance for Georgia's existing industries. For example, if an organization has a taxable income of \$10 million, 5% of gross receipts (\$500,000 of income) would be subject to Georgia's 6% corporate income tax, making corporate income tax liability \$30,000 (Georgia Department of Economic Development, 2015). Maier, spokesperson for Porsche Cars North America, stated that the company's reason for choosing a new location in Georgia was "the brilliant support that we received from the state of Georgia and the city of Atlanta. Second, and I would say equally important, is that we can depend on a very experienced workforce here in Atlanta" (Georgia Department of Economic Development, 2015b, p. 3). The state has established incentives to attract and appeal to corporations to promote economic growth and provide tax credits to conduct business in Georgia. The residence of the state are provided job opportunities and the corporations benefit from these tax credits.

Problem Statement

The general problem was that the economic forecast in the state of Georgia predicted the creation of 81,000 jobs, but only 61,000 were created; further, a gain of 89,000 new jobs were predicted for 2015 with only 71,000 established (Dhawan, 2014). Dhawan (2014) also forecasted that in 2016, job creation would reach 100,000, and the state's population continues to grow; yet, job growth has not kept pace. The specific problem was that Georgia's economic development leadership faced obstacles that

challenged the state's growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses. A gap exists in the literature, focusing on obstacles hindering the economic growth and development of Georgia.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. I focused on the identification of obstacles in the system to clarify where the system may be constrained. The study may bring awareness to local and state government on how to overcome challenges to growth. By unveiling the obstacles impeding the state's growth, the research could be used to understand how well the organization identifies, characterizes, and reacts to constraints. Resolving constraints could allow corporations to view Georgia as a prime location to conduct business and allow Georgia to better compete with other states. The study objective was to explore how the leaders in XYZ agency can direct and improve the state's growth and bring positive social change through job creation and cultural diversity.

Research Questions

The goal of this qualitative case study was to explore obstacles encountered by XYZ agency to attract business to generate economic growth. XYZ agency leaders have one major task and that is to promote growth and development for the state of Georgia. This study contained one central research question: What are the obstacles that state leaders face in economic development?

Conceptual Framework

The theory of constraints was helpful in grounding the framework for this study. Goldratt (1984) developed the theory of constraints (as cited in Mabin, Forgeson, & Green, 2001). The theory is used to assist organizations with identifying and resolving daily operational problems (Goldratt, 1984). According to Mabin et al. (2001), Goldratt's goal was to create a systematic approach for organizations to identify what was preventing them from making money.

The theory of constraints covers a wide range of principles, concepts, solutions, tools, and approaches. The thinking process is a major component of the theory of constraints (Goldratt, 1984). The thinking process expresses the concerns of change management and gives an outline for change (Goldratt, 1984). Organizations navigate through the thinking processes of problem identification, problem structuring, solution building, identification of obstacles to overcome, and execution of the solution through analysis, strategy formulation, and tactical planning (Goldratt, 1984). The thinking pattern to the theory of constraints provides a conceptual map to an organization thinking process. Managers are now equipped to approach and resolve organizational problems from utilizing Goldratt's thinking process.

Hrisak (1995) explained that organizations of all sizes all over the world use the theory of constraints. Hrisak declared that managers who consistently used the theory understood their businesses. By using the theory of constraints, managers viewed operations differently and could prevent constraints before they arise, and managers who identified and proactively responded to constraints were able to achieve organizational

goals (Hrisak, 1995). Corporations may find that incorporating theory of constraints early may reduce issues and alleviate the amount of time handling obstacles to focus more on increasing productivity and achieving goals.

This theory is based on a multifaceted system of technology developed to help managers of organizations think about obstacles, create solutions, and implement change successfully (Mabin & Balderstone, 2003). Mabin and Balderstone conducted a meta-analysis of the theory of constraints performance and success in organizations. The theory of constraints includes a problem-solving tool; if a problem exists in the system, the tool can help identify the issue (Mabin & Balderstone, 2003). The manufacturing industry was the first to use the theory of constraints and had great success (Goldratt, 1984). Large manufacturers such as Boeing, General Motors, and Procter Gamble that used the theory of constraints saw increases in profits and production, along with improvements in efficiency and effectiveness (Mabin & Balderstone, 2003). When utilizing theory of constraints managers can identify issues, implement change and increase performance levels. The evolution of Goldratt's theory continues to transcend from manufacturing to other industries to improve organizational goals.

Use of the theory of constraints has expanded into the field of project management. Bartoska and Subrt (2012) conducted a review of the theory of constraints through the lens of project management. From the beginning of a project to completion can be a time-consuming process that can cause projects to go over budget. Bartoska and Subrt claimed that the element of time in projects is the weakest link. A major step in

applying the theory of constraints is identifying the weakest link that is blocking an organization from performing at its optimal level (Goldratt, 1984).

All organizations have constraints that hinder managers from reaching their goals. According to Naor, Bernardes, and Coman (2013), managers have accepted theory of constraints because it provides a meaningful body of knowledge. By applying the theory within a study of leadership in XYZ agency, the study may help the department to articulate and categorize major challenges and obstacles to growth.

Since the 2008 financial collapse, organizations have directly linked their demise to known or unknown constraints (Grodach and Seman, 2013). Jamieson (2014) suggested that the theory of constraints allows organizations to explore and identify that most business decisions rarely stem from good practices, maximizing shareholder value, or even just doing a good job (p. 17). Jamieson tested the theory in a midsized financial organization. Jamieson examined how to find the real constraint by identifying the recurring obstacles that hinder the daily operational process. Adapting the theory could increase the shareholder value, allow the organization to achieve global and local goals, and help managers enhance organization policies.

Gupta, Bridgman, and Sahi (2015) studied a nonprofit organization and applied the theory of constraints to its system. Managers within the organization had attempted to find and resolve the constraints but were unsuccessful. Gupta et al. used the theory of constraints to examine the organization process and identified multiple physical and policy. The methodology of the theory of constraints was easy to understand and was an excellent fit because it worked well within the organization's values.

This theory is necessary to guide further research effectively on the cause and effect of internal and external factors inhibiting long-term economic growth and increased productivity. After all the data was collected and examined, the results yielded how leadership can identify major constraints within a system and identify corrective solutions. The theoretical and empirical literature for theory of constraints is further reviewed in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used embedded case study approach. This method allowed me to explore the organization and the employees within the organization. The participants were asked to refer to an experienced phenomenon, which provided for an exploration of internal and external stakeholders seeking how to increase economic growth. The participants were executive personnel within the global commerce and tourism divisions. I interviewed internal stakeholders (global commerce and tourism executive personnel) and external stakeholders (development authorities).

Embedded case study was appropriate for this study; other existing methodologies lacked evidence of providing the experiences of a group or individual in understanding a phenomenon (Yin, 2003). In an embedded case study, I studied the organization and the subunits. Single case studies only allowed the researcher to examine the organization (Yin, 2003). To understand the organization obstacles an embedded case study was appropriate. Moreover, embedded case study was ideal for examination of the collected data and grouping individual experiences by theme. I recorded data collection and then analyzed the transcription.

Definitions

Binding constraints: Constraints that cause the greatest hindrance to increased economic growth (Rodrik, 2007). If agents in the economy are trying to prevail over the constraint, then the constraint is binding (Hausmann, Klinger, & Wagner, 2008).

Economic development: The progression of low-income economies converting to modern economies (International Monetary Fund, 2014). Development typically includes social progress and growth in technology, including education, health, financial institutions, significant capital investments in infrastructure, and other human development activities (IMF, 2014; The World Bank 2014; UNDP, 2014).

Economic forecasting: A prediction about the future of the economy (Clements & Hendry, 2002).

Economic growth: The method by which a nation's wealth and capacity to produce goods and services grow over time (International Monetary Fund, 2014). The growth is calculated by the rate of change of gross domestic product (GDP), which includes a nation's aggregate development in natural resources, human resources, capital resources, technology, institutional structure, political stability, trade, and other economic activities (IMF, 2014; The World Bank 2014; UNDP, 2014).

Economic indicator: A statistic for measuring the health of the economy, such as the rate of unemployment or the rate of inflation (Kuznets, 1973).

Economic issues: Factors that influence a country's economic growth and development (Madura, 2003). According to Madura (2003), several indicators can be

used to measure a country's stability and growth, including public debt, GDP, inflation, financial viability, and level of unemployment.

Endogenous growth: The use of a closed system to assist in identifying causes of growth; "an endogenous outcome of an economic system, not the result of forces that impinge from the inside" (Romer, 1994, p. 3).

Hysteresis: Hysteresis occurs when previous short-term changes of the relevant forcing variables have indicated a shift in the economic behavior of the observed unit(s), but taking away the initial value will not force variables to revert to the initial behavior (Gocke, 2002, p. 168).

Structural unemployment: Unemployment caused by the structure of an economy rather than by changes in the economic cycle. Structural unemployment diminishes the economic structures causing it (The Economy, 2015).

Assumptions

I had several underlying assumptions to provide why the state lost contracts. When companies expand or relocate, they consider many factors, including infrastructure, education, housing, public transportation, crime rate, competition with other states, and compensation (Nathan, 2012). One assumption of the study was that a lack of infrastructure is negatively affecting Georgia's economy, and companies are seeking types of infrastructure that do not exist in Georgia. Transport infrastructure creates a substantial multiplier effect in investment flows (Crescenzi & Rodríguez-Pose, 2012). Another assumption was that the school system may not be performing to a standard that is acceptable to department heads and employees, as Bernardo (2014) noted the Georgia

school system ranks 32nd out of 50 states and the District of Columbia. Another assumption was that housing and public transportation are inadequate in the area where the company is relocating. If public transportation was not available in all areas of the state, and the area the company is considering relocating to, it may pose a problem to employees. Wachs (2011) indicated that investments in transportation could improve productivity and eventually job creation. Other assumptions were that surrounding neighborhoods are unsafe, and the crime rate is too high as crime is a deterrent for companies to consider relocating or expanding in an existing neighborhood as violence discourages investment and hinders economic growth (Loureiro & Silva, 2010).

Underlying political issues, such as conflict with state leadership, differences in state agency agenda, and majority representation in state legislature, may affect the placement of businesses. Not all public and private sector entities that affect job creation are in one accord with economic growth and job creation. In addition, some of these partners may not be aware of the companies that want to do business in Georgia.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore obstacles encountered by XYZ agency to attract business to generate economic growth. Financial stability correlates directly with job growth; a healthy economy and employment are results of the innovative products corporations bring to the communities where they are located (Ahlstrom, 2010). According to Saporta (2011), the state of Georgia continues to lose business prospects to other southeastern states because of inadequate tax incentives and high business costs. The reason for this focus of this study was because unemployment

was at an all-time high, and the state was experiencing slow economic growth. Jobs were being lost because companies were closing, and current economic incentives were not competitive with other states (Saporta, 2011, 2015).

The study included internal stakeholders (global commerce and tourism executive personnel) and external stakeholders (government agencies). Administrative personnel (procurement, accounting, information technology, marketing, and communications) were excluded from the study because they lacked knowledge on the topic and were not beneficial in solving the underlying problem.

Limitations

The study was limited in geography to one state, and potential findings were limited by (a) analyzing the data, (b) sample size, (c) lack of available data, (d) lack of prior research on the topic, and (e) lack of access to the appropriate people needed for the study. Analyzing the data was time consuming. After collecting data by recorded interviews, I needed to review the data more than once to make sure the information I had from each participant was accurate. I put many hours into transcribing the data, and it was difficult to interpret. Furthermore, it was not difficult to determine when I had enough data to move forward. Sample size was under 20 participants because data saturation was reached beforehand. The number of individuals selected to participate in the study was a limitation as the sample size was limited to senior level personnel in the global commerce and tourism divisions, and governmental agencies, the decision makers when it comes to contract negotiations and closing the project.

Research material to provide a solution to Georgia's job loss factor has been lacking, and little research has addressed why Georgia is losing business opportunities to other states. My study results may contribute to this gap to provide recommendations that the state can adopt to attract corporations to conduct business in the state of Georgia, although access to participants may be restricted. Ten participants were interviewed in person, and one participant was interviewed by phone. .

Researcher bias can be reduced in case study research through awareness and objectivity in data collection (Yin, 2014). However, participants recognized that there are various problems with economic growth in Georgia; therefore, the participants were open to discuss the negative and positive aspects of job recruitment and retention. Moreover, selected participants were comfortable with answering questions. However, participants may not recognize any problems with economic growth in Georgia; therefore, they may only want to discuss the positive aspects of job recruitment and retention, whereas lower level employees may be more apt to share the good and the bad. Moreover, selected participants may not feel comfortable with answering the questions presented. If the participant refused or felt uncomfortable with the line of question, I moved on to the next question.

To reduce potential biases, I explained the research, made participants feel comfortable, and let them know that I was objectively collecting data to narrow a gap in the literature. The outcome of the study may contribute to this gap and provide corrective measures to inform XYZ agency.

To address these limitations, I carefully selected participants who were knowledgeable in this subject matter. Second, I coded the data using Yin's (2014) pattern matching from the interviews was done correctly and efficiently to determine emergent themes. After interpreting data, I made a second visit to the participants to share the interpreted data to make sure it was accurate.

Significance of the Study

In this study, the significance was that when trying to expand or relocate a business, many hindrances can surface causing setbacks. The outcome of this study may be used to assess the hurdles encountered by the XYZ leaders when attracting businesses to generate growth. New business is critical for a flourishing landscape. Although companies relocate in areas for various reasons, this study may benefit leaders seeking methods to increase growth

The study may be a contribution to the XYZ agency, chambers of commerce, and residents of Georgia. The potential contributions will provide ways to be useful in job creation. Entities can use the paper as a guideline to provide new policies and procedures for business recruitment, ultimately ensuring that Georgia stays at a high level of productivity. Often, the links were indirect and unexpected as it related to economic growth and social change. A combination of factors must be in place to foster improvement of social and human conditions. A healthy economy produces a healthy workforce. When an economy is thriving, the people will thrive, thus causing economic growth. Job opportunities will increase, and the unemployment rate will decrease.

With increased job opportunities, work environments will become more diverse (Nathan, 2012). In diverse work environments, gaining knowledge about different cultures is vital. Having knowledge of other cultures allows for cultural awareness and sensitivity of others (Nathan, 2012). Moreover, social change will foster better education. Employees will be more apt to seek out educational opportunities that will enhance their current abilities. In turn, they will place themselves in a position for upward mobility in the corporation and take on other job responsibilities. Social change brings about social progression, and corporations build and expand to create jobs; as a result, living standards will increase, and people will be in a position to do more for the community (Nathan, 2012). For example, prosperity employees will be able to give to social and nonprofit organizations.

Summary and Transition

A vibrant business climate in Georgia is imperative for economic growth. Some hindrances cause setbacks and cause companies not to relocate or expand. The goal was to identify the constraints, learn from them, and capitalize on how to change the environment to make business work. A shared interest and agreement between public and private sector partners is necessary for the benefit of Georgia and its citizens. These partnerships will foster economic growth that will not only help companies and the economy but also assist citizens of the state by promoting social change. The results offered corrective measures to the XYZ agency to implement for economic growth and development. Additionally, corrective measures were presented so Georgia economic development leadership can align its policies and procedures to compete with other states.

Chapter 1 included the wider scope of the study, including the background, problem statement, the purpose, and the research questions. Also highlighted was the nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes a detailed overview of the literature on the theory of constraints. Literature on the extension of theory of constraints to show how the theory has evolved. Chapter 2 includes research concerning obstacles that interfere with economic growth.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Obstacles are interfering with economic growth in the state of Georgia. Sjoquist (2013) stated that Georgia has challenges that effect economic growth. The XYZ agency responsible for attracting new businesses, keeping existing corporations in the state, and drawing tourism and film industries to the state. The agency leaders are faced with obstacles as the population grows and corporations lay off workers or move to other states. As the state's population continues to grow, job growth has not kept pace. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. The specific problem was that Georgia's economic development leadership faced obstacles that challenged the state's growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses. A report from the Selig Center for Economic Growth (2014) stated that the Georgia population will increase by an estimated 13% by 2020. As the population grows, the state's economic development could decline and result in an increase in the unemployment rate. Kiersz and Holodny (2014) suggested that Georgia's economy is slow to recover when creating or adding new jobs.

Semuel (2015) stated that Georgia is home to several Fortune 500 companies and the unemployment rate is higher than the national average. According the U.S. Department of Labor (2016), the state of Georgia is ranked 39th in the nation on unemployment with a rate of 5.3%; the national rate is 4.6%. Georgia Department of Economic Development offers incentives such as low wages, low taxes, and low service for new and existing organizations looking to relocate and uses a competitive strategy

against other southeastern states (Georgia Department of Economic Development, 2015). According to Wald, a former Bureau of Labor Statistics economist in Atlanta, the state has a hands-off, laissez-faire approach to the economy (U.S. Department of Labor, 2016).

A review of the current literature revealed areas that could interfere with the economic development in Georgia. A healthy economy depends on local, regional, and state government working together to attract new business to the state of Georgia. This includes continuing to support the expansion of existing businesses. The literature established that the relevance to the problem was that the unemployment rate is higher than the national average, infrastructure, and lack of job creation, Georgia's population growth rate, and hindering obstacles that could affect economic growth (U. S. Department of Labor, 2016). The literature shows that when the economy is not thriving, residents of the state suffer, causing a decline in economic growth and development (Brunos & Stutzer, 2010). In Chapter 2, I provided a concise synopsis of current literature related to the problem, literature search strategy, conceptual framework, comprehensive literature review of current research related to economic growth and development, social change, and summary.

Literature Search Strategy

I examined literature from reputable sources to assess obstacles that are hindering economic growth to Georgia. I researched books, magazines, the Internet, and peer-reviewed journals for the purpose of this literature view. In addition to Walden University Library, I used the Georgia State University and Columbus Technical College libraries.

This included online databases such as EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, and Business Source Complete. Keywords used were *economic growth, economic development, obstacles hindering economic growth, local and regional growth, Georgia economic development, tourism helps growth, the effects of unhealthy economically, sustainable economic and developmental growth, and the effects on social change with thriving citizens*. I considered materials that were published within the last 5 years.

Conceptual Framework

The theory of constraints (TOC) was developed by Goldratt and Cox (1984), and Watson, Blackstone, and Gardiner (2007) supported Goldratt and Cox (1984) by agreeing that TOC provides a comprehensive look into management philosophy policies. Goldratt and Cox asserted that organizations thrive or diminish not as processes but as systems. This theory can best be described as a system of continuous improvement. This system identifies the weakest link in the organization's process. The TOC is a series of methods organizations can use to improve overall performance. The system recognizes what is restricting progression and finds ways to correct the underlying problems. Below are five focusing steps in TOC designed to help management identify constraints and increase areas of performance (Goldratt & Cox, 1984):

1. Identify the constraint.
2. Decide how to exploit the constraint.
3. Subordinate everything else to the above decision.
4. Elevate the constraint.
5. Go back to Step 1 to identify other constraints.

With TOC, managers are tasked with three decision-making questions that are directly connected to the organization's goals. Managers are often faced with the objectives of what needs changing and how to execute these changes. By following the TOC thinking process, managers can observe daily processes and make decisions that would inspire continuous improvement within an organization. Goldratt and Cox (1984) suggested that an organization's main objective should be focused on making money now and in the future. To achieve this goal, all constraints must be identified and removed. At the inception of this theory, only manufacturing organizations were using this method; now, however, practitioners from various business sectors have acknowledged and incorporated TOC processes (Goldratt, 1984).

Rahman (1998) provided a significant overview of research on the TOC with a meta-analysis of 139 articles in 29 journals. Articles were grouped into different categories based on study types: conceptual, enhancement, comparison, and area of application (purchasing, accounting, administration, education, and quality). Rahman suggested that the TOC provides a platform for organization operations with two major components: ongoing improvement and a general approach for problem analysis and solution development termed the "thinking process" (p. 355). The TOC encompasses both a philosophy of operations and a system of problem analysis and solution development.

Originally designed by Goldratt (1990b, 1994) to recognize and address production problems, the TOC has since been extended into service industries. Today, where organizations compete in a complex market, many fail to maintain their

competitive edges in the delivery of services (Rahman, 1998). Goldratt developed two influential parts to the TOC: (a) perception, which supports continuous improvement, including five focus steps; and (b) a broad methodology for investigating, analyzing, and solving complex problems (Rahman, 1998). Both of these components can play a significant role in development of more robust and successful organizations.

Goldratt (1993, 1994) extended the TOC further with a technique termed the *current reality tree* to identify organization policy constraints. It is important to identify these constraints and necessary to prioritize them according to the impacts on the goals of the organization. The process of addressing policy issues was referred to as the thinking process (Noreen, Smith, & Mackey, 1995; Rahman, 1998). Noreen et al. (1995) characterized thinking process as a major intellectual achievement, likening it to the invention of calculus (p. 149).

By the late 1990s, the TOC was emerging from recognition as a production system to a broader construct for any organization (Rahman, 1998). Though few studies until then had focused on nonmanufacturing industries, research began to move into a much wider range of service industries as well. Goldratt explored the concepts surrounding the thinking process in a series of books on the TOC (Goldratt, 1990a, 1990b, 1994; Goldratt & Cox, 1984; Goldratt & Fox, 1986)

Naor et al. (2013) tested whether the TOC was a theory and whether it was a good theory. Naor et al. based testing criteria on Wacker's (1998, 2004, 2008) framework. Wacker developed theory criteria through theory-building literature. Naor et al. decided to use these criteria because they mirror an agreement in other studies between other

theorists regarding defining mechanisms of theory and shared set of qualities for a respectable theory. Conceptual definition, domain limitations, relationship building, and predications establish the TOC as a theory (Naor et al., 2013). If the TOC is a good theory, it must have eight virtues: It must be unique, save money and resources, hold traditional values, be widely applicable, produce growth, remain consistent in internal processes, be capable of refutation, and focus on ideas (Naor et al., 2013). According to Naor et al. (2013), the TOC adhered to all eight; therefore, TOC satisfied all the requirements of a good theory to use in everyday practice.

Sale and Sale (2013) conducted an empirical study highlighting the use and acceptance of the TOC. They developed a questionnaire using a Likert-type scale and emailed it to organizations that were currently using the TOC in their business units (Sale & Sale, 2013). Information was gathered from discussion groups, guest books of TOC websites, and the TOC Special Interest Group of the American Production and Inventory Control Society (Sale & Sale, 2013). A total of 742 e-mails went out, generating 191 responses (Sale & Sale, 2013). Sale and Sale examined the relationship between the use of the TOC and business unit performance through the lens of four hypotheses: (a) There is no relationship between the TOC and business unit, (b) no relationship between throughput accounting and business unit, (c) no relationship between drum-buffer-rope scheduling and business unit, and (d) no relationship between the five steps of continual improvement process and business unit. Through analysis of variance testing, the authors determined that there were relationships among all four hypotheses and rejected the null hypotheses (Sale & Sale, 2013). As the development of the TOC, organizations are still

incorporating its methodology to increase productivity and increase their business unit operations.

In a 3-year study conducted by Linhart and Skorkovsky (2014), the TOC thinking process was tested in a concrete company. The two objectives of this study were to implement project systems and identify constraints, as well to examine the concrete company for economic growth after 3 years. Linhart and Skorkovsky (p. 1344) developed four hypotheses:

H1. If the organization shortens projects and increases the managers' ability to handle several projects without interference of designed systems, over the course of 3 years' sales will increase by 25%.

H2. If the organization recognizes the constraint, there will be a decrease in the overage inventory.

H3. New system application should generate an atmosphere to allow inventory to be stable.

H4. The designed in the new system will provide the production to increase by 10% yearly. Add summary and synthesis throughout to connect back to your problem statement.

The organization in Linhart and Skorkovsky's (2014) study needed to implement a new project management scheduling system using the TOC. To achieve the organization's goals, Watson et al. (2007) suggested the TOC to be the foundation for many practices. Due to the economic problems, the organizations suffered in handling several projects, limitations on manufacturing and improvement process (Linhart and

Skorkovsky, 2014)). Linhart and Skorkovsky suggested that the organization's sales were more than its actual ability to produce products. Over the course of 3 years, Linhart and Skorkovsky explored how the organization handled projects through observing projects that could take 3 months to 2 years to complete. The concrete company employed 32 workers that included engineers working together at the same time on 90 projects (Linhart & Skorkovsky, 2014). Linhart and Skorkovsky stated three stages to implementing the new scheduling systems with the TOC: technical (installing systems through IT); training (educating managers and engineers on the TOC); and involvement (becoming skilled in using the system). After 2 years, the concrete company started to see major changes in how quickly requests were processed (Linhart & Skorkovsky, 2014). The number of projects completed on time increased, and the company could handle several projects at one time with few delays. Inventory decreased and remained stable. Although organizations have complex issues that may hinder companies from achieving their overall goals, the TOC thinking process tool can help managers develop innovative ways to overcome obstacles and constraints.

Simsit, Gunay, and Vayvay (2014) conducted a review of the TOC in five eras of Goldratt's TOC evolution. Listed below are Goldratt's books that show the advancement of TOC and how the theory continues to change and improve within other industries.

- Optimized production technology (OPT; 1979–1984); organizations focused on meeting demands and increasing output.
- *The Goal* (1984–1990), Goldratt's book for managers to gain knowledge, market, and manage OPT.

- *The Haystack Syndrome* (1990–1994) concentrated on measuring finance and operation systems.
- *It's Not Luck* (1994–1997), a guide for effective decision making.
- *Critical Chain* (1997–2010); planning and managing resources.

As more organizations strategize on how to have a competitive advantage, the need for understanding how to improve the organizations' process is ongoing. The TOC has evolved into a commonly used management philosophy tool that can now be used in every industry.

Organizations primarily develop goals that focus on how to increase profit. Simsit et al. (2014) stated that constraints are the core obstacles that hinder organizational goals. The *It's Not Luck* era was the most important to organizations because of the introduction of the *thinking process* (Goldratt, 1994). According to Simsit et al., management has to determine what to change, what to change to, what tools are needed for the change, the scenario of what if, and how to implement and achieve change. The TOC been recognized and researched for over 30 years, and it continues to be acknowledged throughout the service sectors, manufacturing industry, and other enterprises facing operations issues (Simsit et al, 2014). In the current study, the examination of XYZ agency can benefit from using TOC to identify economic growth problems.

Pretorius (2014) conducted a review on the stages of the TOC. In this review, the Pretorius added in-between points that would enhance understanding and permit additional usage of each of the five stages of the TOC.

The first stage of the TOC is finding the constraint; once the constraint is found, the organization must determine whether the constraint is physical or a behavioral or policy issue (Pretorius, 2014). Organizations that find the constraint to be physical can proceed to Stage 2 (Pretorius, 2014). Constraints that are behavioral or policy issues are not scarce resources; therefore, managers cannot exploit the problem (Pretorius, 2014). Pretorius created an alternative stage to Step 4 that suggested that the organization develop a new policy to change the behavior of its employees. Within the decision point (a) stage is the thinking process (Pretorius, 2014). The organization must decide what policies need to be changed or if new policies need to be developed. Next, changing the organization's behavior has to be considered as a constraint. Involving other members of the organization in the thinking process would assist with changing the attitudes and behaviors within the organization (Pretorius, 2014). When policies and employee behaviors are changed, the organization can move forward to Stage 5.

Stage 2 focuses on exploiting the constraint (Pretorius, 2014). In this stage the organization is dealing with either a physical, internal, or market constraint (Pretorius, 2014).

When the decision is made to exploit the constraint, the organization can move to Stage 3. Stage 3 focuses on subordinating everything to the constraint (Pretorius, 2014).

Pretorius included four alternative decision points that define this stage: (a) the organizations must ensure that it has selected the right constraint. This is important because a company selecting the wrong constraint will observe the error instantaneously and must go back to Stage 1. Once the right constraint is chosen, decision point (b)

suggests that the organization determine if the constraints is broken or almost broken. If the constraint is not broken or nowhere near being broken, decision point (c) asks whether the system performance is satisfactory and Stages 1 through 2 need to be evaluated again. If the constraint is at the breaking point, proceed to decision point (d); this means that the constraint can and will move and the organization can move to Stage 5.

Pretorius (2014) suggested a second alternative for nonconstraints that are not moving or breaking, called the strategic stage of the process. Once the organization has evaluated every stage of the process and can ensure that it can be proactive at preventing the constraint, the organization will experience an increase of system performance without ever having to remove the constraint. Pretorius's objective was to establish that the TOC process can be applied to various types of constraint, physical or nonphysical, as well as providing in between decision points that relate to different constraints. Pretorius also established other ways to reconsider how to exploit and subordinate the constraint if it cannot be broken. This study showed the TOC process through the lens of deductive reasoning by expanding and understanding the information and then applying additional steps to the process that would assist with stopping or removing the constraint.

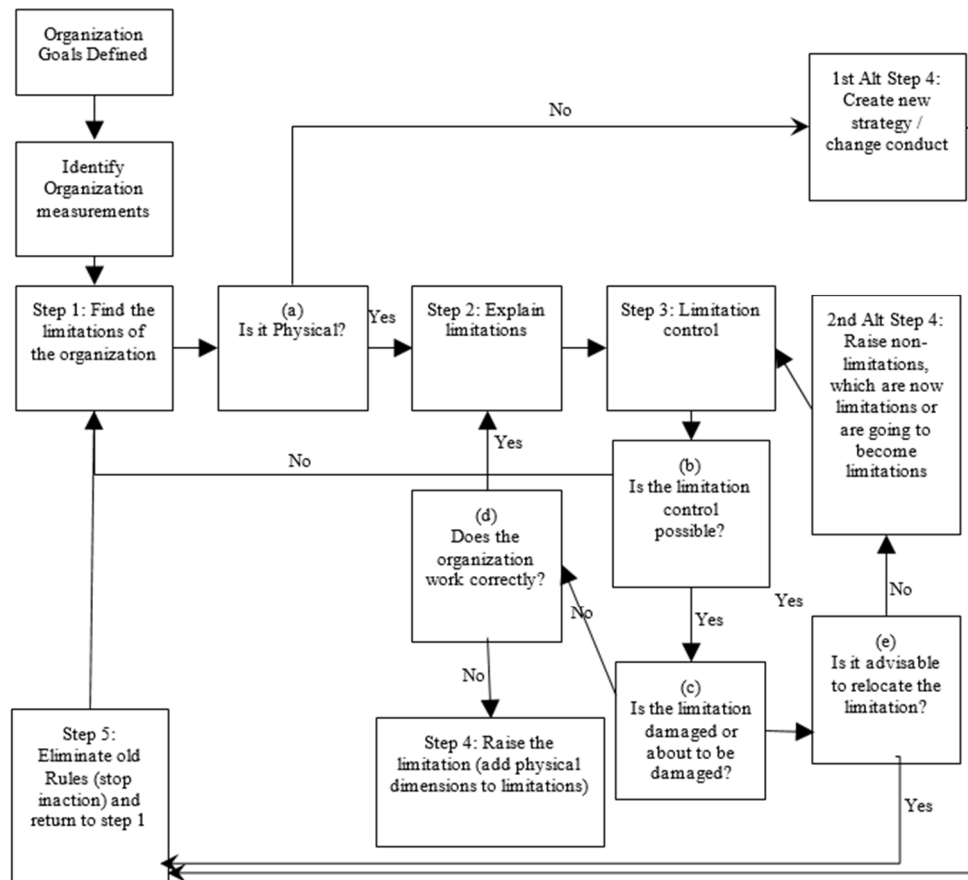


Figure 1. The five focusing steps with all in-between decision points included.

Literature Review

The literature will show that the TOC has evolved. Below are studies conducted on the theory. I examined nine industries that illustrate how this theory has progressed into other industries.

TOC in the Supply Chain

Kholopane (2015) conducted a study on TOC in a South African mine after attending a conference on how to find constraints using TOC methods. Kholopane said that organizations that want to increase profits need to handle constraints to improve

business. The objective for applying the TOC at the mine was to ensure that the South African mine would have improved production flow, decreased cost per unit, and continuous and stable production (Kholopane, 2015). The constraint was identified as the amount of time it took to process customer orders. A time buffer was implemented to signal managers when the work orders would not be completed on time, provide completion dates, and indicate when to start production on work orders based on dates given to customers (Kholopane, 2015). The TOC implemented in the production process in the South African mine was able to increase production from 5,500 tons per day to 7,500 per day (Kholopane, 2015). This supports that the TOC can be used in many organizational settings to enhance or increase production in operational involvements.

Sukalova and Ceniga (2015) conducted a review of the TOC in manufacturing organizations. Sukalova and Ceniga explored the TOC in a distribution supply chain center to see if profits would increase by correcting the constraint. Gupta (1997) stated that organizations can optimize logistics in their supply chains by applying the TOC. The TOC thinking process is commonly known as a management philosophy that allows managers to offer solutions to many organizational problems (Gupta, 1997). Qualitative data collection by Sukalova and Ceniga was from 15 small to medium distribution centers and 216 retailers in Slovakia. The constraints identified were unreliability, late deliveries, inadequate delivery, and an internal process that was too long (Sukalova & Ceniga, 2015).

Mixed methods research conducted by Ogleshorpe and Heron (2013) identified seven constraints in several United Kingdom local food supply chains by applying the

TOC. Oglethorpe and Heron studied 23 cases and reached data saturation at case 17. Cases were placed in alphabetical order from A to W arranged by food groups, supply tier, and region (Oglethorpe & Heron, 2013). Data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The seven constraints were: (a) market saturation of retailers with the same product; (b) marketers increasing the cost of units output to cover marginal cost; (c) hiring skilled individuals matching job description; (d) small supply chain competing with larger chains; (e) the need to build relationships with local produce suppliers; (f) large and small suppliers understanding the difference in barriers relating to their compliances on policies and certifications; and (g) changes in human behavior (Oglethorpe & Heron, 2013). For this particular study, Oglethorpe and Heron selected Case G, because it provided mixed grocery distribution and dealt with retail operations that involved door-to-door sales to customers as they were also wholesalers to various retailers. Applying the TOC to Case G identified the constraint to be purchasing foods that were not delivered through direct sales to consumers. This led to the organization wasting its finances, wasting product that was thrown away due to expiration and over ordering; and wasting employees' hours, which were scheduled based on work load. Consumers reverted to the accessibility, pricing, and convenience of the grocery store (Oglethorpe & Heron, 2013, p. 1351). The food chain decided to correct these constraints by ending door-to-door service and purchasing the grocery store the consumers were using. The warehouse was closed and moved to a central location, which decreased the organization's operating cost. By doing this the company could now provide pickup and delivery for other suppliers on a smaller scale.

Fullerton and Wempe (2008) examined consumers' demand for quality products that were delivered on time and with less lead time. The decision making involved process managers correcting constraints by changing how they replenished products centered on the amount sold. Managers needed to make certain that they identified the right product as the constraint to increase profits (Fullerton & Wempe, 2008). The distribution center had to ensure that it provided the retailers with products they requested or ordered. Applying the TOC approach to the distribution supply chain could increase profits to the organizations by acting quickly to identify and remove constraints.

Geri and Ahituv (2008) studied how 139 medium- and large-sized organizations implemented interorganizational systems (IOS) with the TOC approach. For this quantitative study, they studied companies who had earnings from 7 million to 2 billion dollars, and employ nine to 14,000 employees. Selected organizations had the resources and the ability to implement IOS. Understanding why companies start IOS and what the influences are at the planning stage were the central questions for the study (Geri & Ahituv, 2008). These questions were vital to the study because companies were required to use the TOC approach. Using this approach can help organizations stay focused on critical issues that can increase the chances of a successful implementation process. Geri and Ahituv constructed and mailed surveys to chief information officers or those responsible for organization communication. They created four hypotheses (Geri & Ahituv, 2008, p. 352):

- H1. The perceived potential strategic value of IOS positively influences the IOS implementation status.

- H2. The perceived potential transactional value of IOS does not affect the IOS implementation status.
- H3. A power position of an initiator positively affects the IOS implementation status.
- H4. Maximal infeasibility is negatively related to the IOS implementation status.

Geri and Ahituv (2008) found that all hypotheses were accepted except for Hypothesis 4, which showed a negative influence with a strong influence on IOS implementation. Hypothesis 4 identified some organizations that wanted to implement IOS system but lacked funds. Understanding that implementing IOS is complex, Geri and Ahituv suggested that organizations use the TOC to enhance and guide their forays into interorganizational e-commerce.

Coman and Ronen (2007) developed a constraints model that permitted organizations to view the TOC in high-tech industries. The model included two types of constraints: tactical and strategic. Tactical constraints are issues for midlevel managers to center attention on how to grow the worth of their organizations. Strategic constraints are concerns for senior level managers, which include marketing, continual improvements, and any core problems that exist (Coman & Ronen, 2007).

Coman and Ronen (2007) conducted a case study in a high-tech organization with revenues of \$40 million per year, employing 200 staff, which produced two electronic products and had an excellent work environment. They conducted interviews with managers, reviewed financial documents, and collected additional data through

observation. Coman and Ronen compiled the data and identified strategic constraints using the classic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. Using the same data, they applied the TOC steps to tactical constraints. The SWOT model provided a list of constraints, but it did not identify how to resolve and manage the constraints. Coman and Ronen determined that the constraints in the high-tech organization were marketing and sales and research and development. Managers were able to examine the products manufactured and provide a product that would be cost effective for customers and increase the organization's profitability.

TOC Application to Business Models

Spector (2011) combined the TOC with the business model. The review discussed the use of the Coman and Ronen (2007) extended the TOC model for organizations to determine if a constraint is related to a tactical or strategic constraints. Ostenwalder, Pigneur, and Tucci (2005) adopted nine business model theory dimensions: value proposition, market section, communication, and distribution channels, establishing a relationship among clients, vital components needed to make the business model possible, activities needed to implement the model, including partners and motivating them to be involved in the business model, revenue generated by the business, and cost structure of the business (p. 3389). Spector illustrated how to determine where a constraint exists in an organization's business model. The organization can still use the five steps of the TOC; however, the organization must address internal and external constraints with a different approach when the constraint is the business model (Spector, 2011).

According to Coman and Ronen (2007), tactical constraints are the organization's business process, and strategic constraints are elements that influence the company's business arena. Coman and Ronen recommended five steps for organizations to use that would increase the success rates of their core competencies. The company should recognize the constraints; ascertain business strategic constraints (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats); evaluate gaps between the company and the business model; develop a plan that aligns the company with the business model; and implement the plan and monitor for effectiveness (Coman & Ronen, 2007).

In extending the TOC to the business model when the constraint is competitors in the market place, Coman and Ronen (2007) suggested that two extra steps be included before implementing the plan and monitoring for success. The organization must analyze the differences between its business model and the competitors', with an emphasis on the market and the constraint (Coman & Ronen, 2007). The organization would then develop a plan that would improve its competitive advantage in the market place.

If the constraint is the business model that is most often used in a business market or industry, Spector (2011) suggested examining the case of Amazon.com. To compete with Barnes and Noble, Amazon constructed a business model. After developing the business model, Amazon incorporated the TOC into its plan. The distribution channels were the constraints. Barnes and Noble had stores where customers could physically go to purchase books, whereas Amazon distribution was limited to online sales (Spector, 2011). By exploring and analyzing Barnes and Noble's business model and noting the

differences between them, Amazon was able to strategically develop a plan that gave it a competitive advantage (Spector, 2011).

Osterwalder et al. (2005) conducted a meta-model study on business models and their origins. Many practitioners discuss and use business models without fully understanding their potentials. Osterwalder et al. stated that models are designed to show how an organization conducts business. Timmer (1998) and Magretta (2002) agreed with Osterwalder et al. that elements found in the business model define the business model. Osterwalder et al. provided differences in the process and business model. The process model examines the process implementation of business cases (Osterwalder et al., 2005). The strategy model (SWOT) was designed from a competitive stance and can be used with the business model to allow the organization to see where its business fits among its competitors. Osterwalder et al. stated that business models are not successful, but the way they are implemented can lead to success. The nine elements that make up a good business model are value proposition, targeting customers, communication and distribution channels, relationship with clients, partnerships, cost model, revenue model, capability, and value configuration (Osterwalder et al., 2005, p. 32). Organizations should understand what business models are and develop their business models based on the goals they want to achieve.

The Evolving TOC

According to Tulasi and Rao (2012), over the years, practitioners have seen the TOC evolve in both methodology and application. Tulasi and Rao studied three paradigms (logistics, global performance measure, and the thinking process) and

explained how they have evolved. The logistic paradigms look to find constraints in the system to increase the organization's throughput (Tulasi & Rao, 2012). Now that the TOC has progressed, organizations are not using optimized production technology software; they have transitioned to include the drum-buffer-rope technique with Goldratt's five steps of the TOC (Tulasi & Rao, 2012). The drum-buffer-rope technique schedules projects based on how crucial the product is for throughput (Tulasi & Rao, 2012). As experiencing success with extending the TOC to project management, organizations are applying it to project cost and risk management.

TOC and the Hotel Industry

Dalci and Kosan (2012) evaluated a five-star, 72-room Turkish hotel through descriptive observation that involved 50 employees. The hotel was experiencing a decline in customer satisfaction, profits, and occupancy rates. The authors examined the hotel through indirect and direct observation first to find the constraints. They noticed that phone calls to the front desk were not answered; too many calls came in at one time; unnecessary calls took up valuable time; and information was not communicated to customers in a timely manner (Dalci & Kosan, 2012). The authors interviewed hotel guests to find out what was dissatisfying from their perspectives. Guests complained that during the peak of summer, they were unhappy with the process for checking in or out of the hotel and long waits on the phone make reservations at the hotel's restaurant. From this preliminary observation, Dalci and Kosan found the constraint to be the front desk and agreed that applying the TOC thinking process would help resolve the problem.

Dalci and Kosan (2012) begin their study by directly observing staff members. They examined how information was to be exchanged between departments, the length of time it took to answer guest calls, and the check-in and -out process. To understand the employees' perceptions, they assembled a focus group of 10 employees from various departments to provide information on how they viewed the hotel (Dalci & Kosan, 2012). Information acquired from the focus group revealed that employees felt overworked and were dissatisfied with their jobs. When employees are not performing at their fullest potentials because of dissatisfaction, this hinders the organization from making any current or future profits (Dalci & Kosan, 2012).

TOC and Customer Service

Goldratt and Cox's (1992) bottom-line objective for any company is to make money now and in the future. Customers' loyalty is vital to increasing an organization's profits, since this has a direct relationship to customer satisfaction (Goldratt & Cox, 1992). Wilkins, Merrilees, and Herington (2010) agreed with Dalci and Kosan (2012) that it is important for companies to gain customer loyalty and customer satisfaction to make a profit margin. An organization that applies the TOC thinking process is seeking to understand the current problems within the organization, create and analyze solutions, and evaluate how the change will impact the organization's performance.

Dalci and Kosan (2012) observed a language barrier between the guests and the restaurant staff. The staff were not bilingual and could not speak English, German, or French, whereas the majority of their guests did speak those languages. Another concern was that when a guest called to make a restaurant reservation, the front desk staff would

receive the call and then call the restaurant to check for seating availability. This process was cumbersome because the restaurant staff had to write down the guest's request and then let the front desk know whether seating was available in the restaurant; the guest would then receive a call back from the front desk. Dalci and Kosan stated that providing this type of service degrades the quality and value of customer service and leads to customer dissatisfaction and a decrease in profits, customer loyalty, and occupancy rates.

Polito, Watson, and Vokurka (2006) agreed with Dalci and Kosan (2012) that when a company starts to implement change, it needs to construct a current reality tree. The current reality tree helps to identify the problem; then the company constructs an evaporating cloud diagram to also identify what needs to change and what the change needs to be (Goldratt, 1984). After creating the evaporating cloud diagram, the company creates a future reality diagram to determine if the solution will apply to the problem now or in the future. Dalci and Kosan (2012) agreed with Dettmer (2007) that an organization must set clear goals for the future and develop an intermediate objective map to achieve future success. After applying the TOC *thinking process*, Dalci and Kosan suggested that the hotel cross-train restaurant staff on taking reservations. Other suggestions included installing an integrated computer system between the front desk and restaurant to allow the front office staff to check restaurant availability and make reservations in a timely manner, and educating restaurant staff on how to use the computer as well. The authors argued that this would reduce the number of calls from guests to the front desk for restaurant reservations. Also, employees working the front desk would not feel

overwhelmed. Dalci and Kosan stated that hotel management needed to allocate funding for cross-training employees.

Golmohammadi (2015) and Kholopane (2015) conducted a study that involved implementing the TOC in an organization with scheduling systems constraints. Yashin and Semenov (2013) stated that the TOC provides an organization with continual system productivity. Applying the TOC enables an organization to recognize constraints in system performance, which allows the organization to design new ways to control constraints (Alsmadi, Almani, & Khan, 2014; Zadry & Yusof, 2006). The authors developed three simulation scenarios based on three scheduling systems. De Souza, Sobreiro, Nagano, and Manfrinato (2013), Yao (2012), and Sobreiro and Nagano (2012) are a few of the authors who have discussed success with applying the TOC to production scheduling. Scenario 1 and System 1 were developed together to ensure that the scheduling system would reduce the production batch size. The simulation showed that when the batch size was reduced profits increased. Scenario 2 and System 1 were paired to explore solutions for changes in release time in production. Golmohammadi (2015) noticed no changes in Scenario 2 and System 1 in the release time and ongoing improvement process. The last scenario and System 1 were programmed to run at the same time, changing the input variable (Golmohammadi, 2015). These results showed that as the system decreased batch size and production release time, profits and throughputs increased.

Golmohammadi (2015) provided five reasons for conducting a case study through simulation: (a) using the TOC in complex scheduling systems; (b) flows in complex

systems create several constraints; (c) the environment of this organization provided an excellent setting to test TOC and the buffer effect; (d) scheduling and rule of operations; and (e) examining the impact on throughput. Although Golmohammadi tested the effectiveness of the TOC through simulations, Wang et al. (2014), Chang (2012), and Zheng, Gao, and Wang (2012) explored the TOC usage in scheduling systems. Studies have shown that organizations can use TOC in the most complex systems to work out constraints.

TOC and Management Constraints

Mishra and Palo (2014) explored through qualitative phenomenology methods that the TOC thinking process was present in an Indian administrative service. Several studies that have focused on removing constraints in the area of management. Mishra and Palo and Moss (2007) stated that the TOC research is lacking on companies that are not for profit, including government and administrative services. Ring and Perry (1985) suggested that the public and private sectors view constraints differently. Mishra and Palo collected research data from 28 administrators through conversational interviews. Data saturation was reached and interviews stopped at 21. They identified four constraints: bureaucratic process, political interference in administration, quantum of responsibilities, and human resources and policy related issues (Mishra & Palo, 2014, p. 192). Managers needed to find gaps in policy to have freedom to make decisions without waiting for approvals from various individuals. This was a major administrative constraint among all interviewed. Officials would take 6 months to make decisions including various individuals involved in the decision-making process (Mishra & Palo, 2014). Political

constraints can be managed by managers if they provide those in political power with good solid reasoning why their ideas will work. Managers can handle quantum constraints by prioritizing the workload by what is most important. This includes time management. To handle policy constraints, managers must know when to approach officers (political representatives) with new suggestions on forming policies (Mishra & Palo, 2014). Human resource constraints can be managed by hiring the right individual for the right position. Mishra and Palo showed that nonprofit organizations can apply the TOC thinking process to achieve and enhance administrative objectives.

TOC and Project Management

Organizations are making decisions to use the TOC in projects that are ongoing or new. Izmailov (2014) conducted a review of organizations considering the TOC for project management. Maintaining multiple projects at once causes resources to be stretched. This then creates constraints for the organization to determine which project is more important (Izmailov, 2014). It is often difficult to complete projects on time and remain within budget. This occurs because managers' priorities shift, projects overlap, problems in the first project linger into another project, and organizations can miss new opportunities by responding to slowly.

Izmailov (2014) stated that managers cannot avoid working several projects at once; however, they are pressured to create new opportunities daily. Managers recognize that starting a new project diverts already strained resources from ongoing work and jeopardizes existing commitments. Both Cullen and Parker (2014) and Parker, Parsons, and Isharyanto (2015) agreed with Izmailov (2014) that applying the TOC to project

management provides for the following: solutions to robust planning, more effective scheduling processes, changing how many people work or manage the project, and bringing the right people in at the right time. Also, the Project Management Institute (PMI; 2013, p. 17) stated that managers overseeing projects should possess the ability to manage projects effectively. Since the inception of the TOC, organizations have evolved from old management concepts to a new era of thinking that can now create new means of increasing an organization's profit. Izmailov stated that the main objectives for any organization are to increase profitability, acquire a competitive advantage, and meet the demands of consumers when applying TOC. Project management along with the TOC can help managers streamline their projects to work more efficiently and effectively.

Rand (2000) explored Goldratt's book *Critical Chain* for project management and the possibility of replacing CPM/PERT with TOC. Rand through observation did not see any success with the current usage of CPM/PERT and argued that this system commonly does not work. Applying a new approach would reduce late completion of projects, stop overspending, and cut out areas of that are not needed (Rand, 2000). The CPM/PERT process inability to handle these mounting issues demands for a more detailed and rigorous inquiry and the usage of the TOC. Use of the TOC finds the core problem and then invents a breakthrough solution (Rand, 2000). To enhance organization project management, the TOC would be the best practice. This system would allow management to handle different behaviors in how to construct the project and manage it after completion (Rand, 2000).

Fenbert and Fleener (2002) conducted a study on the TOC multiproject management at Boeing that explored the use of drum-buffer-rope and the TOC. By implementing this process, Boeing was able to predict an end date, modify schedules' algorithms, and balance resources across multiple projects (Fenbert & Fleener, 2002). Managers can reduce risks and achieve project success by implementing buffers. The global performance measure paradigm requires the organization to increase throughput and reduce inventory and operation expenses. The TOC methodology outlines how an organization can achieve its goals and have long-term earning potential (Tulasi & Rao, 2012). The thinking process paradigm requires organizations to make decisions on "what to change, what to change to, and how to implement change" (Tulasi & Rao, 2012, p. 337). The TOC thinking process has evolved to include three trees of logic: (a) current reality reveals the root cause of the problem; (b) future reality tests the solutions for the problem; and (c) transition shows the state of the organization through a flow chart (Goldratt, 1984). Tulasi and Rao (2012) provided two additional tools to the logic tree that answer the "in order to have we must" question (p. 338). Evaporating cloud is a tool that should be used with future reality to identify the problem and provide solutions. The prerequisite tree identifies obstacles that prevent injection from the evaporating cloud. The organization at this part of the plan must ask if this is adequate or satisfactory to resolve the constraint. The application of the TOC to the area of project management logistics paradigm helps to enhance production, increase revenue, and throughput (Tulasi & Rao, 2012). This review explored how the TOC has evolved to include additional tools achieve organizational success.

TOC and Usage in Contemporary Organizations

Leadership and management are asking critical questions within the organization before developing new improvement strategies. What areas need improvement to become competitive, and what is the relationship between improvement and investment opportunities? Chigbo (2013) reviewed understanding the TOC in contemporary organizations, suggesting that next-generation managers are using the TOC as the top contender over other management theories. More contemporary organizations recognize that the TOC focuses on ways to achieve and maintain ongoing improvements. The problem companies are seeing among management theories is that most theories try to fix the entire company, which is not feasible. Chigbo suggested that the TOC allows the organization to seek out a constraint and then allocate resources to the right department. Organizations that incorporate the TOC are able to center attention on corrective measures; once they are able to comprehend the TOC, they can apply it to achieve their organizational goals (Chigbo, 2013). Organizations must develop plans that will allow them to measure and monitor their performances. Applying the TOC enables the organization to direct attention to vital problems and causes versus seeking out warning signs of the issues (Chigbo, 2013). The TOC is practiced around the world in different business sectors. Organizations such as Procter and Gamble and General Electric are among the few that are using the TOC in their daily operations.

TOC and State Government

Robbins (2011) conducted a qualitative case study through observation on a county registration and licensing department. The goal for conducting this study was to

streamline the process of registering vehicles, animals, and weapons. Due to company layoffs, it was important to streamline the process to make it more efficient for residents, who are required by law to register these items. R1 represented vehicles, R2 animals, and R3 firearms. The department had 40 hours per week to process registration requests, with a maximum of 20 hours per week available for processing. To meet the demands of county residents required a total of 176 hours. In Process 3 of the system representation county heavy equipment maintenance activities service times were insufficient. R1 processed 90, R2 100, and R3 110; this required 50 hours to process. In this process, the county has 40 hours to process, making Process 3 the constraint. When Robbins applied the TOC to the county registration process, the issue was the amount of time it took to service registrations of vehicles, animals, and firearms. The study showed unused resources in registration times. R2 and R3 were over, and R1 was under. After applying the TOC to the process and correcting the constraint, the organization saw an improvement in service delivery, including a surplus each week in revenue (Robbins, 2011). Continuing to offer cost-effective services was the main objective; however, state and local government struggled with maintaining the budget. Costs were increasing daily, causing resources that were once available to decrease. In order to operate within these restraints and maximize the need to meet the community demands with limited resources, governments should apply the TOC.

Fox (2012) conducted a study in Utah's Department of Workforce Services (DWS). This agency experienced a major downfall during the economic recession. DWS was responsible for providing service to laid-off workers who needed public assistance

with food and Medicaid. As more people were laid off, DWS's work load tripled. Due to a decrease in tax revenue, the Utah State Senate had to cut the agency's expenses (Fox, 2012). DWS earlier used the Lean and Kaizen approach for improvement process to address issues; however, it was to no avail. The agency saw only minimal success with this process. In 2009, a consultant introduced the TOC to DWS. By this time, the TOC had a remarkable reputation among private industries and the armed forces. The consultant focused on maintaining service levels in the processing of federal assistance programs, as this department had the most increased workload. As DWS was implementing the TOC in the department, the State Senate pressured the agency to increase service levels while cutting the budget from \$80 million to \$9 million (Fox, 2012). Top agency officials participated in seminars to learn how the TOC could reduce the behavior of complex systems and apply it to departmental processes. After officials became aware of small changes that would improve performance and effectiveness within the department, they engaged the 900 DWS employees in the process. DWS began to see change only a few months after starting the program (Fox, 2012).

The DWS continued with throughput operating strategy that attacked systemic issues with focus teams and local improvements (Fox, 2012). With the TOC, DWS achieved its goal of saving \$9.4 million out of its annual operating budget. After Utah's success with the TOC, other states have launched the same initiative and achieved similar outcomes. Fox (2012) stated that federal and state agencies should pay close attention to the TOC and how they can use it in their operations.

Ciegis and Jasinskas (2006) stated the TOC provides an alternative outlook to problems of an organization. This means that leaders do not have to strive to solve all issues; however, they must find the constraint and concentrate on it. Ciegis and Jasinskas evaluated governmental support for using the TOC in agriculture. With a broader philosophy of this theory to solve economic issues relating to the government trade support. Constraints are both physical and nonphysical; however, nonphysical restraints are what most organizations encounter. Government policy is considered a nonphysical constraint. Such support can distort the market and reduce the permeability of more efficient companies (Ciegis & Jasinskas, 2006). Having gained the governmental support, manufactures would acquire productive equipment that would enable them to increase permeability. As productivity increases, the country competitiveness also increases when government stops being a constraint and starts supporting trade (Ciegis & Jasinskas, 2006).

Summary on TOC

The organizations addressed above implemented the TOC to help managers with scheduling in order to see what their constraints were. TOC literature can be used in a wide variety of industries to help identify limitations in organizations. Organizations that implemented the TOC held a competitive advantage over their competitors. Managers were able to make effective decisions in finding solutions to hindrances within the organization when they used the TOC thinking process. Although this theory has evolved, the ultimate goal is to find a solution to achieve long-term financial success.

Georgia Economic Development and Growth

Georgia is the largest state in the Southeast United States. The state has many industries and manufactures a wide variety of products. Georgia residents have experienced many fortunes and misfortunes since the 2008 recession, and population growth has increased. The state leadership facilitates job creation by encouraging domestic companies to expand and recruiting international companies to relocate or open new offices within Georgia. In order to be competitive with other states, Georgia Department of Economic Development offers an incentive package. The tourism and film industries also contribute to the state's economic development. Competition with other states is stiff, and Georgia's economy continues in recovery.

Hanks and Harker (2013) led an assessment on employment in Georgia and rural downtowns to determine if enough revenue was made to encourage economic growth. The primary concern for this study was to detect if these downtown retail centers could produce a sustainable economic engine for the state. Hanks and Harker expressed concern that downtowns were not a major component in the state's overall economic development plan, noting that downtowns could make major contributions to economic growth for job development and retention. Hanks and Harker divided Georgia's 345 downtowns into seven population strata. City populations ranged from 1,000 to 2,500 for smaller cities and 100,000 to 500,000 for larger cities. Because Atlanta's population was more than 550,000, it was excluded from the study. Further research showed that Georgia downtowns had the potential to create and maintain jobs. Hanks and Harker maintained that lawmakers should focus on locating more companies in downtown areas to drive

economic development. Retail stores and public administration make up 39% of jobs in downtown cities, according to data collected by Nielsen Clantas (as cited in Hanks & Harker, 2013).

Kiersz (2015) wrote an article published in *The Business Insider* that discussed the best and worst state economies. Georgia ranked 15 out of 51 for manufacturing and textile industries. This ranking was derived by gathering information based on prices of the current housing market, payroll from non-farm-related jobs, unemployment figures, job growth, GDP per capita, and state government surplus and deficits (Kiersz, 2015).

Georgia's unemployment rate ranked third in the nation in 2014 at 6.9%. This ranking is despite the 2.6% population growth and 6.6% housing market improvement the state experienced (Kiersz, 2015). A previous study performed from 2013 to 2014 by Kiersz and Holodny (2014) ranked Georgia 12th in the nation as one of the slowest states to recover. During this period, the state saw a 1.7% increase in jobs created, adding 68,700 jobs (Kiersz & Holodny, 2014).

An assortment of business leaders, volunteered state legislators, and entrepreneurs provided their feedbacks on ways to promote growth and economic safety in the nonpartisan publication *The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)* (2015). Laffer, Moore, and Williams (2015) mentioned in their book *Rich States Poor States* that the research published by ALEC helps explain how the balance of power should be between state and federal government. Luard (2016) agreed that, when state or federal government has more power over the other, there is an imbalance of power. Table 1 shows Georgia's economic outlook and performance ranking over a 4-year span. This

was based on 15 state policies and three performance measures: state GDP, absolute domestic migration, and non-farm-payroll employment.

Table 1

Georgia Ranking out of 50 States

Year	Economic outlook rank	Economic performance rank
2012	10	33
2013	8	31
2014	9	27
2015	7	25

Note. Georgia ranking is from Laffer et al. (2015).

The recommendation of the authors was for Georgia to decrease corporate and income taxes. Georgia business leaders held numerous meetings to discuss improving and reforming the state's competitive advantage. All states are charged with making decisions and developing policies that will spearhead economic development. Unfortunately, the road to economic growth is narrow.

Davis (2015) with the Andrew Young School Center for State and Local Finance at Georgia State University (2015) used quantitative methods to pinpoint where Georgia ranked among other states when it came to budget, taxes, and other indicators.

Information for the study was obtained from the following sources: U.S. Census Bureau annual population, survey of state and local government finance reports, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Bureau of Economic Analysis. Only four of the 38 metrics created by Davis were applicable for this study. The findings disclosed an increase in population of 13.3% from 2004 to 2014, making Georgia eighth in the nation and a 1% decrease in

unemployment between 2013 and 2014 (Davis, 2015). Georgia ranked 45th in the nation for unemployment. In 2014, the state's unemployment rate was 6.6%, which was higher than the national rate at 5.6% (Davis, 2015). Georgia placed 49th for per capita and local revenue and 50th for per capita and local road expenditures (Davis, 2015). As the state's population increases, the unemployment rate continues to increase and show an unsteady economy.

Compared to other states' fiscal health, the state of Georgia grows moderately. Norcross (2013) conducted an economic study to assess how Georgia fared in fiscal health compared to other states. Norcross developed five categories to determine fiscal health rankings: cash solvency, budget solvency, long-term solvency and liability ratio, service level solvency, and trust fund solvency. From an economic perspective, Georgia ranked 28th in cash solvency, 33rd in budget solvency, 30th in long-term solvency and liability ratio, 16th in service level solvency, and 19th in trust fund solvency. Overall, the state ranked 26th as the state of Georgia is indebted by billions of dollars and obligations. Norcross (2013) recommended the state look at its long-term fiscal health before making or implementing future public policy decisions.

Atkinson and Andes (2010) studied Georgia by looking at the State New Economy Index to measure how the state's economy is globalized, IT driven, entrepreneurial, innovative, and knowledge based. The authors stated that several states suffered job loss during the recession and these jobs are not predicted to return. The State New Economy Index has 26 indicators. In 2010, Georgia was ranked 19th. Two years later, when Atkinson and Andes conducted the same study again, the state ranked 18th in

five key areas: globalization, digital economy, knowledge jobs, innovation capacity, and economic dynamism. In 2014, the study was conducted again and Georgia's ranking declined to 21st. Yandle (2012) directed a review of Georgia based on the State New Economy Index and found the state to be the weakest in the nation in terms of GDP. Yandle declared that one never knows what to expect because the economy is so unpredictable.

Samuels (2015) noted Georgia has one of the highest unemployment rates in the United States and yet is home to several Fortune 500 companies. In 2013 and 2014, the state was named number one for business by *Site Selection Magazine* because of its training programs, workforce, and low taxes (Samuels, 2015). Residents who are aware of Georgia's economic issues also understand what it takes to attract corporations and convince them that Georgia is the best place to do business. The state provides low taxes, wages, and service levels. Governor Deal thinks state government should hold back and allow the private sector to help boost economic growth. This hands-off approach does not aid in increasing economic growth in the state. Samuels (2015) mentioned a tax reform bill that was passed in Georgia in 2012, which eliminated certain sales taxes. Even with the passing of this bill with lowered tax breaks, corporations are not bringing actual jobs to the state in spite of these incentives, and XYZ agency continues to lose new business and projects to other surrounding states. Small counties in the state actually have a decrease in revenue.

Maciag (2014) asserted that some states are slower than others to reveal how their economic development subsidies are doing and if they are making a difference. If the

state reveals information on economic development subsidies, the public will know which corporations receive grants, know payroll data, and be able to ascertain if the agency is upholding its commitments. Corporations receiving incentives or grants from the state must report job numbers, and according to Maciag (2014), The Georgia Department of Economic Development ranked 41st in revealing this information. This agency was heavily fined and penalized for burying data on its website regarding the state's economy and corporations' growth contributions, as well as for deleting the information after 30 days (Maciag, 2014).

The state of Georgia placed high in policy but low in overall economic performance according to the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2013). The overall economic performance indicator centered on 2- and 10-year job growth, productivity growth, overall expansion of gross state product, growth in output per job, income growth, livability, growth in per capita personal income, and median income of a four-person household adjusted for state cost of living (16). Although Georgia placed high in five areas of policy, the state was not included in the top 10 states for growth and economic development.

Beyond the numbers, Tharpe (2014) reported Georgia had an atmosphere for economic inequality, despite being selected as number one for business by *Site Selection Magazine*. Tharpe indicated that in order to determine state rankings, researchers are using a range of analyses to figure out the business climate indexes that are published by magazines such as *Tax Foundation* and *Forbes Magazine*. Low wages, decreased taxes, frail unions, and weak state policies cause states to experience increased levels of

inequality, even though they have a decent business climate (Tharpe, 2014). Regardless of high poverty rates and low-income earnings, the southeastern states are in the best sub-tropical climate, popular tourist population, and thus have a competitive advantage. Georgia ranks sixth for poverty and 11th for lowest per capita income in the nation (Tharpe, 2014).

Local Economic Development

Bradshaw and Blakely (1999) conducted a qualitative study that involved 16 states. The authors' primary focus was third-wave state economics and comparing programs, following efforts for growth, and assessing direction. Bradshaw and Blakely explored what leading states believed to be vital goals. Including identifying how states incorporated economic growth plans and allocated finances for this purpose. Third-wave economics concentrates on state growth through developing the framework for financial development through public-private partnerships, networks that leverage capital, and human resources to increase global competitiveness of a group of strategically linked firms (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999). First-wave economics consisted of state agencies attracting new and existing organizations through uncommitted firms from outdated manufacturing companies. The tools used to draw these sectors were to offer loans for relocating and a reduction in taxes. The second wave moved the organization's focus from going after organizations in other states to maintaining and increasing development of current firms. Second-wave tools provided firms with assistance to create new opportunities and increase investment by creating new businesses and increasing investments. Bradshaw and Blakely (1999) stated that third wave incentives should not

remove first and second waves; however, they should support economic growth rather than payment to organizations.

The 16 states that were selected had solid economic growth initiatives (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999). Bradshaw and Blakely (1999) collected data through interviews and from state budgets that were set aside for development. Georgia was among the states researched. Bradshaw and Blakely showed that many states varied on the extent to which they would attract new organizations to relocate, while others held firm on values and beliefs on how far they would go. The state of Georgia, however, was not deterred from attracting business, and state officials carefully examined performance of growth based on new manufacturing organizations and job location (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999). Georgia was not a contender when it came to spending state funds for economic growth; however, spending for promotions did increase. States seeking economic growth differed in budget and strategic planning. One main goal that was consistent among the states was retaining and expanding businesses to diversify their economic bases (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999).

Leigh and Blakely (2013) stated that since the recession many states had been slow to recover, while other states were not recovering from the economic downfall. Lawmakers in their representative states are faced with critical questions; however, questions concerning economic growth will not have a clear concise answer, and state and local leaders should appropriately manage issues that affect the economy and citizens. Many states have local agencies that develop and plan economic growth. These

local agencies' only focus is to recruit, create, and retain jobs in the state. Another responsibility is to work with other local state agencies to promote the state.

In earlier research by Bradshaw and Blakely (1999), when local officials concentrated on retaining current businesses, human skills, and infrastructure, this proved the best outcome for economic development. States that were successful at economic development aggressively planned and designed a strategy that involved investors, not-for-profit organizations, public groups, and business owners. Leigh and Blakely (2013) suggested churches and schools are vital for trying to build a plan that would persuade new businesses and keep existing firms in the local area (72).

Syrett and Sepulveda (2012) conducted a similar study that detailed the importance of diversity and economic growth. States and cities must be equipped to handle cultural differences when developing a plan for economic expansion. Government officials must understand how important and sensitive the approach must be to creating growth that will include diverse organizations and people (Syrett & Sepulveda, 2012). It is critical for those involved in planning to recognize the relationship between economic development and diversity. This was the first study to draw a comparison between diversity and economic growth.

Nathan (2012) agreed with Syrett and Sepulveda (2012) that as the world becomes more culturally diverse and demographics change, policymakers will have a challenge to understand economic impact. Nathan reviewed other qualitative and quantitative work, focusing on Richard Florida's work on the economics of diversity. Florida (as cited in Nathan, 2012) discussed theories that attempted to explain economic success in one

region but not in other regions. The author's concept focused on economic growth that was motivated by resourceful individuals, who like to gather in places that are culturally diverse and open to new innovative ideas. In order to be economically successful and attract new business, Florida suggested technology, talent, and tolerance for simulating and sustaining economic growth. To experience economic growth, local regions have to be receptive to a globally changing nation. Nathan described three focal points to consider for a positive economic outcome concerning diversity: minorities, communities, and a diverse community. Nathan strongly urged policymakers to fully know how to develop economic development policies that would involve different cultural backgrounds to be successful at growth.

Grodach and Seman (2013) conducted an occupational analysis of the cultural economy consisting of 30 metropolitan areas in the United States during the recession, capturing changes that occurred over the decade. Among the cities studied was Atlanta, Georgia. Since the recession had come to an end, Grodach and Seman explored whether economic growth was evenly distributed and geographically constructed in U.S. employment. The questions that surrounded this study were what states, cities, and occupations had experienced the most noticeable development or decline (Grodach & Seman, 2013). Data were collected from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Department of Labor. They selected 23 occupations and placed them into four categories: architects, artist, chefs, and designers. To be involved in the study, each city's population had to range from 1 to 19 million residents. The 30 states made up approximately 49% of the national employment (Grodach & Seman, 2013).

The metropolitan areas that bounced back were heavily invested in changing the culture in a way that enabled them to keep and enhance their competitive advantages. Areas that had a high unemployment rate before the recession saw no change in the recovery process (Grodach & Seman, 2013). However, Atlanta, with a cost of living lower than other metro cities and considered to be a city highly divested in culture, experienced a decline of 1.2% in cultural sector employment. Three out of the four categories in Atlanta had the highest decline. Due to the housing market and foreclosures, Atlanta declined in architects from 12.49% to -27%, artists declined from 25.58% to 19.65%, chefs 27.76% to 26.47%, and designers increased from -17.72% to 24.33% (Grodach & Seman, 2013). Grodach and Seman (2013) suggested regions tied to the financial, industrial, architectural, and housing sector struggled and suffered most. Larger and smaller regions affected by the high foreclosure rates struggled together; therefore, the region size or occupational ties did not matter. This major study by Grodach and Seman illustrated how the recession economically affected Atlanta in three employment sectors.

McFarland and McConnell (2013) directed a quantitative study that explored the relationship between local government policies and growth among small businesses. McFarland and McConnell discussed how local government policies differ when attracting new and existing business. They theorized that this was due to challenges in management and operation that small businesses encounter at different levels in development. McFarland and McConnell examined 109 U.S. counties with a population of 50,000 or more. Data were gathered from the International City/County Management

Association and the National League of Cities economic development surveys. These are the longest standing economic surveys in the field. McFarland and McConnell compared small business with one to nine employees with businesses that employed 10–99 people. The definition of small business economic growth included forming new firms, expanding existing firms, and relocating firms (McFarland & McConnell, 2013). Level 1 businesses had one to nine employees, generated \$1 million or less, were “mom and pop” businesses, focused on customer service and product, and wanted to see growth (but this was not the main goal). McFarland and McConnell (2013) stated level 2 businesses employed 10-99 people, provided 35% of national jobs, had high growth, had revenues of \$750,000 to \$50 million, and had the largest economic impact. McFarland and McConnell mailed surveys to 556 counties that had populations of 50,000 or more and 3,283 municipalities with populations of 10,000 or more. The study did not mention how many surveys were completed or returned. Level 1 and level 2 businesses both benefited from growth when they partnered with private businesses and industries for development of economic growth (McFarland & McConnell, 2013). Local policies focused more on Level 2, since they had a greater chance at expanding the company brand and would continue to increase economic growth. Level 1 was less of a concern and continued to have less interaction with local policymakers due to slower economic growth.

Local governments were more likely to seek out policies to spur growth and development of small businesses. Lawmakers must create policies that support and present opportunities for small business growth and include both public and private sectors to provide assistance. To close the gap between Levels 1 and 2, the authors

suggested that local governments should strengthen the relationship and develop more policies that can assist at different phases in growth (McFarland & McConnell, 2013).

Bartik (2012) conducted a study on various business tax incentives to boost local job growth. Bartik's claim was that economic developers and lawmakers thought this goal supported job growth. A significant amount of research indicated the benefits of state and local economic development policies (Bartik, 2012). Bartik's previous studies had showed the benefit of these policies on prompting job growth and increasing residents' earnings per capita. Bartik (2012) also contended that the main strategy of policies for local economic development should be to boost the quality of local labor market benefit. Policymakers and economic planners need to develop a broader policy that would pursue a larger demand for local labor markets (Bartik, 2012). Bartik suggested making state and local economic policies more informative on the effects of labor demand, tax incentives, and business services.

Kollár (2013) conducted a review on tools and strategies needed for local economic development use. Kollár stated that the same tools and strategies could be applied for international or local usage. Economic tools consisted of tax benefits, location, road construction, and training programs. Strategy development tools for the community were creation of local business, support of minority corporations, community development, and marketing (Kollar, 2013). Business development strategy continual support of new business and research and development. This is not limited to infrastructure, tourism, public service, housing, and legislation improvements. Local governments offering tax credits, exemption from paying, and other incentives would

attract new business and continue to support existing businesses. Kollár agreed with Blakey and Bradshaw (1999) about local economic development strategy and its components, which include four basic community-based strategies: business development, site location, and human development strategy. As local government engages in this strategy, attracting and obtaining businesses will not be difficult.

Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, and Tomaney (2014) stated that local and regional development leaders need to have a stronger connection and deeper interactions. This study aimed to open up conversation between local and regional officials to discuss and define regional and local development, examine similar problems, and critique development. In an earlier study conducted by Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose (2011); Leys (1996) said development policy talks have become exhausting as outdated top-down policy approaches from state officials are too strict and not flexible enough to handle cultural regional and local situations. As the economy continues to increase, it is especially challenging for political and social communications. Therefore, authors argument is that state, local, and regional government's custom design developmental strategies to address these concerns. To do so they can start by engaging in answering the above questions to begin a dialogue and connect on a higher and in-depth level.

Osgood, Opp, and Bernotsky (2012) conducted a quantitative study that agreed with Bradshaw and Blakely (1999) on third-wave economics and local economic downfall. While conducting research for this study, the authors gathered information to support their research from 1999, 2004, and 2009. The survey examinations were based on a national level database from the International City/County Management Association.

Over the course of 3 years, surveys were sent to cities that had a population of 10,000 or more and to counties with 50,000 or more residents (Osgood et al., 2012). The main objective of this study was to find the differences between economic activities, resources, and abilities of cities and counties (Osgood et al., 2012). Osgood et al. obtained only 912 respondents for 1999, 634 for 2004, and 729 for 2009. Moreover, the percentage of responding participants went from 19.6% in 2004 to a significant increase of 31.5% in 1999; 126 cities over 3 years returned surveys (Osgood et al., 2012). The statistical instruments used were descriptive, mean comparison, and principal component analysis. Osgood et al. explored different trends and variations pertaining to local economic development practices. They identified responsibility and competition issues with local economic development along with funding and barriers to economic development practices for gaining knowledge in trends and changes. Results showed 67% in 2009 and 68% of cities were responsible for increasing economic growth. While 60% had a partnership with other local agencies. Those reporting partnerships with chambers of commerce still had a decline in economic development. Local agencies reported 59% in 2004, and 81% in 1999, 75% in 2009 (Osgood et al., 2012). Cities often encountered barriers such as availability, property cost, and investment shortage.

Throughout this study, Osgood et al. (2012) identified relationships between cities and the methods they used to gain economic development. This was the first of many steps to understanding the patterns in local areas of economic development. Osgood et al. stated that more research should be conducted in this area to truly comprehend the role each entity played when partnering for economic development. During the economic

downfall local and nearby cities competed and struggled with economic strategies to boost their economies.

Taylor (2012) investigated through the use of quantitative study the formulation of governors' economic development plans, examining the issues that guided their choices relating to economic development policy. During this investigation of the literature, Taylor observed that there was a gap in literature between quantitative and qualitative studies concerning governors in economic development. Few quantitative studies existed, compared to qualitative case studies on governors' roles and policies. Several case studies explored governors' responsibilities for forming economic policy in southern states from 1936 to 1990. Taylor found that governors' involvement in the economic development process assisted in defining and redefining state government roles. Taylor assumed that governors aligned financial policies through self-interest and personal or political agendas. Forming policies for personal gain caused resources to be limited in different areas of the budget. Taylor posited three hypotheses designed: the first hypothesis stated that more economic proposals are formed based on state conditions; the second hypothesis stated that more or few local policies are created based on high and low cost of business climates; and the third hypothesis stated that with limited resources for business owners, creation of new business will either decrease or increase policies. The study showed local economic development policies stimulate growth through the low cost of conducting business in that state; however, entrepreneurship encourages growth through innovation and expanding of firms in the area (Taylor, 2012). The findings of this study also showed that governors who are concerned with their states' economic

developments regardless of rich or poor economic conditions formulated policies to either keep up or catch up to other states (Taylor, 2012). States where governors developed healthy economic policies maintained their economic edges and competitive advantages compared to other states where governors had not stayed involved and had not formulated good policies for economic development.

Feser (2014) agreed with Taylor (2012) and Katz and Bradley (2013) that many economic development policies are created by governors based on political agendas. This is achieved through controlling powers between the Republican and Democratic parties. Feser researched how the government should plan for local economic development. Regional planning in development needs to be a strong foundation that will guide local agencies on the best practices for an increased and global economy. The author's argument is that governors need to have a new approach to economic policy that is different from other local economic development policies. States that are collaborating and experimenting with other agencies to challenge outdated policies are achieving leading edge economic development (Taylor, 2014). This allows local government officials to think freely and examine current policies to find out how they are structured and funded to attract economic development.

University and College Economic Development

Breznitz and Feldman (2012) examined the role and effects that colleges and universities have on their local and regional economies. Higher learning institutions were founded to educate individuals into their career paths. Now that society has changed into a knowledge-based economy, universities and colleges' part in increasing the economy

have become more prevalent. Breznitz and Feldman stated that since the industrial revolution, the roles of colleges and universities continue to expand as a main contributor on a social and economic level (p. 135). Since universities and colleges receive state funds they are pressured to give back to society. Breznitz and Feldman discussed that over the years local policy makers have centered attention on how local universities and colleges can provide more measurable contributions to their communities and economies. Breznitz and Feldman suggested that higher learning institutions must partner with regional and local government to develop new policies that would make an impact on economic development. Colleges and universities must continue to be involved in creating an economic impact by working with local policy makers to increase economic growth in their local economies.

Tourism and Film Industries Effect on Economics

Communities residing in rural areas can benefit from tourism development. Látková and Vogt (2015) conducted a quantitative study in a Midwest state on tourism and its effect on development in rural counties. Látková and Vogt wanted to gain a perspective on residents' knowledge of tourism and how it could impact them economically. Rural areas were the focus because over the course of time they have seen a decline in manufacturing development. Tourism has been a constant means of economic development that has also promoted an actual source of revenue and work. Three rural counties were involved in the study. To participate in the study, residents had to reside in the county and own their own homes. Latkova and Vogt stated approximately 3,000 residents were randomly selected, with 350 surveys being administered; 809 surveys were

returned and completed. The survey consisted of questions on a Likert-type scale pertaining to residents' perception of tourism development and the economic role of tourism. Ages in the group varied between 50 and 69 and residents had owned their homes for about 10 years or more, with an income of \$50,000 or more.

Látková and Vogt's (2012) findings showed residents living in rural areas wanted tourism development. The authors viewed tourism as a positive influence rather than a negative impact. More interest should be placed on additional development in these areas. The implications from this study were for local government to consider rural areas for tourism development and to build public relations within the community for potential economic opportunities. Local government should be aggressive and proactive through marketing tools to expand tourism outside the city scope.

Vargas-Sánchez, Porras-Bueno, and Plaza-Mejía (2015) conducted an empirical study similar to Látková and Vogt (2012) and agreed with their findings that residents' perceptions of tourism development are mostly positive. Residents viewed tourism as a means of economic sustainability. Government should address the needs of the residents as tourism follows a growth pattern. Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2015) suggested that when residents are aware of the positive benefits from tourism, this decreases any negative notions about the increase of tourism.

Lee (2013) agreed with Látková and Vogt (2012) and Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2013) that once residents can fully understand the support of sustainable tourism, local government will be more successful at obtaining economic growth through tourism. Kim, Uysal, and Sirgy's (2013) study remains consistent with other studies. The authors

conducted a quantitative study that showed a direct relationship between the social impact of tourism and residents' sense of community well-being. Those living in surrounding counties outside of the city perceived tourism through a negative lens. State officials should involve residents in the planning of sustainable tourism development activities.

At a conference on planning of sustainable tourism development, Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik (2012) noted that tourists are in favor of visiting states that are fresh and beautiful and can provide superior service. Social, cultural, and economic development are elements of tourism development. In order for tourism to be successful, a marketing strategy, objectives and goals have to be implemented. Two important components are visitor activities and attractions. Once the planning committee completes the evaluation, implementation can start. To assist with tourism planning, Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik used SWOT methods to examine tourism development. Four major factors came out of the process: (a) improving the quality of the existing infrastructure and constructing new infrastructure; (b) strengthening institutional and human resource development; (c) branding the city as a tourist destination; and (d) defining tourist offers, products, and proper promotion and presentation (Angelevska-Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012). Tourism sustainability can only be effective if managers seek to implement economic growth, determine strategically what are the problems affecting tourism, and resolve the issues aggressively (Angelevska-Najdeska & Rakicevik, 2012).

Waligo, Clarke, and Hawkins (2013), conducted a case study on tourism and sustainable resources. The authors agreed with Angelevska-Najdeska and Rakicevik's

(2012) findings, but took an in-depth look into implementing and involving business owners as shareholders in the process. In the case study, Waligo et al. examined how stakeholders could enhance and achieve tourism sustainability. Those involved in the study were placed into groups. The groups consisted of diverse business owners and one of three groups consisted of employees who oversaw implementing the process. The case study involved 40 questions. Waligo et al. found that for tourism to be sustainable, stakeholders (i.e., chambers of commerce, convention and visitors' bureaus, downtown development authorities, Main Street programs, etc.) needed to be a part of the solution. These stakeholders have a unique perspective on sustainable tourism initiatives and development; they will be able to troubleshoot issues and offer solutions to any problems that many arise (Waligo et al., 2013).

According to Williams and Wheatcroft (2013), the film industry has an impact on economic development, and Vogel (2014) stated that Americans spend on average billions or more on entertainment. Williams and Wheatcroft noted that California was once the only location for television and film, but since that state's policies are becoming stricter, filmmakers are seeking new locations to film. The film industry has become competitive as more states are offering tax incentives or credit rebates to increase their local economies (Medel & Gossel, 2014; Wells & Ross, 2013; Williams & Wheatcroft, 2013). Filmmakers are more attracted to states that provide incentives than to those states that do not, and Honthamer (2010) agreed with Williams and Wheatcroft that states are competing to increase their local economies by providing tax rebates and incentives to invite film revenues. Williams and Wheatcroft conducted a case study on three states that

are competitive in the film industry with regard to tax incentives. Georgia was one of the states studied, and the state offers two incentives: 20% incentive on based spend and 10% for the state name to be shown on all film credits (Williams & Wheatcroft, 2013, p. 3). In order for a state to be successful in the film industry, it must have clear and concise incentives that are legally binding, have infrastructure in place, make good on every promise, and have a staff highly trained with experience in the entertainment industry. Williams and Wheatcroft stated that in order for the film industry and state to profit, a cap on the minimum amount the production company has to spend needs to be in place. Developing a self-sustaining environment could place the state in the optimal position when tax return is between 20% and 30 (Willaims & Wheatcroft, 2013). Incentives are important to the film industry; if states are seeking to boost their economies through the film industry, they must be competitive and create tax incentives that are enticing.

Social Change

Every country around the globe is facing company closings, unemployment, and devastating economic issues (David, Abreu, & Pinheiro, 2013). State and local development agencies are challenged daily with promoting a wide range of strategies, social responsibilities, and the best practices for society welfare during this crisis. People, organizations, and lawmakers must immerge together to help one another. Understanding that many state and local agencies may have certain restrictions in the law that may hinder social change, the real purpose of responsibility strategies are vital to economic success social and quality of life in a sustainable environment (David et al., 2013). Through case study research the authors were able to identify various strategies that

would show how vital it is to involve local groups to implement sustained guidelines and community accountability strategy.

Blakely and Leigh (2010) agreed with David et al. (2013): When local agencies work together through practice to address local or physical, business, human resources, and community-based development strategies, this creates economic, social, and environmental change. The author's findings suggested strengthening the community involvement or rights and that local government partner with various interest groups. This will decrease political and economic power one entity may have.

Summary and Conclusions

An exhaustive literature review was conducted on the TOC, local economic development, and the affect that the tourism and film industries can contribute to boosting the economy. The above literature discussed the evolution of the TOC and how organizations can increase system performance. The TOC explored how organizations could examine constraints and resolve complex issues in various industries. The five focal points in the TOC suggested that the organization follow every step to ensure success. The thinking process tool guided managers on decision making, extending the TOC for organizations to create a current reality tree to examine policy constraints. The TOC can be used with various business models, and studies showed that marketing students developed a TOC simulation game that modeled real-life market issues on producing two or more products and their positioning in the market place. The organization's objectives are to achieve goals and understand what constraints prevent them from being successful accomplishing them. Local government is held responsible

for increasing the economy. The above literature review discussed that local officials have to partner with other local leaders to create economic development. Studies explored in the above literature were qualitative and quantitative methods that had an increase or stable economy worked together to attract corporations through local policies, reduced taxes, diverse population, and infrastructure. The literature gave suggestions on how local government could build a stronger relationship with nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Governors must partner with policymakers on creating policies that encourage the growth of small businesses and large corporations. Film and tourism can increase economic growth. States benefit from attracting visitors and the film industry through job creation, reduction in unemployment, and creating an environment that is culturally diverse. Chapter 3 includes the introduction, research methodology, the role of the researcher, research design and rationale, and the research questions. I will incorporate a description of the methodology, participant selection, and data collection instruments, as well as describing the data analysis plan and exploring issues of trustworthiness.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. The specific problem was that Georgia's economic development leadership faced obstacles that challenged the state's growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses. The study focused on identifying obstacles in the system to clarify where the system may be constrained. The study may bring awareness to local and state government on how to overcome challenges to growth. By unveiling the obstacles impeding the state's growth, the research could be used to understand how well the organization identifies, characterizes, and reacts to constraints. Resolving constraints could allow corporations to view Georgia as a prime location to conduct business and allow Georgia to remain competitive among other states. Chapter 3 includes a description of the research methods used to study obstacles interfering with Georgia's economic growth. In this chapter, I discussed research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, the recruitment and selection of participants, instrument used to collect data, the analysis of data, trustworthiness, ethical procedure, and summary.

Research Design and Rationale

One central research question guided the study: What are the obstacles that state leaders face in economic development? Depending on participant responses, additional follow-up questions were asked to give me a better understanding of economic development. The research methodologies consisted of how the researcher selected a given method to answer specific questions and satisfied the goals of research (Patton,

2002; Yin, 2014). The research method selected for this study is qualitative. Patton (2002) and Yin (2003) agreed that an embedded case study provides the researcher the ability to interview subunits to gain multiple perspectives within a complex organization. According to Creswell (2013), the researcher that has selected to use qualitative research believes that a problem exists and should be explored using verbal data rather than quantitative or mixed methods to utilize numerical data. Lyons and Doueck (2010) stated that using qualitative research enables the researcher to gather knowledge into the phenomenon of how, why, and examine the organizations policies to see if the programs that is in place are effective. The study focused on the XYZ agency to understand Georgia economic development and growth. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) stated that if the researcher is concerned with one issue, a qualitative method is best suited for the study. In this study, I focused on obstacles interfering with Georgia economic growth. Yin (2014) and Patton (2002) agreed that with the use of qualitative methods the researcher can have an in-depth and detailed understanding of the issue. Examining what the causes are that would increase or decrease economic growth and development to the state was the issue. In qualitative approach, the researcher can have a humanistic approach that enables one to describe and interpret experiences including how they can be applied to situations.

Quantitative methods were not considered because numeric data was not gathered, and the study was not deductive in the testing of a hypothesis. Further, the study does not presuppose an empirical outcome prior to data analysis (Simon, 2003). In quantitative research, a statistically significant sample is gathered that represents a larger population

(Patton, 2002). Miles et al. (2014) stated quantitative research fails to understand the true emotions of the participants and may misread valuable information provided. Also, quantitative methods limit the researcher from fully understanding the focus and further examining additional information that might be provided by the participants. In contrast, qualitative research was inductive, and a smaller sample was appropriate to analyze for emergent themes related to the obstacles that interfered with economic growth. In qualitative research, the researcher can collect, analyze, and interpret data which includes examining data for common themes and patterns regarding this phenomenon (Yin, 2013). Quantitative research would limit the humanistic approach needed for this study. Numerical data would not allow participants to provide relevant information to the obstacles hindering Georgia's economic growth.

A qualitative case study design was appropriate for this study because, as the researcher, I selected a sampling of cases that represent a larger set explored in depth participant perceptions and experiences (Yin, 2014). Qualitative case study enables the researcher to capture the experience and understand what was learned from each case (Maxwell, 2013). Patton (2002) and Yin (2014) agreed that case studies do not permit the researcher to examine new information found within the process. Instead, the researcher through qualitative analysis considers three types of data collection: (a) in-depth, open-ended interviews; (b) direct observation; and (c) written documentation (Patton, 2002). Yin (2014) stated, "interpretation comes in numerous methods, which allows for multiple perspectives and meaning" (p. 220). I understood the information provided from participants through open-ended questions. I observed body language and hesitation in

the participant's responses during the interview and also probed for additional information, which quantitative methods would not have permitted.

In this research, I employed an embedded case study approach. This design allowed me to conduct research in an organization including interviewing employees within the organization connected to the phenomenon. Yin (2014) stated embedded case study examines information from the unit and subunits of the organization (see Figure 2). Data, including employee interviews, were collected from one organization. I used three approaches recommended by Yin (2014) to ensure the case study was appropriate: (a) how and why questions were asked; (b) the study focused on obstacles leaders faced at XYZ agency as it related to economic growth; and (c) I ensured I had limited control of the participant responses . Using a comprehensive approach, I studied the how and why of organization practices and policies. Incorporating employees to the study enabled researchers to use embedded case study (Yin, 2014).

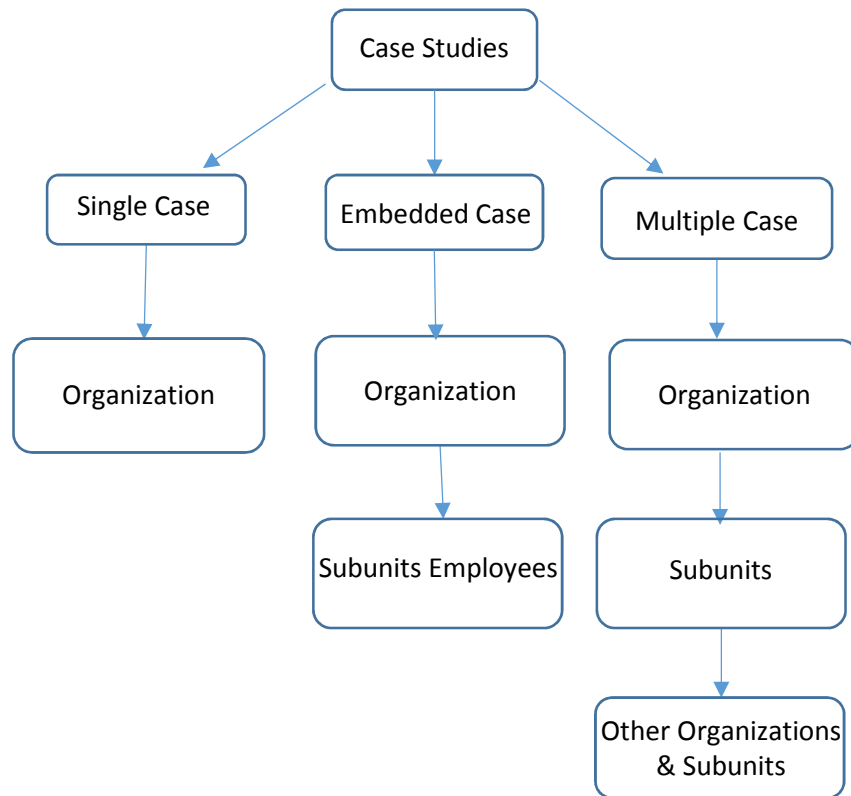


Figure 2. Basic types of designs for case study.

Objectivity relied on the organization and the employees to understand the phenomena from more than one source. Yin (2009) postulated that the use of various sources of data provides an additional benefit of triangulation. Researchers using embedded case study want to investigate real life situations in detail. A case study, although difficult, provides a platform that explores the effects of a specific occurrence on participant's lives (Yin, 2014). To have a successful study the researcher must be skilled and trained. According to Yin (2009), a case study has six distinguished activities: (a) must have a strategy; (b) develop an outline; (c) be prepared; (d) gather data; (e) examine data; and (d) report findings. Yin (2014) provided five rational reasons for case

study design: (a) the case must be critical for research; (b) when the study may discover unknown/unusual circumstances; (c) the researcher can understand and grasp daily operations of the organization; (d) researcher provided a chance to examine and consider earlier issues to the phenomenon; and (e) research can be conducted at different points and time frame. Yin's rationale for conducting a qualitative case study enabled me to understand that Georgia's economic growth is critical. These methods allowed me to discover four obstacles that hinder the state's growth from the employee's perspective.

The main purpose of an embedded case study is to pursue and challenge issues from top executives down to the mailroom. This design of research considered facts from all units and subunits of an organization (Yin, 2014), including subunits capable of providing insight to the issues of the organization and how the organization should handle issues. This approach allowed me to understand the totality of the organization and the viewpoints of those participating in the study (Rowley, 2014). Selecting case study design enhanced and developed a broad examination to my study.

Phenomenology was not considered due to its focus on lived experiences since my study constructs included economic and competitive constraints. Secondly, narrative research was not considered as I intended to focus on the problem the participants experienced within the workplace instead of creating a reflective document related to a lived experience. Grounded theory was also not considered because the study would have then been aimed towards new theory development rather than a current economic phenomenon.

Role of the Researcher

I was the primary instrument to gather data through interviews. According to Yin (2014), qualitative research allows the researcher to become an instrument of data collection. Part of the researcher's role was to collect information by interviewing participants on-site, face-to-face, and telephone. As stated by Patton (2002) and Yin (2014), the interview process for qualitative study is common for the interviewer to be the instrument for data collection.

In a qualitative study, the researcher acts as the instrument for data collection and requires skills to effectively conduct a case study (Yin, 2014). I collected, reviewed, analyzed, and reported data findings. As the researcher, I listened intensively to the participants and asked probing questions. I adapted to the environment as needed. I had knowledge on the subject being researched but avoided biased or prejudiced philosophies. I was proactive in planning and preparing before collecting information. I selected a sampling size, structured research questions, and saw themes in the study. A good qualitative researcher asks probing questions, then thinks, then ask more questions to get to a deeper level of conversation. An effective researcher seeks to build a picture using ideas and theories from a wide variety of sources.

I did not have a personal nor professional relationship with any participants at the organization I studied. I refrained from having any personal ideas or perceptions pertaining to the topic of study. I collected data then made interpretations and analyzed the information provided. The participants in the study volunteered and were informed that they could request the interview be stopped at any time.

Avoiding bias in research starts with the collection of data. When collecting data, the researcher can exhibit biases. According to Yin (2009), the researcher must understand the possibility of biases in the research and avoid the perceptions of bias to prevent the findings from an adverse impact. To reduce any possibilities of bias, I followed and used the interview question, and stayed on task with the purpose of study. Since I had no relationship nor an affiliation with the organization or participants this assisted with the prevention of bias.

Yin (2014) noted that good case study researcher will strive for the highest ethical standards while doing research. The researcher must maintain any ethical issues by not plagiarizing, providing false information, honestly, dismiss deceived notions, and take responsibility for research conducted. As the researcher, I had to be professional, stay aware of related information pertaining to the research, and ensure accuracy of the data collection.

Methodology

Population

The population for this study was selected from XYZ state agency. This agency is responsible for creating economic growth and development in the state. Maintaining existing business and establishing new corporations to the state through incentives is the main objective for the organization. The participants came from departments within the agency. Permission to conduct the study from the research site was requested.

Sampling for this qualitative study required participants that were selected to have an understanding and specific knowledge of the study. A commonly used sampling

strategy for qualitative research is purposive sampling. Patton (2002) stated purposive sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for identification and selection of information rich cases. Using purposive sampling is beneficial in case studies because the process is to concentrate on a set of elimination and inclusion standards (Rossman & Marshall, 2010). The participants were selected from the agency and were involved in the daily operations process of the organization. The participants were selected based on the skills, experience, and knowledge of the phenomenon. Selected participants meet or exceeded the criteria process having rich information that was be involved in the case study. Wagstaff and Williams (2014) stated that purposive sampling focus on participants with expertise on the specific topic of study.

The requirement for study participation was that the participants should have worked for the XYZ state agency for at least 2 years. Participants' role in the organization must be a deputy commissioner, manager, or director in the agency. All participants were familiar with the process of economic growth and development. Participants needed to be involved or worked on a project/team responsible for the recruitment of corporations to conduct business in the state. The participants work in tourism, film, global commerce, international trade, workforce development, and the arts. Age and education criteria for participants were 21 and over and possessed a high school diploma or a degree.

Silverman (2011) stated qualitative studies that use data collecting methods, such as interviews, should recruit at least 10 participants and at most 20 participants. This size is generally sufficient to reach data. Patton (2002) also stated the sample size depends on

what the researcher wants or needs to know for the study. For this study, 11 participants were selected and I reached saturation at eight participants. I continued to collect data to ensure that data saturation was reached. All 11 members came from different divisions within the XYZ state agency.

A recruitment method commonly used in qualitative research, with an emphasis on a set of exclusion and inclusion criteria, is purposive sampling (Boehnke et al., 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Purposive sampling technique was used to recruit deputy commissioners, managers, and directors within the XYZ agency. Participants were identified by managerial level, years of experience, and projects worked on by the individual. Participants meeting the requirements were sent an email or a formal letter requesting participation in the study. A consent form was included with each form of communication, requesting each participant to read, sign, and date the form. All forms were returned to me before the interview began. Once the signed consent form was received, an interview day, time, and place were requested that was convenient to the participant's schedule.

The recruitment of participants involved me informing the members of the XYZ agency how helpful and valuable the information that was shared for this research. The study results may help others understand how the department can overcome obstacles while maintaining economic growth within the state. The relationship for saturation and sample size is the population (sample size) provides the information that enables the researcher to reach saturation.

Instrumentation

For data collection, I used an open-ended and semistructured interview guide. According to Guion et al. (2011), seven stages were used to conduct interviews: (a) one needs to categorize interview questions, (b) create a guide for the interview, (c) interviewing, (d) transcribe interview answers, (e) analyze interviews, (f) results need verifying, and (g) report results. Steps one through three were task created for gathering data. The last steps were the analysis stage and conclusion. I developed a semi-structured and open-ended interview guide. Questions were asked from the guide. Depending on response given, I asked follow-up questions for clarification. Interview question focused on the leaders in the XYZ agency tourism, film, commerce, and international and global trade relating to the following question:

RQ1: What are the obstacles that state leaders face in economic development?

I anticipated interviews to last for 45 minutes. The interview could last longer based on the participants quick or slow response to the questions. After each interview, I thanked the participants for participating.

Field Test

I drafted interview protocol questions (see Appendix A) that were aligned with the research question, problem and purpose statement. A field test of the interview guide was conducted to evaluate the clarity of the interview questions and interview instructions. The field test was conducted for participants to evaluate whether each interview question would generate sufficient amount of information needed for the study,

which included whether participants understood the questions and the accuracy of the questions.

The interview questions were shared via e-mail with three industry experts who had experience with the study topic (see Appendix B), and the three industry experts returned feedback on the interview guide. Feedback from the industry experts indicated that the interview questions were aligned with the research question, problem, and purpose statement. Based on the field test evaluation, the interview guide was expected to generate adequate and valuable information needed for the study.

Procedures for Recruiting, Participation, and Data Collection

Yin (2014) stated that qualitative research requires the researcher to use a minimum number of participants and adding more until data saturation is reached. The target population included tourism, film, commerce, and international and global trade employees. Individuals were involved in projects that recruited and maintained business in the state to create and develop economic development. I contacted the XYZ agency discuss the purpose and nature of study. I requested permission from deputy commissioners, managers, and director's. This included requesting a list of employees that fit the inclusion criteria, and I selected from qualified participants.

I recruited from the list and informed prospective participants the nature and purpose of the study. As the researcher, I assessed the participant eligibility based on the criteria of inclusion and exclusion. The participants that met the criteria received a formal invitation either by phone or e-mail. I sent a consent form attached to an e-mail with information regarding involvement in the study. Included in the information, I asked the

participants to sign the consent form with two options to mail or give the consent form to me at the time of interview. Once the participants agreed to be a part of the study, I requested a convenient time and location for interview. The participants provided me with the preferred location that was most convenient; office (face-to-face), phone, or SKYPE.

Purposeful sampling continued until data saturation was achieved (Rossman & Marshall, 2010). I asked participants to recommend expert individuals who were once involved in the process. The recruitment process for new participants encountered the same criteria and was informed of the nature and purpose of the study.

The consent form used for granting permission from potential participants came directly from Walden University. The sample consent form provided by the University protected members' rights and the non-breaching of ethical standards. Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) had the responsibility for ensuring that all research conducted complied with ethical standards by the University and U.S. federal regulations. The IRB approved my research first before information was collected, and participants had or receive a consent form before the start of the interviews.

Informed consent was explained to the participants before the interview started. Interview questions were offered and I provided the participants with instructions as to how the interview process would go. This included reminding the participants of rights concerning: (a) participation in this study was purely voluntary, (b) participant identities were confidential, (c) all interviews were recorded, and (d) information provided during the study would be destroyed after a certain amount of years. After the interview, I

discussed the next process of transcribing information provided and if additional follow up questions were needed for clarity, I contacted the participant via phone or e-mail.

The interview guide was open-ended with semi-structured questions. The interview questions and follow-up questions centered on how the participants responded to the central question. Through questions asked of the participants, responses provided obstacles faced by leaders when attracting and maintaining business in the state.

Data Analysis

Interview notes during the session included observation notes of participant nonverbal cues and a recording device was used to record the responses of the participants. This kept track of all findings to ensure that human oversight did not occur during data collection. Organizing data and member checking was used to provide the participants the opportunity to review responses for accuracy. Transcripts were emailed to participants for member checking. Member checking strengthens the trustworthiness of the findings and improves the quality of the interpretation (Yin, 2014). NVivo is software that is commonly used in qualitative research and this software will organize and code data collected into themed categories, and the software allowed analysis and storage of various document formats that include PDF, audio, photographs, websites, and several processing files. The program deciphers interviews, surveys, and focus groups, and NVivo was used to code data by patterns to search for common themes within the data using Yin's (2014) pattern matching.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The researcher must maintain a high level of credibility and objectivity, and the results must demonstrate evidence that was sound and strong to support the researcher's argument. According to Yin (2014), to increase trust with participants the researcher should not cut interviews short. Qualitative research has four areas of concern: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility

According to Farrell (2013), credibility is the true experience given by the participants' as only as they know. The contribution to credibility is continued contact, triangulation, peer review, the ability to be flexible, member checking, and data saturation. The two most commonly used methods are triangulation and member checking. Member checking is defined by quality control process by which a researcher seeks to improve the accuracy, credibility, and validity of what has been recorded during an interview (Barbour, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Doyle, 2007; Harper & Cole, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this study, member checking was used for transcript accuracy, and I asked the participants the same interview question in an interview setting. I recognized the relationship among patterns and explanations to reduce the likelihood of making inaccurate and untrustworthy conclusions using Yin's (2014) pattern matching. Data saturation was met when repetitive responses occurred at participant eight, which was considered another form of credibility, and the most preferred method for qualitative inquiry is member checking.

According to Harper and Cole (2012) member checking can happen during or after the interview. Participants member checked after notes were transcribed as Yin (2014) suggested that the informants review drafts of the study. Participants were given an opportunity to clarify or discuss the results to ensure accuracy. Participants were then able to fill in any gaps or missing information that was missed in the earlier interview. The participants were provided a transcript to review and offered another opportunity to clarify responses. Transcripts were emailed to every participant in the study. This was another part of gaining trust and credibility of the study. Patton (2002) recommended that the researcher use other methods to ensure credibility. I kept a journal in the data collection phase to write my thoughts, and the participants' reaction and concerns. Using different sources confirmed results findings and supported the themes found within the examination stage.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research means the outcome in this study can be shifted to a new study. According to Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012), the reader/potential researcher determines transferability, not the researcher in qualitative research. For this study to be transferable, a comprehensive study was conducted along with rich detailed description that the researcher could conclude if this study would be conducive for another study or settings. Describing all pertinent details of a case study could improve transferability and the potential researcher/reader would determine if findings were transferable (Yin, 2013). As this is a qualitative study, transferability may not be likely; this may also be limited because of the limitations noted in Chapter 1.

Dependability

Dependability determines if the information from the study can be repeated. To improve dependability for this study I recorded and transcribed findings. Using a recordable device, accurate transcription and member checking of transcripts as tools to ensure dependability (Reilly, 2013). I sent participants a copy of the interview transcript via email to review and approve for accuracy as Chenail (2011) concluded that a review of transcripts approach improves the accuracy of interview studies. This process allowed the participants to review and make corrections where needed. Another method that I employed in this process to ensure dependability in the study was to document methodological steps used for the study. By providing methodology used for the study, I assured that another researcher could examine and replicate the study (Hanson, Balmer, & Giardino, 2011). The researcher's approach should be identical for processing and analyzing data for every participant to guarantee dependability (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013).

Confirmability

The findings of this study did not reflect any bias on my part, but it reflected the individuals involved. Siemiatycki (2012) stated confirmability is the reflections of the participants. To improve confirmability the researcher had various approaches to use. Storing and keeping all documentations offered the researcher one way to confirm data findings. Providing a paper trail for auditing purposes allowed the researcher to examine and analyze collected data before reaching a conclusion (Hanson et al., 2011). I put personal bias and experiences aside. Nelson, Onwuegbuzie, Wines, and Frels (2013)

stated that through bracketing the researcher was able to ignore personal biases, and collect and analyze information without bias. The main purpose was to increase confirmability to ensure trustworthiness and validity of my study.

Ethical Procedures

I complied with the standards of the IRB at Walden University and federal regulations. The responsibility of the IRB was to ensure that the researcher complied with all ethical standards of research. The IRB had the authority to oversee that the participant's involvement in the study was free and knowing. IRB role was to ensure that the research methods were safe and complied with the objectives of the study including securing the rights and privacy of the participants. I obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University to conduct this study (IRB#01-10-18-0252284). After gaining approval, all potential participants were contacted and data collection phase of the study began.

Confidentiality was critical for conducting research. I did not reveal identities of individuals participating in the study. This included not listing names on the interview sheet or mentioning names on recorded devices. The appropriate way to distinguish the participants was to provide aliases for the individual and I was the only one who truly knew the participant's identity. All files are securely stored and password protected on all systems used. Consent forms, interview questions, tape recordings, and physical data are locked in a secured location. Information gathered for the purpose of this study will be destroyed after five years. The participation in the study was solely voluntary. I ensured

that the consent form clearly documented the free will of the participants and that no reward was given for involvement and the participants had the option to leave the study.

Facilitating the interview in an ethical manner, the participants felt comfortable with the involvement of the study. In keeping with ethical guidelines, I ensured that all participants carefully read the consent form before signing. The consent form included information related to the reason and purpose for conducting the study. I answered questions that the participants may have had before agreeing to sign the consent form. Once the consent form was signed, I began the interview process. Obtaining participants signature signified that the individual understood the details of the study. I included on the consent form how the identity of the participants would remain confidential. To increase confidentiality and deescalate ethical violation in the recorded interview, aliases were used to collect data. This format was used throughout the entire interview process, and participants understood that at any time I could be contacted for additional follow up or to withdraw from the study. All participants knew that minimal risk was involved in participating in the study. To reduce and avoid ethical concerns, I will provide a copy of the study findings to the participants. Providing a transcript of my findings to the participants will offer an added benefit, which gives the participant an insight gain from the study.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research method for the study. Chapter 3 included a description of the research design and an explanation for selecting the design. I discussed the role of the researcher and addressed ethical concerns. I identified the

population size, logic to how participants would be selected, instrumentation for collecting data, the procedure for recruitment and data collection. I discussed issues of trust, the ability of transferability of the study, reliability, and ethical precautions that were taken.

Chapter 3 provided a description of the responsibility of the IRB and Walden University relating to ethical research. The chapter gave insight to how all participants will remain unanimous and individual involvement to the study is voluntary. To manage, analyze, and organize data collection, NVivo software was used. In Chapter 4, I present the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. Gaining insight into what leaders at XYZ agency experienced when attracting economic development to the state of Georgia was the heart of this study. The specific problem was that Georgia's economic development leadership faces obstacles that challenge the state's growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses. Examining what the causes were that would increase or decrease economic growth and development to the state was the issue. To understand obstacles that leaders in the agency experienced, I conducted an embedded case study of 11 participants. I investigated participant's roles, experience, and perceptions on economic growth and development for Georgia. I used NVivo Pro 11 software to assist with coding the interview findings. NVivo allowed for a more systematic and organized formulation of the emergent themes. The central research question for this study was: What are the obstacles that state leaders face in economic development? The TOC assisted with exploring where the system is constrained at XYZ agency.

I included the research settings, demographics, data collection and analysis that were taken from 11 participants who met the requirements for the study. The participants shared, through in-person interviews, the obstacles faced when performing their roles to attract and maintain business. Also, included in the chapter is information regarding the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study results from 11 participants and chapter summary.

Research Setting

The participants for this study were selected from XYZ agency by inclusion criteria and were then interviewed. The operations manager was contacted by e-mail to provide a list of potential candidates that matched the inclusion list. I reached out to the potential candidates via e-mail and phoned to ask the potential participants to be a part of my study. As the researcher, I allowed the 11 participants to provide the location for the in-person interview. The participants were asked to provide that best time and date and method of interviews either in person or by telephone. By doing this, each participant selected the method of how and where the interviews would take place to ensure privacy and protection for recording purpose. One participant requested a phone interview in lieu of an in-person interview. All other interviews were held at the agency in the participant's office with the door closed. Before signing the consent form, I briefed the participants that all gathered data, including the transcribed and audio files would be kept in a secured locked safe for a minimum of 5 years, as required by the University. I informed every participant that files would be destroyed after 5 years. I needed to ensure that participant's protection and confidentiality of responses was provided for the study.

Two participants had outside influences that may have impacted the quality of their interviews. One of the participants only had 20 minutes for the interview before leaving for the airport. This participant's responses were quick and short. The other participant scheduled their interview at the end of the day. This participant was tired, rambled often during the interview, and had to refocus on the question asked.

Demographics

Participants were 11 individuals with two or more years of experience with XYZ agency. The majority reported gender as female (7), male (4) and age ranges consisted of 46+ years (7), 36-45 years (2), and 26-35 years (2). Level of education were master's degree or higher (6) and associate or bachelor degree (5). Titles of position held were (5) directors, (5) managers, and (1) deputy commissioner. Tables 2-5 contain the breakdown of demographics for experts at XYZ agency.

Table 2

Gender Demographics

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	7	63.34
Male	4	36.36

Table 3

Age Demographics

Age	Frequency	Percent
46+	7	63.64
36-45	2	18.18
26-35	2	18.18

Table 4

Education Demographics

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Masters or Higher	6	54.55
Associate or Bachelor	5	45.45

Table 5

Job Title Demographics

Job Title	Frequency	Percent
Manager	5	45.45
Director	5	45.45
Deputy Commissioner	1	9.1

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted as stated in Chapter 3. I contacted agency XYZ to recruit potential participants. I informed the operations manager of the study's purpose and why I wanted to conduct the study. I was provided by the operations manager with an inclusion list participant criteria that would fit the study requirements. I contacted all qualified participants from the list. Recruitment for the study was voluntary. The potential participants' qualifications were solely based on inclusion-exclusion criteria. I sent the potential participant a formal invitation through email. Per the IRB, the invitation served as the consent form. I brought and gave the participant a consent form to sign

before recording the interview. Before signing the consent form and agreeing to be a part of the study, I informed participants that, if at any time they felt uncomfortable, the interview and recording could be stopped.

The participants provided location, time, and date for the interview. I had a total of 11 participants. Ten of the participants scheduled their interviews on site in their offices and one requested the interview be conducted by telephone. My contact information was provided so that the participants would be able to contact me to answer any questions after the interview. Before recording the interviews, I collected demographic information from participants. After the initial introduction and demographic collection, I waited until the participant was comfortable. I then proceeded to conduct the interview, both recording the session and taking observation notes as data collection methods.

The data collection from interviews was conducted over a period of 3 weeks. I reached data saturation after eight participants; however, collection of data continued to ensure no new information would be found. The 11 interviews lasted between 18 to 53 minutes. Once the recording of an interview was concluded, I thanked each participant for his or her participation. All participants were offered a contact number if he or she might have further questions or would decide to opt out/withdraw from the study for any reason. Participants were reassured of privacy, understanding that collection of data would be maintained for a period of 5 years with the electronic files being encrypted and along with other files to be locked in a secured location.

After the conclusion of each interview, the audio recording was transcribed verbatim to a Word document and uploaded into NVivo by a secure transcription company. Haper and Cole (2012) stated that member checking is the method of assuring accuracy of the transcription by allowing the participant to review the transcribed document. Once I received the transcribed document, I reviewed it for errors and then forwarded it through email to the participant for member checking. Member checking for all participants did not result in any changes to the transcribed document. The participant's folders were identified with unique identifiers to maintain my individual notes. All folders are locked securely, including all paper materials and the encrypted drive of files (recorded interviews, excel, NVivo) from the study. After the completion of member checking, data were input to NVivo Pro 11 for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis method employed was inductive coding analysis combined with NVivo Pro 11 software for qualitative data coding. Three iterations of coding were conducted that resulted in 11 initial codes. Codes were reviewed to determine major patterns in the data, and recurrent patterns were immediate noticeable from all participants. Patterns were collapsed into four major themes. Analyzing qualitative data through an inductive point of view was to identify important categories in the data. I analyzed the data using Attride-Stirling, Braun and Clark's (2013) six-step approach: "(1) become familiar with the data; (2) early coding; (3) a search of themes; (4) re-assessment of reviewed themes; (5) extraction of meanings, definitions, and labeling or themes; and

(6) establishment of thematic networks” (p. 219). I also looked for associations from the grouped responses of participants.

As the researcher, my goal was to analyze the text and transcripts by the interviews to understand what the participant’s thought and felt regarding Georgia’s economic growth. Once the participants were interviewed, I listened to the recordings, read transcribed notes, and coded the data manually by commonalities, themes, codes, or categories. I searched for merging patterns and themes in the data through a process of discovery. In Step 1, I became familiar with the participant’s responses through recordings and transcribed interview notes, which were listened to and read three times. In Step 2 I read the responses; this began the initial coding where I coded text into categories of similar content. In Step 3, I continued to explore additional themes and I expanded them from the previous step. In Step 4, I reassessed themes. In this step, I broke down and gathered themes based on similarities of the participant’s responses. In Step 5, I identified common nodes and classifications of codes for a complete and thorough coding of the data from participant’s response. Lastly, in Step 6, a thematic of networks were constructed to examine the themes, meanings, and commonalities of the responses. A detailed assessment and further coding allowed for four major themes within NVivo Pro 11.

The steps I took to plan and start analyzing data were to document the data and the process of data collection. Data were organized into concepts. This was followed by connecting similar responses from the participants. I began the analysis of data at the inception of the interview process and continued as the notes were reviewed after the

participant interviews. In my observation notes, I highlighted what I believed were interesting or important perspectives from the participant's responses to the questions asked. Before importing into NVivo, I manually color-coded my interview notes.

The questions I asked during the interviews were the same for each participants with no deviation from the prepared list of questions (see Appendix A). The responses from participants were similar, but not identical so similar themes appeared during the interview process. There were no areas of major concern while coding or transcribing and no significant discrepant cases were noted. It is important to this study to include that I did not encounter problems during the data collection and analyzation phase of my study.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was evaluated on the bases of member checking. I ensured the study's credibility by member checking for accuracy of transcribed notes. Credibility is when the responses provided by the participants are given to the best of his/her knowledge and experience. The qualitative embedded case study method allowed for construct validity to be established through evidence from the source described by (Amerson, 2011). As discussed in Chapter 3, member checking was done to provide the participants an opportunity to verify responses, accuracy, and to change responses previously provided. This stage enhanced the credibility of my study by allowing the participant to change recorded statements and I not influence the response. Allowing the participants to take a few minutes to review the transcribed notes added assurance to the credibility of the study. Confirmation of assurance came from the 11 the participant validated the findings,

no modification to the data was required. Through the three activities that were important aspects to credibility was interviews, observation notes, and member checking. Lincoln and Gupta (1985) qualitative researchers should use observation when needed for credibility. During the interview, I took observation notes. I took notes between the responses when the participant was not providing eye contact. If I noticed that my note taking distracted the participant, I stopped immediately and took notes after the interview so as not to interfere with the participants' thoughts and concentration. I also provided additional thoughts and impressions on the recording device of the information recorded by the participant to ensure credibility. All transcribed interviews and observation notes were upload into the memo section of NVivo Pro11. Observation notes helped to clarify accuracy in transcription and questions that arose during member checking by myself and the participant.

Transferability

Transferability for my research was important for trustworthiness. I conducted a field test providing the interview guide to an expert panel prior to use and I revised and validated for the study to increase the relevance to the study. Yin (2013) the potential researcher can decide rather a research is transferable by the detailed findings of a study. I provided a detailed description in the above context for the study, including the setting and the participants to ensure transferability. Petty, Thomson and Stew (2012) transferability of a study is applying research findings from one group to another. I selected participants that had two or more years of experience at XYZ agency and worked on projects to maintain and attract economic growth and development for

Georgia. The participants were able to provide different experiences through the various years of employment at the agency.

Dependability

Dependability of a study is dependent upon if the researchers study can be repeated. Reilly (2013) to enhance dependability the researcher should use recording devices, accurate transcription, and member checking. I assured dependability through a series of audit trails. I recorded and transcribed verbatim with review following transcription. I conducted a repeated review three times of the transcribed notes before I coded, categorized, and selected themes for the study. The detailed information from notes and research were stored to enable future researchers to repeat the work; this was done by importing recorded and transcribed interviews and observation notes into NVivo 11 Pro software.

Confirmability

The main objective was to ensure confirmability and increase trustworthiness for the study. Confirmability was maintained during data collection, coding of themes, and the analyzing process of the study. Siemiatycki (2012) confirmability should reflect the participants and not the researcher views. Houghton, Casey, Shaw and Murphy (2013) stated confirmability happens when the researcher's findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the participants than the characteristics and preference of the researcher. I conducted multiple reviews of the recordings and transcripts to help reveal eliminate, and separate any personal biases during review, coding, and analysis of the data were further assurance of confirmability.

Study Results

The interview questions were derived from the research question: “What are the obstacles that state leaders face in economic development?” Statements that were significant to the study were divided into themes and description. The descriptions for each participant were merged so that obstacles faced by leaders in XYZ could be understood.

Four major theme findings reported by all 11 participants included (a) traffic congestions and resulting time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia; (b) perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime; (c) infrastructure location and accessibility dilemmas; and (d) substandard public education. Each of the major themes is presented with a representation of participant quotes to represent the theme findings (see Table 6).

Table 6

Major Themes

Theme	Frequency	Percent
1. Substandard public education	11	100%
2. Traffic congestions and resulting time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia.	10	90%
3. Perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime	10	90%
4. Infrastructure location and accessibility dilemmas	9	81%

Note. N=11.

Theme 1: Substandard public education. Georgia public school education is inadequate, and all 11 participants stated that this is major barrier to attracting and maintaining business in the state when education is substandard. This was illustrated by Participant 3 who said, “An issue is the public-school systems. Our private and even our charter schools are performing well, but the public system is short on expectations. Teachers have left the school systems opting for other careers and we are left with an issue of falling behind our competitors.” Participant 11 concurred and said, “The major bidding war for Amazon will create thousands of jobs over a period of time. The headquarters will bring staff with children. The hindering concern is that our public-school systems are under performing and this could cause a problem for us.” Participant 1 noted that, “Public schools are our weakest link. This is a major problem for our state. Test scores across school districts are low, some of the lowest in the nation. We have to do a better job with funding education and taking care of our teachers.” Likewise, Participant 5 stated that, “I am on the team to bring Amazon to Georgia. The obstacle right now is public education, if we lose the bid it will be due to our educational system. The state and schools have to do a better job of preparing children and not just letting them slide by. They are doing our children a disservice.” Participant 2 also noted, “The state of Georgia is behind Mississippi when it comes to education. Who wants to relocate to a state that is underperforming?” Participant 10 expressed, “We need more funding in education. Our state legislatures should find resources that would increase teacher’s salary.”

Theme 2: Traffic congestions and resulting time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia. The state traffic congestion problems delay productivity and 10 of (11) participants agree that this is an obstacle for corporations to locate to Georgia. This was best illustrated by Participant 1 who said, “Look outside my window at 75/85 it is not five o’clock yet and traffic is horrible at two p.m. in the afternoon. We have to do better with getting people where they need to be.” Similarly, Participant 2 said, “One area that we could improve is the traffic problem. I have had meetings in my car on the way to the office. I can leave my home in more than enough time, but getting off the interstate is a nightmare and the streets are overcrowded, bumper to bumper.” Participant 4 asserted that, “I don't think there's any particular risks but the traffic issue. My daily commute can take me anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half to get to my office, and depending on the time I leave the office I could sit in 2-hour traffic just to get home. If I have a late afternoon offsite meeting, I could literally be in traffic for a long time.” Participant 10 affirmed, “Traffic in this area is problematic, just this morning I was within a two-mile radius to work and it took me 20 minutes to get here.” Participant 7 noted that, “We would be here all day discussing traffic and how to resolve this issue with the population growing daily.” Participant 5 stated, “I can tell you that Georgia has everything any potential client could want and need; however, we have lost projects over traffic concerns.” Participant 8 noted, “A 10-minute drive to meet a potential client could take me 45 minutes. I have to plan ahead not to keep the client waiting.”

Theme 3: Perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime. A barrier for the state is that there is a negative perception of public transportation and

crime. Theme 3 was constructed by 10 (of 11) participants and was reported by Participant 1 “I had a client that we found the perfect location in a rural area of Georgia. This location was approximately 20 minutes outside of a major county and the client wanted the business in the area, but wanted to live in another county, and commute back and forth, but public transportation was not available. We lost this contract due to lack of public transportation.” Participant 3 illustrated that “Community counties fight with my agency on the expansion of public transportation in fear of crime.” Participant 5 stated that, “It would be wonderful if Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) was accessible in all areas of Georgia, but due to residence’s belief that the transit system will bring crime, this is an obstacle to our department.” Participant 6 said, “I think transportation is key because the airport is close, but traffic is so horrendous. We need to provide more subways and more MARTA throughout the state. I mean, I live out in Newman. MARTA should go all the way out to Newman. But [we don’t have MARTA] because many of the residents in Newman think that unwanted crime will appear.” Participant 7 also stated, “There’s not enough public transportation throughout the state. We have Hartsfield-Jackson Airport and our ports in Savannah, but those are more commercial and business related. We need more buses. We need more public transportation. If we get more public transportation, then we have to consider the issue of more crime coming to the area.” Participant 8 noted that, “Public transportation has been an obstacle. There is a belief, that expanding public transportation to other areas outside of the metro Atlanta area will bring crime.” Participant 9 agreed, “I can provide you one instance when a company left because of our transit system. The company’s

representative expressed to me that one of the main reasons they were not choosing Georgia was our weak public transportation system; they choose to go to another state with a better system.”

Theme 4: Infrastructure location and accessibility dilemmas. Locating the best property in the state is an obstacle, and along with the accessibility of the land causes dilemmas. Theme 4 emerged from nine of the 11 participants which are illustrated by Participant 1 that said “Building in specific location is a problem. Often clients request to be centrally located near an interstate that is accessible for employees and customers. Typically, property near interstates are overcrowded and no room for building new corporate offices.” Participant 2 noted that, “Infrastructure is another huge concern. Finding adequate buildings for many of our projects is difficult. Location is an issue when matching location with the client.” Participant 3 expressed, “We have clients that want locations with a certain amount of space initially and over a period of time would like to expand. This poses a problem because over the period of time we have to hold land that could potentially be available to another company.” Participant 4 said, “I do want to mention infrastructure. Every potential client wants a prime location that is accessible mainly to the downtown area. However, this is impossible because we are limited as to the available buildings we can offer.”

Similarly, Participant 5 said, “Prime locations are in downtown or surrounding areas of downtown Atlanta. The agency has problems with available areas in prime locations.” Participant 8 further stated, “Clients send a RFI (request for information) and we provide the information. The building that we find for the client based on the request

is either too large or too small. At this present time, we are trying to keep up with the growing population, which we were not prepared for and because of this, the space is limited.” Participant 10 said, “Georgia’s infrastructure is good and not good. We still have rural areas that are not fully developed or up to date with high speed internet or accessible roads.” Participant 11 also noted, “Georgia is a manufacturing and port transit state. The state has two ports that can be utilized; however, finding available land with accessible roads in Brunswick and Savannah is difficult. Often the land is privately owned and the department has to go through a lot of red tape to purchase the land for the client.”

Summary

In chapter 4, data were analyzed from 11 participants at XYZ agency. Ten interviews were in-person and one via phone. All interviews were recorded. After the interviews were conducted and transcribed, I used inductive coding for the qualitative embedded case study. I initially read and made notations of reoccurring codes and themes from collected data. From the data analyzed, four major themes emerged from the main research question: (a) substandard public education, (b) traffic congestions and resulting time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia, perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime, and (c) infrastructure location and accessibility dilemmas. A discussion of the interpretation of research findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change is presented within Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. In this study, I used embedded case study approach. This method allowed me to explore the organization and the employees within the organization. The participants were asked to refer to an experienced phenomenon, which provided for an exploration of internal stakeholders seeking how to increase economic growth. The problem was that Georgia's economic development leadership faces obstacles that challenge the state's growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses (Dhawan, 2014). Within Chapter 5, I addressed the interpretation of findings, limitations, recommendations, implications to individuals and family, societal impact to social change, and the conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The study results included four major themes identified from interviews with 11 employees of XYZ agency. The participants reported obstacles to Georgia economic develop in the areas of education, traffic congestion, lack of public transportation, and infrastructure. The interview questions were related to address the one central research question. Generally, participants reported that Georgia would be an ideal location to conduct business if the state corrected the obstacles noted in the findings. Several implications were determined for each of the major theme findings below.

Theme 1: Substandard public education.

Theme 1 reflected the substandard education in Georgia as an obstacle to economic growth. The first implication of Theme 1 was that economic development leaders had difficulty promoting a state where public education did not meet minimal standards (Denison, 1966; Hanushek & Wobmann, 2007; Marginson, 2016). The second implication of Theme 1 was the disparities between Georgia's excellent higher education institutions and its poorly-performing public school system, when compared with other states (Jackson, 1982; Hanushek & Wobmann, 2010; Grant, 2017). Participants also reported this quality of higher education should be paralleled or mirror the same excellence for PreK-12 public education (Ali, Hakin & Abdullah, 2017; Gibbs, 2010). Third, Theme 1 reflected that public education needed more funding, and the state investment in more funding and support of teachers could potentially improve public education (Dougherty, Natow, & Vega, 2012). Georgia needs to be appealing in all areas for potential clients, including attractive and high quality public education (Steven & Weale, 2004; Tandberg & Hillman, 2014). The state population continues to grow yearly, and public education needs to perform at a greater standard to match growth (Barro, 2013). School districts within Georgia perform at different levels because of funding due to how well the school district performs on standardized tests (Hanushek, 1986; Hanushek & Wobmann, 2014).

Theme 2: Traffic congestions and resulting time delays deterred corporations to locate to Georgia.

Traffic congestion was reported in Theme 2 as a significant barrier to attract

potential clients to the state for growth and development. Theme 2 reflected how time was invaluable to an organization and should be utilized more effectively to induce companies who desire productive workplaces (Harriet & Emmanuell, 2013; Mun & Yonekawa, 2006), and this sentiment was reported by many of the participants who agreed that most contracts were lost over traffic issues and concerns. Second, Theme 2 showed how Georgia has become a melting pot and as the population continues to grow, so will road congestion (Hymel, 2009). It remains vital for the agency to continue to work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to address concerns by visiting other states to evaluate processes to reduce traffic congestions, as some participants described this growing issue (Papjohn & Bayraktar, 2010; Thomas, 2013). A third implication from Theme 2 was DOT progress toward the expansion of highways and roads delays and closed lanes midday all around Georgia that makes it more difficult with the growing population and many people traveling on the road at various times of the day (Abadi, Rajabioun, & Ioannou, 2015; Stopher, 2004). Fourth, an inference of Theme 2 was the commute over the weekend can take 15 to 20 minutes, but Monday through Friday the commute can take 2 hours or more. It was determined that the evaluation of traffic patterns from weekday to weekend is essential to reducing traffic (Smith, Hamer, Ucci, Marmot, Gardner, Swayer, & Fisher, 2015).

Theme 3: Perception of limited public transportation and affiliated crime.

Although MARTA provides service to many parts of Georgia, it is limited to attracting or expanding business to other parts of the state. This external problem has led the agency to collaborate with local residences and city mayors to help with diminishing

the myth about MARTA and crime (Diab & El-Geneidy, 2013). The first implication from Theme 3 was that public transportation should be available 24 hours a day. Many jobs in the metro area are not 9 a.m.5 p.m. positions (Bhatta & Drennan, 2003; Diab & El- Geneidy, 2013). A second implication for Theme 3 was that the state desires to attract technical corporations, but millennials want quality public transportation service (Polzin, Chu, & Godfrey, 2014). The third implication for Theme 3 was that potential clients may want to reside in the city but work in the rural areas of Georgia, or work in the city and reside in the outer parts of Atlanta; however, without adequate transportation this becomes a problem. Pellicer et al. (2013) reported access to public transportation, in relation to where one resides and work, was vital to potential clients, and a key issue of concern was that other competitive states provide transportation service through-out the state and also have a healthy economy (Carter-Edwards et al., 2015). The fourth implication to Theme 3 participants felt that there was not a direct correlation between crime and public transportation in communities they felt that crime could occur by car when public transportation has not expanded and this should not be a variable to prevent residents for not wanting MARTA in his/her community. Public transportation and the association with crime continues to hinder expansion to neighborhoods that desperately need public transportation and economic growth (Cecato & Uittenbogaard, 2013; Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008). Residents and the perceptions with crime remains a critical obstacle for leaders to represent the state and create job growth through economic development.

Theme 4: Infrastructure and accessibility dilemmas.

Building location and the lack of space has posed problems for the agency leadership, as reported in Theme 4. One implication from Theme 4 was that roads were not developed in rural Georgia. It was also noted that internet access can be an issues as some rural areas of Georgia still offer residents only dialup internet access with no broadband options. Similarly, Whitacre, Gallardo, and Strover (2014) agreed broadband access was essential for growth. Another inference of Theme 4 was that underdeveloped cities within states have been reported as a deterrent to growth (Robinson, 2011). A third implication was an issue of land acquisition as an incentive to attract companies has been that the state acquires property for business relocation (Messerli & Schonweger, 2015). This poses a problem because the state has limited infrastructure and the land may be owned by a private corporation, which means the state must undergo research into ownership and potential bureaucratic barriers to purchase the land (Messerli & Schonweger, 2015). Depending upon the timeframe, the potential client may desire to relocate and the state may have already invested in a land purchase that may go unused if the client decides to select another state. For example, clients may change the direction and desire a rural location only to find unpaved roads, poor conditions, and limited broadband internet connectivity. The fourth implication for Theme 4 was that buildings will need to be accessible for employees and potential business as the need for heavy foot traffic is essential for sales (Morar & Bertolini, 2013; Waddell, 1996). Similarly, the downtown area was reported as too crowded and costly. In order to access many of the

buildings in this area, the client may consider walking more than a block or two away to the parking deck and then to the building as less than ideal.

The study interpretation of findings was that Georgia must improve areas of public education, decrease traffic congestion, expand public transportation, eliminate crime, and handle infrastructure issues. Public education and funding are needed in all counties of the state, and the state must elevate the substandard education. Preparation is key to reduce traffic congestion and employers want more productivity and less stress from the daily commute from home to work. Providing a safe environment for public transportation will also aid residents moving from one place to another without the hassle of traffic congestion. This is beneficial to having a healthy economy to improve the quality of life for all residents. Additionally, the purchase of land in advance before potential clients are interested, the development of roads, and the extension of broadband access are recommended to ensure that economic growth is spread throughout the state and not solely located in one area.

Limitations of the Study

The study was delimited to one state and one state agency. Study findings were also limited to 11 employees at XYZ agency, and participants were on time constraints due to competing agency priorities. In addition, the agency utilized external consultants who were not eligible to be participants in my study, but may have had deeper experience with the research question and excluding them may have limited findings.

Through participant interviews, it was discovered that the agency partners with various businesses, such as Georgia Power, Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and research

consulting firms. Expanding the participant pool to other agencies that assist with attracting and maintaining businesses to the state might have been valuable to my research as these agencies may have provided additional obstacles that hinder leaders to promote economic growth. For example, MARTA, Atlanta's public transit system, may have discussed strategies that would expand services and how not expanding might decrease development. Likewise, Georgia Power may have included other perspectives that were not discussed by XYZ agency. Examination of Georgia without a comparison to another competitive state may have further limited research findings.

Finally, the timing of data collection was a limitation as Georgia made the short list of cities for Amazon to open a second headquarters location. This fact limited a certain amount of time for participants, although data saturation was reached at eight participants and an additional three participants were added to ensure that no new information would be discovered. Some participants were also not available until the middle of March due to working on other potential contracts. At the beginning of the year, the agency receives RFIs and must work in a short time frame to gather information for potential clients. If time had not been a factor, more participants might have offered a different perspective on obstacles hindering Georgia's growth.

Recommendations

Recommendations for agency leadership and future research can be supported by the study theme findings. The first recommendation was for agency leadership to actively reduce barriers within the community and establish collaborative agency partnerships as corporations want to expand and increase revenue, but when obstacles interfere with this

purpose there is a decline in Georgia's economic growth and an increase in unemployment rate (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2014; Vojtovich, 2011). This recommendation was supported by Theme 4, as Pike et al. (2014) noted all stakeholders should have deeper and stronger interaction to promote economic growth.

Additionally, agency leadership was recommended to engage partnerships with the public-school systems as increased financial development has been attained through public and private sector partnership as supported by Theme 1 (Bradshaw & Blakely, 1999; Waligo, Clarke, & Hawkings, 2013). Additionally, all stakeholders need to be involved in the process to ensure that Georgia not only grows economically concurrent with improvements to the education system (Brenitz & Felman, 2012) as partnering with the school systems may provide more funding to Pre-K through 12th grades and reduce this area as an obstacle.

It was also recommended the agency collaborate with DOT, and a representative from the agency should conduct an outside assessment of other larger states to examine how the states traffic concerns are handled as reflected by Theme 2. With Georgia's population estimated to grow to 13% by 2020 (Sleig Center for Economic Growth, 2014), XYZ agency and DOT should develop a plan for growth ahead of the growing population. Constructing more highway lanes, reducing road construction during peak times in the week, and providing more secondary roads to decrease highway congestions could help the state to become more competitive (Ababi, Rajabioun, & Ioannou, 2015).

Another recommendation would be for agency leadership to collaborate specifically with MARTA public transit, as reported in Theme 3, to expand bus and rail

services to Augusta, Savannah, Macon, and other populated cities within the state to expand economic growth to all areas of the state (Diab & El-Geneidy, 2013). To reduce the myth that crime is associated with public transportation, more town hall meetings needs to be established to show concerned residents how competitive states are successful with expanded transportation services. Since Georgia's population continues to grow, the agency should partner with MARTA also to extend services 24 hours a day, which may make the state more competitive with other states.

A final recommendation for agency leadership would be to develop infrastructure in rural areas of Georgia as reflected in Theme 4. In this millennium, no areas of a state should be underdeveloped (Hanks & Harker, 2013), the agency leadership should hire another outside consulting firm to provide a list of cities in the state that have unpaved roads, lack of broadband, and privately-owned property so that every road should be paved to prepare for future growth and expansion as reported in Theme 4. Partnerships with AT&T to provide fiber optics to rural areas in Georgia would be a plus, and research-based property acquisition for potential clients.

Future Research

Future research should be conducted to further examine Theme 1 using a quantitative correlation study to examine education and economic growth within Georgia. The research may determine whether relationships exist between economic growth and education, and quantitative research enables the researcher to collect large amounts of numeric data for statistical analysis. This study may help leaders at XYZ agency to examine if education and economic growth from an inferential standpoint.

Second, it was recommended to conduct a qualitative ethnographic study of Theme 3 to observe various traffic patterns at public transportation stations. This study would involve observations of Georgia residents' human behavior in a natural environment to analyze observation patterns to better align transportation schedules, access, and other factors. Finally, research could be expanded with a mixed methods approach to further examine Theme 2. The researcher can attempt to explore or examine the phenomenon of obstacles that agency leadership face when attracting and maintaining economic growth including daily traffic patterns and observations of public transit from internal and external public agency stakeholders.

Implications

The study findings have important implications to improve economic growth and development within the state of Georgia. Positive social change as it relates to Theme 1 is that economic growth has the potential to make a substantial impact in Georgia. Substandard school systems in certain areas are providing a disservice to communities that are less fortunate. If more funding were available to the school system, the state would be able to provide quality education. Teachers would be paid at the level of his/her performance and given the opportunity to gain more subject knowledge in the areas in which he/she teaches. Another implication to social change and education is that with more funding the state can educate students with advanced technology to be established in every school and not based on statistical test scores (Adams & Gottlieb, 2015). The STEM program is currently offered in select schools due to lack of funding and low test scores. Equip schools with laptops, interactive learning to be used at school/home to learn

with others outside the class and around the world. This would include reducing overcrowded classrooms and teacher to student ratio. Changing a generation with positive social change through increasing economic growth will allow the next generation to flourish.

Implications to positive social change and traffic congestion as reflected by Theme 2. Having better air quality with less traffic on the roads will reduce environmental hazards (Arnott, 2013). This may increase one's quality of life. The reduction of traffic congestion means that less time can be spent traveling and more time with one's family. The reduction of traffic on Georgia roads means less wear and tear thus saving money on repairs. This would allow more money to be spent on other sectors of the state.

The expansion of public transportation would provide positive implications for social change in the community as it relates to Theme 3. Many residents depend on public transportation to commute to and from work, and that may be the only means of transportation. Foth, Manaugh and El-Geneidy (2013) reported expansion of transport systems into areas where transit was not available also led to job creation. This could increase the probability of providing a better quality of life if one can work outside of impoverished locations to those where higher, better paying jobs are available. Public transit can also decrease travel delays to allow individuals to reach desired destinations on time and with less stress. This would also reduce the need for second vehicles saving families money, and increased community interactions can occur through social networking by encouraging new relationships between individuals who would not have

normally interacted. Therefore, quality of life implication for social change conserves energy, reduces air pollution, relieves road congestion, decreases global warming, and reduces oil dependency.

Study implications to infrastructure and positive social change are discussed in Theme 4. Proper infrastructure in rural areas of Georgia will be positive for residents living in this area (Morar & Bertolini, 2013). Many rural areas in Georgia are on dial-up with no established timeframe to extend fiber optics to the area. The state has many unpaved roads, substandard living conditions, along with issues of infrastructure development. To improve transportation and quality of living would be ideal.

Implications to positive social change and employment are reflected by a viable economy. When companies can provide continued employment, then employees have financial stability, and employees can benefit from the stability of job creation and growth. Subsequently, job creation promotes higher living standards that encourage residents to reinvest back into the economy to stimulate economic growth. This may increase charitable contributions to assist in areas such as homeless shelters, drug rehab centers, and programs for the disadvantaged. The best weapon is economic growth to fight poverty in our communities. Diversity in the workplace is another positive social change (David, Abreu, & Pinheiro, 2013). Learning and experiencing other cultures including understanding others' differences may reduce racial tension.

Most importantly, establishing economic growth to the state of Georgia can drastically change the lives of residents in a positive way. Local residents can provide more comfortable living due to job earnings. The prospects of creating wealth may be

obtainable because of job creation. With continuous growth, residents can be assured of a wider income distribution with the inflow of monies in the state and the community.

Stakeholders are the catalyst for social change. Bringing small and large business leaders together to promote and collaborate on how to bring job creation, economic growth and development to the state for the advancement of resident's. Taylor (2014) stated that partnership is key for positive social change among stakeholders because the organization cannot support the economy if resources are not available. Therefore, the investment of stakeholders is important to growth since both are seeking a stable and healthy economy. The findings in the study contributed to the theory of constraints, which served as the study theoretical framework (Goldratt, 1984). By understanding where the system is constrained, the agency has to put all resources to the first constraint and then eliminate the constraint before moving to the next obstacle. For example, in Theme 1 to eliminate substandard education, the agency has to establish a relationship with all of the school district boards of education. Agency leadership must examine where the obstacles to quality public education exist, such as funding, teachers, lack of instructional resources, or state student outcome results. The agency then must work with the public school districts to develop strategies to improve Georgia's statewide public education.

Theme 2 contributed to the theory of constraints as once the main issue is eliminated, the system or organization must move to the next barrier, which was traffic congestion. Agency leadership must partner with the DOT to establish a road map to resolve Georgia traffic congestion. All allocated resources need to better flow in the

direction of traffic congestion elimination. Likewise, Theme 3 contributed to the theory of constraints as the next sequential barrier to face would be expanding MARTA and disassociating it with crime. Agency leadership must spotlight this obstacle and allocate resources for economic growth and MARTA improvement. Lastly Theme 4, infrastructure, also contributed to the theory of constraints as the final obstacle agency leadership must resolve barriers for land acquisition, road infrastructure, and broadband access to all rural communities. In the theory of constraints, a system or organization must repeat this process until all barriers identified by the system are resolved.

Conclusions

Every state wants to provide stable economic growth and development. In order to generate growth to the state leaders have to examine obstacles that would interfere with economic prosperity. As mentioned above, the agency that is primarily responsible for attracting and maintaining businesses to the state does not have an easy task. In order to achieve the agency goal of economic growth, partnership is necessary as growth requires teamwork from all sectors whether private or public, and everyone gains, including residents, when the economy thrives. The obstacles that hinder growth are substandard education (Theme 1), traffic congestion (Theme 2), expansion of public transportation and crime association (Theme 3), and lack of infrastructure (Theme 4). More funding needs to be allocated into the four identified barriers as the agency must start to improve education first, as supported by the sequential order reflected in the theory of constraints, and then proceed to other three barriers until the agency can resolve these barriers. Quality of life for Georgia residents may improve from reduced traffic

congestion thereby decreasing commute time to attract new businesses. Public transportation and crime association must also be dissolved. The expansion of transportation will provide employment to residents and attract millennials who prefer public transportation. This also allows for affordable and accessible public transportation for Georgia and assist in improvements to traffic congestion.

In this millennium, no Georgia resident should live below minimum standards. The discovery that many of Georgia's residents reside in areas that are not developed and have no broadband access is not acceptable. Infrastructure in the state must improve to provide adequate, accessible, and safe expectations for all residents.

Finally, Georgia is known for some of the best universities and colleges across the nation. Many graduates leave the state in pursuit of a career that is not available in Georgia due to the barriers identified in this study. In order to keep millennials, and attract and maintain new businesses, all of these hindering obstacles to economic growth and development must be removed. As the population continues to grow, strategic planning needs to be developed to ensure that the state is prepared for providing quality education in every county, elimination of traffic congestion, improved public transportation, and have adequate infrastructure.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the obstacles encountered by the XYZ agency to attract businesses to generate economic growth. Below are sample interview questions that the researcher will ask participants. Questions were crafted by literature analysis on the topic and industry experts evaluated the feasibility of the questions based on face validity, trustworthiness, and credibility. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The participants will understand that during any time in the interview they can stop.

Demographic Questions

1. Employees of the XYZ agency
2. Bachelor Degree or higher
3. Supervisor or Higher Position

Interview Questions

1. What is your definition of economic development?
2. What are your experiences with Georgia economic development?
3. What are your experiences with strategies for success in attracting new and existing companies to Georgia?
4. What are your perceptions as to the potential benefits of economic development for the state of Georgia?
5. What are your perceptions as to the potential risks of economic development for the state of Georgia?

6. What are your perceptions as to these obstacles managerial, political, legal or educational?
7. What are your perceptions as to where these obstacles arise from?
Additional prompt: Are the obstacles inside the state or other states?

Appendix B: Field Test Solicitation E-mail to the Industry Experts

Dear XXXXX

Thank you in advance for all your agreeance to participant in this field study. My dissertation proposal is almost ready for the URR review. Before my dissertation can move forward my committee member Dr. Judith Forbes instructed me to conduct a “Field Test” with industry experts to test my research questions for face validity, trustworthiness, and credibility. At this current time, I request your participation and expertise in reviewing my interview questions to examine if such questions would generate research data that would address the research question.

To achieve this goal I need your participation by providing feedback on the alignment of the research question to the interview questions. Your participation in the field test will ensure that I am asking appropriate question to gather sufficient data and information for analysis.

Thank You,
Vanessa Cox

The Research Question

The dissertation proposal contains one central research question: What are the obstacles that leaders in economic development face when performing their roles?

Problem Statement

The specific problem is that Georgia’s economic development leadership faces obstacles that challenge the state’s growth in attracting new businesses and developing existing businesses.